



An Inspiring Voice for Change in South Africa's Youth Revolution

At just 22, Vhuhwavho Makhaga is already making waves in the media space and more than just a radio personality, she is a force of nature, weaving her passion for storytelling with a fierce commitment to social change. A proud daughter born in Ngwenani ya Ha-Themeli in Limpopo, this Honours student in Media Studies at the University of Venda is a beacon of hope for her community and a powerful advocate for youth empowerment and gender equality. As a newsreader and current affairs host at UNIVEN FM, Vhuhwavho's voice resonates across the airwaves, educating, inspiring, and sparking vital conversations about the issues that matter most.

Her journey in broadcasting began in 2023 at Vuwani FM, but it was at UNIVEN FM where she truly found her stride. With a natural flair for connecting with listeners, she has become a household name in the region, delivering news with clarity and hosting discussions with purpose. "I have always admired the power of storytelling," she says, reflecting on her love for radio. "The intimacy and connection between hosts and listeners captivated me." Beyond the microphone, Vhuhwavho explores voice-over work and creative expression, showcasing her versatility and ambition to leave a mark in the media world.



For Vhuhwavho, radio is more than entertainment, but it is a platform for transformation. She is particularly vocal about gender-based violence (GBV), a crisis she calls "one of the greatest threats to the safety and freedom of young women." Living in Vhembe District, a hotspot for GBV cases, she feels the weight of this issue personally. "I do not feel safe anywhere, be it in public transport, the library, or even my own home," she shares. Through her platform, she amplifies survivors' voices,

shares resources, and educates her audience, believing community radio can shape mindsets and create safe spaces for dialogue. "We need to be bold enough to speak out against GBV and consistent enough to teach respect and equality from a young age," she asserts.

Her activism extends beyond the airwaves. As the Public Relations Officer for the Pfunzo Foundation, Vhuhwavho champions mental health awareness and academic empowerment for learners in Limpopo. Her mission is to uplift youth, bridge socio-economic gaps, and foster kindness. "I envision expanding my reach through various media platforms, continuing to advocate for mental health and social change," she says with quiet determination. Her parents' unwavering support has fuelled her drive, pushing her to defy limitations and break boundaries.

As South Africa celebrates Youth Month, Vhuhwavho's story embodies the resilience and courage of the nation's young people. Reflecting on the theme, "Skills for the Changing World - Empowering the Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation," she sees both progress and challenges. "We are in a digital era, and many young people are learning technological skills and making money online," she noted. But she also questions the promise that education is the key to success, pointing to South Africa's high unemployment rate where over 40% of graduates remain jobless, and many entry-level jobs demand experience fresh graduates cannot possibly have. "No one is coming to save us," she says.

"We need to equip ourselves with as many skills as possible. The more you know, the more value you have."

Vhuhwavho also critiques the lingering inequalities in South Africa's democracy. "We are politically free, but economic freedom remains elusive," she says, highlighting how barriers like unequal access to quality education persist. As a proud Black woman, Youth Month reminds her of her heritage and the sacrifices made for equality in education. Yet, she acknowledges that economic disparities still limit opportunities for many.

Her vision for change is clear: dismantle patriarchal norms, promote gender equality, and reform education to prioritise practical, job-ready skills. She calls for mandatory skills-based courses, interdisciplinary programmes, and entrepreneurship training to reduce unemployment and empower youth. To combat GBV, she advocates for stronger laws, support services for survivors, and societal shifts in how boys are raised. "A working educated woman is not an enemy but equally deserving of opportunities and the right to live," she says.

Vhuhwavho Makhaga is not just reading the news, she is rewriting the narrative. With her roots in rural Limpopo and her sights set on national impact, she is using her voice to challenge social norms, inspire her peers, and build a safer, more equitable South Africa. As she continues to rise, one thing is certain: this is only the beginning for a young woman whose courage and vision are transforming her community and beyond.

The 1st Human Resource Management International Conference attracted more than 100 scholars from 14 countries

The University of Venda's Department of Human Resource Management and Labour Relations in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law proudly co-hosted the historic 1st Human Resource Management International Conference (HRMIC) in partnership with the

Department of Management Sciences and Entrepreneurship, School of Business and Economics, Moi University, Kenya. The conference that was held from 02-05 June 2025 in Eldoret, Kenya, attracted over 100 scholars from 14 countries and 21 Institutions of Higher

Learning. This conference not only served as a platform for knowledge exchange but also as a catalyst for future collaborations, inspiring hope for sustained academic partnerships.

The hybrid-format conference, themed “Innovative Human Resource Strategies for Workforce Resilience and Sustainable Development,” served as a transformative platform to address critical challenges in global workforce development, organisational resilience, work-life balance and HR innovation.



Prof Barwa Kanyane, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law at the University of Venda, emphasised the significance of this collaboration during the official opening ceremony. He highlighted signing a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Moi University as a significant step towards sustained academic partnerships and internationalisation. This MoU includes joint research projects and student exchange programmes, which will foster a deeper understanding of global HR practices and promote cultural exchange. A new MoU with Moi University marks the beginning of a historic chapter for both institutions in the region,” he said.



Prof. Kiplagat Kotut, Acting Vice-Chancellor of Moi University, echoed the same sentiments and emphasised the relevance of Human Resource Management in shaping the stability and functionality of organisations worldwide, adding that the effort to bring this conference together has laid solid foundation for the everlasting conference that has brought scholars from all over the world together to shape the work environment and to bring stability in the workplace.

The conference comprised three breakaway sessions with eighty presentations delivered. These sessions covered a diverse range of topics, from strategic HR practices and leadership development to employee engagement, talent retention, and digital transformation, providing a comprehensive overview of the current trends and challenges in the field of Human Resource Management.

Among the participating institutions were: University of Venda, Moi University, University of the Free State, University of Rwanda, Taita Taveta University, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Durban University of Technology, American University in Dubai, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Makerere University Business School, University of South Africa, Ansbach University of Applied Sciences (Germany), Open University of Kenya, Kyambogo University, Masai Mara University, Mountains of the Moon University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kisii University, Koitaleel Samoei University, Uganda Management Institute and Midlands State University.



Some of the scholars attending the conference

UNIVEN Staff Blaze the Comrades Trail: Seven Champions, One Historic Run



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) proudly celebrates a remarkable milestone as seven of its staff members took on one of the world's most gruelling endurance challenges, the 2025 Comrades Marathon. Held on Sunday, 8 June 2025, the iconic race followed the demanding 90 km "down run" from Pietermaritzburg to Durban, testing both physical and mental limits.

UNIVEN's contingent of runners, Tinyiko Sibiya, Tshimangadzo Ndou, Genius Katekwe, Rudzani Makhema, Lugisani Managa, Kudakwashe Madzima, and Malebogo Legodi, not only completed the ultramarathon within the official cutoff time but also did so with resilience, determination, and pride, representing the University with distinction.

Among the group, Ms Tshimangadzo Ndou made history as the first woman to represent UNIVEN at the Comrades Marathon. Finishing in an impressive 10 hours and 56 minutes, she earned a bronze medal and secured her place in the university's growing legacy of excellence and inclusion.

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"I was running under the University of Venda banner, so I was really representing UNIVEN, putting the flag on the map," said Ndou. She credited her performance to intensive training on hilly terrain and expressed gratitude for the university's unwavering support: "I appreciate the logistical and moral support provided by UNIVEN, it made a real difference."



On the photo in the previous page: Tshimangadzo Ndou (right) with Dr Takalani Dzaga (left)

Ndou's trailblazing effort signals a powerful message for the future. "I hope more women will join next year. We will share our experiences and support one another," she said, emphasising the broader impact of participation, especially for wellness and personal growth. "Running helps me manage stress and boosts my productivity. It gives me purpose and balance."

The 2025 Comrades Marathon carried the theme "More Than a Race – Isiko Mpilo" ("Culture is Life"), highlighting its cultural and emotional significance beyond the physical challenge. Participants must meet strict qualifying criteria, including completing a standard marathon in under 4 hours and 50 minutes, making the achievement all the more commendable.

UNIVEN's leadership praised the runners' accomplishments. Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, remarked: "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our seven remarkable staff members. Their dedication, perseverance, and spirit are truly commendable. They have made us all proud."

Chief Operating Officer Mr Kraziya Botwe, who hosted a send-off event before the race, echoed this sentiment:

"Your participation in this iconic event reflects the values we hold dear—excellence, resilience, and teamwork. You have inspired your colleagues and our student community alike."

Mr Genius Katekwe, who led the UNIVEN team with a finish time of 10:08:26, shared:

"This accomplishment reflects the discipline and hard work I invested in training. I am grateful to the University for its support and encourage more colleagues to take on this transformative challenge."

Close behind him was Mr Tinyiko Sibiya, who finished in 10:53:08, followed by Ms. Tshimangadzo Ndou and Mr Kudakwashe Madzima, both clocking in at 10:56:25.

Mr Malebogo Legodi completed the course in 11:36:45, and Adv Rudzani Makhema finished in 11:44:22.

A standout performance came from Mr Lugisani Managa, who crossed the line in 11:51:07, just nine minutes before the final cutoff.

"Crossing that finish line was one of the most emotional moments of my life," said Managa. "Every step in those last few kilometres felt like a battle. But I kept reminding myself, 'You didn't come this far to stop now.' The encouragement from the UNIVEN team kept me going."

Dr Takalani Dzaga, Director of Marketing, Branding, and Communication, praised the team: "This is more than just a race finish. It reflects the spirit and tenacity we cultivate at UNIVEN. We encourage more staff to join this movement toward a health-conscious, resilient community."

The runners represented a wide range of departments and professional backgrounds, embodying the inclusive and community-focused ethos of the university. Their collective achievement stands as a powerful example of what can be accomplished through shared purpose and institutional support.

As UNIVEN continues to promote holistic development, academically, physically, and socially, the 2025 Comrades Marathon marks a defining moment. It is a testament to the university's commitment to wellness, excellence, and living its values in every stride.

They did not just run a race. They ran for history, for health, and for the heart of a university that believes in its people.



UNIVERSITY OF VENDA'S DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCE IN THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING & AGRICULTURE IS PROUD TO CO-HOST THE 55TH ANNUAL SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR ANIMAL SCIENCE (SASAS) CONGRESS!

The University of Venda, in collaboration with the University of Limpopo (UL) and the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD), will co-host the **55th Annual Congress of the South African Society for Animal Science (SASAS)** from 8-10 July 2025 at Protea Hotel, The Ranch Resort, Polokwane.

This year's congress will be under the theme **"Thriving in diverse environments: optimised innovations and resilience in livestock-wildlife interactions"**

The congress expects to convene over 300 delegates, including leading livestock researchers, policymakers, industry executives, and students, who will engage in high-end discussions on scientific innovation and sustainable livestock production.

The **UNIVEN** is proud to be involved in an event which is of such strategic significance, as the congress will deliver the following:

• Strengthen the University's scientific leadership in the province

Co-hosting the SASAS congress is in line with the UNIVEN's vision of engaged scholarship in delivering its mandate.

• Promote livestock industry collaborations

The congress provides a platform to strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders, including the agricultural research council (ARC), the department of agriculture, land reform and rural development (DALRRD), and major agribusinesses.

• Promote post graduate student development

Through participation in academic presentations, networking sessions, and the SASAS Student Quiz and Debates, students will gain valuable exposure to cutting-edge research, industry trends, and career-building opportunities, to become locally relevant and globally competitive.

• Stimulate development economic transformation

With a focus on building resilient livestock systems, productivity, and sustainability, the congress aligns with UNIVEN's mission to contribute to local and regional agricultural development and economic empowerment.

Congress Highlights

• Plenary sessions and scientific panels

Will feature leading global experts on sustainable, climate resilient, and precision livestock production.

• Industry showcases and innovation exhibitions

Spotlights of groundbreaking advancements in livestock production and agribusiness solutions.

• Technical field excursions

Field excursions to outstanding local livestock enterprises, to showcase local innovative and sustainable livestock production practices.

Participation and Engagement:

UNIVEN researchers and Post Graduate students will actively participate through:

- Presenting research papers and posters
- Attending plenary discussions and technical sessions
- Engaging with industry leaders and potential research funding agencies
- Chairing sessions

For further information, please contact:

- **Prof. F Fushai** (HoD, Department of Animal Science, felix.fushai@univen.ac.za)
- **Dr. T Chitura** (Vice-Chairperson, Local Organising Committee, Department of Animal Science, Teedzai.Chitura@univen.ac.za)
- **Prof. M Manjoro** (Local Organising Committee Member, Institute for Rural Development, Marizvikuru.Manjoro@univen.ac.za)
- **Prof. J Balozi** (Local Organising Committee Member, Department of Animal Science, Joseph.Balozi@univen.ac.za)
- **Dr A Raseona** (Local Organising Committee Member, Department of Animal Science, andrea.raseona@univen.ac.za)

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Improper conduct includes the following...

1. Financial misconduct,
2. Misuse or misappropriation of University assets,
3. Health and safety risks,
4. Plagiarism,
5. Fraud and corruption.



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VICE-CHANCELLOR'S WINTER GOLF TOURNAMENT 2025






KILLARNEY COUNTRY CLUB, JOHANNESBURG
04 JULY 2025

Format: 4 Ball Alliance

Entry Fee: R8000
-Inclusive of Green Fee
-Golf Cart, Golf Shirt & Cap
-Halfway Light Meal
-Prize Giving Dinner

Payment: 30 June 2025

Golf Registration: 08H00 - 09H30
Tee-off: 10H00

The funds can be deposited into the University of Venda ABSA Account
Acc. Name: University of Venda
Acc. Number: 1000 000 538
Branch Name: Thohoyandou
Branch Code: 33419
Ref. Number: GOLF DAY 2025

RSVP: Mrs TR Muthadzwi
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CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Venue: University of Venda
Deadline: 30 June 2025

32nd SAAIR Annual Conference

27 - 31 October 2025

Towards Excellence: Enhancing Funding Pathways and Student Outcomes through Human-Centric AI, Impactful Research, and Operational Intelligence

Subthemes

- 🚀 Funding the Future
- 📊 From Insight to Impact
- 🌉 Bridging the Skills Gap
- 🌟 Ensuring Excellence
- 🌍 Global and Continental Commitments

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