



University of Venda strengthens global academic ties with the University of Sussex in the UK



The University of Venda's collaboration with the University of Sussex in the UK was led by Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, which included Prof Modimowabarwa Kanyane – Executive Dean: Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law; Prof Emmanuel Oseifuah – Interim Director: Univen Business School; Mr Thabo Dikgale – Acting Director: International Relations and Partnerships; Dr Patience Mativandelela – Director: Institutional Research and Planning and Ms Diana Makwarela – Director: Internal Audit.

The University of Venda undertook a successful strategic international collaboration visit to the University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom, from 23 to 25 October 2025. The purpose of the visit was to strengthen academic partnerships, enhance global engagement, and explore collaborative opportunities in business education and research. This initiative was jointly spearheaded by Professor Kanyane, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law (FMCL), and Professor Chux Daniels, a renowned expert in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policy, engineering,

digitalisation, energy, and public policy. Prof Daniels is based at the prestigious Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex. As part of the collaboration, Prof Chux Daniels has been appointed Adjunct Professor to contribute to establishing partnerships with the University of Sussex for the proposed Business School and MBA programme within the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law. His academic contributions will include teaching quantitative methods and research methodology, supervising master's and PhD students, and supporting the faculty's strategic goals as part of a staff exchange with other colleagues from the University of Sussex.

The University of Venda delegation was warmly and graciously welcomed by senior representatives of the University of Sussex. The reception was led by Prof Robin Banerjee – Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Global and Civic Engagement, and included Prof Ingrid Woolard – Executive Dean, Sussex Business School, Prof Geert de Neve – Head, School of Global Studies, Dr Linda Waldman – Director of Teaching and Learning and Research Fellow in the Health and Nutrition Cluster, Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Prof Maja Golf-Papez – Director, MBA Programme.

The visit featured strategic engagements with staff from the University of Sussex Business School, focusing on enhancing academic excellence, fostering global partnerships, and enriching business education through cross-cultural collaboration. These discussions

marked a significant milestone in the University of Venda's unwavering commitment to internationalisation and innovation in teaching and learning. The University of Sussex Business School expressed intense enthusiasm for the partnership, recognising its potential for long-term collaboration. The school's vision is to be a leading institution that collaborates across disciplines to address global challenges in business, management, and society—impacting policy, practice, and people.

The University of Venda delegation visited the School of Global Studies, a world-renowned institution ranked number one globally for Development Studies for the 9th consecutive year. The visit was more than a ceremonial exchange—it was a dynamic platform for dialogue, research synergy and cultural exchange.



The Head of the School, Prof Geert de Neve, presented a comprehensive overview of the school's postgraduate programmes. One of the highlights of the visit was a roundtable on widening participation in higher education, where both institutions shared ideas and

strategies for improving access and inclusion. Plans were also discussed for future exchange programmes, allowing students from both universities to experience diverse learning environments and contribute to cross-cultural understanding.

Dr Linda Waldman led a tour of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) premises for the visiting delegates from the University of Venda. She proudly noted that IDS has been ranked the world's top institution for Development Studies for the ninth consecutive year, according to the

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025. The IDS priorities include working with partners, such as the University of Venda, to expand international research and mutual learning networks for development, emphasising the shared benefits of the partnership.



The visit concluded with the signing of a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University of Venda and the University of Sussex. Both parties committed themselves to promoting co-operation between the two institutions in education and in academic research, and agreed to explore the development of joint research activities, including, but not limited to, staff, doctoral

and post-doctoral research; co-operation on academic programmes, the facilitation of student exchange and/or visiting programmes; the facilitation of staff exchanges or mutual visits to both Parties' institutions; the exchange of information, which may include the results of teaching and research collaboration; and any other activities viewed to be mutually beneficial.



Prof Robin Banerjee – Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Global and Civic Engagement; Prof Modimowabarwa Kanyane – Executive Dean: Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law and Mr Thabo Dikgale – Acting Director: International Relations and Partnerships.

The visit exemplified the power of academic diplomacy and the transformative power of global partnerships in higher education. As the University of Venda and Sussex University Business School continue to build bridges

across continents, the collaboration promises to shape the next generation of visionary business leaders through staff exchanges and student mobility programmes.

UNIVEN Research Team Advances Eco-Friendly Pest Control Through Sterile Insect Technique

Pest control does not always have to mean clouds of chemicals drifting over crops. A smarter and environmentally friendly alternative is the Sterile

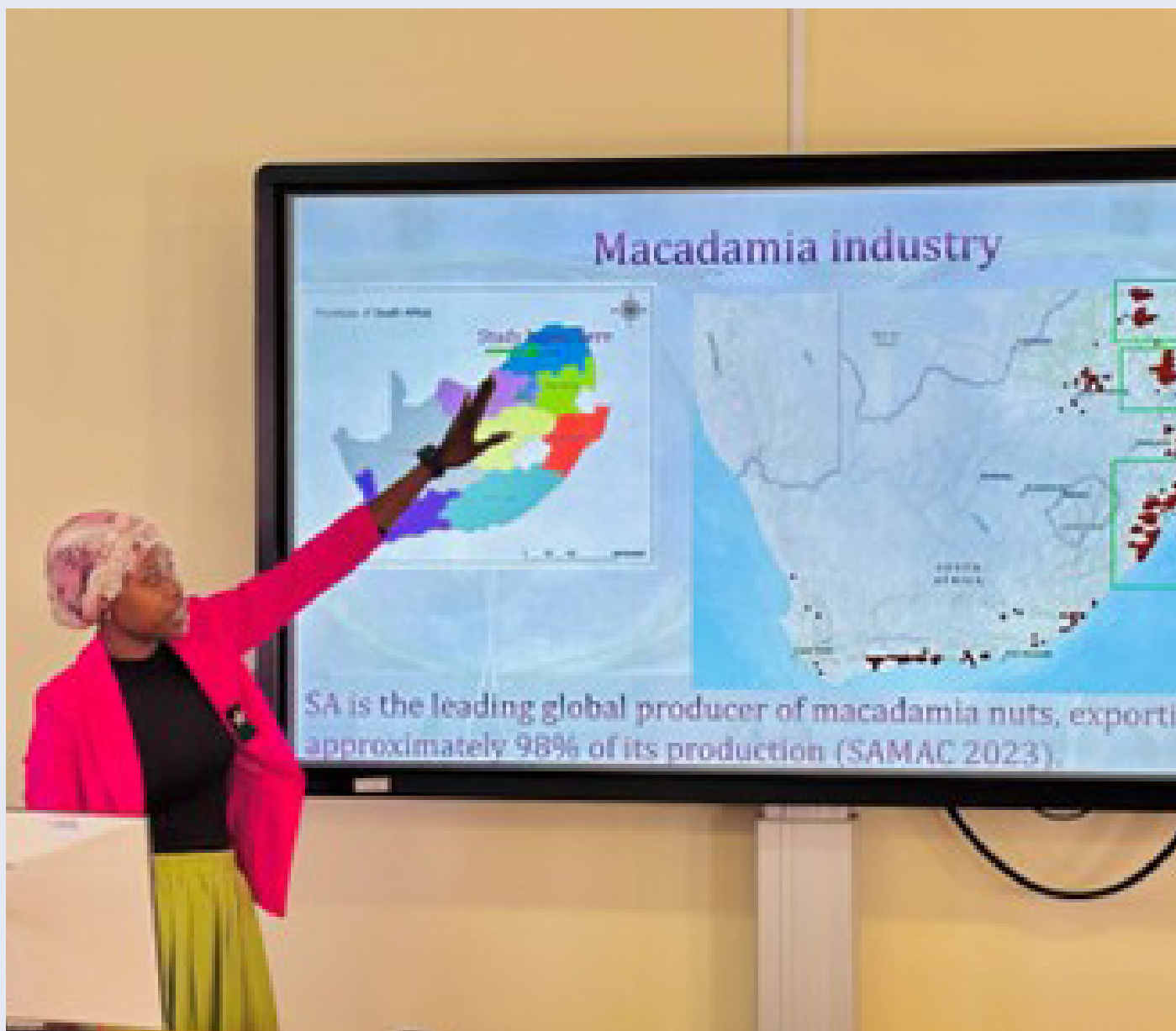
Insect Technique (SIT), a biological control method that involves releasing mass-reared, sterilised insects to suppress wild pest populations.



Participants at the Fruit Fly Mass Rearing Facility in Stellenbosch

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) funds projects across the globe to develop and refine SIT programmes, and one such groundbreaking initiative is being led by Professor Lourens Swanepoel, the DSI-NRF South African Research Chair (SARChI) in Biodiversity Value and Change, Faculty of Science, Engineering and

Agriculture at the University of Venda (UNIVEN). Working alongside Drs Desmond Conlong, Elsje Joubert, and Mulalo Muluvhahothe, the team is developing a mass-rearing system for a major pest affecting one of South Africa's fastest-growing agricultural sectors, macadamia farming.



Dr Muluvhahotho delivering the presentation

Earlier in September 2025, Dr Mulalo Muluvhahotho represented UNIVEN at a technical meeting hosted by Stellenbosch University, where IAEA project participants from across the world gathered to share research progress and insights. During the visit, delegates toured the fruit fly and XSIT mass-rearing facilities, witnessing firsthand how the Sterile Insect Technique has been successfully implemented. These visits demonstrated that SIT is not merely a scientific concept but a proven, scalable solution that can transform pest management practices.

As one of the most effective biological control strategies, SIT offers farmers a sustainable and chemical-free alternative to protect their crops.

Its broader impact extends beyond agriculture — reducing pesticide reliance, creating local employment opportunities, and fostering new avenues of research and innovation.

Over the next 18 months, Dr Muluvhahotho will continue investigating key aspects of the developmental biology of the macadamia nut borer (MNB) to further enhance the efficiency of the mass-rearing process. The project is funded by the IAEA and supported through the DSI/NRF SARCHI Chair in Biodiversity Value and Change. Dr Muluvhahotho also holds an NRF Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowship, underscoring UNIVEN's growing contribution to sustainable agricultural solutions that balance productivity with environmental care.



University of Venda
Creating Future Leaders

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2025

INVITATION

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND
PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
VENDA, **PROF BERNARD NTHAMBELENI**
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE

LAUNCH OF CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE AND INSTITUTES



LIST OF CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE AND INSTITUTES

- Es'kia Mphahlele Centre for National and Global Dialogue (EMCNGD)
- Ismail Mahomed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights (IMCHPR)
- MER Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Arts and Culture (MMCALC)
- Vuwani Science Resource Centre (VSRC)
- African Musicology Institute (AMI)
- Mass Spectrometry Institute for Southern Africa (MSISA)
- OR Tambo Institute of Governance and Policy Studies (ORTIGPS)
- Institute for Pathogen and Global Health Research (IPGHR)
- Institute for Rural Development (IRD)

VENUE: UNIVERSITY OF VENDA STADIUM | TIME: 10H00

This prestigious event marks a significant milestone in our academic and research journey, showcasing the establishment of new centres of excellence and institutes that will drive innovation, collaboration, and excellence across disciplines.

Kindly RSVP by 10 November 2025 to: Mrs Esther Munano – ester.munano@univen.ac.za
(082 801 9361) | Mrs Tshililo Muthadzwi – Tshililo.muthadzwi@univen.ac.za (082 868 1988)
Ms Fulufhelo Nonge – fulufhelo.nonge@univen.ac.za (064 759 8811)

We look forward to your presence.