



University of Venda
Creating Future Leaders

UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



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Taking UNIVEN to the World: School of Law Deepens Global Footprint Through Lithuania Partnership

The University of Venda's Department of Public Law in the School of Law, under the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, continues to strengthen its international academic footprint through a growing partnership between its School of Law and the Faculty of Law at Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) in Lithuania. highlighting the institution's growing commitment to global collaboration and academic excellence.



Left to right: LLM Student, Prof Ademola Jegede, Prof Jolita Miliuvine, Dr Crystal Mokoena and other LLM students

Recent staff mobility exchanges and academic engagements between the two institutions have demonstrated the value of international collaboration in advancing teaching, research, and institutional development. The activities

form part of the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2023, which promotes cooperation in teaching and learning, research, curriculum development, and staff and student mobility.



Engagement with the visiting Professor, Prof Jolita Miliuvine

In a significant step towards internationalisation, the School of Law recently welcomed Professor Jolita Miliuvienė from MRU's Institute of Public Law. A distinguished legal scholar and Parliamentary Ombudsperson in Lithuania, Prof Miliuvienė shared her expertise with Master of Laws students specialising in Human Rights as well as LLB students. Her lectures provided valuable comparative legal perspectives, exposing students to global approaches to public law and human rights.



The collaboration was further strengthened when Dr Crystal Mokoena from UNIVEN's Department of Public Law participated in a staff mobility programme at MRU in Vilnius. During her visit, she delivered lectures to undergraduate and postgraduate students on South Africa's constitutional framework,

landmark Constitutional Court judgments, and the Inter-African Human Rights System. The presentations showcased UNIVEN's academic strengths whilst broadening European students' understanding of African legal systems and jurisprudence.

Beyond the classroom, the exchanges created opportunities for meaningful institutional engagement. Discussions between academics from UNIVEN's Department of Public Law and MRU's Institute of Public Law, together with meetings involving university leadership, explored new avenues for collaboration. Key areas identified for future growth include joint research projects, postgraduate supervision, and the development of innovative academic programmes.

The partnership stands as a testament to UNIVEN's commitment to internationalisation and strategic global partnerships. By fostering academic exchange across continents, the University is not only enhancing the quality of teaching and research but also creating transformative opportunities for students and staff, while elevating its position as a globally connected institution.



Prof Jolita Miliuvine receiving a token of appreciation from UNIVEN. L-R: Dr Crystal Mokoena (interim HOD-Public Law), Prof Lonias Ndlovu (Director: School of Law), Prof Jolita Miliuvine, Prof Moyo (Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies - Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law) and Prof Jegede (Director: Ismail Mahommed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights)

Rhodes University Prof Facilitates Workshops at the Green Technology Confucius Institute

Prof Patrice Mwepu, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and the Co-Director of the Confucius Institute at Rhodes University recently visited the University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s Green Technology Confucius Institute (GTCI) where he facilitated two workshops attended by UNIVEN staff and students. Participants of workshops included Prof Tawanda Runhare, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Education (FHSSE), Prof Pfarelo Matshidze, Deputy Dean of FHSSE, Dr Matodzi Raphalalani, Head of the Department of African Languages, Dr Sannah Mativandlela, Director of Institutional Research Planning, Prof Grace Ge and Prof Eric Maluta, Co-Directors of GTCI. Altogether, more than 120 participants attended the events.



The workshops were directed by Mr Ted XIONG, the Manager of GTCI. Mr XIONG began by extending a warm welcome and expressing sincere gratitude, on behalf of GTCI, to Prof Patrice Mwepu for making a special trip to visit GTCI. He noted that the Confucius Institute at Rhodes University has accumulated extensive experience in curriculum development,

disciplinary growth, and talent cultivation. He expressed the hope for this exchange to further promote mutual learning and cooperation between the two institutions and contribute to the advancement of Chinese language education as well as cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and South Africa.



Prof Grace Ge, the Co-Director of GTCI pointed out that Confucius Institutes in South Africa not only serve the function of Chinese language teaching but also act as important platforms for promoting educational cooperation and academic exchange between China and South Africa. Since its establishment, GTCI has continuously advanced Chinese language curriculum development, teacher training, cultural exchange initiatives, and student development programs, achieving a series of positive outcomes. She further noted that GTCI is actively exploring ways to integrate Chinese language courses into UNIVEN's talent-development and academic credit systems in line with UNIVEN's strategic goals. This effort aims to promote the professionalisation and academic institutionalisation of Chinese language education and to lay a solid foundation for the future establishment of a Chinese language major.



In his speech, Prof Tawanda Runhare, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, drew on his own experience in cross-cultural research to emphasise that

language learning is not merely about acquiring a tool for communication; it is also an important means of understanding different civilisations and broadening one's international perspective. He encouraged faculty members and students to make full use of the exchange opportunities offered by the workshop and to deepen their understanding of the long-term benefits of learning Chinese.



During the staff workshop held that morning, Prof Patrice Mwepu delivered a lecture on the theme 'How Chinese Studies are Embedded in the Academic Project of Rhodes University'. Drawing on the practical experience of Rhodes University in Chinese Language Education and China Studies, he provided a systematic overview of the university's achievements in incorporating Chinese courses into its credit-bearing curriculum, developing Chinese Studies programmes, and cultivating young talents who demonstrate strong interest in China and its language and culture. Since establishing the Confucius Institute at Rhodes University in cooperation with Jinan University in 2007, Rhodes University has continuously promoted the deep integration of Chinese language education and academic research. Courses such as Chinese and Understanding China have been incorporated into the university's formal credit system and, together with disciplines such as African Languages, French, and German, have become an important component of the institution's language and cultural education framework. At present, the university has established a comprehensive Chinese Studies training system covering undergraduate, honours, and master's degree

levels. Over the years, it has produced many graduates with international perspectives and strong intercultural communication skills. Many students have participated in study and exchange programs in China through platforms such as the Chinese Bridge Competition and have achieved outstanding results.

Prof Patrice Mwepu noted that a well-developed curriculum system, formal credit recognition mechanisms, and sustained institutional support are essential safeguards for the high-quality development of Chinese Language Education. He suggested that universities strengthen the exchange of experience and the sharing of resources, jointly explore effective approaches to promoting the coordinated development of Chinese Language Education and academic disciplines, and work together to build a sustainable ecosystem for Chinese Language Education. Such efforts, he said, would contribute to China-Africa cooperation and the cultivation of young talent with global vision and intercultural competence.

The student workshop, held that afternoon, focused on the theme Promoting Intercultural Competences through Learning Chinese. Drawing on his extensive experience in Chinese language education, Prof Patrice Mwepu introduced students to the positive impact that learning Chinese can have on personal growth and career development. He also shared a few success stories of students from Rhodes University who had studied Chinese, participated in international exchange programmes, and pursued further studies in China. He encouraged students to make the most of the opportunities available to them, remain committed, and actively participate in international exchange programs. By gaining a deeper understanding of China, he said, students can broaden their horizons, enhance their abilities, and develop into globally competitive young professionals.





During the interactive sessions, faculty members and students actively raised questions on topics such as Chinese language learning, studying in China, career development, and intercultural communication. They engaged in in-depth

discussions with the guest speaker, creating a lively atmosphere. Following the discussion, Prof Eric Maluta, Co-Director of GTCI, delivered a vote of thanks. He expressed his sincere appreciation to Prof Patrice Mwepu for sharing valuable experience and insights that would contribute to GTCI's academic development and talent cultivation. He also thanked FHSSE, IRP and other UNIVEN units for their strong support of GTCI's work.



The workshops provided a new platform for deepening exchanges and cooperation between GTCI and the Confucius Institute at Rhodes University. It also offered valuable insights and useful references for UNIVEN as it advances the development of Chinese language education and China studies as academic disciplines. Looking ahead, GTCI will continue to leverage its role as a platform for educational and cultural exchange, strengthen cooperation with universities and educational institutions across South Africa, and promote the high-quality development of Chinese Language Education





DSTI-NRF Chair in Climate Change and the Rule of Law (CCRL), University of Venda in collaboration with the Environmental Law Association of South Africa (ELA) Presents **Conference On:**

CLIMATE LAW AND POPULISM IN AFRICA

Date:
25th – 26th June 2026

Venue:
Student Parliament

Time:
08:30am – 5:00pm

Join Online: <https://bit.ly/44sJizP>