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UL partnership empowers Mankweng's top learners with smart devices

Department of Nursing Sciences brings maternal health and nutrition education to Dimamo villages



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UL leads higher education transformation agenda across all 26 South African public universities

Since 2018, more than R500 million has been invested in nearly 100 projects, as a national colloquium charts the future of collaboration and capacity development in higher education

By Johannes Selepe – Mosela.selepe@ul.ac.za

The University of Limpopo (UL) has been entrusted with a critical national responsibility as a leading driver of transformation within South Africa's higher education sector



Photos
Malatji Monyelegwete

Higher education thought leaders and policymakers convene to discuss collaboration and capacity development across the sector.

In this role, UL offers strategic project implementation support to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the University Capacity Development Programme and its Grant (UCDP/G), particularly under the University-led Collaborative Projects Sub-programme established in 2018. This function is located within the Development Grants Management (DGM) directorate of the Vice

Chancellor's Office at UL and is led by Shiba Diketane, the Director of DGM. Since its inception, the programme has enabled the implementation of approximately 100 collaborative projects across all 26 public universities, with a combined value exceeding R500 million. Of these, more than 70 projects fall directly under the University-led Collaborative Projects Sub-programme. Importantly, this

initiative has ensured that nearly every public university in South Africa has had the opportunity to lead a collaborative project, strengthening sector-wide capacity and cooperation.

This commitment was reaffirmed during the 1st National Colloquium on the University-led Collaborative Projects Sub-programme, organised by the Department of Higher

Education and Training (DHET) in partnership with UL.

The two-day colloquium gathered sector leaders, academics, policymakers and development partners, providing a platform to reflect on a decade of investment in institutional capacity, leadership development, and system-wide transformation.

Central to the discussions was the importance of collaboration in overcoming systemic challenges in higher education, including governance, leadership, student success and research capacity.

One of the flagship initiatives is the Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM) programme, which involves participation from all 26 universities. Since its inception, HELM has:

- Trained 1,661 academic leaders and university managers
- Supported 273 Deans and Deputy Deans
- Engaged three university executive teams
- Developed 190 women leaders
- Capacitated 145 Student Affairs and Student Success professionals



Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele, UL Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

Giving opening remarks during the dialogue, Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele, UL Vice-Chancellor and Principal described the university as a strategic enabler of national development through knowledge production and partnerships.

"This colloquium provides an opportunity for the sector to reflect on progress and chart a constructive path forward for strengthening universities. We are proud, as the University of Limpopo, to serve as an implementation partner in advancing collaboration, building institutional capacity and driving meaningful transformation across the higher education sector," he stated.

Introduced in 2018, UCDP has emerged as one of the most significant interventions in the sector, enabling universities to collaborate on high-impact projects.

The colloquium also highlighted initiatives such as academic advising and student success programmes, data analytics, first-year experience and students in transition, a range of staff capacity development projects, articulation and many other projects which have improved retention strategies and institutional performance.



Phillip Tshabalala, Chief Director for Teaching, Learning and Research Development in Universities of the University Branch at DHET.

Phillip Tshabalala, Chief Director for Teaching, Learning and Research Development in Universities in the Department, emphasised the strategic significance of collaboration for higher education transformation.

"The university-led collaborative projects demonstrate the power of partnerships in addressing systemic challenges and enhancing



Mandisa Cakwe, Director: University Capacity Development in the University Education Branch at DHET.

institutional performance," he remarked. Mandisa Cakwe, Director: University Capacity Development at DHET, echoed the words of Tshabala, adding that, "These collaborative projects have created vital platforms for institutions to learn from one another, strengthen capacity, and advance transformation within the higher education system."

While significant progress has been made, participants stressed the need for improved coordination, scalability and sustainability.

A key outcome was the proposal to establish a Community of Practice (CoP) to institutionalise collaboration and enhance knowledge-sharing across institutions.

The colloquium also highlighted the importance of evidence-based decision-making, encouraging institutions to align projects with national priorities and ensure measurable impact.

"These collaborative projects have created important platforms for institutions to learn from one another, strengthen capacity and advance transformation within the higher education system."

Collaborating with 50 educators to shape future career pathways in Limpopo communities

Career Development Workshop equips Life Orientation teachers with tools to guide learners in making informed career choices

By Nyeleti Nyathi –ulpublication@ul.ac.za



Photos
Mohau Seleka

Teachers align on expectations, challenges and solutions on improving career guidance.

Choosing a career path is a life-changing decision for any individual. In this context, the University of Limpopo hosted a Career Development Workshop for Life Orientation (LO) educators in the Dimamo, Mamabolo, Mogodumo and Mankweng Circuits to assist them to guide learners in making informed career choices

Organised by UL's Rural Development and Innovation Hub (RDIH) and funded by BANKSETA, the workshop brought together 50 educators from various schools who are charged with the Life Orientation subject. It provided a collaborative platform for participants to reflect on their practices and explore ways to strengthen career guidance in schools.

The workshop provided a platform for educators to share experiences, identify challenges and propose practical solutions in recognition of the life-changing nature of deciding on a career in the lives of pupils. Participants were divided into groups to explore expectations, challenges and strategies for strengthening learner support.

Educators expressed a strong desire to improve their knowledge and skills in career guidance, particularly in assisting learners to make informed decisions, develop critical thinking and access relevant career information. They also emphasised the need to expose learners to diverse career opportunities beyond traditional professions.

Commenting on the initiative, Kgokologa Makgato, Principal of Radikgomo Secondary School based at Ga-Mothiba' Ngwanamago in the Mogodumo Circuit, emphasised that strengthening educators' knowledge of career guidance is essential to help learners choose careers aligned with their abilities, interests and personalities.

"Learners often face peer, parental and teacher pressure, as well as limited exposure to career options. Educators must therefore be equipped with up-to-date information to support learners in a rapidly changing job market, where some careers are becoming less relevant."

"Proper guidance enables the learners to explore a wider range of careers and make informed choices about their future," added Prof Mokgata Matjie, an Industrial and Organisational Psychologist in UL's Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management and Law.

Key challenges identified included limited time allocated to Life Orientation, insufficient specialised training in career counselling, and the need for stronger institutional support. Educators proposed solutions such as increasing time for LO, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, and expanding inclusive career exhibitions that cater to diverse learner interests.

Idah Maboja, Mogodumo Circuit Manager, emphasised the evolving nature of the workforce and the crucial role educators play in shaping learners' futures.

"The world of work is constantly evolving, and the skills required today may not be the same in the future. As educators, we have a responsibility to identify and nurture learners' potential and guide them toward suitable career paths," she said.

Boitumelo Makgotlo from BANKSETA highlighted opportunities available to learners through bursaries, learnerships and internships. "I encouraged educators to actively support learners in accessing information about various SETA programmes across multiple sectors."

"Proper guidance enables the learners to explore a wider range of careers and make informed choices about their future."

UL Digital Hub showcases student innovation, industry collaboration at SA Innovation Week 2026

Student-driven innovation takes centre stage as UL leverages partnerships to deliver scalable solutions

By Abba Armooh - abba.armooh@ul.ac.za

The University of Limpopo (UL) Digital Hub, a key player in a broader innovation consortium, attended the 2026 South African Innovation Week at the NASREC Expo Centre in Johannesburg



Photos
Tlou Manaka

Dr Happy Bango, Operational Officer at LATS, showcasing agro-food products developed and tested at the station.

As part of ongoing efforts to foster collaborative development across Limpopo and beyond, UL identifies participation in programmes such as this to be a deliberate intent to contribute to broader solutions for African needs. The exhibition provided a platform for UL to connect student innovators, researchers and industry partners, ensuring that innovative ideas are transformed into practical and scalable solutions that respond to real-world challenges.

A key highlight was the work of young innovator Frans Chokoe, a second-year Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Mathematical Sciences student and software developer. Chokoe developed the Student Navigation System, designed to enhance how students navigate campus spaces and access services. Since its launch, the system has attracted over 3,000 users, with an average of 62 active users daily, reflecting its growing relevance and impact within the university community.

"The Student Navigation System was developed to simplify access to campus services and improve the overall student experience. Seeing it gain traction among users affirms the importance of developing solutions that respond directly to students' needs," said Chokoe.

UL participated in the Expo alongside key consortium partners, including mLab, Abiri Innovations, Sekhukhune CFERI, AlgoAtWork, LEDA, Mokopane Centre and Limpopo Connexion, further strengthening its collaborative approach to innovation. Digital Hub Manager, Thabo Lebelo emphasised the importance of partnerships in driving sustainable innovation.

"Our participation, and that of our partners in this Expo reflects the strength of collaboration in driving meaningful innovation. We appreciate the continued support and partnership of organisations such as

mLab, Abiri Innovations, Sekhukhune CFERI, AlgoAtWork, LEDA, Mokopane Centre and Limpopo Connexion. It is through these collective efforts that we can create opportunities for our students, strengthen our innovation ecosystem, and deliver solutions that have real impact within our communities."

Complementing digital innovation, the university's Limpopo Agrofood Technology Station (LATS) showcased applied scientific solutions under the leadership of Dr Happy Bango, Operational Officer at the station. The exhibition featured agro-processed products developed at the station, alongside those tested for microbial and chemical analysis, highlighting both innovation and quality assurance.

"It is through these collective efforts that we can create opportunities for our students, strengthen our innovation ecosystem, and deliver solutions that have real impact within our communities."



The University of Limpopo Digital Hub, alongside consortium partners (mLab, Abiri Innovations, Sekhukhune CFERI, AlgoAtWork, LEDA, Mokopane Centre and Limpopo Connexion), at South African Innovation Week 2026.



The University of Limpopo Digital Hub, alongside consortium partners (mLab, Abiri Innovations, Sekhukhune CFERI, AlgoAtWork, LEDA, Mokopane Centre and Limpopo Connexion), at South African Innovation Week 2026.

Deputy Minister Pinky Kekana calls for ethical, capable state at UL public lecture

Hon Kekana touts deliberate engagement to bridge the gap between government and academia, strengthening public service delivery and leadership

By Lesego Maaba - ulpublications@ul.ac.za



Photos
Frans Nkhapele

Hon Pinky Kekana, Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration, delivering a keynote address on building an ethical and capable public service at the University of Limpopo.

The University of Limpopo (UL) recently hosted Hon Pinky Kekana, Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration, to deliver a public lecture aimed at strengthening engagement between government leaders and communities, while emphasising the need to build a capable, ethical and developmental state

Organised by UL's School of Economics and Management (SEM) through the Department of Public Administration, the engagement created a platform for students, academics and practitioners to engage directly with government leadership on the future of public administration.

Delivering the keynote address, Hon Kekana emphasised that the professionalisation of the public service must extend beyond policy and be reflected in the daily conduct of public servants. She highlighted the urgent need to strengthen ethical leadership, accountability and responsiveness to improve service delivery and restore public trust.

"A capable state is built on ethical leadership, accountability and a commitment to serving our people with integrity," said Kekana.

She further noted that a developmental state relies on public servants who demonstrate integrity, professionalism and responsiveness to community needs, particularly in addressing socio-economic challenges. Hon Kekana also called for continuous skills development and innovation within the public sector, urging institutions of higher learning such as UL to play a central role in producing graduates who are not only academically competent, but also ethically grounded and socially conscious.

The lecture formed part of SEM's broader commitment to contributing to national priorities, particularly the development of a competent and citizen-centred public sector.

Hon Kekana emphasised the importance of collaboration between government and academia, noting that universities play a critical role in shaping future public servants through teaching, research and innovation. She encouraged students and scholars to actively contribute to building systems that are ethical, efficient and responsive to citizens' needs.

The event also provided an opportunity for UL's Department of Public Administration to showcase its academic and research capacity, reinforcing its role in advancing the discourse around the professionalisation of the public sector. Through its programmes which involve engagements with practitioners and leaders in the public service sector, the department continues to equip students with the skills required to navigate a changing public service landscape.



Advice Ramushi, a Master's student in Public Administration at UL, tabling his inputs and questions during the question-and-answer session.

Students actively engaged in the lecture, with some posing critical questions during the interactive session. Advice Ramushi, a Master's student in Public Administration, raised questions on internship and bursary opportunities for young people in Limpopo, reflecting strong interest in career pathways within the public sector.

Prof Samuel Koma, Director of the School of Economics and Management, noted that the lecture aimed to bridge the gap between theory and practice while exposing students to real-world opportunities.

"The Department anticipates that this engagement will have a lasting impact on participating students, having equipped them with the knowledge and confidence to navigate the world of work, while also strengthening their understanding of public service," he said.

"A capable state is built on ethical leadership, accountability and a commitment to serving our people with integrity."

UL partnership empowers Mankweng's top learners with smart devices

Fourteen high-achieving learners receive smartphones to bridge the digital divide and strengthen STEM education in the Mankweng Circuit

By Reuben Maake - reuben.maake@ul.ac.za

Recognising and encouraging academic excellence, the University of Limpopo (UL), in partnership with the One-on-One Community Based Programme, has donated smartphones to fourteen top-performing high school learners in the Mankweng Circuit



Photos
Reuben Maake

University of Limpopo staff members from UL Junior Programme celebrate with fourteen top-performing learners from the Mankweng Circuit, who received smartphones to support and enhance their learning.

The initiative forms part of ongoing efforts to bridge the digital divide and support learners in their academic journeys.

The handover, led by UL's School of Education in collaboration with UL Junior, took place during the Mankweng Annual Excellence Awards Ceremony. The initiative, established in 2024, is grounded in a broader STEM-focused support strategy aimed at strengthening academic outcomes across the circuit.

Speaking at the event, Chairperson of the One-on-One Community Based Programme, Doc Sethole, emphasised the importance of introducing digital literacy at an early stage. "Learner exposure to the tenets of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) through Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools encourages digital literacy and independent web-based research capabilities," he said.

Since its inception, the programme has delivered tangible results. Computer laboratories have been established at four secondary schools including Ramashobhle, Mountain View, Hwiti and Frans Mohlala, with two additional laboratories set to be launched by the end of March 2026. Last year, two secondary science schools received fully equipped science laboratories, with two more installations planned for later this year.

Sethole noted that the provision of smartphones serves both as a reward and a motivation. "These learners have been given tools to enhance their studies, while also inspiring others to recognise that hard work yields results," he said.

He added that the partnership with UL is significant as it enhances potential take-ups of future university students. By investing in STEM education at school level, the programme aims to ensure that learners are better prepared for tertiary studies.

For many of the recipients, the gesture marks a turning point. Raesetja Masekwameng from Marobathota High School expressed her appreciation, saying: "In the era of proliferated digitisation and artificial intelligence, learners from disadvantaged backgrounds need this kind of support as it levels the playing field with their counterparts from the city." She plans to use the device for research and completing assignments from home.

Phokungoana Mashile, a top learner from Ramashobhle High School, said she was surprised by the award. "I did not expect to receive a device that will make such a meaningful difference in my studies," she said.

At UL, Dr Baetsane Tau, project leader of UL Junior, highlighted that the outreach programme was established in response to a critical gap in science education. Many schools lacked laboratory facilities, limiting learners' ability to conduct practical work and affecting their academic progress.

"We have since identified additional schools for the installation of science laboratories to further improve learning outcomes," said Dr Tau.

"In the era of proliferated digitisation and artificial intelligence, learners from disadvantaged backgrounds need this kind of support as it levels the playing field with their counterparts from the city."

Championing water justice, sustainable futures at National Water Month Dialogue

University of Limpopo convenes experts and youth to tackle water inequality and drive sustainable solutions

By Nyeleti Nyathi – ulpublications@ul.ac.za



Photos
Mohau Seleka

Centre: Petunia Ramunenyiwa, Chief Director for Intergovernmental Relations, Sector Transformation and Provincial Governance at the National Department of Water and Sanitation, leads a National Water Month dialogue at the University of Limpopo, focusing on addressing water inequality and advancing sustainable solutions.

As they say, *water is life and sanitation is dignity.* In marking 2026 National Water Month, the University of Limpopo (UL) positioned itself at the centre of critical conversations on water security, social justice, and sustainable development by convening leading voices from government, academia, and industry

Hosted by UL's Department of Water and Sanitation in collaboration with the Department of Water and Sanitation and sector partners, the dialogue was held under the theme, "Where water flows, equality grows." The gathering created a meaningful platform for engagement, reflection, and action on the role of water in advancing equitable and sustainable communities.

Delivering the keynote address, Petunia Ramunenyiwa, Chief Director of Intergovernmental Relations, Sector Transformation and Provincial Governance at the National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), provided a sobering overview of the province's water and sanitation landscape. She outlined persistent challenges, including constrained water resources, ageing infrastructure, and recurring supply disruptions, compounded by the escalating impact of climate change.

She called on institutions such as UL to play a more proactive role in shaping solutions. This, she noted, requires strengthened collaboration, forward planning, and a shared commitment to ensuring sustainable water access for all.

Nomandla Nxusa, an nGAP lecturer in UL's Department of Water and Sanitation and the driving force behind the initiative, emphasised that the future of the sector must be inclusive and youth-driven.

"Such initiatives create platforms for students and young professionals to connect and share knowledge. Together with the South African Water and Sanitation Youth Network (SAWSYN) Limpopo Chapter, young professionals continue to drive meaningful conversations on water challenges, sustainability, and career development," she said.

The programme featured a panel discussion examining the intersection between water access and gender equality. Conversations highlighted how inadequate access disproportionately affects women and girls, particularly in rural communities, where daily water collection continues to limit educational attainment and economic participation.

Panellists underscored that while policy frameworks are in place, the real challenge lies in implementation and accountability.

"The challenge is not the absence of policy, but the failure to turn it into lived reality. Real change begins when accountability meets action," Ramunenyiwa said.

The event also brought together a range of young professionals, sector stakeholders and thoughtful leaders. Kabelo Malele from the Professional Provident Society (PPS) Foundation shared insights into bursary opportunities, graduate internships, and support mechanisms for young professionals entering the field.

Fanisa Baloyi a UL alumna from ScieThrive Impact highlighted the importance of youth-led innovation, demonstrating how young people are driving impactful solutions within the sector. Thakgatso Manamela, a Water Institute of Southern Africa - Young Water Professional Limpopo Chapter Lead, emphasised the value of voluntary professional registration in strengthening career development and maintaining industry standards.

Reflecting on grassroots innovation, Mmoti Mabotja, an educator from Klass Mothapo High School in Mankweng, stressed the need for accessible and affordable water purification technologies. She pointed to emerging plant-based

filtration methods as promising, environmentally friendly alternatives, despite current limitations in durability and efficiency.

Adding a student voice, Jaycobeth Galane, a Master of Science candidate in Water and Sanitation at UL, highlighted the importance of youth participation in shaping the sector's future.

"As students, we are not just learning about these challenges; we are part of the generation expected to solve them. Platforms like this empower us to think critically and develop solutions that are practical, inclusive, and sustainable."

"Invest in understanding yourself and the sector now, so you can lead with purpose later," encouraged Zama Mkhwananzi from the South African Water and Sanitation Youth Network (SAWSYN) Limpopo Chapter.

"The challenge is not the absence of policy, but the failure to turn it into lived reality. Real change begins when accountability meets action."

Department of Nursing Sciences brings maternal health and nutrition education to Dimamo villages

Workshop in Dikgale, Mothiba and Mamabolo shows how UL research is reshaping nutrition, health and livelihoods in Limpopo communities

By Caroline Khosa – ulpublications@ul.ac.za



Photos
Frans Nkhapele

Prof Livhuwani Muthelo, Associate Professor in the Department of Nursing Sciences at UL, engaging the Dimamo community on maternal health and nutrition education.

The villages of Dikgale, Mothiba and Mamabolo recently benefited from maternal health and nutrition education through a stakeholder engagement workshop hosted by the University of Limpopo at the Dikgale Royal Council House

The engagement demonstrated how UL's research agenda is increasingly rooted in the lived realities of surrounding communities. Held under the theme "Personalised Health: Maternal Nutritional Education for Equitable Nutritional Access and Improved Maternal and Offspring Health Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa", the workshop forms part of the AMEN Project — an initiative aimed at improving maternal and child health through digital nutrition education, community participation and locally grounded solutions.

Led by Prof Livhuwani Muthelo an Associate Professor: Department of Nursing Sciences at UL, in collaboration with Prof Catherine Phillips from University College Dublin, the project seeks to bridge the gap between scientific research and community practice. At its core is a simple yet urgent objective: to ensure that expectant mothers have access to relevant, affordable and culturally appropriate nutritional information.

"This project is about co-creating sustainable solutions with communities to improve maternal and child health outcomes," said Prof Muthelo.

The workshop unfolded as both a knowledge exchange and a listening exercise. Academics, health professionals, farmers and community members shared insights on how nutrition, culture and access intersect in rural settings.

Prof Paulina Bopape-Mabapa an Associate Professor and Head of Department for Plant Production, Soil Sciences, and Agricultural Engineering at UL highlighted the value of indigenous crops as a critical yet underutilised resource in improving food security. "In a province where climate variability and economic pressures shape diets, these crops offer resilience and

nutritional value," she said.

Local farmers added a practical dimension, grounding the discussion in the realities of food production at household level. Their contributions underscored a broader truth: that sustainable health outcomes begin not in clinics, but in fields, kitchens and community knowledge systems.

Dr Happy Bango Operational Officer at UL's Limpopo Agrofood Technology Station extended the conversation into clinical territory, outlining the importance of balanced diets during pregnancy, including what to include and what to avoid, and linking nutrition directly to maternal and foetal development.

Research presented by Dr Coshiwe Makunyane, a Postdoctoral Fellow under the AMEN project in the Department of Nursing Science, revealed significant gaps in maternal nutrition knowledge across the Dimamo area, particularly in relation to balanced diets, food preparation and food sourcing.

"It gives me great pleasure to be part of this project and to know that we are making a difference in the Dimamo community. Our work goes beyond research; it is about empowering women with practical knowledge that can improve their health and that of their children," she said.

Many women indicated a preference for accessing information through mobile platforms — a finding that has informed the development of the AMEN Digital App. The app aims to deliver accessible, user-friendly guidance tailored to local contexts, while discouraging harmful practices and promoting sustainable food habits.

Mohale Makgobane, UL's Digital Hub Administrator, positioned the work of the Hub within a broader ecosystem of empowerment. "By supporting

entrepreneurship and helping communities translate needs into viable business opportunities, the Hub extends its impact beyond health into economic participation."

What emerged from the workshop was not a one-directional transfer of knowledge, but a dialogue. During the Q&A session, community members actively engaged, offering insights and recommendations that will shape the next phase of the project.



Prof Mabitsela Mphasha, Associate Professor of Public Health at UL, together with Prof Livhuwani Muthelo, Associate Professor in the Department of Nursing Sciences at UL, shared insights on how best to support and improve the wellbeing of communities in Dimamo.

"This project is about co-creating sustainable solutions with communities to improve maternal and child health outcomes."

Women's rugby team clinches silver in Top 8 Rugby Super Tournament

Resilient Limpopo side secures runners-up finish and R12 500 prize after a commanding run to the 2026 final

By Frans Nkhapele – ulpublications@ul.ac.za

"As a team, we take great pride in what we have achieved so far. We are committed to building on this success and delivering even greater accomplishments for UL."



Photos
Frans Nkhapele

The UL Rugby team delivered an impressive performance in the Top 8 Rugby Super Tournament, securing silver in Rustenburg. The tournament, sponsored by Sibanye-Stillwater, saw UL compete strongly against top teams.

Following an impressive second-place finish in the Sibanye-Stillwater Super League Women's Division 2025/26, the University of Limpopo (UL) women's rugby team capped an exceptional season by, again, securing second place in the Top 8 Rugby Super Tournament final, played in Rustenburg at the end of March 2026

The Sibanye-Stillwater-sponsored Top 8 Rugby Super Tournament aims to boost rugby development across provinces by assembling top-performing teams on merit. This year's competition featured eight teams, including Kempton Park Wolves, Correctional Atteridgeville, Mamelodi Stanzas, Tshwane University of Technology, UL, Sibanye-Stillwater Nellmapius Rugby Team, Harlequins Pink FC, and SMU Buffalos.

During the tournament, held over three weekends in March 2026, the Limpopo side faced a formidable Harlequins Pink FC outfit in a fiercely contested Grand Finale. Despite a spirited display, UL finished as runners-up, pocketing R12 500 and concluding a campaign defined by resilience, unity and high-level performance.

Their path to the final was shaped by two pivotal victories. On 1 March 2026, the team overcame Tshwane University of Technology 12-7 in a quarter-final clash in Nylstroom, highlighting strong defence and tactical awareness.

The run continued on 7 March 2026 in Pretoria, where UL secured a commanding 22-12 victory over the Sibanye-Stillwater Nellmapius Rugby Team, booking their place in the final and cementing their status as one of the tournament's leading sides.

UL's achievement comes at a pivotal time for women's rugby. The Blue Bulls Rugby Union has introduced the Sibanye-Stillwater Super League 2026, a premier amateur competition comprising more than 72 teams, expanding pathways for emerging talent across South Africa.

The intensity of the final reflected the league's growing competitiveness and the rising standard of women's rugby nationwide.

One of the standout contributors was Itumeleng Faith Mkhari, whose consistent performances were instrumental in guiding the team to the final.

"I began playing rugby at DZJ Mtebule High School when I was 14. My dream has always been to encourage more girls to play rugby and to show them that they have what it takes to excel in the sport," she said.

Mkhari, from Nkowankowa township in Tzaneen and currently pursuing a Postgraduate Certificate in

Education, expressed pride in the team's achievements.

"As a team, we take great pride in what we have achieved so far. We are committed to building on this success and delivering even greater accomplishments for UL," she added. Head coach Artwell Makhubele commended the team's dedication throughout the competition.

"The players displayed remarkable resolve and discipline. Reaching the final is a testament to their relentless effort and belief in one another. This achievement is significant for both UL and the province," he said.



Coach Artwell Makhubele delivers an impassioned half-time talk during Top 8 Rugby Super Tournament final, urging the University of Limpopo players to intensify their efforts and execute their strategy with precision.



Itumeleng Mkhari breaks through the defensive line with relentless determination during a Sibanye-Stillwater Top 8 Rugby Super Tournament clash, driving the University of Limpopo forward in a fiercely contested, high-intensity encounter.



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