



INSIDE UL

newsLetter



How Limpopo's only medical school produced 255 doctors, building a new generation of rural healthcare leaders

IN THIS ISSUE

New research chair takes aim at environmental, socio-economic challenges

PAGE 06

Students return from Spain with new perspectives on learning, research

PAGE 10

Livestock genetics, reproduction workshop takes science from the laboratory to the farm

PAGE 12

Resonance between Mathematics teaching, real-life examples key to improve learning, says Indonesian scholar

PAGE 14

University of Limpopo marks Mandela Day through service in various communities

PAGE 18



Finding solutions for Africa

 www.ul.ac.za

MANAGING EDITOR
Peter Tlouane

EDITOR
Johannes Selepe

JOURNALISTS & PHOTOGRAPHERS
Reuben Maake
Malatji Monyelegwete
Lebogang Mathaba

CADET PHOTOGRAPHERS
Frans Nkhapele
Forgive Hlungwani
Mohau Seleka

CADET JOURNALISTS
Hunadi Motlhala
Rinae Manenzhe
Lesego Maaba
Phishego Mohubedu
David Mmatli
Thabiseng Ngoben

REPROGRAPHICS MANAGER
Thabo Madisha

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
Macdonald Motlane
Khwela Siziwe

PRINTING AND PACKAGINGS
Paulina Rapheso
Diphete Banyatsang
Benevolent Mapholo
Fortunate Chiloane
Pumia Ubisi

Copyright© University of Limpopo

All material published in this document remains the property of the University of Limpopo and shall not be reprinted without written consent and approval by the Marketing and Communication Department.

Contact Details:

Tel: 015 268 3210 / 2121
Fax: 015 267 0485
Email: ulPublications@ul.ac.za
Website: www.ul.ac.za



University of Limpopo @ULVarsity

www.ul.ac.za

#ChooseUL



@ULVarsity

#ChooseUL



10 YEARS
OF IMPACT

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



FOR 10 YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN EXPANDING ACCESS TO MEDICAL EDUCATION AND STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Established:
2016

First MBChB intake:
60 STUDENTS
(In 2016, selected from more than 1,000 applicants)

CURRENT ANNUAL MBChB INTAKE:
80 STUDENTS

MEDICAL DOCTORS GRADUATED THUS FAR: **255**

FIRST GRADUATING CLASS: 2022
(**47 DOCTORS**)

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS: **23**

DEPARTMENTS ACCREDITED FOR SPECIALIST TRAINING: **21**



CLINICAL TRAINING PLATFORM:
Public hospitals and healthcare facilities across Limpopo

Addressing South Africa's shortage of healthcare professionals.

Improving healthcare in rural communities across Limpopo.

Patients receive advanced care closer to home, helping to save lives.

Strong partnerships with government, healthcare institutions and communities.



Finding solutions for Africa



www.ul.ac.za

How Limpopo's only medical school produced 255 doctors building a new generation of rural healthcare leaders

Ten years after admitting its first students, the University of Limpopo's School of Medicine is transforming healthcare by producing doctors, specialists and researchers committed to serving rural and underserved communities

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



The University of Limpopo's School of Medicine continues to benefit from the Limpopo Provincial Government's support through the Department of Health in training medical doctors for the province and beyond.

A decade after opening its doors, the University of Limpopo's School of Medicine has emerged as one of South Africa's most significant investments in strengthening healthcare in rural communities

Established in 2016, the School has already produced 255 medical doctors, many of whom are now serving in public hospitals and clinics across Limpopo and other provinces, helping to reduce the longstanding shortage of healthcare professionals. The journey began with the admission of its inaugural cohort of 60 Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) students, selected from more than 1,000 applicants.

Since then, the programme has continued to grow, with the annual intake increasing to 80 first-year students in 2025, further expanding the pipeline of locally trained doctors. The school occupies a unique place in South Africa's higher education landscape. It is not only Limpopo's only medical school, but also the first medical school established in democratic South Africa, creating new opportunities for talented young people, particularly those from rural and underserved communities, to pursue careers in medicine.

The school celebrated its first graduating class in 2022, when 47 newly qualified doctors completed their medical training. At the university's 2026 Autumn Graduation Ceremony, a further 56 doctors graduated, bringing the total number of UL-trained medical practitioners to 255 in just ten years.



Director of the School of Medicine, Professor Shisana Baloyi, says the School was established to increase access to medical education and address South Africa's shortage of doctors.

According to the Director of the School of Medicine, Professor Shisana Baloyi, the school was founded to improve access to quality medical education while addressing South Africa's critical shortage of healthcare professionals.

"Our mission has always been to train competent, ethical and compassionate doctors who understand the healthcare challenges facing South Africa, particularly those experienced by rural and underserved communities," said Professor Baloyi.

While undergraduate medical education remains its cornerstone, the school has rapidly developed into an important centre for postgraduate training, specialist education and health research.

To date, the school has produced more than 25 medical specialists, approximately 70 master's graduates in Public Health, 70 PhD graduates, and three MSc graduates specialising in Public Health, contributing significantly to the country's growing academic and healthcare workforce.

Professor Baloyi believes that the school's greatest achievement is measured not simply by the number of graduates, but by the impact they have on patients and communities. "It is easy to focus on the numbers, but our greatest achievement is producing healthcare professionals who are making a tangible difference in people's lives every day."

He noted that patients who previously had to travel to tertiary hospitals outside the province for specialised care can now receive advanced treatment much closer to home.

"Patients who previously had to be referred to tertiary hospitals in Gauteng are now treated here in Limpopo by our own specialists."

The school has also made remarkable progress in specialist training. Of its 23 academic departments, 21 are accredited by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) to train medical specialists, positioning UL among South Africa's leading centres for specialist medical education.

One of the most visible demonstrations of this growing clinical expertise was the successful separation of conjoined twins at Mankweng Hospital in 2026, a landmark procedure that highlighted the advanced surgical capabilities now available within the province.

"That is the benefit of having a medical school in Limpopo. Our specialists are providing advanced care that was previously unavailable in the province."

Through strong partnerships with the Limpopo Department of Health, public hospitals and healthcare facilities across the province, the school has established an extensive clinical training platform that enables students to gain practical experience while strengthening service delivery in the public health sector.

Professor Baloyi attributes the school's success to sustained collaboration between government, healthcare institutions, academic staff and clinical partners who share a common commitment to improving healthcare outcomes.

"Our specialists are providing advanced care that was previously unavailable in the province."

New research chair takes aim at environmental, socio-economic challenges

Professor Thanyani Madzivhandila is set to lead research focused on community livelihoods, student development and sustainable responses to challenges facing Limpopo and beyond

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



Photos
Frans Matlala

Professor Thanyani Madzivhandila says the newly awarded DSTI/NRF-SASOL Foundation Research Chair in Development Studies will focus on the impact of environmental change on rural livelihoods and develop responses to poverty, unemployment and other development challenges.

Communities facing poverty, unemployment and environmental pressures can look forward to benefitting from a new research chair awarded to the University of Limpopo (UL), focusing on environmental and socio-economic sustainability

Professor Thanyani Madzivhandila, attached to the university's Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership (TGSL), has been awarded the DSTI/NRF-SASOL Foundation Research Chair in Development Studies, with a focus on Environmental and Socio-economic Sustainability.

Prof Madzivhandila is a full professor in the Master of Development programme (MDEV) at TGSL and Chairperson of the Scientific Committee of the Limpopo Research Forum (LRF).

The chair will examine how environmental changes affect people's livelihoods, particularly in rural areas, and explore ways of responding to poverty, unemployment and other development challenges.

Prof Madzivhandila said the chair would integrate research and community knowledge to find solutions to problems experienced by ordinary people.

"We will be looking at environmental issues and at how those issues affect the socio-economic conditions of communities. The intention is to conduct research that speaks directly to the challenges communities are facing," he said.

The research chair will work with communities, government and other partners to ensure that research findings contribute to development planning and decision-making. Collaboration will also form an important part of its work, with partnerships expected to extend beyond South Africa.

According to Prof Madzivhandila, whilst the chair was primarily established by DSTI/NRF in collaboration with SASOL to evaluate SASOL foundations development interventions into its fens line communities, it will strengthen the university's research profile and its work in development studies, while supporting research that responds to challenges facing communities in Limpopo and beyond.

It is also anticipated that students, particularly at postgraduate level, will benefit from research training and opportunities to participate in community-based projects. They will also receive guidance from researchers and partners working in environmental and sustainable socio-economic development.

"For students, this creates an opportunity to participate in research and gain experience in dealing with real development issues. We want to develop young researchers who understand the challenges facing communities and can contribute to finding solutions," said Prof Madzivhandila.

When asked about the development, UL Director of Research Administration and Development Dr Theminkosi Mabila, who spearheaded the Research Chair application, said:

"We are excited about this new research chair. It reflects UL's growth from three Research Chairs in 2016 to 12 today and its development as a research-intensive institution.

The chair's focus on community livelihoods and socio-economic challenges aligns with the NRF's definition of societal impact — research that improves lives and addresses national development priorities through collaboration."

The chair has received Tier 2 funding for a five-year period, with an allocation of R2 million per annum.

"We will be looking at environmental issues and at how those issues affect the socio-economic conditions of communities. The intention is to conduct research that speaks directly to the challenges communities are facing."

Planning before disaster: UL colloquium calls for climate-smart development

Colloquium argues that better spatial planning is key to reducing disaster risk and building resilient communities across Sub-Saharan Africa

By Lebogang Mathaba – lebogang.mathaba@ul.ac.za



Photos
Lebogang Mathaba &
Temosho Shokane

Panelists discuss integrating spatial planning, rural development and climate disaster risk response.

Academics, government officials and development practitioners gathered at the University of Limpopo's (UL) Second Annual Colloquium to examine how spatial planning can help address the challenges facing Sub-Saharan Africa

Hosted by the Department of Development Planning and Management in the School of Economics and Management, and sponsored by Santam, the event focused on the links between spatial planning, socio-economic development and climate disaster risk management.

Held under the theme, "The Nexus Between Spatial Planning, Socio-Economic Development and Climate Disaster Risk Response in the Sub-Saharan Region", the colloquium drew academics, researchers, municipal officials, development

practitioners and policymakers to share research, debate policy and discuss practical approaches to strengthening disaster resilience and improving community planning.



Lebogang Mosotho, Disaster Management Officer at Capricorn District Municipality and President of the Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa, delivers the keynote address.

Delivering the keynote address, Lebogang Mosotho, Disaster Management Officer at Capricorn District Municipality, highlighted that the negative impact of climate change is often exacerbated by inadequate planning rather than natural hazards alone.

She warned that settlements established in floodplains, wetlands and other high-risk areas continue to expose communities to avoidable disasters.

"Spatial planning is far more than land-use management; it is a strategic development tool. Where planning fails, vulnerability increases, but where planning succeeds, developmental gains are protected," she stated.

Mosotho called for a deliberate integration of planning, disaster risk management and governance by decision-makers to address rapid urbanisation, informal settlements and escalating climate-related threats.



Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management and Law at UL, Professor Omphemetse Sibanda, congratulates the Department of Development Planning and Management on hosting the second Annual Colloquium.

Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management and Law at UL, Professor Omphemetse Sibanda, said the colloquium created an opportunity for scholars and practitioners to examine development challenges confronting South Africa and the broader Sub-Saharan region.

He said, "sustainable development depends on recognising the relationship between spatial planning, economic growth, environmental protection and disaster risk reduction."

Head of the Department of Development Planning and Management, Professor Ngoako Mokoale, said the discussions were intended to move beyond theory towards producing practical solutions to the country's development challenges.

He noted that many communities continue to experience the consequences of historical planning patterns, with settlements located in areas vulnerable to floods and other disasters.

"Disasters are not solely natural occurrences; they are often influenced by human actions and planning decisions. We hope this colloquium will generate evidence-based policy recommendations and quality research that can inform future planning," he remarked.

Dr Moses Khangale, Manager of Stakeholder Programmes at Santam, delivered a presentation titled "Building Resilience Through Partnership". He encouraged students to adopt a global perspective on disaster risk reduction by drawing lessons from the Sendai Framework.

He stated that ageing infrastructure, poor maintenance and weak project implementation continue to contribute to growing losses in the insurance sector. To address these challenges, he argued, requires partnerships between government, academia and the private sector to strengthen infrastructure, improve spatial planning and reduce disaster risks.

For students, the colloquium offered a vital opportunity to link classroom learning with real-world development challenges.

Martin Boshomane, an Honours student in Development Planning and Management at UL, said the discussions reinforced the importance of spatial planning in shaping sustainable communities.

"Development takes place on land, making spatial planning fundamental to sustainable development. I also learned that poor coordination between different levels of government often excludes rural communities from development processes. This colloquium created an important opportunity for dialogue that can contribute to more resilient communities."

The programme also featured research presentations from emerging scholars, including Bashio Mogotle, a final-year Law student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Mogotle presented a paper titled "Towards Safeguarding the Environment as a Constitutional Mandate: A Critical Analysis of Practical Environmental Governance in South Africa".

In the paper, he argued that protecting the environment should be viewed not only as good policy but as a constitutional responsibility.

"Environmental resilience is not only a policy issue but also a constitutional mandate. Strengthening environmental governance is essential to protecting communities and ensuring sustainable development for future generations."

"Where planning fails, vulnerability increases, but where planning succeeds, developmental gains are protected."

Students return from Spain with new perspectives on learning, research

Semester exchange programme gives students international academic exposure, research experience and an opportunity to learn in a different cultural environment

By Lesego Maaba & Thabiseng Ngobeni - ulpublications@ul.ac.za



Photos
Lebogang Matheba

Reflecting on their semester exchange experience at the University of Málaga in Spain are, from left: Remember Jonnie (Master of Social Work), Lungie Motau (Master of Agricultural Management), Leah Mothiba (Master of Agricultural Management) and Blessing Shongwe (Master of Arts in Communication Studies).

Six University of Limpopo (UL) students have returned from a semester exchange programme at the University of Málaga in Spain, bringing home new approaches to research, learning and life beyond South Africa

"The experience was life-changing, not only did I get an opportunity to immerse myself in a different education system, but in Spanish culture also."

The students were welcomed back by UL's Office of International Affairs on 1 July 2026. They form the largest group of UL students to participate in the programme since the partnership between the two universities began.

The exchange programme gives students an opportunity to study in a different academic environment while experiencing new cultures and approaches to teaching and research. Master of Agricultural Management student, Leah Mothiba, said the experience would assist improve her research output.

"I learnt a lot in Málaga, and the experience will contribute positively to my research as I was exposed to a different approach to conducting academic research," said Mothiba.

She added: "The experience was life-changing, not only did I get an opportunity to immerse myself in a different education system, but in Spanish culture also."

Lungie Motau, also a Master of Agricultural Management student, said living in Spain required adjusting to a different way of life.

"One of the biggest challenges was adapting to the food because it was very different from what we are used to in South Africa. However, with time, we adjusted and learnt to appreciate the cultural differences," Motau said.

Master of Social Work student, Remember Jonnie, said travelling abroad through the exchange programme was an opportunity he did not take for granted.

"I am thankful for the opportunity and consider it a privilege because not everyone gets an opportunity to travel abroad with all costs fully covered," he said.

Blessing Shongwe, a Master's student in Communication Studies and a Digital Marketing Student Assistant at UL Marketing and Communication,

said he was grateful for the experience and would welcome another opportunity to participate in an international exchange programme.

Senior International Practitioner for International Partnerships, Collaboration and Scholarships at UL, Vusi Makamu, said the programme is supported through Erasmus+ funding, which provides financial support to participating students and staff.

Each year, selected UL students spend one academic semester at the University of Málaga, while academic staff participate in week-long exchange visits. The programme promotes the sharing of research, teaching practices and knowledge between the two institutions.

Makamu said international exchange programmes form an important part of UL's internationalisation efforts and expose students to learning beyond their home institution. Academic staff from the University of Málaga have already visited UL. Although students from the Spanish university are yet to undertake a semester exchange at UL, Makamu said the university hopes to welcome undergraduate and postgraduate students from Málaga in future.

"The programme is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students, although there is a stronger emphasis on postgraduate participation because of the flexibility of their research-based academic responsibilities," he said.

Makamu encouraged students interested in future exchange programmes to follow university communication platforms and maintain good academic performance.



Senior International Practitioner for International Partnerships, Collaboration and Scholarships at the University of Limpopo, Vusi Makamu.

Livestock genetics, reproduction workshop takes science from the laboratory to the farm

UL and Bulgarian researchers share reproductive biotechnology skills to improve animal breeding, productivity and the conservation of genetic resources

By Phishego Mohubedu - ulpublications@ul.ac.za



Photos
Dimpho Boshomane

Dr Petar Petrov, a lecturer in poultry science, and the histology and morphology of farm animals at the Agricultural University-Plovdiv in Bulgaria, shares his expertise during the practical training session.

The workshop focused on the exchange of knowledge and practical skills in reproductive biotechnology, giving postgraduate students and researchers hands-on experience in techniques used in animal breeding, fertility assessment and genetic conservation.



Dr Radka Malinova, a lecturer in animal reproduction, reproductive biotechnology and embryo transfer at the Agricultural University-Plovdiv in Bulgaria.

Improving livestock breeding and preserving animal genetics took centre stage during a practical workshop hosted by the University of Limpopo's (UL) Department of Agricultural Economics and Animal Production in partnership with the Agricultural University-Plovdiv in Bulgaria

As part of the workshop, Bulgarian researchers Dr Radka Malinova and Dr Petar Petrov demonstrated, amongst others farming practices, semen collection and evaluation techniques using indigenous poultry breeds during a practical session at UL's animal Laboratory. The collected samples were analysed using Computer-Assisted Sperm Analysis (CASA) technology to assess sperm quality and fertility.

Dr Malinova, a lecturer in animal reproduction, reproductive biotechnology and embryo transfer at the Agricultural University-Plovdiv, said semen collection has several applications in animal production.

"Semen collection is used for artificial insemination, fertility evaluation, research and the conservation of valuable genetic resources," highlighted Dr Radka Malinova.

She added, "reproductive techniques are important for breeding programmes and the preservation of animal genetics for future generations. The knowledge is particularly relevant in livestock production, where farmers continue to deal with disease and difficult environmental conditions."

The workshop allowed participants to see how reproductive biotechnology can be used to select and breed animals with desirable traits. It is said that this can contribute to improved fertility, animal performance and the preservation of indigenous breeds.

Students were also exposed to commercial livestock production during a visit to ZZ2 in Mooketsi, where they learnt about the PinZyl cattle breed. Developed from Pinzgauer and Tuli cattle, the breed is known for its hardiness, disease resistance and ability to perform under African conditions.

Professor Thobela Louis Tyasi, Full Professor in Animal Production at UL, said the workshop was important because it linked laboratory training with the realities of livestock farming. "Partnerships such as this allow students to see how laboratory science translates into practical solutions that improve productivity and sustainability in the agricultural sector," said Prof Tyasi.

He said exposing postgraduate students to international researchers and innovative practices in commercial farming operations broadens their understanding of animal production and gives them practical knowledge that can be applied in their research.

The partnership with the Agricultural University-Plovdiv also creates opportunities for researchers to exchange knowledge on animal genetics and reproductive technologies. For UL students, the workshop provided access to specialised techniques and expertise that can strengthen their postgraduate research.

According to Thankge Kholofelo, a Master's candidate in Animal Production, livestock farmers are under increasing pressure to improve productivity while preserving animal genetic resources.

"The workshop demonstrated how research and practical training can help develop animals that are more productive and better adapted to local conditions."



University of Limpopo Animal Production postgraduate researchers and Bulgarian researchers visit the ZZ2 cattle farm in Mooketsi to learn about best practices in commercial livestock production and breeding practices.

"Partnerships such as this allow students to see how laboratory science translates into practical solutions that improve productivity and sustainability in the agricultural sector."

Resonance between Mathematics teaching, real-life examples key to improve learning, says Indonesian scholar

Dr Duano Sapta Nusantara says teaching mathematics through real-life situations can improve understanding, critical thinking and learner participation

By Lesego Maaba - ulpublication@ul.ac.za



Dr Duano Sapta Nusantara from Universitas Jambi, Indonesia, delivers a presentation on Realistic Mathematics Education during a two-day international seminar at UL.

According to Dr Duano Sapta Nusantara, mathematics becomes easier to understand when learners can connect it to situations they experience in everyday life

Dr Nusantara delivered a keynote address at an international guest lecture and research seminar hosted by the University of Limpopo's (UL) Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (DMSTE) in the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities.

His address centred around "Transforming Mathematics Learning through Realistic Mathematics Education: Theory and Classroom Practice". He emphasised that Realistic Mathematics Education (RME), an approach that uses real-life situations to help learners understand mathematical concepts, is important to yield desired outcomes in mathematics teaching.

The renowned mathematics scholar from Universitas Jambi in Indonesia said mathematics teaching should move beyond memorising formulas and procedures; and allow learners to understand how mathematical concepts relate to the world around them.

"Realistic Mathematics Education connects mathematics learning with real-life situations to improve learners' understanding, critical thinking and classroom participation."

Dr Nusantara demonstrated how teachers can use familiar situations and practical problems to introduce mathematical concepts. Through this approach, learners are anticipated to think, discuss and develop ways of solving problems instead of simply following prescribed steps.

He said RME could help address some of the challenges facing mathematics education by making classroom lessons more meaningful to learners and encouraging their participation.

The two-day seminar brought together key role players comprising of DMSTE lecturers, postgraduate students, researchers, academics and Mathematics Senior Education Specialists from the Limpopo Department of Education.

It provided the participants with a platform to discuss mathematics teaching methods and research areas that could contribute to improving classroom practice.

Dr Nusantara also spoke about the link between mathematics education and research, particularly the role of postgraduate students and academics in producing research that can improve teaching.

"Many postgraduate students complete their studies without publishing even one article from their research. This seminar aims to bridge that gap by equipping emerging researchers with practical skills to write quality literature review papers, prepare publication-ready manuscripts and improve their chances of publishing in high-impact journals," he said.

Professor Kgaladi Maphutha, an Associate Professor and Postgraduate Coordinator at DMSTE, said the department invited Dr Nusantara because of his experience in mathematics education and academic publishing. She said the seminar was intended to expose postgraduate students to different approaches to mathematics teaching while improving their research and writing skills.

"We also wanted to introduce our postgraduate students, especially master's students, to RME so that they can apply it in classroom practice and build on it during their PhD studies to improve mathematics education in South Africa," Prof Maphutha said.

She added that the department wants students and lecturers to turn their research into published work and contribute to discussions on mathematics education.

The seminar also created an opportunity for university academics and education specialists to share experiences on mathematics teaching in schools. Masters and PhD students actively engaged in the workshop by asking insightful questions and sharing their reflection on the key lessons they took away from the seminar. One of the postgraduate students, Patience Mashabela, said the workshop exposed participants to innovative teaching approaches and encouraged them to apply these methods in their research and academic work.



Government employees, academics, researchers, educators and postgraduate students exchange ideas and discuss teaching approaches aimed at improving mathematics education.

"Realistic Mathematics Education connects mathematics learning with real-life situations to improve learners' understanding, critical thinking and classroom participation."

67 minutes of taking science to the people, alignment with national initiatives

University of Limpopo strengthens support for women in research through mentorship, networking and academic development

By Malatji Monyelegwete – malatji.monyelegwete@ul.ac.za



Photos
Tlou Manaka

Learners and community members participate in science activities at Paledi Mall during the University of Limpopo's Nelson Mandela Day outreach

Through its Science Centre, in partnership with the UL Digital Hub and Sciethrive Impact, the University turned Paledi Mall into a science exhibition where learners, families and shoppers explored how science and technology are used in everyday life

"National Science Month enables the university to strengthen partnerships, expand outreach programmes and create opportunities for students to participate in science and innovation."

The outreach formed part of National Science Month under the theme, "Science, Technology and Innovation are for Everyone", highlighting the importance of making science accessible beyond the classroom and laboratory.

Launching National Science Month earlier this month, Director of the School of Physical and Mineral Sciences at UL, Professor Hasani Chauke, said the campaign aligns the university's science engagement activities with national priorities.

"National Science Month enables the university to strengthen partnerships, expand outreach programmes and create opportunities for students to participate in science and innovation. These initiatives position UL as a deliberate contributor to the increased uptake of science and technology in the country," he said.

The university's Technology Transfer Office (TTO) and UL Digital Hub demonstrated technologies associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), including drones and Virtual Reality (VR).

Visitors watched live drone demonstrations showing how the technology is used in agriculture, environmental monitoring, infrastructure inspection, disaster management and geospatial mapping. The demonstrations illustrated how drones can collect data quickly and safely in areas that are difficult to reach.

For many visitors, it was also their first opportunity to experience Virtual Reality. Learners used VR headsets to explore digital environments and learnt how the technology is applied in education, training and e-sports.

Pontsh Mampuru, Commercialisation Officer at the UL Digital Hub, said developments in artificial intelligence, robotics, deep fakes and immersive technologies create opportunities while raising important ethical questions. He highlighted, among other things, the importance of using technology responsibly.

"Technology should never advance faster than our understanding of its impact on people. As artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies reshape society, they also introduce new risks relating to privacy, identity, cybersecurity, misinformation and equality. Communities should be equipped with the knowledge to use these technologies responsibly and recognise when they are being misused," said Mampuru.

He said science communication and digital literacy are essential to ensure technology benefits society.

Sciethrive Impact complemented the exhibition with practical science demonstrations, giving learners and community members an opportunity to explore scientific concepts through hands-on activities.

Programme and Education Coordinator at Sciethrive Impact, Matipa Molomo said the initiative was about helping people understand the role science plays in their daily lives.

"Science communication is about helping people understand the science that influences their daily lives. It encourages critical thinking and enables communities to participate in discussions about the opportunities and challenges presented by scientific and technological advancement," she said.

Programmes Coordinator at the Science Centre and part-time lecturer for the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA)-funded Postgraduate Diploma in Science Communication, Sandile Rikhotso, said initiatives such as Science in the Mall make science more accessible to communities.

"The programme encourages public interest in science, promotes responsible innovation and reflects the university's commitment to using research and innovation to address societal challenges," he said.

University of Limpopo marks Mandela Day through service in various communities

The University of Limpopo marked Nelson Mandela Day by taking staff and students into communities across Limpopo to serve those most in need

Malatji Monyelegwete – Malatji.monyelegwete@ul.ac.za

Guided by the call to dedicate 67 minutes to helping others, the University of Limpopo (UL) undertook activities that promoted environmental responsibility, supported vulnerable groups and strengthened community well-being.

Geography Department champions environmental responsibility



Photos
Monyelegwete Malatji

"Gate 2 Glow-Up: 67 Minutes for Clean Spaces and Human Dignity" was the theme of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies' clean-up campaign, aimed at improving the cleanliness of the University's Gate 2 precinct and its surrounding areas.

The Department of Geography and Environmental Studies in the School of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (SAES) marked Nelson Mandela Day with a clean-up campaign aimed at promoting environmental responsibility and community pride

Held under the theme "Gate 2 Glow-Up: 67 Minutes for Clean Spaces & Human Dignity", the campaign focused on the clean-up campaign of the area around the University's Gate 2, bringing together staff, students, Sovenga YouthMappers and community stakeholders.

The initiative formed part of the global Mandela Day campaign, which encourages people to dedicate time to projects that benefit their communities.

According to Izelque Botha from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, environmental stewardship begins with collective action.

"We celebrate the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela, whose commitment to service continues to inspire people across the world. Mandela Day reminds us that each of us can make a positive difference through acts of service, no matter how small. As part of doing our bit to mark this important day of the prolific statesman, we cleaned the area around Gate 2 and encouraged people who use the space to help keep it clean."

Bringing comfort to the elderly at Kwelano Bohloko Old Age and Disability Centre

By Makgano Mamabolo - makgano.mamabolo@ul.ac.za



Photo
Phuti Semanya

Elderly residents of the Kwelano Bohloko Old Age and Disability Centre sing and celebrate with University of Limpopo staff during a Mandela Day visit filled with activities that brought joy and companionship.

The University also visited the Kwelano Bohloko Old Age and Disability Centre in Mankweng- Tlhalaganya, where staff spent time with elderly residents and people living with disabilities

The event honoured the late founder, Jane Rabodiba, whose vision of caring for vulnerable people continues through the work of the centre. Following her passing in December 2025, Ignatius Mogale took over the centre's leadership to continue the work of caring for others.

Established in 2009, the centre provides daily care to approximately 33 elderly beneficiaries, offering activities such as beadwork, crocheting and recreational programmes that support their physical, emotional and social well-being.

Speaking during the event, Mogale described the centre as more than a care facility.

"It has become a second home for many elderly people and individuals living with disabilities. Had it not been for the existence of this centre, these people would have nowhere to turn to for support and companionship. We extend our sincere gratitude to UL for always thinking about us during Nelson Mandela Day and every time we need their help."

University staff shared meals and spent time with residents, upholding the spirit of Mandela Day through simple acts of care and companionship.

"We extend our sincere gratitude to UL for always thinking about us during Nelson Mandela Day and every time we need their help."

Supporting vulnerable families in Ga-Makanye

By Thabiseng Ngobeni - thabiseng.ngobeni@ul.ac.za



Photo
Thabiseng Ngobeni

Happy faces at the Itumeleng Community Nutrition and Development Centre in Ga-Makanye as the University of Limpopo's CSCD donated perishable and non-perishable food items to the centre.

The University's Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) marked Mandela Day with a donation drive for the Itumeleng Community Nutrition and Development Centre in Ga-Makanye Village 16

In line with the 2026 Mandela Day theme, "It is still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity", the university community donated clothing, toiletries, stationery, blankets and perishable and non-perishable food items

According to Anna Mabina, a psychologist at CSCD, the donation was intended to encourage kindness and support for vulnerable members of the community.

"We chose this centre as a beneficiary because it is one of the doorstep communities adjacent to the University and because Mandela Day reminds us to show kindness to others. We hope these donations will bring smiles to the faces of vulnerable people in Ga-Makanye and encourage everyone to care for those in need."

Student Registered Counsellors and Peer Counsellors also provided psychosocial support to community members during the visit.

"We chose this centre as a beneficiary because it is one of the doorstep communities adjacent to the University and because Mandela Day reminds us to show kindness to others."

Promoting mental health and disability inclusion



Photos
Desmond

The Department of Nursing Sciences brought together healthcare professionals, academics, students and community members to raise awareness of mental health, disability inclusion, access to healthcare services and the importance of healthy eating, while supporting learners living with disabilities.

At the Moletji Centre, the Department of Nursing Science joined by the Departments of Optometry and Dietetics, together with the Green Biotechnologies Research Centre of Excellence, to host a Mental Health Community Engagement Programme.

Supported by traditional leaders and Disabled People South Africa (DPSA), the programme was held under the theme "My Mental Health and Physical Challenges Cannot Be an Obstacle to My Success".

Healthcare professionals, academics, students and community members came together to raise awareness on mental health, disability inclusion and access to healthcare services while supporting learners living with disabilities.

Dr Mathapo Thobakgale, Clinical Skills Laboratory Coordinator in the Department of Nursing Science at UL, said the outreach also formed part of students' practical training.

"One of our learning outcomes is to prepare students to provide quality healthcare to children living with intellectual and physical disabilities. Community engagement allows them to apply what they learn in class to real world scenarios by interacting directly with the children and understanding their healthcare needs. This experience prepares them to provide appropriate care when they enter the profession."

The Green Biotechnologies Research Centre of Excellence also donated food and other essentials to the community.

Closing the programme, His Majesty Kgoshi Kgabo Moloto III, thanked the University and its partners for supporting the community.

"On behalf of our community, I extend my sincere gratitude to the University of Limpopo, its partners, healthcare professionals, students and everyone who dedicated their time to serving our people. Your contribution reflects the true spirit of Ubuntu and that of Nelson Mandela's legacy of selfless service."

"This experience prepares them to provide appropriate care when they enter the profession."



The University of Limpopo's new library extension enhances learning and research, while its construction created job opportunities and injected millions into local businesses.



Finding solutions for Africa



www.ul.ac.za