

Special Edition

Ubuntu Nexus

The spirit of collective humanity and interconnectedness



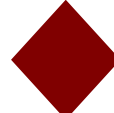
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (CEAD) DIRECTORATE

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2024

MUT CELEBRATES MANDELA MONTH

It is still in our hands to combat poverty and inequality



Message from the Editor-in-Chief



Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni
Director CEAD

The 2024 International Mandela month

The International Mandela month is another great opportunity for MUT to showcase its commitment to being a university that is anchored in its communities. MUT has a long-standing practice of making effort to be actively involved when the international community commemorates the annual International Mandela day through engaging in various outreach activities, thereby increasing its footprint in the Umlazi community and its surroundings. By prioritising Umlazi community and its surroundings with great zeal, MUT delivers on its strategic objective “To increase national visibility.”

The university’s Strategic GOAL 3: Excellence in Community Engagement provides motivation for the MUT community to partner with strategic collaborators to commemorate this important day. In pursuit to effectively deliver on its community engagement mandate, MUT resolved to extend the commemoration of the International Mandela Day to the entire month of July with effect from 2023 due to the great enthusiasm that the university community, in partnership with external stakeholders, displayed whereby a total of 28+ activities were successfully carried out in Umlazi Township and neighbouring communities.

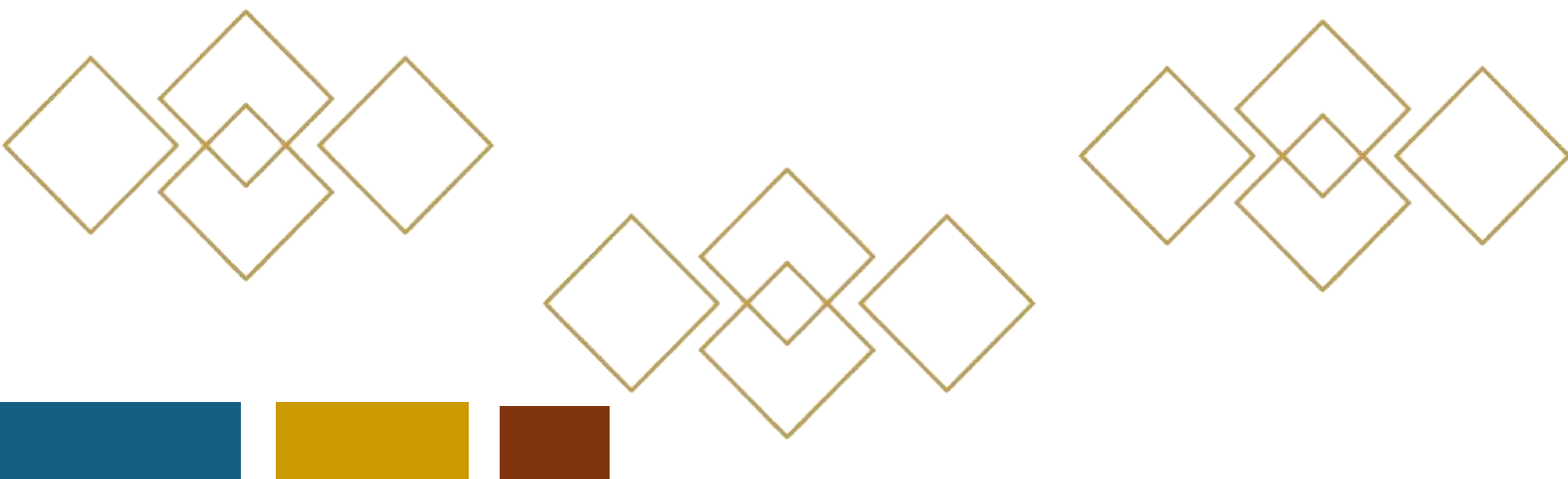
For 2024, MUT developed a Mandela month programme (1- 31 July) with an aim of joining forces with local partners and collaborators such as the municipality, industry and civil organisations to increase its impact while leveraging resources. The Mandela month activities at MUT activities were informed by the 2024 theme: - “It’s still in our hands to combat poverty and inequality” (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2024).

The focus for this year has been on dismantling the destructive impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which exposed existing disparities and damaged vulnerable communities in all kinds of ways. The Foundation reminds us that climate change, war and conflict are leading to the displacement and impoverishment of a multitude of communities, and even whole societies. One of the primary objectives of celebrating Mandela month this year was to instil Mandela values of Ubuntu, nonviolence and peace-making, ensuring that there is more just and equal society with respect and protection other people's dignity.

The activities that the MUT community embarked on to honour Tata Madiba's legacy for this year were informed by the new MANDELA DAY STRATEGY (2019-2029) of the Nelson Mandela Foundation whose priority areas include early childhood development, food, sanitation and active citizenship. As the Mandela Day has moved away from an ad hoc, individualized, reactive approach towards a sustainable, long-term, collaborative methodology to address issues affecting our society, outreach activities were aimed at making in-roads for long-term collaborative partnerships with communities to address these societal challenges. This effort contributed to the Nelson Mandela Foundation's new strategy which aims to mobilize Madiba's legacy by addressing intergenerational poverty and inequality.

Through this annual initiative, MUT is well positioned to carry Madiba's nationalist humanist vision of life through community outreach activities that are purposeful. As the beacon of hope to our communities, we can influence the operationalization of Madiba's legacy by inspiring our students and communities to engage in self-reflection and reconciliation to contribute towards the Ubuntu.

The Mandela month would not have been successful without our community partners and collaborators. MUT truly appreciates you for your support! I also wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the MUT community (staff and students) and MUT management for their unwavering commitment to the good course of upholding the legacy of our struggle icon who, through his leadership, made effort to cultivate the UN values of peace, forgiveness, compassion and human dignity that he embodied. May everyday be a Mandela day!



Mobilizing Mandela Month to Combat Poverty and Build a Just Society



Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi
Deputy Director: CEAD

In honour of Madiba's legacy, the Nelson Mandela Foundation focused its efforts on several key areas for the 2024 Mandela Month, including early childhood development, food security, education, shelter, active citizenship, sanitation, nutrition, and creating just cities. The Foundation's new strategy aims to mobilize Madiba's legacy to build a more just society by addressing intergenerational poverty and inequality.

The call to action for Nelson Mandela International Day 2024 is: "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequality." The MUT community addressed this theme through various activities.

The impact of Mandela Month activities includes:

- Instilling Mandela's values such as

a more just and equal society.

- Providing hope to those in need
- Promoting a sense of giving and spirit of camaraderie.
- Reducing poverty and addressing daily hunger
- Breaking down barriers between communities and the university
- Encouraging a clean environment and raising awareness about climate change
- Promoting community-based research

The Mandela Month activities adopted a hybrid model, with communities inviting MUT to participate in their events, and MUT visiting communities to deliver its programs. Additionally, communities were invited to join MUT's internal programs, such as sign language workshops and clean-up campaigns. Key activities included health promotion sessions, HIV and AIDS awareness, GBV workshops, tree planting, clean-up campaigns, mental health awareness sessions, career days, digital literacy, distribution of preowned clothes, establishment of new gardens, visits to children's and old age homes, sign language workshops, student volunteering to clean and serve breakfast to the homeless, promotion of reading and

writing, and a fun day.

These activities enhanced cooperation among MUT departments, fostered working relationships between MUT, community members, and partners, and led to the preparation of new MOUs with some organizations. They also stimulated enthusiasm among MUT scholars to conduct more community-involved research, improving overall well-being and economic opportunities, aligning with the sustainable, long-term, collaborative approach emphasized in the Mandela Day strategy.

There is a need to forge stronger partnerships with the private sector. We appreciate the support from partners such as eThekweni Libraries, the Department of Agriculture, DSW, Go Digital, and MUT staff.



Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

“It is in your hands, to make a better world for all who live in it.”

Call to Action: Be a Beacon of Change

Inspired by Nelson Mandela's words, South Africa is reminded of the power and responsibility each individual holds to make a difference by volunteering time, supporting local causes, practicing acts of kindness, leading by example, and promoting inclusivity. Through these efforts, communities can collectively contribute to building a better world.

Every action, no matter how small, honours Mandela's legacy and fosters a more just and compassionate society.

The call is clear: Start today – find your path, embrace your purpose, and be a beacon of change.

Featuring....

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MUT Volunteers Support the Homeless at Denis Hurley Centre

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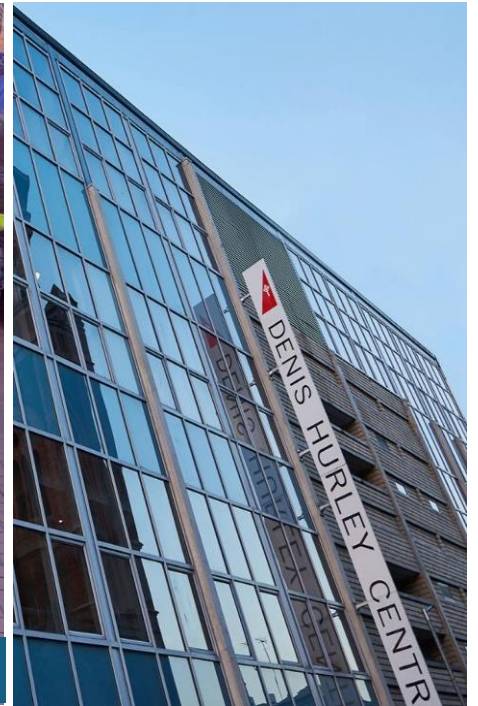
CEAD Closes Mandela Month with a Vibrant Sports Extravaganza

.....& More

MUT Volunteers Support the Homeless at Denis Hurley Centre



MUT student volunteers serving meals to the homeless at the centre



The spirit of Ubuntu came alive on 8 July 2024, when representatives from MUT and the Denis Hurley Centre convened to launch a Student Volunteerism Project.

This initiative, involving MUT's Dr Mthoko Ntuli, Dr Mfanozelwe Shoji, Dr David Ighodaro, and Dr Raymond Perrier from the Denis Hurley Centre aims to expose MUT students to the city's social challenges, particularly homelessness.

The project was launched on Mandela Day, 18 July 2024, and it invited MUT students to volunteer for 10 hours over a 6weeks period from 20 July to 31 August 2024.

Volunteering activities at the Denis Hurley Centre included serving meals and engaging with homeless individuals.

A total of 12 volunteering sessions were conducted during Mandela Month, with the remaining activities extending beyond July as more MUT students have been volunteering to serve at the Centre.

Students were encouraged to reflect on their experiences through TikTok videos or written reflections, with those completing their hours receiving a certificate of participation. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with many slots already filled and participants recommending the experience to their peers.

The project is indeed leaving a lasting impact on the volunteers and promoting empathy and civic responsibility. It resonates with Nelson Mandela's legacy of selfless service and continuous personal growth through reflection.

Personal Reflections of Student Volunteers



Sisassenkosi Nene

I learned about the history of Denis Hurley and his work during the apartheid era. The Denis Hurley Centre exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism, allowing me to be on the front lines and experience the act of giving to others firsthand.

If I had the power to improve the situation of impoverished individuals, I would begin by providing the homeless with safe places to sleep and promoting health and educational skills among them.



Lusanda Sithole

Volunteering at the Denis Hurley Centre was a deeply enriching experience, providing insights into the challenges faced by the homeless in Durban. Serving meals and preparing food showed me how small acts of kindness can make a big impact. Interacting with the homeless revealed their resilience and the complex issues they face, including unemployment, mental health, and social stigma. This experience deepened my understanding of the importance of empathy and community support.

If I could change the circumstances of the homeless, I would focus on creating comprehensive support systems. This would include job training and employment opportunities tailored to their needs, as well as fostering community programs to encourage social integration and reduce stigma.



Nobuhle Zulu

I learned the value of respect, love, and treating everyone equally, as even a simple smile can brighten someone's day. I've also learned to be grateful and appreciative of everything I have, recognizing that many people have much less.

If I had the power to change circumstances, I would seek donations to help build shelters. These shelters would provide separate accommodation for the elderly and those with disabilities, with appropriate care provided. Additionally, residents would be taught valuable skills, such as sewing or baking, to help them secure employment and earn their own income.



Nofezile Jali

My time at the Denis Hurley Centre has been transformative, reinforcing my belief in the power of community and empathy. I've learned that even small gestures can make a significant difference and have a profound impact. I now understand that homelessness involves more than just a lack of housing; it is a complex issue influenced by economic, social, and personal factors.

If I had the power to change circumstances, I would prioritize creating accessible services that help people regain their independence and stability, such as job training, healthcare, and social services, and expanding affordable housing.

CEAD Supports the Food Security Efforts in Umlazi



As part of Nelson Mandela Month activities, CEAD partnered with MUT's Marketing and Communications (Marcoms) team to visit St. Augustine Parish in Kwa Mdladla, Umlazi Township, on 9 July 2024. This initiative aimed to honour human dignity and support the food security efforts of the church and its community.

CEAD led by Professor Nkonki-Mandleni brought an array of pre-loved clothing items including five bags, five boxes, and a washing basket full of pre-loved clothing donated by the university community. In addition, they donated non-perishable food items such as baked beans, cooking oil, and soup powder.

Ubhavu Project, a community initiative under St. Augustine Parish, received these generous donations under the leadership of the Rector, Rev Thulani Zikhali.

The Ubhavu Committee expressed immense gratitude for MUT's gesture. Neli Bam, Deputy Chairwoman of the committee, highlighted the significance of MUT's support: "MUT is our good neighbour. This is so special." Bam appreciated that MUT chose to collaborate with Ubhavu, ensuring the donations reached the needy individuals of Umlazi.

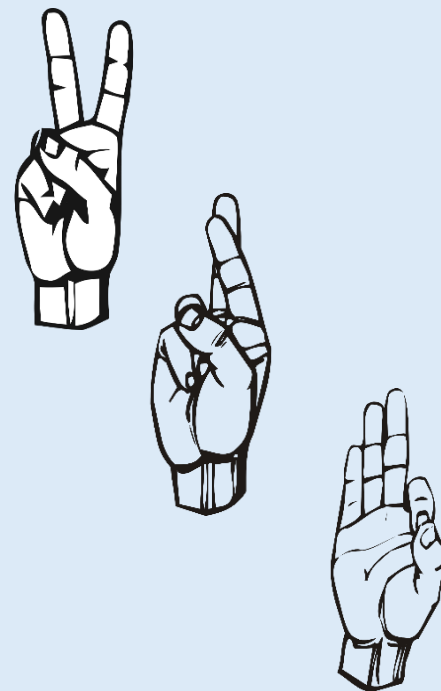
Rev Thulani Zikhali also expressed deep gratitude for MUT's contributions, recognizing the hardships faced by those who earn a living, and the extent of hardships by those without any form of income.

This visit is part of MUT's ongoing commitment to community engagement and support, reflecting the spirit of Nelson Mandela through acts of kindness and solidarity.

CEAD Hosts a Sign Language Workshop



Professor Nkonki-Mandleni (1st from right) with MUT staff and external communities who attended the workshop



CEAD hosted a vibrant and impactful Sign Language Workshop on 10 July 2024, as part of the Mandela Month activities. Held at the MUT Community Development Centre, the workshop brought together 23 participants from the eThekweni Municipality, Mason Lincoln Special School, Ubuntu Munye, and MUT staff.

Led by Nomcebo Mabele from the Incamisile Intokozo Organization, the training provided an engaging introduction to sign language and Deaf culture. Professor Nkonki-Mandleni emphasized the importance of learning sign language, indicating that it is crucial for MUT community to ensure that all community members, including those with special needs, are not left behind in MUT's engagement efforts.

The workshop did not only highlight sign language's role as a tool for inclusivity but also marked a significant step that MUT is taking to fostering a more inclusive community engagement, thus showcasing MUT's commitment to bridging communication gaps and promoting accessibility for all.

*Inclusion Begins with Understanding:
Learn Sign Language*



MUT Clinic Leads Interactive Sex Education Programme



Sister Nonhle Sibiya MUT's clinic PHC Practitioner addressing Enaleni learners on reproductive health education

On 17 July 2024, the MUT Health Services team engaged the Grade 12 learners at Enaleni High School in Umlazi as part of Mandela Month activities.

The initiative, led by Sr Bongwiwe Sithole, brought together health practitioners from the MUT clinic and peer educators, who are also MUT students, to deliver an interactive health education session. Dr Mfanozelwe Shoji and Dr Oluwabunmi Popoola from CEAD attended the event.

The session focused on reproductive health, and the topics discussed included awareness of unplanned teenage pregnancy and pregnancy prevention, sexually transmitted infections, and the different contraceptive options available to young people. The benefits of abstinence were emphasised.

It also emphasised the implications of unplanned pregnancies on future educational opportunities. The interactive nature of the session allowed learners to engage actively, ask questions, to gain clarity on various aspects of reproductive health.

Learners received health promotion materials, including informative pamphlets. Additionally, MUT-branded diaries were distributed to learners. Female learners were offered sanitary towels to promote personal hygiene and self-care among learners.

MUT Health Services honours Mandela's vision of a more equitable society by empowering young individuals with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their health and future.

Mandela Day Sparks Innovation at Umlazi Primary School



Ngilos Primary School learners receiving gift packs sponsored by Go Digital SA foundation

The Grade 6 and 7 learners at Ngilos Primary School in Umlazi Township experienced a transformative Mandela Day on 18 July 2024. In collaboration with the Go Digital SA Foundation, the CEAD team brought life-changing lessons in coding and robotics to the young learners.

The learners engaged in hands-on projects, creating automated models using the donated laptops and robotic kits by the former Minister of Higher Education, Dr Blade Nzimande. Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, Director of CEAD, acknowledged the kind gesture of the former minister for resourcing the computer lab of Ngilos primary school.

She also praised the learners' remarkable proficiency in robotics. "Their models demonstrated a deep understanding of aerodynamics and mechanics," she noted. Impressively, the learners confidently explained the programming concepts and mechanical designs behind their projects.

Mandela Day 2024 will be remembered as a day of inspiration and future possibilities for these young minds, proving that with the right support, innovation can thrive.

The impact of the Mandela Day initiative extended beyond just learning new skills. It ignited a passion for technology and innovation among the learners, fostering a sense of confidence and curiosity.

Both the CEAD Directorate and the Go Digital SA Foundation expressed their commitment to continuing this journey, aiming to further support the learners' development in STEM fields.

This collaboration serves as a reminder that education, when combined with community engagement, has the power to transform lives and create lasting change in underserved communities.



Faculty of Management Sciences Spreads Mandela Day Cheer at Umlazi Old Age Home



Students from the Faculty of Management Sciences cleaning the old age home

On 18 July 2024, the Faculty of Management Sciences marked the Mandela Day with a special visit to Ekhanana Old Age Home in Umlazi's C section. The day began with lecturers, students, and officials from the CEAD Directorate, Dr Mfanozelwe Shoji and Dr Oluwabunmi Popoola, assembling at the university's transport unit before heading to the old age home.

The visit featured an opening prayer remarks from Dr P N Majiya, representing the Acting Dean, Dr Ramsarghey. Speeches highlighted the importance of community service, while musical performances by the Inkanyezi Gospel Singers and local primary school learners added to the event's vibrancy. MUT Radio captured the event with interviews of key faculty representatives and Ekhanana staff. Faculty representatives presented blankets to the elderly residents, and students took part in clean-up activities, including sweeping floors, washing windows, and tidying the grounds.

The day concluded with learners cultivating a garden, symbolizing care and support for the elderly. The visit not only brought smiles and comfort to the elderly residents but also served as a meaningful learning experience for the students involved. Engaging in acts of service, provided an avenue for MUT students to be reminded of the value of compassion and community upliftment, embodying the spirit of Nelson Mandela's legacy.

As the day drew to a close, both staff and students reflected on the importance of sustaining these efforts beyond Mandela Day, pledging continued support to the Ekhanana Old Age Home and other community initiatives in the future.

Cultivating a Sustainable Future: Community Food Security Initiative in Umlazi



Learners from Shumayela Secondary school participating in one of the planting sessions

In a heartfelt tribute to Nelson Mandela, the Department of Nature Conservation at MUT joined forces with the Umlazi District's Department of Agriculture on 18 July 2024, to launch a powerful community food security initiative. Led by Dr Sibonelo Thanda Mbanjwa from the faculty of Natural Sciences, this initiative sought to address the pressing need for food security and sustainable living, especially in the face of economic challenges, high unemployment rates, and the impacts of climate change.

The event took place at MUT's North Campus and Umlazi P Section, bringing together learners from Shumayela Secondary School in Umlazi Q Section and community members from Section P. The primary goal was to empower the young learners and community members with the knowledge and skills to grow their own food, thereby promoting self-sufficiency and resilience.

Throughout the programme, participants were not only educated on sustainable agriculture practices but were also provided with seeds to help them start their own gardens. This hands-on approach is designed to equip learners with practical tools to contribute to food security within their communities.

This effort is part of MUT's broader commitment to promoting a culture of environmental responsibility and food security among the youth. As this programme takes root, its impact is expected to extend beyond the immediate community, inspiring broader efforts toward sustainability.

By honouring Nelson Mandela through this initiative, MUT continues his legacy of empowering communities, promoting self-reliance, and driving positive change.

Food Security Project Brings Support to Differently Aabled Children at Umlazi Day Care Centre



FSBH project members participating in the community waste collection campaign

On 18 July 2024, the Food Security for Better Health (FSBH) Project team, led by Dr C Hlungwani, visited Masibambane Day Care Centre in the Mhlabeni Informal Settlement, Umlazi. The visit was a collaborative effort involving the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), KZN Sharks Board, Save A Life, Save Nature, Inkwazi Isu, Isipingo Primary School, and Gourmet Chef.

Masibambane Care Centre provides a nurturing environment for physically challenged children, and the day was filled with meaningful activities aimed at improving the centre and its surrounding community. In his speech, Dr Hlungwani highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts between government departments and private sectors to address community challenges.

The day's activities included painting the care centre by all participating organizations, and a community waste collection and awareness campaign. The FSBH team also conducted tree planting exercise, a cabbage and spinach mulching demonstration, along with tomato harvesting and storage techniques. There was also a generous donation of a Jojo tank, groceries, and R5,000 by Dr Emmanuel to assist the centre further.

The day ended with a joyful lunch from Gourmet Chef, followed by lively dancing, networking, and brainstorming, bringing smiles to the children's faces.

The visit was a heartwarming success, showcasing the power of community collaboration and the positive impact it can have on those in need.

Empowering KwaMashu Learners with Career Insights in Biomedical Sciences



Phelelani Khomo of Biomedical Sciences Department addressing learners



MUT's Biomedical Sciences Lab

In the spirit of Mandela Day, the Department of Biomedical Sciences at MUT took a meaningful step toward shaping the future of young minds in Lindelani Township. On 18 July 2024, the department's entire team visited Mandlenkosi and Umtapo High Schools, offering a unique careers day experience that left a lasting impact on both students and educators.

Led by Lecturer and Community Engagement Coordinator Nokukhanya Thembane, the initiative aimed to introduce learners to the vital field of Biomedical Sciences - a profession at the heart of diagnostic medicine and public health. *"We believe in the power of education to transform lives, and this careers day was our way of contributing to the community by showcasing the importance of Biomedical Sciences,"* Thembane shared.

Throughout the day, learners were engaged in interactive sessions that highlighted the critical role Biomedical Sciences play in healthcare. The team presented the field as not just a career option but as a calling that addresses some of the most pressing health challenges of our time.

From demonstrating basic lab techniques to discussing the pathways to becoming a biomedical scientist, the sessions were designed to inspire learners to consider this essential field as their future. This outreach was part of a broader commitment by MUT to foster active citizenship and support the well-being of local communities.

The visit was met with enthusiasm by both the learners and staff at the schools, with many expressing interests in further collaborations with MUT. The department plans to build on this success with more community-focused initiatives. As MUT continues its outreach efforts, the impact of this Mandela Day careers day will resonate for years to come, inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals and reinforcing the university's role as a beacon of hope and education in the community.

Honouring Mandela Through Coastal Clean-Up in Amanzimtoti



Dr Sibonelo Mbanjwa with learners from Siyabonga Secondary School

On 19 July 2024, the Department of Nature Conservation at MUT collaborated with the Durban Municipality, Siyabonga Secondary School, Umgeni Water, and the Department of Waste Management to commemorate Nelson Mandela Day with a Coastal Clean-Up initiative in Amanzimtoti.

The initiative was launched in response to the growing environmental challenges facing the coastal area, particularly the severe littering and pollution that have negatively impacted the marine ecosystem.

Recognizing the importance of preserving the environment, MUT's Department of Nature Conservation led this clean-up effort as a way to honour Nelson Mandela's legacy of community service and environmental stewardship. The event drew many community members, all eager to contribute to the restoration of their local environment.

In addition to the clean-up, the department also focused on environmental education, highlighting the importance of sustainable living practices. They introduced the concept of growing one's own food and donated seeds to community members, encouraging them to start their own gardens.

This initiative aligns with the department's broader goal of nurturing a generation that is environmentally conscious and capable of advocating for sustainable practices. The Coastal Clean-Up not only achieved its goal of cleaning the coastline but also succeeded in raising awareness about the critical importance of environmental care among the learners.

The positive response from the learners and local community members was a clear indication that such initiatives are significant in fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.

CEAD Forges Ties with Non-Profit Organisations During Mandela Month



Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi and Shabalala Senamile, 3rd and 4th from left, and members of local NPOs

In celebration of Mandela Month, CEAD focused on strengthening partnerships with local Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs). This initiative aims to foster collaboration between the academic community and NPOs, aligning the university's programs with community needs. It offers students and researchers opportunities for meaningful community service while allowing communities to benefit from university research.

A key event during Mandela Month was CEAD's participation in a program hosted by Qhosheyiphethe NPO on 21 July 2024. The NPO began its operations in early 2024, focusing on teaching Christian values and providing meals to young children.

Zanele Maluleka shared the organization's journey, which began with fifteen children and a mission to counter negative influences by offering spiritual guidance and support to uplift underprivileged children.

The event, held at eKhuthuthukeni Special School in Umlazi Q section, featured presentations from various speakers and guests. CEAD's Deputy Director, Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi encouraged the children to consider pursuing careers that are vital but often overlooked in Black communities. He also highlighted MUT's ongoing research in various communities, inviting those interested to access

the research findings and urging communities to welcome academic research initiatives.

Phumzile Shabane, a social worker from Lifeline at Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital's Thuthuzela Centre, spoke to the children about personal safety and the support available at the centre, which includes social workers, police, and doctors for cases of sexual abuse. She also offered tips on recognizing and protecting against abusive behaviours.

Themba Simelane of Iwundlu NPO highlighted the importance of respecting children's rights as outlined in the constitution. After the talks, the children received school uniforms donated by Kingsgate Clothing Group, reflecting the spirit of UBUNTU championed by Tata Mandela.

This event not only uplifted the children but also reinforced the importance of collaborative efforts between educational institutions and community organizations in creating positive change.

A Religious Student Body Brings Compassion to a Durban Old Age Home



TACTSO Members at John Dunn Old Age Home

Members of the Twelve Apostles Church in Trinity Students Organization (TACTSO) at MUT had the profound privilege of visiting John Dunn Old Age Home in Wentworth on 22 July 2024.

The students cleaned the home, aided the elderly, and engaged them in meaningful conversations, brightening their day with companionship. Their visit fostered a sense of community and care, leaving a lasting impact on both the students and the elderly.



TACTSO members entertaining the elderly

The experience instilled a deep sense of responsibility among the students, and engaging directly with the elderly residents allowed them to witness firsthand the tangible impact of their efforts.

This hands-on involvement highlighted the importance of giving back and staying connected to those in need.

The students' interaction with the elderly residents offered them insights into the general conditions of the elderly and the care they receive.

This learning experience equips the students with knowledge they can apply in caring for their own grandparents and elderly loved ones.

TACTSO MUT believes that engaging in activities like this contributes to the development of a compassionate and socially responsible generation, one that is well-prepared to address the challenges of the future.

Nature Conservation Environmental Project Plants Seeds of Empowerment for Umlazi Learners and Communities



Sizwakele Senior Primary school learners engaging in planting activities

Dr Sibonelo Thanda Mbanjwa and his Environmental Education and Sustainability (EES) project team visited Sizwakele Senior Primary School in Q Section on 22 July 2024, engaging with enthusiastic Grade 7 students.

The aim was to teach the learners how to plant their own vegetables and fruits, equipping them with valuable skills for the future. This hands-on activity not only prepared the learners to tackle challenges such as food insecurity but also encouraged them to share their newfound knowledge with their families and communities.

The following day, on 23 July 2024, the EES team extended their outreach to P Section, Umlazi. There, they donated seeds and agricultural tools to local community members and conducted a workshop on vegetable and fruit planting.

This initiative aimed to help the community members develop skills that would enable them to manage difficult times and reduce the impact of poverty. Both activities were conducted in honour of Nelson Mandela, embodying his values of empowerment and self-sufficiency.

Dr Mbanjwa and the EES team's outreach efforts in Umlazi exemplify the transformative potential of education and practical skills in building resilient communities. These initiatives not only honour Nelson Mandela's legacy but also create a ripple effect of positive change, encouraging participants to uplift their communities through shared learning and self-sufficiency. The EES project serves as an example of how education and collaboration can address real-world challenges and inspire hope for a better future.

Biomedical Sciences Department Raises Awareness with Health Talk on MUT Radio



On 23 July 2024, a significant health awareness event unfolded on MUT Radio, capturing the attention of the community and beyond. The Important Health Talk Alert on Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections (STI/STD), led by Nokukhanya Thembane, Senior Lecturer and Community Engagement Coordinator of the Department of Biomedical Sciences at MUT, was a resounding success.

Broadcast live at 11:15 am, the talk was streamed through MUT Radio, delivering crucial information on the prevention, treatment, and impact of STIs and STDs. The discussion was crafted to educate listeners about the importance of early detection, effective treatment options, and the broader implications for community health.

The expert insights and engaging delivery made the session both informative and impactful, and the audience were encouraged to disseminate this vital information within their own networks.

The broadcast marked the beginning of a promising new initiative. In response to the successful awareness show, the MUT Radio manager has extended an invitation to the Department of Biomedical Sciences for a regular slot on "Health Tuesdays."

This new platform offers an exciting opportunity to continue sharing essential health information, fostering ongoing dialogue, and promoting wellness within the community.

The introduction of "Health Tuesdays" is expected to enhance public health education, allowing the department to address various health topics regularly and engage with a broader audience. The department is enthusiastic about harnessing this opportunity to further its mission of promoting healthy living and supporting community health initiatives.

The Department of Biomedical Sciences is excited to explore new ways to use its platform as it continues its collaboration with MUT Radio, aiming to enhance community health efforts and promote a well-informed, healthier society.

MUT Catholic Church Students Make an Impact at Umlazi Old Age Home



ACTS members showing care and support to elderly residents at the old age

MUT students from the Association of Catholic Students (ACTS) visited Ekhanana Old Age Home on July 26th, 2024, creating a truly heartwarming experience. The students engaged in a variety of activities, including cleaning bedrooms, watering the garden, and assisting with health checks such as measuring blood sugar levels and monitoring blood pressure.

The warmth and gratitude of the residents, affectionately known as abo Gogo, deeply touched the students. This meaningful interaction not only taught them patience and compassion but also highlighted the importance of giving back to the community. Participating in the health checks emphasized the significance of healthcare and wellness, making the experience even more rewarding.

The Catholic Society extends special recognition to Nonduduzo Gumede, ACTS Chairperson, and Dr Ntuli from Student Affairs, whose exceptional leadership and organizational skills were significant in the successful planning and execution of this activity. Their dedication and enthusiasm inspired the students, ensuring a seamless and impactful event.

CEAD Runs Clean-Up Campaign on Campus in Honour of Mandela's Legacy



Participants at the clean-up campaign

On 26 July 2024, CEAD hosted a clean-up campaign, in partnership with KaMyaluza PTY LTD, Pretty Season Garden Company Pty Ltd, Durban Solid Waste, the Department of Environmental Health, and the Student Affairs Department. This event, aimed to raise awareness about environmental issues and encourage community involvement in maintaining a clean and sustainable environment.

The campaign began at Seme Hall, where participants received gloves, masks, and plastic bags. Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi facilitated the event, stressing the importance of community action in environmental sustainability. The key speakers - Mbali Dlamini, Dr L Mathews, Dr M Ntuli, Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, and Tholakele Zondi - emphasized the harmful effects of improper waste disposal, the connection between clean-up efforts and environmental health, the role of students in promoting sustainability, and the urgent need for collective action to address climate change.

After the briefing, participants were divided into groups and assigned various campus areas, including Seme area, TSC area, North Wing, North Campus, and residences. Each group spent an hour cleaning their designated areas and removing litter. This event honoured Nelson Mandela's legacy of service and commitment to a better world.



Participants awaiting assignment to their designated cleaning area



Enthusiastic participants actively engaging in the campus-wide clean-up campaign, demonstrating their commitment to environmental sustainability and community service



CEAD and Umlazi NPO Uplift Differently Abled Children at Umlazi Day Care Centre



Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi, 2nd from right, and members of Imbokodo Projects NPO

On the 30 July 2024, CEAD partnered with Imbokodo Projects NPO for a meaningful initiative at Masibambane Day Care Centre in Umlazi, Section H. This collaboration, part of Mandela Month celebrations, focused on supporting children, including those with Cerebral Palsy, by providing essential grocery items.

Imbokodo Projects NPO, known for its dedication to uplifting disadvantaged communities, has adopted Masibambane Day Care Centre as part of its ongoing efforts. This partnership began with a visit that deeply resonated with the organization, leading them to commit to supporting the center in the long term.

During the event, Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi from CEAD emphasized the importance of the partnership between MUT and community-based organizations.

He highlighted MUT's role in sharing research and aiding skills development while organizations like Imbokodo Projects NPO work to bring resources closer to those in need. The leadership of Masibambane Day Care Centre expressed their gratitude for the support received during Mandela Month, acknowledging the goodwill and commitment shown by CEAD and Imbokodo Projects NPO.

This collaboration not only brought much-needed assistance to the children but also showed the value of collective efforts in making a lasting impact on vulnerable communities. It also serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of collective action in addressing societal challenges and ensuring that no child is left behind.

Ecosystems Rehabilitation and Restoration Project Spreads Hope and Care in Celebration of Mandela's Legacy



Sithembile Nkosi, right, and ERR members with children at Isaiah 54 Children's Sanctuary

To close Mandela Month, the Ecosystems Rehabilitation and Restoration (ERR) Community Engagement Organization in the Department of Nature Conservation carried out two impactful initiatives on 31 July 2024. These efforts embodied community, generosity, and compassion, leaving a lasting impact at Isaiah 54 Children's Sanctuary and Ndukwenhle High School.

At Isaiah 54 Children's Sanctuary, the ERR team provided a heartwarming dinner for 25 people, including 12 children, bringing joy and a sense of belonging. Caregiver Auntie Zama expressed gratitude for the kindness and shared how the dinner gave her a well-needed break.

ERR's second initiative at Ndukwenhle High School focused on menstrual health awareness, with the distribution of sanitary pads and educational talks for 1,250 learners. This initiative, supported by MUT Clinic's Sister Sithole, empowered girls to manage their health confidently, breaking stigmas around menstruation.

ERR plans to continue these monthly efforts, seeking donations to expand their support with hygiene products for boys. Their contributions align with key United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), addressing poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, sanitation, and inequality.

ERR extends heartfelt thanks to all donors and looks forward to ongoing community support.

MUT Radio and Communications Department Shine Spotlight on Impactful Community Initiatives

In honour of Mandela Month, MUT Radio dedicated five broadcast slots to showcase various activities carried out by MUT staff. The interviews featured CEAD Director Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, who discussed the sign language workshop and shared insights into the activities organized in honour of Mandela with the support of CEAD.

CEAD's Deputy Director Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi and Dr PN Majiya, Head of the Department of Office Technology, also appeared on air to discuss their visit to the Ekhanana Old Age Home. While Dr ST Mbanjwa from the Faculty of Natural Science in his interview, highlighted several initiatives organized by the faculty. Professor Nkonki-Mandleni wrapped up the Mandela Month activities with her interview, providing a final reflection on the month's events.

Key takeaways from these interviews emphasized that extending Mandela Day to a full month allows for deeper engagement with Nelson Mandela's values and legacy, promoting continued community service, education, and reflection on social justice, equality, and human rights.

Worthy of note, the Marketing and Communications Department (MarComms) also highlighted the various activities on MUT's social media platforms, including Good News Friday (GNF), which increased the visibility of Mandela Month activities. This diverse media engagement effectively showcased the efforts of various MUT faculties, departments, and units in supporting and interacting with the surrounding communities.



**Professor Busisiwe
Nkonki-Mandleni**



Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi



Dr Nomusa Majiya



Dr Sibonelo Mbanjwa

CEAD Closes Mandela Month with a Vibrant Sports Extravaganza



Professor Nkonki-Mandleni, 3rd from left, participating in the aerobic session

The CEAD Directorate, in collaboration with the Sports and Recreation Department, brought Mandela Month to a triumphant close with a lively sports event tagged "Nelson Mandela Fun Day" on 31 July 2024. This event, held on MUT's campus, was the grand finale of a month-long series of activities aimed at honouring Nelson Mandela's legacy through community engagement and active participation.

The day was filled with energy and excitement as members of the MUT community, including staff, students, security personnel, cleaners, and a few external stakeholders, gathered to celebrate the spirit of unity and teamwork. The theme of the day was clear: promoting a sense of camaraderie and fun while promoting a healthy, active lifestyle.

The sports event was meticulously organized by the dynamic duo from the Sports Department: Qiniso Nqoko, the lead coordinator, with the capable assistance of Mgcini Mkhize.

The two Deputy Directors, Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi (CEAD) and Mr Mkwalo (Sports & Recreation) played a significant role in ensuring the seamless execution of the event. Participants had the opportunity to engage in a variety of sports and activities designed to cater for different interests and fitness levels. The event kicked off with a stimulating aerobics session, followed by a challenging obstacle run sponsored by Red Bull. Teams also competed in netball, with the Blue Team facing off against the Orange Team in a thrilling match. Chess enthusiasts had their share of the action, and the soccer matches saw multiple teams battling it out on the field in a display of skill and determination.

Adding to the festive atmosphere, MUT Radio was on-site, broadcasting live and capturing the spirit of the day. The "Nelson Mandela Fun Day" was more than just a sports event; it was a celebration of recognising that we are a community regardless of our work designations on campus.

The Sports Unit recognized the potential to elevate the Nelson Mandela sports celebration into an official wellness sports day for all MUT staff. This initiative could expand the event, accommodate even more participants, and likely increase the number of staff and teams involved.

As the sun set on a day filled with laughter, competition, and unity, it was clear that the event had achieved its goal of bringing people together in the true spirit of Mandela's legacy. The CEAD Directorate and Sports and Recreation Department can look back on this day with pride, knowing that they have successfully inspired and uplifted the MUT community.



Participants engaged in a strategic game of chess



The aerobic session



One of the football teams before their match



The netball session showcasing players in action



Participants navigating the obstacle run course

CEAD Appreciates All that Participated in the Mandela Month Initiatives

The CEAD Directorate team would like to extend their deepest gratitude to all the dedicated staff at MUT who actively participated in the various initiatives during Mandela Month. Your commitment to celebrating and honouring the legacy of Nelson Mandela through meaningful activities has not only made a positive impact on the communities we serve but has also reflected the true spirit of Ubuntu that Mandela embodied.

The CEAD Directorate appreciates your efforts in organizing and leading these initiatives, as well as your submission of detailed reports and pictures, which have been invaluable in documenting and sharing the success of these projects. Your contributions have brought these events to life and have helped us showcase the remarkable work being done across our university.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and for helping to make this Mandela Month a memorable and impactful one for all involved. Your continued commitment to community engagement is a testament to the values we uphold at MUT, and we look forward to your ongoing involvement in future initiatives.

As Nelson Mandela once said, *"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."* Your efforts this Mandela Month have embodied this profound truth. By giving your time, energy, and compassion to uplift others, you have contributed to making a real and lasting difference in the lives of those we serve. This is the essence of Mandela's legacy and the spirit of Ubuntu that we strive to live by at MUT.

Let us continue to carry forward this spirit of service and dedication, not just during Mandela Month, but in all our endeavours. Together, we can make a lasting impact on our communities and truly honour the legacy of Nelson Mandela.



Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
18 July 1918 – 5 December 2013

Connect with CEAD

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni

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Dr Oluwabunmi Popoola

Dr David Ighodaro

SPREAD THE WORD

Help us raise awareness about MUT's community engagement efforts by sharing our newsletter with your partners, collaborators, friends, family, and colleagues.

Your Feedback Matters!

We value your opinion - Please feel free to share your thoughts with us!

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JOIN US

VOLUNTEER

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