

Ubuntu Nexus

The spirit of collective humanity and interconnectedness

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (CEAD) DIRECTORATE

NEWSLETTER

October – December 2024

Thank you to Our Partners for the 2024 Success

On behalf of the CEAD team that works tirelessly behind the scenes I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to our collective journey of excellence in community engagement.

To our **University management**, your visionary leadership, strategic guidance, and unwavering commitment to fostering meaningful connections with the community have been crucial in driving our mission forward. Your dedication continues to inspire us all.

To our **staff and students**, your passion, hard work, and compassion have been instrumental in making a real difference. Your efforts in engaging with and positively impacting the lives of individuals and communities speak volumes about the heart and soul of our institution.

A special thank you to our **partners and collaborators**. Your support and expertise have enriched our initiatives and expanded our reach, allowing us to create a lasting impact. Together, we have forged bonds that benefit not only our respective organisations but also the communities we serve.

We are also grateful to our **sister universities** for their collaboration and shared knowledge. Your commitment to advancing collective goals strengthens the higher education landscape and amplifies the positive change we can achieve together.

Finally, to our **external stakeholders**, your support is invaluable. Whether through resources, guidance, or shared objectives, your involvement helps us to continually enhance the quality and scope of our work. We deeply appreciate your trust and collaboration. Together, we have made great strides towards our set goals for the year, and I look forward to the continued success of our partnership in making a profound and lasting impact on the communities we serve.



Professor Busisiwe
Nkonki-Mandleni

Director: CEAD

Second Edition of Inguyazana a Big Success



Participants at the 2024 Inguyazana

The 2024 Inguyazana event, hosted by the CEAD Directorate, brought together 75 participants representing academia, government, non-profit organisations, schools, and community groups. Held at Seme Hall on 17 October 2024, the event was themed "Reflections on the Progress of CEAD Programmes, 2024." It served as a significant platform for stakeholders to engage in critical dialogue on MUT's ongoing community engagement initiatives and future strategies.

The event was moderated by Phumzile Xulu, a community engagement practitioner from Durban University of Technology (DUT). It began with a welcome address by Dr Tobius Poswa, Head of the Department of Environmental Health

in the Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences. Dr Poswa emphasized MUT's commitment to integrating community engagement as a strategic pillar within its academic mission. Dr Poswa highlighted the importance of aligning teaching and research with community needs, to ensure that students graduate with a deeper understanding of societal challenges and the skills to address them.

The keynote address by Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, CEAD Director, showcased MUT's dedication to promoting partnerships, advancing student volunteerism, and integrating community-based research into its operations. Professor Nkonki-Mandleni reiterated the importance of collaboration and sustainability in ensuring meaningful and lasting impact.

The panel discussions, led by Professor Angela James from University of KwaZulu-Natal, brought a wealth of perspectives and expertise to the fore. Sithembile Nkosi, a Lecturer in the Department of Nature Conservation, presented her Ecosystems Rehabilitation and Restoration project, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human and environmental well-being and the critical need for conservation efforts. Sibusiso Thenjwayo, a student at MUT, Department of Human Resource Management shared his journey in volunteerism and the transformative impact it had on his personal and professional development, calling for greater recognition and incentives for student volunteers.

Dr Bisini Naidoo, an expert in Service Learning, expressed the importance of integrating classroom theory with practical community-based experiences. Dr Naidoo shared a compelling case study of a collaborative housing project, advocating for structured Service-Learning programmes across academic disciplines. Dr Bonginkosi Zwane of the Department of Accounting emphasized the role of education in promoting empowerment and dignity reflected on his personal experiences with poverty. Dr Zwane highlighted the importance of sustainable, community-driven initiatives that reduce dependency and enhance resilience.

Professor Blessing Karumbidza delivered a thought-provoking presentation on the need for asset-based community development and the role of universities as incubators for local economic growth. He emphasized harnessing community resources and promoting economic circulation within townships to drive sustainable development.



Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni delivering an address on the mandate of the CEAD Directorate



Professor Angela James leading the panel sessions

Former KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube's address focused on entrepreneurship and bridging the gap between education and employment. Dube-Ncube stressed the need for curriculum reforms that align with the economic realities of South Africa and highlighted the potential of technology and local manufacturing to empower communities.

The interactive sessions allowed participants to share insights, pose questions, and propose collaborative solutions to challenges. Discussions explored topics such as multidisciplinary collaboration, mapping community needs, and fostering inclusivity in community engagement efforts.



External stakeholders, including Bukwe Duma from the non-profit organization Sivisiswe B2M Africa Initiatives, called for the event to be held more frequently, highlighting its significance as a platform for meaningful engagement and knowledge exchange.

The 2024 Inguyazana event exemplified MUT's role as a channel for societal change, bridging the gap between academia and communities.

From left: Nomusa Dube-Ncube, Professor Nkonki-Mandleni, Buyisiwe Ngidi – Former Deputy Director CEAD, Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi – Deputy Director CEAD, and Dr David Ighodaro – Researcher: Community Engagement CEAD



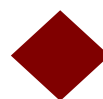
Former KZN Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube delivering keynote address

It celebrated progress, identified opportunities for growth, and set the stage for enhanced partnerships and sustainable initiatives that will continue to uplift communities and drive transformation.



Standing, Dr Tobius Poswa delivering address on behalf of the Dean of the Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences, Professor Alfred Msomi

Participants, such as Professor Theophilus Davies, a retired lecturer from the Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences, expressed immense appreciation for the event. They praised the professionalism of the speakers, the diversity of perspectives, and the opportunities for networking.



MUT Community Engagement Excellence Awards 2024



Seated, from left, Cynthia Mpati – one of the acknowledged CEAD stakeholders; Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni; Professor Nokuthula Sibiya (VC & Principal); Dr Anette Mienie, and Dr Kevin Ramsarghey

The CEAD Directorate celebrated excellence in community engagement through its prestigious 2024 Community Engagement Excellence (CEE) Awards, held at Seme Hall on 26 November 2024.

The event highlighted the University's commitment to sustainable development, societal transformation, and impactful collaboration between academia and communities.

Attendees included project leaders, academics, and external stakeholders who collectively celebrated MUT's achievements in driving community-focused initiatives.

The ceremony began with an engaging introduction by Programme Director Runyararo Marima, who praised the dedication of individuals and organisations making a difference through community engagement.

Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, delivered a powerful address, emphasizing MUT's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the importance of fostering collaboration. Professor Sibiya announced an annual joint awards ceremony commencing in 2025 to honour both research and community engagement excellence. Professor Sibiya was presented with a token of appreciation for her visionary leadership.



VC and Principal: Professor Nokuthula Sibiya had a very important message for the attendees

Keynote speaker, Professor Blessing Karumbidza, representing former KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube, delivered an inspiring address emphasizing entrepreneurship, asset-based development, and collective action as pathways to African progress.

Professor Karumbidza praised MUT's leadership for its commitment to progressive transformation, highlighting the appointment of the university's first female Vice-Chancellor as a milestone achievement. He encouraged collaborative efforts to address societal challenges.



Professor Blessing Karumbidza delivering his keynote address

The awards segment was the highlight of the event, recognizing exceptional projects and contributions. **Food Security for Better Health (FSBH) project**, led by Dr Caiphaz Hlungwani of the Department of Community Extension received top honours for his efforts in addressing food insecurity among Umlazi Township schools.

Other notable awardees included:

- **Environmental Education and Sustainability (EES) Project**
Led by a Lecturer in the Department of Nature Conservation, Dr Sibonelo Mbanjwa, this initiative educates schools and communities on ecological conservation and sustainable practices.
- **Agricultural Support Project (ASP)** - Headed by Phindile Mlaba, a Lecturer in the Department of Agriculture, the project equips smallholder farmers and unemployed youth with agricultural training and essential resources.
- **Food Safety Training for Informal Food Handlers** - Led by Dr Jugen Manyatsa, a Lecturer in the Department of Environmental Health, this project educates informal food vendors on hygiene and safety to ensure public health protection.
- **MUT Schools and Community Sports** - The MUT Sport and Recreation Directorate, in collaboration with the CEAD Directorate, leads the project which is recognized for enhancing sports development and engagement among high school students in Umlazi Township.
- **Impilo Community Project** – Coordinated by Batho Dube and Gwere Motta, Lecturers in the Department of Office Management and Technology, this project supports high school learners at Impilo Home by providing educational and life skills development.



Guests at the CEE Awards

In addition to project awards, CEAD honoured Dr Caiphas Hlungwani (FSBH Project), Dr Sibonelo Mbanjwa (EES Project), and Mohleko Helen Mapeka (Assisted Reproductive Technology - ART Project) for their outstanding dedication and impactful contributions to community engagement initiatives.

Stakeholders and MUT contributors were honoured for their unwavering support and dedication. Recognised partners included eThekweni Municipality, Sivusisizwe B2M Africa Initiative, Azibuye Digital Technologies, Small Enterprise Development Agency, Moses Kotane Institute, DMZ Agricultural Academy, Ubhavu Social Outreach, Ikamva Youth Organization, Impilo Home, Vumengazi Tribal Authority and TOYOTA.

Key MUT staff members acknowledged for their valuable contributions included Dr Tholi Cele and Nxumalo Nkosinathi from the Agriculture department, Deputy Director: Sport, Siyabulela Mkwalo, Dr Mthoko Emmanuel Ntuli, Student Development

Officer at Student Affairs department, Khehla Ndlovu, Head of Transport, Sithembile Nkosi, a Lecturer at the Nature Conservation department, and Dr Nobuhle Ndaba of the Department of Communication.

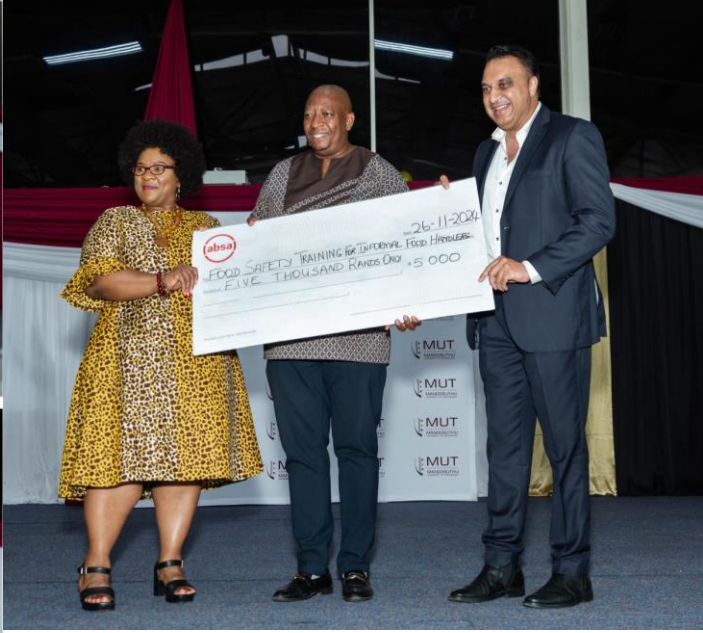
Entertainment from Ngilosu and Embonini Primary School learners added vibrant cultural elements to the celebration, with groove and Indian dance performances delighting the audience.

The day concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi, Deputy Director of CEAD, who commended all participants for their commitment to promoting impactful community engagement.

The 2024 CEE Awards reflected MUT's unwavering dedication to integrating academic excellence with community empowerment. Recognising innovative projects and fostering collaboration, MUT paves the way for sustainable and inclusive development, inspiring meaningful change in the communities it serves.

Photo Gallery





CONNECT WITH CEAD

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Dr Oluwabunmi Popoola – Writer

Dr David Ighodaro - Editor

Dudu Mbhele - Editor

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.

Together, we can amplify our message and inspire others to join us in our mission.

Your Feedback Matters!

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

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