



MUT Reading Project Competition Gains Momentum



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief



**Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-
Mandleni**

As we reflect on the third quarter of 2025, this edition of our Community Engagement Newsletter proudly highlights the meaningful ways in which Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) continues to live out its mandate of social responsiveness, innovation, and partnership with communities.

At the heart of the third quarter achievements is our unwavering commitment to improving quality of life through education, health, sustainability, and active citizenship. The Food Security for Better Health Project continued to nurture schools and care centres, promoting sustainable food production and improved nutrition, while strengthening collaboration with key partners.

In addressing the digital divide, MUT rolled out a Digital Literacy Programme for Grade 12 learners, empowering young people with essential skills for the digital economy through strategic partnerships with BANKSETA and ELET.

Community participation and youth development were further celebrated through the *2025 MUT Schools and Community Cup*, which once again united schools from Umlazi Township in spirited competition across football, netball, and a pilot chess programme. This initiative not only showcased sporting talent but also reinforced teamwork, discipline, and active citizenship. Equally inspiring was the *Science Spark Project*, which ignited curiosity and creativity among township learners, demonstrating the transformative potential of STEM education.

The third quarter also underscored the value of knowledge exchange and cultural heritage through the Traditional Medicine Symposium, which fostered dialogue between academics, students, traditional health practitioners, and community members. Our literacy initiatives continued to shine, with the Fundanathi Literacy Project and the MUT Reading Competition inspiring a love for reading and lifelong learning among young minds. Environmental stewardship remained a key focus as MUT students partnered with eThekweni Municipality during International Coastal Clean-Up Day, and celebrated Arbour Month through green action and community collaboration, reinforcing our responsibility to protect and sustain our natural environment.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the project leaders, coordinators, and dedicated staff whose vision, expertise, and commitment continue to drive the success of these initiatives. Our gratitude also goes to our valued partners and collaborators, government departments, sector education and training authorities, schools, community organisations, and local associations whose support and shared purpose make sustainable impact possible. We further acknowledge the unwavering support and strategic leadership of MUT University Management, whose guidance and commitment to community engagement enable these programmes to thrive.

Together, these initiatives reflect MUT's holistic approach to community engagement, one that integrates education, health, culture, sport, and environmental sustainability. We thank all our partners, staff, students, and community members who continue to make this work impactful, and we invite you to explore this edition as we celebrate the collective efforts that shape healthier, smarter, and more resilient communities.

Food Security for Better Health Project nurtures schools and care centres

The Food Security for Better Health Project, led by Dr Caiphus Hlungwani from the Department of Community Extension, Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences, continued to make significant strides in the third quarter of 2025. The initiative promotes sustainable food production and improved nutrition by engaging schools, care centres, and project partners.

Activities began on 27 July 2025 with visits to all participating schools for garden observations and reflections. Land preparation at Masibambane Care Centre took place in August, followed by a meeting with staff at the Place of Safety orphanage home on the same month, to plan their garden project. Seedlings were collected from the Department of Agriculture and transplanted at Masibambane. In the days that followed, the team continued with land preparation and demarcation at the Place of Safety, and subsequently at Zimisele, Bavumile, Sithokoziso, Ngqayizivele, and Sekelani Primary Schools, where planting activities were carried out. Each site benefited from the project's technical guidance and practical support, ensuring that the gardens were established efficiently and sustainably.

The monitoring phase took place in September 2025, during which all school gardens were assessed for growth progress, maintenance, and impact. This ongoing engagement allowed the team to provide advice and support to educators and learners involved in the gardening initiatives. Further reinforcing the project's commitment to sustainable agriculture, kraal manure was applied to the gardens at Masibambane Day Care, Sekelani Primary, and the Place of Safety in September.

Through these activities, the Food Security for Better Health Project has continued to demonstrate the power of community engagement and education in addressing issues of hunger and malnutrition. Its hands-on approach empowers participants while building sustainable and nutritious food sources for the future.



All pictures, above; land preparation, planting, watering, and vegetable growth across project sites

MUT bridges the digital divide for Grade 12 learners



MUT rolled out a Digital Literacy programme for Grade 12 learners from the beginning of July to the beginning of August 2025, in partnership with the Banking Sector Education and Training Authority (BANKSETA) and the Environment and Language Education Trust (ELET).

The initiative forms part of MUT's broader strategy to respond to the Fourth Industrial Revolution by equipping young minds with essential skills for the digital age.

Learners from Mafumbuka and Umlazi High Schools participated in the project.

The six-days programme was designed to provide practical, future-focused skills across four core areas, which are Coding and Robotics; Career Guidance, Beginner AI concepts; and Microsoft Office skills. Learners responded with overwhelming enthusiasm, praising both the course and the facilitators. Coding and Robotics emerged as the most popular module, inspiring interest in STEM careers such as Mechanical Engineering, Biomedical Sciences, Information Technology, and Chemical Engineering.

Career guidance sessions, particularly on Curriculum Vitae (CV) writing and career exploration, were widely regarded as empowering, while the introduction to AI concepts provided perspectives into an emerging and rapidly growing field. The Microsoft Office and general computer skills component helped learners overcome hesitations with digital tools, with activities such as Excel budget creation, and email communication proving especially practical. A particular highlight was the distribution of new laptops to learners, which they described as transformational for their academic and professional futures.

The programme concluded with a certification ceremony on 4 August 2025, attended by representatives from ELET, the CEAD, principals from Mafumbuka and Umlazi High Schools, and a district representative from the Umlazi Department of Basic Education. The event celebrated the learners' achievements and the programme's impact in equipping learners with digital literacy skills that open doors to new educational and career opportunities. Overall, the Digital Literacy programme was lauded for its relevance, effectiveness, and its role in preparing young learners for a rapidly evolving digital world.

Two days of sporting excellence in Umlazi

The 2025 MUT Schools and Community Cup brought two days of thrilling competition, community engagement, and sporting excellence to the King Zwelithini Stadium and Victoria Mxenge Indoor Sport Centre on 18 and 19 August 2025. This annual tournament, founded in 2023 by the MUT Sport and Recreation Unit and the CEAD, continues to showcase MUT's commitment to fostering community participation, nurturing young talent, and promoting a culture of active citizenship.

The 2025 edition welcomed 14 primary schools and nine high schools from Umlazi Township, with football, netball, and a pilot chess programme making up the exciting line-up of sporting codes. The event offered learners an opportunity to compete, demonstrate teamwork, and build their skills under the guidance of skilled technical directors and officials sourced from local sport associations. Primary school learners participated on the first day, with football, netball, and chess matches energising the stadium and the indoor arena. High school students participated on the second day, competing fiercely in football and netball, while chess competitors showcased strategic thinking and composure. Over the past two years, participating high schools were required to maintain a minimum matric pass rate, that is above 75% in 2023 and 80% in 2024, and demonstrate active participation in official school sport programmes. The same criteria were applied in 2025.

Logistics were meticulously organised, with safe transportation, meals, and health support provided to all participants and officials. Sponsors, including Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, (DSAC) KwaZulu-Natal, eThekweni Municipality Sport Development and Recreation (SDR), Occasion Shiner, and Aquelle, contributed generously, providing refreshments, equipment, and facilities that enhanced the experience for all involved.



Celebrating the talent and spirit of learners in chess, soccer, and netball at the event

The tournament delivered inspiring results across the board. In primary school football, Umlazi Primary School beat Windy Heights Primary School in a closely contested final, while Mgijimi Primary School dominated netball. Chess made a promising debut with talented young players from Zandile and Imisebe Primary Schools leading the U12 and U14 categories. High school competitions also produced thrilling moments, with Shumayela High School clinching the football title on penalties against Zwelibanzi High School, and Zwelibanzi High School asserting dominance in netball with a decisive victory over Umlazi Comtech High School. In Chess, Gagasi High School impressed with a strong overall performance, followed by Shumayela and Zwelibanzi High Schools.

The 2025 MUT Schools and Community Cup once again reinforced the importance of sport as a tool for community engagement, personal development, and fostering excellence. The success of the tournament reflects the dedication of MUT staff, school officials, sport associations, and community partners, all committed to creating an inclusive and vibrant environment for learners to shine. As the event continues to grow, it promises even greater opportunities to celebrate young talent, strengthen community ties, and inspire the next generation of athletes and scholars in Umlazi.



CEAD Director, Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, left, honoured the event with her presence



Dr Mfanozelwe Shoji, CEAD Deputy Director, shares a celebratory moment with a Chess winner



Winning soccer players in high spirits

Lighting the fuse of innovation: Science spark inspires the next generation



Participating learners and their educator proudly display their certificates and trophy earned at the competition



CEAD's Dr David Ighodaro shares a moment with one of the learners

The Science Spark Project lit Umlazi Township with creativity, curiosity, and scientific discovery on 21 August 2025, when it hosted a Science Show Competition at Ndukwenhle Secondary School in R Section. The event, led by Dr Sibonelo Mbanjwa, brought together passionate learners from Umbelebele Secondary, Shumayela Secondary, Ndukwenhle Secondary, and Igagasi Secondary, all eager to explore the wonders of science beyond their textbooks. This exciting initiative was a celebration of learning, innovation, and community spirit. Learners captivated the audience with their experiments and demonstrations, turning complex scientific concepts into accessible and entertaining displays of ingenuity. Through hands-on participation, they enhanced their understanding of science while developing valuable skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and effective communication.

The competition also highlighted the transformative power of STEM education in township schools. It created a dynamic platform where learners could test ideas, solve problems, and present their findings with creativity and confidence. The enthusiasm and originality displayed by the participants reflected a growing spirit of innovation that aligns with South Africa's vision of empowering youth through education and scientific advancement. This event showcased MUT's commitment to promoting education, equity, and opportunity, reminding all involved that when young minds are given the tools and encouragement to explore, they can illuminate the path to a brighter future.



Excited participating learners raise their trophy in celebration of victory

Traditional medicine symposium strengthens knowledge exchange and collaboration



Academics, students, traditional health practitioners, and community members gathered at MUT for the 2025 Traditional Medicine Symposium

The Traditional Medicine Symposium, held on 28 August 2025 at MUT, brought together a mix of academics, students, traditional health practitioners, and community members for a meaningful day of dialogue and knowledge sharing.

The event was jointly organised by the Environmental Education and Sustainability Project leaders, led by Dr Sibonelo Mbanjwa in collaboration with partners from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

This partnership highlighted MUT's commitment to promoting research, collaboration, and the integration of indigenous knowledge systems within the broader context of environmental sustainability and public health.

The symposium explored the critical role of traditional medicine in contemporary health practices and its connection to sustainable environmental management. Discussions highlighted how indigenous knowledge complements scientific research, providing innovative pathways to address community health needs, while preserving biodiversity and cultural heritage. Participants expressed strong interest in further collaboration, noting the importance of bridging traditional and modern approaches to advance both knowledge and community well-being.

Reflecting on the success of the event, organisers emphasised that the symposium had laid a firm foundation for future partnerships aimed at advancing research, knowledge exchange, and community engagement in the field of traditional medicine and sustainability.

Inspiring a love for reading: Fundanathi Literacy Project lights the way



A colourful centre-stage display featuring literary creations and photographs that captured the spirit of reading and creativity at the Fundanathi Literacy event

The spirit of literacy came alive on 29 August 2025 when the Fundanathi Literacy Project led by a Lecturer in the Department of Communication, Dr Nobuhle Ndaba, had a literacy event at Ngqayizivele Primary School. Learners eagerly took part in a range of literacy activities designed to encourage reading, imagination, and self-expression, in keeping with the project's mission to strengthen early childhood literacy in local schools.

The event reflected the collaborative efforts of the Department of Communication and the CEAD Directorate at MUT, as well as the invaluable support of Ngqayizivele Primary School staff and external partners such as Van Schaik Bookstores and eThekweni Municipality Libraries. Their combined dedication ensured that both the logistics and educational activities ran seamlessly, resulting in a well-organised and engaging programme. This partnership highlighted the project's unwavering commitment to tackling literacy challenges in under-resourced communities by creating opportunities for learners to develop reading skills.

excellent platform to share the project's vision, objectives, and achievements with a broader audience, further amplifying its reach and reinforcing the significance of literacy development in young learners.



Dr Ndaba Nobuhle, standing on the left, with an external stakeholder at the event

Dr Nobuhle Ndaba shares the story behind Funda Nathi project in exclusive MUT Radio interview



Dr Ndaba Nobuhle

An inspiring conversation on MUT Radio's *Hlanganani Midday Show* brought to light the vision behind the Funda Nathi Literacy Project, led by Dr Nobuhle Ndaba from the Department of Communication at MUT. The *Funda Nathi* project encourages a culture of reading that unites learners, teachers, families and communities.

"The name *Funda Nathi* captures our vision of reading as a shared journey," said Dr Ndaba during the interview with host Mvelo Hadebe. "We want children, parents and teachers to experience reading not as a school task but as something that connects them." Dr Ndaba explained that the project was inspired by national research findings and a sense of duty. "The 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) report revealed that more than 80 percent of South African Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning," she said. "That finding struck me deeply. Literacy is the foundation of learning."

Dr Ndaba added that President Cyril Ramaphosa's call for every child to read with understanding by 2030 motivated her to begin work in her own community. Since its launch, the *Funda Nathi* project has received strong support from local schools and families. Learners have gained confidence through storytelling and reading activities, while parents are realising that reading can also take place at home. "From the very first activities, we saw how hungry the community was for such an initiative," noted Dr Ndaba.

The project has also strengthened MUT's community connections by giving students opportunities to mentor and teach young learners. Although scheduling and resources remain challenges, partnerships with publishers and the municipality continue to sustain the initiative.

Looking to the future, Dr Ndaba expressed her hopes for the project's growth. "My greatest hope is to see a generation of children who are confident readers, creative thinkers and active citizens," she said. "If what we started in Umlazi Township can inspire similar projects elsewhere, we will be building a stronger, more literate nation." Through *Funda Nathi*, MUT continues to demonstrate how universities can shape communities through education, empowerment and a shared love of reading.

MUT celebrates young minds ready to excel in STEM

MUT hosted the completion ceremony for the 2025 Skills Development and Career Preparation Programme on Saturday, 30 August 2025. The event marked the culmination of 16 Saturdays of intensive academic support in Mathematics, Physical Science, and digital literacy for Grade 12 learners from eThekweni Municipality schools.

The ceremony celebrated the dedication and perseverance of learners from Umlazi Commercial High, Zwelethu Secondary, Mathinta High, Fundinduku High, and Mhawu High, recognising their commitment to academic excellence and personal growth.

Sandro Thaver of the Environment and Language Education Trust (ELET) presented certificates of completion, commending the learners for their patience and hard work while motivating them to excel in upcoming examinations. The ceremony featured inspiring career guidance talks, with Professor Angela James of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) emphasising self-awareness,

personal development, and purposeful career planning. Her “Head, Heart, and Hand” framework encouraged learners to combine knowledge, empathy, and practical skills in building their futures, while reinforcing the importance of taking ownership of their choices, and striving beyond conventional career paths.



Professor Angela James (UKZN) congratulates a learner on completing the programme

Ntando Majosi of the Lukhozi Youth Foundation provided learners with practical perspectives into STEM careers and tertiary education opportunities, covering fields such as Medicine, Engineering, Information Technology, and Applied Sciences. She highlighted bursaries, scholarship opportunities, and the importance of long-term planning, motivating learners to dream ambitiously and pursue careers that contribute meaningfully to their communities.

MUT peer mentors Asanda Sonqishe and Amahle Tshazwa also shared valuable guidance on student life, academic pathways, and holistic personal development, equipping learners with tools to navigate the transition to tertiary education successfully.

The ceremony included the distribution of prospectuses and brochures, group photographs to commemorate the event, and coverage by MUT Radio, capturing the excitement and optimism of the learners.

Closing remarks by Professor James, Thaver, and Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi, Deputy Director of CEAD, highlighted the power of collaboration between academic institutions, NGOs, and funding bodies, while encouraging learners to uphold values of commitment, humility, and service to their communities.

The completion ceremony celebrated the learners' achievements and inspired them to embrace their potential and take confident steps toward their future careers in STEM.

MUT joins global coastal campaign



MUT students participating in the global coastal clean-up campaign

In celebration of International Coastal Clean-Up Day on 20 September 2025, MUT students joined hands with eThekweni Municipality and other partners in a large-scale beach clean-up campaign at Dakota, Cuttings and Reunion beaches. The initiative, part of MUT's Ngqayizivele Student Volunteerism and Green Initiative for Climate Change Projects, gave students a hands-on opportunity to contribute to environmental preservation while learning about the growing importance of the ocean and green economies.

A total of 59 students participated in the campaign, including 37 from the Ngqayizivele Project and 22 the Department of Nature Conservation students organised by Dr Sibonelo Mbanjwa, a Lecturer in the department. The event formed part of CEAD's commitment to nurturing active citizenry among students by encouraging volunteerism and environmental stewardship.

MUT's involvement aimed to amplify student voices in climate action, expose them to environmental and municipal partners, and ignite their interest in green entrepreneurship.

At Dakota Beach, students rolled up their sleeves to collect litter, including plastics, bottles and other waste items that pollute the coastline and threaten marine life. The experience highlighted the collective responsibility of protecting South Africa's natural heritage.

After the clean-up, participants gathered at Reunion Beach for an engaging closing event addressed by representatives from various organisations, including the Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Narend Singh, and eThekweni Municipality Deputy Mayor, Councillor Zandile Myeni. Speakers highlighted the urgent need to address pollution and climate change.

Organisations such as KZN Wildlife, Mondi, Coca-Cola, Toyota, SAB and Drone Labs shared how they are contributing to sustainability through innovation, education and responsible business practices.

The students' reflections revealed just how impactful the experience was. As one student, Sthandwasethu

Mampuru, put it, "Beyond just cleaning up rubbish, I learned that small daily actions like minimising single-use plastics and recycling can make a real difference." Others echoed similar sentiments, highlighting how teamwork, awareness and responsibility are key to environmental preservation.

Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi, Deputy Director of CEAD, expressed satisfaction with the students' reflections. "I am happy to read that some students have interest in exploring business opportunities in the recycling space, ocean economy and green economy" he noted. The campaign strengthened MUT's mission to develop socially conscious graduates who take pride in community and environmental service.

Grade 4 and 5 learners take centre stage at MUT Reading Project competition



Learners representing their respective primary schools pose for a photo before heading off to compete for the top prize

MUT hosted its third Reading Competition under the flagship MUT Reading Project on Thursday, 25 September 2025. The event drew more than 100 participants, including learners from eight primary schools: Ngilosini, Sukuma, Emthethweni, Embonini, and Umgijimi from Umlazi, as well as Mariannridge, Chief Lokothwayo, and Kwamanzini from Pinetown, alongside educators, principals, and partners from the Department of Education, eThekweni Municipality, local libraries, and Shuter & Shooter Publishers.

Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, Director of CEAD, officially opened the event emphasising that while the schools differ in their contexts, they are united by the common purpose of cultivating a culture of reading and learning. Reading with comprehension, she noted, “is the cornerstone of education but remains a challenge for many learners from Grade 4 onwards.” The project, therefore, is not simply about competition but about inspiring learners, supporting teachers, and building bridges between schools and the University.

She reminded learners that they were the true stars of the day and encouraged them to see every page they read as an investment in their future.

Representing the Department of Education, Busisiwe Mahlambi, Umlazi District Director, commended MUT for spearheading such a meaningful initiative and affirmed the Department's pride in being a partner in the project. Quoting Frederick Douglass, Mahlambi reminded the audience that “once

you learn to read, you will be free forever” and highlighted the reality that 81% of South African Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning. She praised MUT and its partners for responding to this challenge in line with the President’s call for every child to read with comprehension by 2030.

Speaking directly to the learners, Mahlambi told the learners that their courage to participate was already a victory, and that “readers are leaders” who can open doors to new knowledge and opportunities. She also applauded the creativity of teachers who, despite limited resources, continue to find innovative ways to nurture a love for reading. Reaffirming Umlazi District’s motto that “no child must be left behind,” Mahlambi concluded with confidence that the learners involved would grow into lifelong readers, thinkers, and leaders.

Dance performances from Sukuma Primary School and a poem reading from Mariannridge Primary School added excitement to the event. Each of the eight schools presented five learners, with Grade 4 assessed on fluency, pronunciation, and expression, and Grade 5 evaluated on fluency and comprehension by six adjudicators.

The results reflected the hard work and dedication of the learners and their teachers.

In the Grade 4 category, Sukuma Primary School from Umlazi Township secured first place and the overall roving trophy, followed by Embonini Primary School in second place and Ngilos Primary School in third. Both these are Umlazi Township school. In the Grade 5 category, Mariannridge Primary School from Pinetown claimed first place and the roving trophy, with Emthetweni Primary and Ngilos Primary, both from Umlazi, taking second and third places respectively. All participants received certificates, while the top performers were honoured with trophies.

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Professor Nkonki-Mandleni, who acknowledged the commitment of learners, the tireless efforts of teachers and principals, and the invaluable support of the Department of Education, Shuter & Shooter, and other partners.

The MUT Reading Project Competition 3 celebrated the power of reading, the potential of young learners, and the collective effort of schools, higher education, and communities working together to build a brighter future. Now in its third year, the Reading Competition has already become a key annual highlight in MUT’s calendar and a demonstration of the University’s commitment to the communities it serves.



Department of Education Umlazi District Director, Busisiwe Mahlambi, shares a moment with Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni during the event



A joyful moment shared between an educator and a learner from Marriannridge Primary School

MUT celebrates Arbour Month with green action and community partnerships



Seedlings being planted at Sibusisiwe Comprehensive Technical College in Umbumbulu and at MUT North Campus

The Environmental Education and Sustainability (EES) Project, under the leadership of Dr Sibonelo Mbanjwa, a Lecturer at the Department of Nature Conservation, continues to advance the University's commitment to environmental sustainability and community engagement.

On 30 September 2025, the project team conducted an outreach visit to Sibusisiwe Comprehensive Technical College in Umbumbulu. This engagement formed part of the project's broader efforts to promote environmental awareness, encourage active participation, and strengthen collaboration with schools and surrounding communities.

This initiative set a strong foundation for Arbour Month 2025, highlighting the importance of establishing partnerships that inspire young people to become active custodians of the environment.

Building on this momentum, the team officially launched Arbor Month activities on 1 October 2025 with a tree-planting ceremony at MUT North Campus. As part of the initiative, 30 indigenous trees were donated and planted, representing both a symbolic and tangible contribution to the University's ongoing efforts to green its campuses and promote environmental stewardship.

Reflecting on the project's impact, Dr Mbanjwa noted that these activities exemplify MUT's unwavering dedication to environmental responsibility and sustainable development. He further emphasised that the success of the launch provides renewed momentum for the project to expand its outreach and continue fostering collective environmental action throughout Arbour Month and beyond.

MUT's student volunteer movement grows stronger

The spirit of service and social responsibility shone brightly at MUT as students continued to make an impact through the Ngqayizivele Student Volunteerism Programme between July and September 2025. Coordinated by Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi and Thobile Mbhele from CEAD, with support from Student Affairs' counsellor, Nokuthula Ndlovu, the initiative has seen students dedicating their time and energy to meaningful community-based projects in collaboration with local organisations and civil society partners.

The concept, designed to enhance student leadership and civic responsibility, has since grown into a cornerstone of MUT's community engagement agenda. Recruitment drives held during registration periods and online platforms drew more than 70 students eager to volunteer for the Denis Hurley Centre and other outreach programmes.



Dr Raymond Perrier, Director of the Denis Hurley Centre, guiding MUT students through the volunteer induction session

The Denis Hurley Centre Volunteerism Programme continues to thrive, providing students with a profound understanding of homelessness and the power of empathy. The second wave of volunteer induction, held on 16 August 2025, brought together students, staff, and members of the homeless community for an inspiring morning of dialogue and reflection. Guided by Dr Raymond Perrier, Director of the Centre, participants explored the realities of homelessness in Durban and discussed the values of compassion and dignity that reinforce volunteer work. MUT students were introduced to their service roles, which include assisting in the kitchen, preparing and serving meals, and engaging meaningfully with the homeless community. In addition, MUT students demonstrated their commitment to community service and sustainability through Mandela Month outreach, STEM and Digital Literacy support, and active participation in environmental initiatives such as the International Coastal Clean-Up Day campaign.

Looking ahead, CEAD plans to continue monitoring the Denis Hurley Volunteer Programme and to host reflection sessions, where students will share their experiences and lessons learnt. Fundraising initiatives are also in the pipeline to support future outreach activities, including meal preparation for the homeless during Mandela Month. MUT continues to celebrate the dedication of its student volunteers who, through compassion, teamwork, and service, embody the University's commitment to building stronger, more inclusive communities.

Voices from the frontline of service

My name is Ndalenhle Zondi. I am a second-year Diploma in Human Resource Management student at Mangosuthu University of Technology. I am a student volunteer with the Community Engagement and Development (CEAD) Directorate. I have developed a strong interest in mentoring, particularly in subjects such as Statistics and Mathematical Literacy.

I firmly believe in the transformative power of education and its ability to shape lives, which is why I am so passionate about supporting learners, not only academically, but also personally. One experience that profoundly shaped my desire to volunteer was attending a programme hosted by the Minister of Sport, Gayton McKenzie. During this event, we encouraged learners, especially those who lacked father figures. That day, I witnessed firsthand how positive role models can influence young lives, and I left with a quote that has stayed with me, "In life, you have two choices and one decision to make. You must be wise because you only have one way door, and you don't want to regret it in the future."

As a volunteer, I have learned the importance of kindness, always being ready to assist others, and giving back to the community that nurtures us. Looking ahead, I remain committed to supporting students and learners in both their academic and personal journeys, knowing that even small acts of mentorship can make a significant difference in their lives.



Ndalenhle Zondi, actively contributing as a student volunteer from the Faculty of Management Sciences



Mandisa Mabika

Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences

Department of Nature Conservation

Step Up. Stand Out. Serve.

Be Part of the Change with CEAD

Calling All MUT Students!

Are you ready to make an impact beyond the classroom?
The **CEAD Directorate** invites **YOU** to get involved in community engagement initiatives that empower, uplift, and inspire.

Meet Mabika Mandisa

Driven by purpose, Mandisa Mabika embraced the challenge of the Community Engagement Essay Competition 2025. Her powerful reflections captured the true spirit of community involvement and the courage to make her voice heard.

Why Get Involved?

Volunteering with the CEAD Directorate isn't just about giving back — it is about growing forward. Through our initiatives, you will:


- Gain valuable experience
- Build leadership and communication skills
- Connect with purpose-driven peers
- Make a real difference in the lives of others


Imagine what **YOU** could achieve if you got involved — and stayed involved.

The Directorate Offers Ongoing Opportunities Throughout the Year!

Don't just participate once — become an active agent of change.

Here's How You Can Join Us!

 **Information Booths:** Look out for our vibrant booths at the university entrance at the start of each semester. Instant sign-up and info!

 **Student Organisations:** We are working hand-in-hand with student groups to bring opportunities to you.

 **Faculty and Staff:** Keep an ear out for announcements in your lectures and emails!

Need More Info? We are Here to Help:

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Connect With CEAD!

SPREAD THE WORD!

Help us raise awareness about MUT's community engagement efforts

Share 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."

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM

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YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS!

We value your opinion – please feel free to share your thoughts with us!

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