



February 2023

News Letter

The months that were

Women in Southwestern Uganda find Support to Battle Urogynecology Disorders. Thanks to MedLend



Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) and Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH) joined forces to provide free gynecological surgeries for people in Mbarara and neighboring districts from February 20 to February 24, 2023. The camp was funded by MedLend, a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, USA, and was led by Dr. Musa Kayondo (PhD), head of the Department of obstetrics and gynecology of MUST. The camp aimed to provide access to medical care and treatments to those who could not otherwise afford them.



The MedLend team, led by Dr. Michael Margolis, is comprised of nine medical specialists that have been working in Uganda for the past 15 years. Dr. Margolis thanked the volunteers from the US for their dedication to the camp and highlighted the fact that MedLend is a non-profit organization that collects funds to support developing countries. He also mentioned that they mentor local physicians in order to promote advanced and sustainable surgical practices. With pride, Dr. Margolis noted that he was able to train and mentor two Ugandan surgeons, Dr. Musa Kayondo and Dr. Njagi, who have now become even better than him. He concluded that he is content to retire knowing that he has trained the “best of the best.”

L-R Dr. Njagi Joseph and Dr. Musa Kayondo



MedLend is committed to tackling the issue of access to medical care for women in Uganda, who face financial and logistical barriers to proper health care. Through providing medical missions, mentoring local physicians, and supplying medical care and supplies, MedLend is helping to give hope and support to these women and enable them to lead healthy lives. Dr. Magolis expressed his gratitude for MedLend's efforts, recognizing that it has made a considerable difference in the lives of many Ugandans.

L-R Dr Paul K. Kato Dr. Brenda Ainomugisha and Dr. Margolis Micheal

Mr. Moris Muhire, the camp coordinator, stated that the number of patients attending the surgeries had been increasing year by year due to the success stories, full board sponsorship, and effective mobilization and coordination efforts. He explained that these efforts involved using local communication mediums such as radio stations, churches, and community meetings to reach both rural and urban areas.



MUST and CAMTech Uganda Welcome University of Illinois Medical Students for Equity Medicine Innovation Program



Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) and the University of Illinois (UI) signed a Memorandum (MoU) of Understanding in 2020 with many potential areas of engagement. The first flagship program was to engage the UI medical students taking the Equity Medicine Innovation program in the innovation pathway of Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies (CAMTech) Uganda.

According to Ms. Nuriat Nambogo the Research and Grants Manager at CAMTech Uganda, this year, the UI sent ten (10) third-year medical students who came along with three (3) faculty members to be supported through the CAMTech Innovation Pathway in addressing challenges in fracture management, mobility in rehabilitation and adherence to diabetic treatment.

She further described that the team has been at MUST since 12th February 2023 being guided to put together concepts that explain the problem, the proposed innovative solution, the commercial viability, team, and partnership sections, and also engaging health workers as the end users.

The UI students were divided into three groups each addressing a specific health challenge which included;

- Cheri Wheelchair Kits: This is aimed at ensuring that people with physical disabilities have reliable, easy, and relatively independent movement and have access to a low-cost wheelchair that is suitable to their unique needs.



Presented by: Vinay Sama, Eli Adams and Kaci Cunningham (All are III year medical students)

- DART (Diabetes Accessible and Resourceful Testing): DART is a mobile application that will be utilized by Village Health Teams (VHTs) to record glucometer readings for patients within their jurisdiction to reduce the number of clinic visits needed simply for testing. VHTs are to be equipped with glucometers, strips, and lancets that will serve as testers for patients that reside within their villages.



- Poly Weave (An Alternative to traditional plaster of Paris Casts): Poly Weave is an orthopedic cast that consists of a woven sisal straw base reinforced with a polyurethane resin, which polymerizes when activated with water. This will allow all patients with fractures to receive timely, accessible, and definitive management



Presented by David Qi, Dharmmie Bankole and Harveen Kaur. (III-year medical students)

On Wednesday 22nd February 2023, these concepts were presented to experts in a Project Qualification Review (PQR) exercise.

The projects were conducted under the guidance of Dr. Data Santorino, Mr. Mukama Martin, Ms. Angela O'Bryant, and Ms. Nuriat Nambogo, Dr. Sarah De Ramirez, Dr. Mary Stapel. Other project coordinators included: Ms. Sharon Ashaba, Mr. Brian Kamukama, and Mr. Ivan Ilemut at CAMTech, and Erica Litzsey at UICOMP.

The students from UI expressed gratitude to MUST, CAMTech Uganda for contributing their time, insight, and resources to make their stay in Uganda a success.



L-R, Mr. Mukama Martin, Ms. Angela O'Bryant, and Ms. Nuriat Nambogo, Dr. Sarah De Ramirez Dr. Mary Stapel.

The judges included: Mr. Peter Nuwagira, Pharmacy department Mr. Rogers Mwavu Faculty of Computing and Informatics (FCI), Dr. Kisitu Kyengela, department of Surgery Dr. Sarah Nabachwa Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, Mr. Harman Kaziibwe, Department of Physiotherapy, Dr. Simon Kawuma FCI, Dr. Andrew Mutekanga department of Internal Medicine and Dr. Martin Bukenya a public health specialist who was the overall observer.



The Thereafter UI team had a dinner with CAMTech and MUST staff members at Emburara Farm Lodge where they were wished journey mercies back to USA.

MUST Students Tipped to Embrace Entrepreneurial Opportunities to Reduce Uganda's Unemployment Rates



Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) through the MUST IUC-UCoBS project organized a guest lecture aimed at “Unlocking an entrepreneurial mindset for youth employability”. The guest lecture was presided over by Prof. Lies Vanhaelemeesch a researcher from Howest University of Applied Sciences in Belgium.

The lecture was organized under MUST IUC-UCoBS subproject 5 spearheaded by senior lecturers in the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences and it was attended by students and staff members from all the six Faculties at MUST.

Prof. Charles Tushabomwe Kazooba the Deputy Vice Chancellor Finance and Administration who also doubles as the local leader of the MUST IUC-UCoBS Project thanked Prof. Lies Vanhaelemeesch for her love towards MUST and Uganda at large. He advised the young entrepreneurs to be innovative and think about businesses that have got an element of innovation.

Prof. Lies Vanhaelemeesch and Dr. Manasseh Tumuhimbise are the team leaders for MUST IUC-UCoBS subproject 5 which is focusing on increased youth employability through skilling, innovations, experiential learning and technology transfer.



Staff and Students during the guest lecture

In her presentation, Prof. Lies Vanhaelemeesch applauded the MUST community for their eager to learn and attain entrepreneurship skills that will not only transform them as individuals but also benefit Uganda as a country.

“At Entebbe International Airport, my eyes landed on a big signpost with words welcome to Uganda, the pearl of Africa. Indeed, this is the pearl of Africa. According to statisticians, by 2050, Uganda’s population will be approximately at 100 Million and we expect that the demand for jobs will be high with the available few opportunities. Entrepreneurs shall be needed to come up with solutions that will generate jobs to meet the increasing population,” Prof. Vanhaelemeesch described.



‘Entrepreneurship is when you at upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into values for others. Everywhere you go, think about how entrepreneur you’re. Let your minds act like a parachute; they only function when they are open. make proper choices in the learning environment.’ She tipped.



Representatives of UCoBS partners and students during the guest lecture

Furthermore, Prof. Vanhaelemeesch challenged students to embrace multidisciplinary university ecosystems to foster youth innovation and entrepreneurship through experiential learning for employability.

On behalf of students, Akugizibwe Geoffrey a third-year student of Accounting and Finance thanked Prof. Vanhaelemeesch for unlocking their entrepreneurial mindset.

“We need to equip ourselves with entrepreneurial skills so as to solve our daily challenges as youths. We should always be willing to learn implement what we have learnt and change ourselves. We are grateful that today Prof. has dedicated this time for us to become change agents, now it’s our time to put into practice what we have acquired,” He happily stated.

MUST IUC-UCoBS is 12-year project titled University as a Facilitator for Community-based Sustainable Solutions to Demographic Challenges in South Western Uganda” hereafter referred to as UCoBS.



Akugizibwe Geoffrey giving vote of thanks to Prof. Vanhaelemeesch

Mbarara University of Sciences and Technology launches 12-year MUST IUC-UCoBS Project



Dr. Warren Naamara and the Ambassador of Belgium His Excellency Rudi Veestraeten

On February 7, 2023, Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) launched a 12-year project known as MUST- Institutional University Cooperation titled “University as a facilitator for community-based sustainable solutions to demographic challenges in southwestern Uganda (MUST IUC-UCoBS)”. The launch aimed at creating a deeper understanding of the project, synergizing ideas, set plans and strategies between MUST and her implementing partners.

The chairperson of the 7th university council, Dr. Warren Naamara welcomed the Ambassador of Belgium His Excellency Rudi Veestraeten who was the chief guest at the launch. He further appreciated the Belgium government and Flemish partners for implementing an exceptional project with MUST. In his remarks, the Ambassador commended the MUST administration and UCoBS leadership for coming up with a unique idea that gave birth to the UCoBS project. He highlighted the partnerships the Belgium government has with Uganda in sectors of education, health, and environmental conservation and pointed out the benefits of these partnerships. H.E Rudi Veestraeten encouraged MUST to use the funds given to them for the right cause so that the project objectives are met.



Associate-Prof.-Charles-Kazoo-ba-Tushabomwe-Prof.-Gily-Co-ene-Ms.-Kathleen-Wytack-Dr. Warren Namaara-and-H.E-Rudi-Vastraeten.-After-the-Ambassador-receiving-a-gift-from-MUST

MUST IUC- UCoBS is one of the five global institutional university cooperation partnerships funded by VLIR-UOS in Belgium. The project is jointly implemented with the Flemish Higher Education institutions coordinated by VUB. The six sub-projects that make up the MUST IUC-UCoBS project are;

- Improved conservation practices of the environment and natural resources
- Improved mechanisms for climate change adaptation for sustainable food production for small-scale farmers
- Improved access and utilization of affordable energy technologies among female-headed households and the urban poor
- Improved sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, children, and adolescents
- Increased youth employability through skilling, innovations, experiential learning, and technology and transfer

These areas were expounded by Assoc. Prof. Charles Tushabomwe Kazooba, the Project's local coordinator as he gave his opening remarks. Prof. Gily Coene the Flemish coordinator noted that the project was developed through a multidisciplinary team in the areas of medicine, environment, engineering, business, ICT, and gender studies. She observed that higher institutions play an important role in shaping and changing our societies and the project aims at ensuring sustainable changes for the most at-risk populations.



The Ambassador of Belgium to Uganda planting a tree to promote environmental protection

According to the Vice-Rector, of Internationalisation at VUB Prof. Karin Vanderkerken, the launch of the project was a combination of the relationship MUST and Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB) have built together over a long time. "We have built a mutual relationship of working together and we are looking forward to its sustainability. I am proud that we have been able to bring together researchers from different disciplines such as medicine, business, and ICT. On behalf of the Flemish team, I want to thank MUST and the UCoBS team for the hospitality, trust, and commitment towards the implementation of this project, keep it up" Prof. Karin remarked.

VLIR-UOS Programme Manager, Ms. Kathleen Wuytack gave a presentation and noted that VLIR-UOS is the Belgium University Cooperation focused on ensuring projects create positive change that is sustainable and enables partners to learn from each other. She stated that the IUC partnerships are important to VLIR-UOS since they have linkages with the government, civil society, and the private sector.

Dr. Medard Twinamatsiko the Deputy local project coordinator revealed that the project thematic areas resonate with the VLIR-UOS main objectives of conservation of ecosystems, resilience to climate change, ensuring healthy lives, equitable and quality education, improved research, innovations, and entrepreneurship.



Ugandan partners during a panel discussion

There were panel discussions between the implementing partners to dialogue about the project from different perspectives. These included representatives from the partnering institutions in Belgium such as VUB, Ghent University, KU Leuven, University of Antwerp, and HOWEST. Implementing partners from Uganda were Uganda Wildlife Authority, National Agriculture Research Organisation, Centre for Energy and Energy Conservation, Ministry of Health, National Information Technology Authority- Uganda, and Start hub. As he closed the launch event, Prof. Celestino Obua, the Vice-Chancellor (VC) MUST appreciated the partners for working with the MUST team to develop the IUC- UCoBS project, he urged them to utilize the resources given for the purpose set out. He pledged his support as the VC and reminded members that the university had waived off tuition for all the scholars on the project. He also encouraged the scholars to finish their programmes on time. The launch set a favorable ground for the MUST- IUC- UCoBS project to attain its set objectives.

MUST – University of Ngozi partnership strengthened.



In pursuit to advance the partnership between MUST and the University of Ngozi (UNG) in Burundi, the MUST delegation composed of Prof. Nixon Kamukama the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs, Mr. Timothy Ndiana Mugumya (Esq) the Legal officer, and Dr. Jonans Tusiimire the Deputy Dean Faculty of Medicine visited UNG on 13th and 14th February 2023. The focus was to streamline the two universities' priorities and produce a work plan, which both universities will adopt and incorporate into their respective programs to engage in teaching and research.



Dr. Valence Ndayisenga (extreme left) explained to the delegation how the water purification system in the food, nutrition, and dietetics analytical laboratory works.



L-R: Mr. Timothy Ndiana Mugumya, Consular James Wafula, Prof. Nixon Kamukama, and Dr. Jonans Tusiimire during one of the meetings.

This partnership is fostered by the governments of Uganda and Burundi. A cooperation coordination committee to bring this partnership to fruition was put in place last year after a resolution was passed in the Joint Permanent commission meeting in March 2022 in Bujumbura.

MUST appreciate the support of the Uganda Embassy in Burundi spearheaded by Consular James Wafula for the realization of this important visit.

MUST Host 40 Students and Staff from the University of Buea Cameroon for Exchange Program on Research and Innovation Development



Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) community was pleased to welcome students and staff from the College of Health Sciences at the University of Buea in Cameroon. A delegation of 40 students and staff arrived in Ugandan on Monday 20th February 2023 and they were hosted at MUST under the Pharmbio-trac project sponsored for a period of two weeks.

Within this period, the two universities (MUST and University of Buea) strengthened their partnership which was initiated in 2021, when Assoc. Prof. Robert Tamukong led a team from Phambiotrac to Cameroon where a memorandum of understanding was signed. In the first week, the delegates were equipped with research writing skills, and this was followed by placing the delegates in different departments at MUST for one week. In his welcoming remarks, Prof. Robert Tamukong revealed the genesis of this partnership which resulted in the coming of health professionals from the University of Buea to MUST.



It was in December 2021, I decided with my team to visit the University of Buea about this exchange program. I met good people there and we decided to take this relationship further. The vice chancellor of the University of Buea and the team welcomed the idea and a memorandum of understanding was signed. MUST opted to take the first initiative of hosting the team from Buea University and later our team will also travel to Cameroon for the same purpose. They were here for two weeks and within these weeks we have acquired research and grant proposal writing skills and then the visitors were placed in various departments,” He reported.

Dr. Joseph Ngonzi the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine expressed thanks to Pharmbiotrac and the delegation from the University of Buea to ensure that the MOU which was signed in 2021 is now at its implementation stage. He stated that as a Faculty of Medicine, they are delighted to associate with the University of Buea and pledged to continue embracing the details of the MOU to ensure that it’s fully implemented.

Prof. Nixon Kamukama, the Deputy Vice-chancellor of Academic Affairs at MUST emphasized that universities exist to solve societal challenges but not to just produce papers only. He thanked Prof. Tamukong for this collaboration to ensure that the two institutions are working together to address community challenges through research and innovations thus leading to the development of Uganda and Cameroon.

Prof Celestino Obua, Vice Chancellor MUST officially welcome visitors to MUST which houses the best medical school in the region. He informed them that MUST is composed of a dedicated team that is focused on achieving MUST’s strategic goals and objectives.



R-L The Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor Receive a Cameroon Jazzy

“It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this part of the country. 34 years back, we were the only university located in what people used to call a rural area because we were far from Kampala but now, we are in our own city of Mbarara generating knowledge to help the country and the region.

He recognized the Pharmbiotrac team that went to Cameroon to initiate this fruitful. He explained that the university needs to be a melting point of ideas and that MUST is home to great ideas.

“I want to thank the students from the University of Buea that chose to come to this beautiful country Uganda and to the prestigious university (MUST). The important thing is that you’ve traveled to experience and discover new knowledge. The interaction you’re going to have with our students and lecturers will be the best. We are honored to see that this partnership is beginning to take shape. Through research and grant proposal writing skills you are going to be taught, we shall ensure that we are working together towards winning grants. When you leave here, we would love to see tangible results,” Prof. Obua indicated.

Prof. Chichom Mefire, Vice Dean Research and cooperation Faculty of Health Sciences appreciated the warm welcome by the MUST, It is not every day that you see a Vice Chancellor come to welcome guests, I am humbled by Prof Obua’s presence today”. He thanked the Pharmbiotrac team for choosing University of Buea, to benefit from this exchange programme, and in the long run, entire Africa will benefit.

Prof. Halle-Ekane Gregory from the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Buea acknowledged Prof. Obua for the warm welcome they received from the entire MUST community.

“In exchange programs like this, there is always something to share and learn. We are here to share what we have and learn new things from MUST and Uganda. We would like to use this opportunity to thank you, particularly for your leadership and networking skills. Through collaborations like this, the University of Buea and MUST become twins; our mission and mission are nearly identical to those of MUST. We need to use this opportunity to make a difference in our institutions and countries through research. Together, we shall excel,” He cherished.

3rd Prayer Breakfast: Preachers Tipped MUST Community to Remain United For Continued Success of MUST



On 15th February 2023, Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) successfully organized its 3rd annual prayer breakfast at its town campus in Mbarara City. This year's prayer breakfast was organized under the theme "we are one" and it was graced by religious leaders from the catholic, Anglican, and Muslim communities within Mbarara.

The Chief Preacher was Fr. Cyril Mujuni from Karama Spiritual Centre accompanied by Sheik Hajji Abdul Mohammed Mukwaya (District Khadi of Mbarara), the very Rev. Canon Bobs Mwesigwa (Dean St James Cathedral Ruharo) and Rev. Jastus Biryomaisho Murokore (Chaplain St Luke's Anglican Community MUST).

In his remarks, Sheik Hajji Abdul Mohammed Mukwaya expressed thanks MUST administration for their culture of organizing annual prayer breakfasts to thank God for what he has done for the MUST community and also to dedicate the new year into his hands.

"We thank you for this initiative of organizing a prayer breakfast every year. When we pray every year, every challenge we have goes away, and our lives are refreshed. May the good Lord reward you abundantly. We must be one and this is well mentioned in the stories of our creation, where the Almighty God didn't consider tribe, geographical location, color, or size when he was creating man. We are like a structure if one pillar falls, it cannot stand. Divided we fall, united

we stand," He expounded.

The Very Rev. Canon Bobs Mwesigwa tipped MUST community to always put God first in whatever they do and maintain teamwork spirit if they are to still serve the nation. This was based on the reading which was extracted from 1 Corinthians 12:27 which was outlining how different body parts relate to each other have a living human being.

"Just as a body though one has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other," the verse reads in parts.

Fr. Cyril Mujuni preached to the congregation the gospel of togetherness and loving one another regardless of earthly differences as it is reflected in Mark 12: 29-33.

On behalf of the Vice-chancellor, Prof. Charles Tushaboomwe Kazooba testified that MUST produce excellent graduates but these are produced as a result of teamwork amongst MUST community members. And this reflects the theme for this year's prayer breakfast.

The prayer breakfast was concluded with prayers dedicated to MUST Staff, students, and to the departed souls of the MUST community.





EDITOR



Mr. Bernard Mubiru

Compiled by Angella Nakato Muyingo PRO. Proudly sponsored by the Vice Chancellor's Office