



UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

**Our Future
Reimagined**



INTUTHUKO

OFFICIAL UJ DEVELOPMENT AND
FUNDRAISING MAGAZINE



CONTENTS

2	Foreword from Development and Fundraising Director: Ms Daphney Nemakhavhani
4	UJ's 'Double Our Future Impact' initiative receives boost from the Alistair Mokoena Education Fund, empowering students
5	UJ community gears up for major fundraising walk with 'Steps 2 UJ Future Walk'
7	UJ and industry partners forge path for socioeconomic development
8	UJ is serious about Future-Fit Leaders: Celebrating UJ Alumnus Pat Mahlangu's Impact
9	Minister Ronald Lamola Champions AI Integration in South Africa's Justice System
6	UJ Student Wins 2023/2024 Nedbank & Old Mutual Budget Speech Competition
8	UJ Student Wins 2023/2024 Nedbank & Old Mutual Budget Speech Competition
9	UJ launched an anthology celebrating mothers
10	UJ Student Wins 2023/2024 Nedbank & Old Mutual Budget Speech Competition
11	UJ launched an anthology celebrating mothers
12	Sophiatown Reborn: UJ Research Project Explores VR to Reclaim a Lost Community
13	Heroes without Capes: Zero Hunger
14	Notre Dame-IBM Technology Ethics Lab Funds UJ's Technology Transfer and Culture in Africa Project
15	Mpedi family launches Neurodiversity Studies Scholarship at UJ
16	UNESCO wants UJ's pioneering teaching school to join its network of associated schools
18	UJ Shines at the 2024 Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans Awards
19	Mandela Day Impact: Cowan-Harper-Madikizela Attorneys joins UJ in making a difference!
20	Development and Fundraising Office spends their 67min for Mandela Day at Kids Haven



Editorial Team



Ms Daphney Nemakhavhani



Ms Thuli Hlabahlaba

This Intuthuko magazine edition is co-edited by Dr Dawn Isabel Nagar, (from the Development and Fundraising Office). We acknowledge the University of Johannesburg's Faculties' support as well as the UJ Graphic Studio's support for graphics, design and layout.

UJ Convocation

is the official interface between UJ and its alumni and the primary channel for UJ Alumni to pass their opinions to the University for consideration.

The Institutional Statute of UJ determines that the membership of the Convocation consists of:

- Alumni (diplomates and graduates of formal subsidised qualifications from the University of Johannesburg, the former Rand Afrikaans University and the former Technikon Witwatersrand)
- The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and other members of the Management Executive Committee of the University;
- Permanent academic employees of the University;
- Retired permanent academic employees of the University.

There are various mechanisms through which Convocation discharges its mandate:

- The Executive Committee of Convocation meets frequently to discuss University matters, changes affecting UJ alumni and to develop approved responses;
- The Annual Meeting of Convocation (AGM) is open to all members of Convocation;
- The Convocation is a legally constituted body that concerns itself with key issues of concern to alumni.

Join us at the upcoming Convocation AGM, more details to follow.

SCAN ME



FROM THE DESK OF THE **CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

During Youth Month, we proudly reflected on our role in commemorating 30 years of democracy in South Africa. Through events and discussions diving deep into our nation's rich history, current challenges, and prospects, our institution serves as a beacon of knowledge and progress. We are dedicated to fostering dialogue and understanding the critical issues shaping our society. This momentous year coincides with our institution's preparation for our 20th-anniversary celebration since its establishment.

Over the past two decades, UJ has established itself as a distinctive university. In the recent QS World University Rankings, UJ is placed at position 312 globally out of 1 503 featured institutions. This means that UJ has retained its global standing among the top 350 universities globally and is ranked among the top four universities in Africa. This incredible news comes after the Times Higher Education (THE) Young University Rankings named UJ the #1 university on the African continent when considering institutions younger than 50 years.

Notably, UJ excels globally in subjects like Anthropology and Development Studies, ranked in the 101-150 band worldwide. Nationally, UJ shines in subjects such as Materials Science, where we are jointly ranked #1. We also hold the #2 spot in South Africa for subjects such as Anthropology, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Education, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Hospitality and Leisure Management. Additionally, we have shown improvement in Chemical Engineering and Mechanical and Aeronautical and Manufacturing Engineering.

UJ EXCELS GLOBALLY IN SUBJECTS LIKE ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, RANKED IN THE 101-150 BAND WORLDWIDE. NATIONALLY, UJ SHINES IN SUBJECTS SUCH AS MATERIALS SCIENCE, WHERE WE ARE JOINTLY RANKED #1.

Looking ahead, we will not dwell solely on the past two decades, but rather use this milestone to identify strategies for continued progress. For the second consecutive year, UJ has been recognised as the leading producer of accredited research outputs in South Africa. These rankings underscore the University's ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation, made possible through the support and dedication of our community. Since its establishment in 2005, UJ has consistently maintained its academic stature in research and excellence. As part of our 20th-anniversary commemoration, we will reflect, regroup, consolidate, and accelerate our efforts to build a 21st-century university deeply rooted in its African heritage, poised to realise the potential of higher education for the development of the continent.

We extend an invitation to our supporters, alumni, and community members to join us on this momentous occasion. Together, let us celebrate the resilience and spirit of the South African people while recognising the work ahead in shaping a reimagined future focused on societal impact for future generations. ■

Ms Nolwazi Mamorare
Chief Financial Officer

FOREWORD FROM DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR: MS DAPHNEY NEMAKHAVHANI

As mentioned by our CFO in her note above, this year holds particular significance for us as an institution as we prepare to celebrate the 20th anniversary of our institution's establishment. Recently, we had the honour of hosting esteemed guests and industry leaders who have been invaluable partners in our remarkable journey. The event served as a testament to the power of collaboration, innovation, and the transformative impact of education.

Held at the captivating UJ Art Centre, the venue itself was alive with creativity, currently showcasing a thought-provoking exhibition co-curated by Gabriel Baard and the esteemed Prof Kim Berman. Together, they have brought to life the mesmerising 'Ntlo E Etsamayang' (The Walking House) by Mmakgabo Helen Sebidi.

To all our partners, supporters, collaborators, and friends of UJ, I extend a heartfelt thank you. Your unwavering dedication and belief in the power of education have paved the way for countless opportunities and advancements, shaping the lives of many.

As we embark on the next chapter of our journey, let us embrace innovation, creativity, and partnership. Together, let us continue to inspire, empower, and transform lives through education and collaboration. ■



For over 10 years you have partnered with us to support more than 4000 students monthly through our Meals Assistance Project with nutritious meal packs.

Check some our students review their bi-weekly meal parcels!



SCAN ME!!

Select Meals
Assistance
Campaign



Donate Today!

Be part of a
generation
that takes a
stand against
the scourge of
student food
insecurity

A BIG THANK YOU

to our corporate sponsors, staff members
and alumni as well for making a lasting impact!

In December 2022, the University of Johannesburg (UJ) launched the 'Double Our Future Impact' campaign, intensifying its commitment to aiding students facing financial obstacles. This initiative has raised over R9 million and positively impacted the lives of numerous students. A contribution from Dr Alistair Mokoena, the Country Director of Google South Africa, bolstered this fundraising effort. Through the Alistair Mokoena Education Fund, he pledged a R50 000 donation towards this drive.

The establishment of the Alistair Mokoena Education Fund highlights Dr Mokoena's commitment to fostering academic excellence and addressing the challenges of education access in South Africa. Highlighting the value of investing in education, Prof Mokoena emphasises its role in advancing knowledge and innovation, enriching students' learning experiences beyond traditional classrooms. He acknowledges the significant educational challenges faced by Africa, particularly South Africa, which must be addressed to alleviate poverty, hunger, and societal inequality. The Alistair Mokoena Education Fund stands poised to become a beacon of hope for aspiring scholars, offering support and resources to propel them towards success.



Alistair Mokoena

UJ'S 'DOUBLE OUR FUTURE IMPACT' INITIATIVE RECEIVES BOOST FROM THE ALISTAIR MOKOENA EDUCATION FUND, EMPOWERING STUDENTS.

Prof Letlhokwa George Mpedi, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal at UJ, stressed that Dr Mokoena's contribution reflects his dedication to addressing educational disparities and creating opportunities for students to pursue their academic ambitions. "The private sector has a significant role in supporting educational institutions and ensuring a lasting impact on South Africa's educational landscape," said Prof Mpedi.

Since 2009, the University of Johannesburg has dedicated R20 million annually to help academically deserving and financially needy students with their registration fees. This significant contribution has enabled over 5 000 students each year to begin their academic journey.

By joining our effort and donating, you can help us match our contribution and double our impact. Together, we can assist over 10 000 students in achieving their academic dreams. Your support makes a crucial difference. ■



SCAN ME!

Give a gift of
Education today!



UJ COMMUNITY GEARS UP FOR MAJOR FUNDRAISING WALK WITH 'STEPS 2 UJ FUTURE WALK'

UJ will be bustling with excitement as students, staff, and faculty members prepare for the UJ Future Walk on 28 September 2024, a university-wide fundraising event. The UJ Sports Division recently organised the 'Steps 2 UJ Future Walk' on 18 May 2024, which served as a successful warm-up event for the main walk at the AW Muller Stadium in Auckland Park.

The UJ Future Walk aims to promote an active lifestyle and foster a spirit of integration and diversity within the UJ community, while also raising crucial funds for students facing financial hardship (missing middle).

Ms Nomsa Mahlangu, Senior Director of UJ Sport and Acting Senior Director of UJ Student Affairs, emphasised the event's importance, stating, "The UJ Future Walk is about creating an active student life, fostering a sense of community, and having fun together. But most importantly, it's about raising funds to support our deserving students (the missing middle). It's exam time now, so I want to remind everyone to work hard and refocus. However, if you're feeling overwhelmed, please don't hesitate to visit PsyCaD (UJ's Psychology, Career Development and Disability

Services) for help. Your academic success is our priority, and these fun events are designed to support your well-being."

The Steps 2 UJ Future Walk saw enthusiastic participation from UJ Sports players, technical staff, university leadership, students, and faculty. UJ Conditioning Coach, Pierre Bonthys, who won the 8 km run, shared his positive experience: "This was a fantastic event! I especially enjoyed the challenging hills. The best part was seeing everyone from different sports clubs and departments come together. We need to maintain this momentum and continue training for the main event in September."

Recognising the pressures of exam time, Ms Reshmika Singh, a Psychologist at PsyCaD, highlighted some valuable resources offered to students on managing exam stress: "One of the biggest challenges during exams is dealing with anxiety. My advice is to prioritise self-care. Maintain a healthy balance by staying active, getting enough sleep, and eating nutritious meals. If you're experiencing extreme anxiety, please don't hesitate to visit any of the PsyCaD centres on campus." ■

About University of Johannesburg Alumni Chapters

A UJ alumni chapter is a regional, town or city based group of university of Johannesburg (UJ) alumni who want to formalise their relationship with UJ. Any verified alumnus may volunteer to convene a chapter.

Chapters coordinate and provide opportunities for alumni to socialise and network. They organise their local alumni and keep them connected to UJ. The alumni chapters are the official contact with the UJ Alumni Office and UJ. Ideally convenors execute the maintenance of their respective UJ alumni chapters with the guidance of the UJ alumni chapter guidelines that the alumni office has produced. The UJ Alumni Office provides communications and administrative support to chapter convenors.

HOW TO START – VOLUNTEERING TO BE A CONVENOR

The convenor of an alumni chapter should have the following characteristics:

- Willingness to work with the University
- Willingness to contribute time
- Enthusiasm
- Ability to motivate and engage alumni

Think about what type of activities you are hoping to organize as a chapter convenor. Successful alumni chapters base their programme on a mixture of activities. Allow the opportunity for as many people as possible to contribute.

Key activities of a chapter include but are not limited to:

- organising multiple events or activities a year to which all alumni in the region are invited
- acting as a contact point for UJ in their country or region
- offering informal advice to alumni moving into their area
- acting as a local contact point for UJ e.g. offering advice to members of staff and faculty about where to stay or hold meetings when visiting their area

If you are looking to establishing an alumni chapter in your region, please contact the UJ alumni office on alumni@uj.ac.za

All UJ Alumni can connect with us on Alumni Connect, www.ujalumni.co.za. The alumni connect platform allows UJ Alumni to, offer mentoring services, receive mentorship and connect with UJ in a unique way and participate in UJ Alumni chapters and affinity groups.

SCAN ME



UJ AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS FORGE PATH FOR SOCIO- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Keynote speakers, Dr Amuzweni Ngoma (Director, Gauteng City Region Academy) and Ms Vuyo Mwase (Chief Executive, Energy Mobility Education Trust), showcased the impact of their partnerships with UJ. These partnerships provide bursaries and training programmes, equipping young people with critical skills for the future workforce.

THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG (UJ) CELEBRATED ITS THRIVING INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS AT A RECENT EVENT HOSTED BY VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL, PROF LETLHOKWA MPEDI. THE EVENT HELD ON TUESDAY, 7 MAY 2024. HIGHLIGHTED HOW COLLABORATION FUELS STUDENT SUCCESS AND DRIVES SOUTH AFRICA'S TRANSFORMATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

"Our partnership with UJ allows us to develop vital skills in young people," said Dr Ngoma, citing their collaboration on the Building Inspector Programme, which has already benefitted 800 individuals.

Over the past six years, UJ's partnership with EMET has transformed the lives of over 3 000 individuals. Ms Mwase emphasised, "We support students throughout their academic journey, empowering them to become successful professionals."

Prof Mpedi underscored the transformative power of education, emphasising that access and excellence go hand-in-hand. He highlighted UJ's 19-year history of forging strategic partnerships to achieve this goal.

"Many of our students are first-generation graduates, just like me," shared Prof Mpedi. "We are committed to helping them achieve their dreams."

He elaborated on UJ's remarkable journey, including achieving the prestigious Institution of Global Excellence and World Class Stature (GES) designation. He also highlighted initiatives, such as supporting over 5 000 missing middle students with registration fees, impressive university ranking advancements, and a focus on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) with a societal impact lens, exemplified by Project Connect in Limpopo.

"UJ is a success story, and our impact extends beyond the university walls," declared Prof Mpedi. "We are actively shaping society, economies, and industries as we navigate the 4IR era."

Prof Mpedi emphasised the importance of industry partnerships and collaborative approaches. He expressed UJ's commitment to maintaining its world-class research excellence and using 4IR for positive societal impact and human capital development.

He concluded by encouraging all partners to contribute, stating, "Universities with great visions often lack support. We wouldn't be here without our partners. We value both financial and mentorship contributions." ■



UJ IS SERIOUS ABOUT FUTURE-FIT LEADERS: CELEBRATING UJ ALUMNUS PAT MAHLANGU'S IMPACT



Winner at the 3rd YOBA'

"THESE AWARDS SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON THOSE WHO ARE STRIVING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

In the dynamic world of advertising and brand recognition, UJ alumnus Pat Mahlangu is making waves. As the founder and chief executive of Pat on Brands and Lerato Agency, Mahlangu's drive, passion, and tenacity have positioned him as a trailblazer in the industry. His journey, marked by a desire to challenge the norm and rise above challenges, exemplifies the spirit of innovation and resilience.

Mahlangu's entrepreneurial journey began with the establishment of Pat on Brands while at UJ. Driven by a vision to create a platform that not only promotes brands but also celebrates the contributions of young entrepreneurs, Mahlangu launched the Lerato Agency. This initiative is a testament to his commitment to nurturing talent and providing opportunities for emerging voices in the industry.

In 2022, Mahlangu took his mission a step further by launching the Youth Owned Brand Awards (YOBA). Established to celebrate the remarkable achievements of newcomers in the industry, the awards recognize and honour youth-owned brands that are making a significant impact. The Top 16 Youth-Owned Brands Awards are a platform dedicated to acknowledging the excellence of young people who are not only contributing to the economy of South Africa but also enhancing the country's overall image.

"These awards shine a spotlight on those who are striving to make a difference. By creating businesses and brands, these young entrepreneurs are not just movers and shakers; they are the underdogs, the creators driving change and economic growth. They are also generating employment and honing their craft, despite the challenging economic landscape said Mahlangu".



Founder and CEO of the Top16 Youth-Owned Brands Pat Mahlangu

The Top 16 Youth-Owned Brands Awards are more than just an event; they are a movement celebrating the indomitable spirit of young entrepreneurs who are shaping the future of South Africa. Through his ventures, Pat Mahlangu is not only challenging the norm but also providing a platform for young innovators to rise above challenges and make their mark on the world. As a proud UJ alumnus, Mahlangu's achievements serve as an inspiration to current students and graduates, showcasing the limitless possibilities that come with dedication, passion, and a drive to succeed.

A heartfelt congratulations to all the winners, the hard work, dedication, and ingenuity in shaping the future of African entrepreneurship doesn't go unnoticed. ■



UJ Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Letlhokwa Mpedi



Honourable Minister of Justice and Correctional Services - Ronald Lamola

South Africa's Honourable Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Ronald Lamola, emphasised the significance of institutions like the University of Johannesburg (UJ) in leading the way for the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the justice system. Minister Lamola made these statements during a Special Guest lecture, entitled 'Legal education and its role in achieving social justice in South Africa,' which was organised by the University's Faculty of Law as part of the institution's celebrations marking 30 years of Democracy in South Africa, on Thursday, 11 April 2024.

During his speech, Hon. Minister Lamola praised UJ for its pivotal role in promoting social justice and nurturing critical thinking among its students. He emphasised that legal education plays a crucial role in empowering individuals to advocate for legal reform, ensuring access to justice, and promoting human rights and equality.

Reflecting on the transformative journey of both UJ and South Africa over the past three decades, Minister Lamola urged the Faculty of Law to produce graduates who are not only proficient in legal analysis but are also actively contributing to building a better future for society.

Hon. Minister Lamola emphasised that social justice was an ongoing endeavour that required continuous commitment and intervention. "The next phase of 30 years of freedom should be to deepen and advance socioeconomic rights to create an equal society. Universities must be rooted in the everyday experiences of South Africans; this is where education and social justice interact," said Minister Lamola.

He highlighted the need for reforms in the criminal justice system and civic procedures, pointing out the importance of integrating digitization and modernisation to ensure quicker access to justice when he announced the Department's intent to amend the Criminal Procedure Act to create a victim-centric criminal justice system compatible with the

MINISTER RONALD LAMOLA CHAMPIONS AI INTEGRATION IN SOUTH AFRICA'S JUSTICE SYSTEM



Scan QR code
to watch the
lecture !



Listen to
article scan
QR code

ethos of South African society. "The Act is an act of 1977; it has been amended several times, but we have found it still not compatible with the ethos of our society, particularly to create a victim-centric criminal justice system," said Minister Lamola.

Furthermore, Minister Lamola suggested that the future of legal procedures would involve extensive digitisation and the integration of AI, stressing the role of universities as catalysts for innovation in this domain and urging stakeholders to view the pursuit of social justice as a fundamental way of living, emphasising the importance of everyday actions in advancing societal equality.

The Public Lecture was attended by esteemed dignitaries, including Advocate Doctor Mashabane, Director-General; UJ Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Letlhokwa Mpedi; Prof Kathleen van der Linde, Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Law; and Prof Puseletso Letete, Vice-Dean of Teaching and Learning. ■

UJ STUDENT WINS 2023/2024 NEDBANK & OLD MUTUAL BUDGET SPEECH COMPETITION

Sandile Mbatha, a postgraduate student from the College of Business and Economics (CBE) at UJ, has won the 2023/2024 Nedbank & Old Mutual Budget Speech Competition. The announcement was made on Wednesday, 21 February 2024.

The competition, a platform for fostering economic insights and nurturing young talent across South African universities, received over 200 entries. A panel of expert judges

evaluated the submissions to select exceptional students who demonstrated remarkable abilities to engage with and propose innovative solutions to complex economic and societal issues.

The Nedbank & Old Mutual Budget Speech Competition is a collaborative effort between National Treasury, Nedbank, and Old Mutual, aiming to empower South Africa's brightest minds, promoting economic education, and growth. It provides a platform for students to offer creative solutions to pressing economic and societal challenges, with past winners going on to become influential economists, thinkers, business leaders, and change-makers.

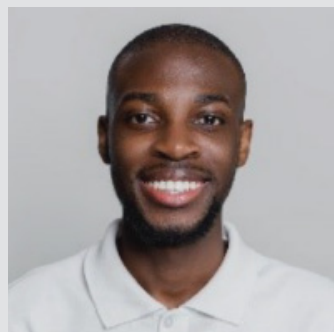
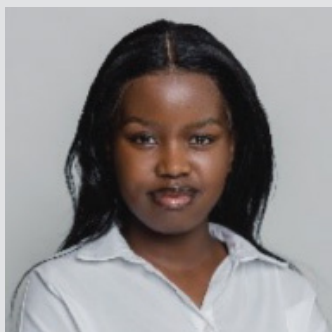
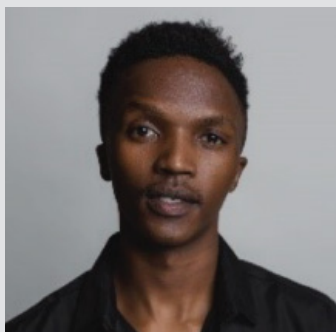
Undergraduate students were tasked with discussing inflation dynamics in emerging markets between 2017 and 2022, while postgraduate students were challenged to express their perspectives on the 'Just Energy Transition' and its potential impacts on the South African economy.

Sandile Mbatha's victory underscores the excellence and dedication of UJ students in contributing to significant economic discourse, reflecting not only his accomplishments but also the commitment of UJ to nurturing talent and fostering academic excellence.

Sandile expressed his excitement at his victory, stating, "It feels unbelievable. I was a bit intimidated by some of the other candidates who were also really good, but I am excited to have come out on top." He also shared his plans to stay in the field of Economics and contribute expertise through academia, the public or private sector, using his skills to help develop and impact society in progressive ways.

UJ had four finalists in the competition, including Delisa Simelane, Kabelo Rabaloyi, and Mziwanele Maxakatho, alongside Sandile Mbatha. The Economics@UJ Budget Speech team played a crucial role in preparing the students for this competition, under the leadership of Prof Eita Hinaunye. ■

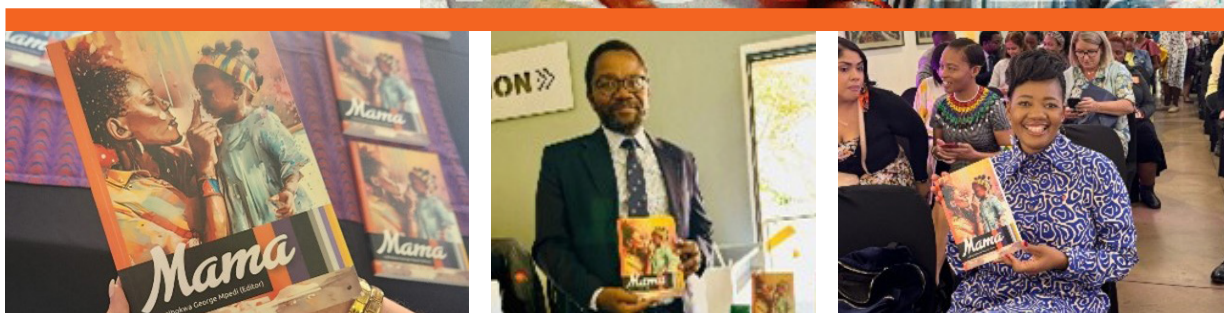
THE COMPETITION, A PLATFORM FOR FOSTERING ECONOMIC INSIGHTS AND NURTURING YOUNG TALENT ACROSS SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES, RECEIVED OVER 200 ENTRIES.



Listen to article
scan QR code

UJ finalists in the competition, including Mziwanele Maxakatho, Delisa Simelane, Kabelo Rabaloyi.

MOTHER'S DAY BOOK



UJ LAUNCHED AN ANTHOLOGY CELEBRATING MOTHERS

ON FRIDAY, 10 MAY 2024, UJ LAUNCHED AN ANTHOLOGY, TITLED **MAMA** TO HONOUR MOTHERS. THE ANTHOLOGY, CONCEIVED BY UJ'S VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL, PROF LETLHOKWA MPEDI, ENCOMPASSES A VARIETY OF THEMES RELATED TO MOTHERHOOD AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS AS MATERNAL FIGURES.

The launch event took place at the UJ Gallery on the University's Auckland Park Kingsway Campus, bringing together UJ staff members to celebrate the special publication. Prof Mpedi explained that the idea for the book originated from a desire to recognise the significant influence of mothers in people's lives.

Featuring 27 chapters, *Mama* includes narratives from individuals within the UJ community, representing diverse backgrounds and roles within the University. The contributing authors, comprising academic and support staff, come from different faculties and departments.

Prof Mpedi shared personal stories from his childhood, emphasising the strong bond he shares with his mother. He encouraged attendees to cherish every moment spent with their mothers or maternal figures.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Gloria Serobe, a prominent business leader and Chancellor of the Tshwane University of Technology. Drawing from her experiences as a daughter, mother, and daughter-in-law, Dr Serobe provided insights into the complex dynamics of these relationships. In 2023, she authored a book, titled *An Ode to My Mother-In-Law, Winnie Serobe: A Mentorship of Love and Honour*, chronicling her enduring relationship with her mother-in-law over 26 years. It was from these profound experiences that Dr Serobe drew inspiration for her keynote speech.. ■



Listen to article
scan QR code



The University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the Trevor Huddleston Memorial Centre (THMC) have joined forces to introduce an innovative Virtual Reality (VR) experience, spearheaded by Izak Potgieter. This revolutionary project aims to bring back to life the spirit and essence of the iconic Sophiatown, enabling users to wander its streets, immerse themselves in its music, and interact with its former residents. More than just a technological advancement, this project is a journey through time, aligning seamlessly with UJ's commitment to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Once a vibrant cultural hub, parts of historical Sophiatown were demolished in the 1950s. Now, through the power of virtual reality, it has been reconstructed, offering an immersive experience that transports users back to the prime of this lively community.

The UJ VR experience project uses cutting-edge technology to provide a glimpse into the past, enabling users to engage with the sights and sounds of this legendary neighbourhood. With this technology, users can explore the streets, visit local landmarks, listen to the music of the time, and even interact with the community members who once called Sophiatown home.

Izak Potgieter, the visionary behind the project, expressed his excitement: "This project is more than just a technological innovation; it's a way to preserve the memory and legacy of Sophiatown. We aimed to create an experience that would allow people to connect with the rich history and vibrant culture of this iconic community."

This project serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of preserving our cultural heritage and the ongoing struggle for freedom and equality.

"Through this VR experience, we hope to educate, inspire, and commemorate the history of Sophiatown," said Potgieter. "It's a celebration of the resilience and spirit of the people who once lived there. We interviewed a lot of former residents, many of whom have never been interviewed before, to recreate Sophiatown in VR."

It is envisioned that the VR experience will become a permanent feature at the THMC.



SOPHIATOWN REBORN: UJ RESEARCH PROJECT EXPLORES VIRTUAL REALITY TO RECLAIM A LOST COMMUNITY

UJ's VR experience promises to be an invaluable educational tool, offering students, historians, and the general public a unique opportunity to engage with history in a way that has never been possible before.

This work is supported by the University of Johannesburg, the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA), the Department of Multimedia and the Metaverse Research Unit with support from Prof Anthony Ambala and Dr Pieter Herman Myburgh and research assistance from Thulani Siziba.

Miss Violet Mohotloane, Matilda Kokoana and Tshepo Letsoalo from the Trevor Huddleston Centre are also recognised for their vital support in realising this work.

This VR experience started as a research project initiated by Mr Denver Mark Hendricks at the UJ FabLab with assistance from Mxolisi Ntshona. Finally, deep gratitude is extended to the former residents of Sophiatown who shared their personal stories.

Help shape the future! This project is a work in progress, and we value your feedback. Let us know your thoughts in the comments below. ■



Watch the story
scan QR code



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

2

Zero Hunger

HEROES WITHOUT CAPES: ZERO HUNGER

'iZindaba Zokudla' is an isiZulu or Nguni phrase that refers to the court of the King where the food that is eaten together is discussed. iZindaba Zokudla was created in line with the concept of a 'food policy council'. This concept of democratic control of the food system has evolved into what we now call Public Innovation Laboratories, which formalise stakeholder engagement as a form of social dialogue.

The Farmers' Lab is designed not only to provide a platform for entrepreneurs to network and engage with stakeholders, but also to mobilise stakeholders interested in a sustainable food system and connect them to farmers to build sustainable enterprises together. I was mindful that established businesses would likely influence emerging entrepreneurs to serve the status quo, which would be inappropriate for the township context and would likely perpetuate unsustainable business practices, particularly in the field of agriculture. To avoid this scenario, I had to methodically intervene and rearrange how emerging entrepreneurs gain access to the economy. I followed the belief that economic development is best achieved among groups of like-minded stakeholders and actors, and the synergies built among such entrepreneurs and stakeholders could lead to the creation of innovative and sustainable businesses. Taking a critical view of innovation supports this idea, and thus, I set out to create alternative groups, imaginations, and activities that could lead to sustainable enterprises.

Engaging in a 'public innovation lab' with peers creates new ways of managing the economy and addressing public challenges. Participation in these labs provides people with an opportunity to adapt their ways of doing things significantly and coordinate these changes with others. Therefore, we have the opportunity to create sustainable enterprises and sectors in the economy by making the right information available in the labs and promoting narratives of change that enable entrepreneurs to innovate in their enterprises. Because agriculture is highly regulated and influenced by vested interests, there is ample opportunity for innovation. ■

NOTRE DAME–IBM TECHNOLOGY ETHICS LAB FUNDS UJ'S TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND CULTURE IN AFRICA PROJECT

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) has launched the project 'Technology Transfer and Culture in Africa: Large Scale Models in Focus', headed by Prof Catherine Botha from the Department of Philosophy. The project involves graduate students in AI Ethics, including Franklyn Echeweodor, Anthony Isong, and Edmund Ugar, collaborating with Notre Dame Faculty Collaborator, Jaimie Bleck from the Political Science Department. This project has been chosen to receive funding through the Notre Dame–IBM Technology Ethics Lab Awards' Call for Proposals (CFP). It is one of 17 projects to receive funding and has been granted just over \$1 000 000 for 2024 through its third annual Call for Proposals (CFP).

Professor Catherine Botha



The project seeks to explore how technology transfer impacts culture in Africa in the context of large-scale models. Its goal is to address the underexplored theme of the impact of technology transfer on culture and large-scale models within the African context. The project will produce three key deliverables: a national workshop, an international conference held in South Africa, and a journal special issue dedicated to the theme.

Prof Botha, the project leader, stated, "The impact of technology transfer on culture is an underexplored theme in the literature, and the impact of large-scale models is only recently attracting much attention, but not from the perspective of technology transfer. We contend that the theme would benefit from a multidisciplinary interrogation to direct policy and law-making within the African context, as well as benefit makers of technologies. A carefully considered theoretical grounding of policy and other decision-making in the area of technology transfer and its impact on culture is, in our view, a first step in understanding this rich topic."

The Notre Dame–IBM Technology Ethics Lab Awards releases a CFP each year to fund practical and applied interdisciplinary research in tech ethics. The theme of this most recent CFP was 'The Ethics of Large-Scale Models', which attracted a highly competitive pool of applicants from across the globe. The selected project teams have been paired with a Notre Dame faculty member who will collaborate on the project, which is a new and exciting aspect of this process.

Nuno Moniz, Director of the Notre Dame–IBM Technology Ethics Lab, stated, "We're beyond excited with this year's cohort of the Call for Proposals, and the chance to support new and hopefully long-lasting collaborations between our Notre Dame faculty and other institutions in the US, Europe, Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America. It's a unique opportunity to support urgent and practical work at the forefront of thought and engineering on the ethics of large-scale models."

The projects will be undertaken and completed in 2024, and their final deliverables will be accessible through the lab's website. The lab's previous CFP, which awarded more than \$930 000 in funding to 19 proposals in 2023 around the theme of 'Auditing Artificial Intelligence', has seen its deliverables linked from the 2023 CFP page in the coming months. ■

MPEDI MPEDI FAMILY LAUNCHES NEURODIVERSITY STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP AT UJ



DONATE TODAY AND HELP BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO FOSTER A GLOBAL COMMUNITY DEDICATED TO UNDERSTANDING AND EMBRACING NEURODIVERSITY. YOUR GIFT WILL FUND INCLUSIVE RESEARCH, PAVING THE WAY FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE FUTURE.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

SUPPORT NEURODIVERSITY.

Scan Me



UNESCO WANTS UJ'S PIONEERING TEACHING SCHOOL TO JOIN ITS NETWORK OF ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS

Ms Azoulay, who was recently appointed in the role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Director-General, was joined by UJ Chancellor, Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former UJ Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Ihron Rensburg, and the Department of Basic Education Johannesburg Central District (D14) Director, Ms Tshepo Seate.

Funda UJabule, a school within UJ's Faculty of Education and a flagship institution in Childhood Education, is a pioneering project in teacher education and research. Its distinctive approach, which actively bridges the theory-practice gap, is rapidly earning acclaim for its practical and research-oriented methodologies in training primary school educators in South Africa.



Ms Azoulay and Dr Mlambo-Ngcuka interact with the pupils of Funda UJabule at the Makerspace. Photo: UJ

IN A BID TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND UNESCO, THE ORGANISATION'S DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS AUDREY AZOULAY, PAID A VISIT TO THE FUNDA UJABULE TEACHING SCHOOL AT UJ'S SOWETO CAMPUS ON TUESDAY 16 APRIL 2024.



L-R: Prof Sarah Gravett, Prof Ihron Rensburg, Ms Audrey Azoulay, Ms Sabina Lukhuleni and Prof Nadine Petersen. Photo: UJ

Prof Nadine Petersen, the Executive Dean of UJ's Faculty of Education, explained, "Funda UJabule serves as a critical training ground for aspiring primary school teachers. It not only provides hands-on experience but also operates as a beacon for the future establishment of 'teaching schools' across the country."

Prof Petersen emphasised the school's role as a "social laboratory," facilitating cutting-edge research in childhood education.

Transformative impact of immersive teacher training

One of the key misconceptions that Prof Petersen addressed is the undervaluation of Foundation Phase teachers in South Africa. She asserts, "Contrary to popular belief, Foundation Phase teaching demands a significant level of intellectual rigour. We must recognise the importance of quality primary school educators, as they lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning."

Prof Petersen stressed the transformative impact of Funda UJabule's immersive approach to teacher training. "Through sustained involvement in our teaching school, student teachers gain invaluable insights into child development, curriculum implementation, and the intricacies of school life. This holistic preparation equips them effectively for the multifaceted demands of the teaching profession." In addition to its role in teacher education, Funda UJabule serves as a nexus for groundbreaking research, fostering collaboration between academia and practice to drive innovation and excellence in childhood education. Prof Sarah Gravett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, who was one of the founders of Funda UJabule School, expressed her joy at seeing the school grow and flourish many years later.

"I am very thankful that when we went to the then Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Prof Rensburg) and said we want to start a teaching school at our Soweto Campus, he was very supportive. (I am also) grateful for the support given by Minister Motshekga, who was at that stage the MEC for Education in Gauteng. Without their crucial backing, we would not be here today." Ms Azoulay and her team were given the opportunity to walkabout in the school, see some of the state-of-the-art facilities available to the children as well as the newly opened Makerspace, which allows children to learn through play. The guests were also delighted with a musical item by the school's choir. She shared her excitement at seeing the usage of indigenous South African languages, Sesotho and IsiZulu, in the classroom and invited the school to join UNESCO's network of associated schools.

Funda UJabule School Principal, Ms Sabina Lukhuleni, expressed her appreciation to the Director-General and her team, and said this encouraged them to continue working hard and continue moulding young minds into citizens driving change in their communities.

The recent visit by UNESCO's Director-General and South Africa's Minister of Basic Education highlights the growing recognition of Funda UJabule as a leading institution in teacher education and research, poised to shape the future of primary education in South Africa and beyond. ■



UJ SHINES AT THE 2024 MAIL & GUARDIAN 200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS AWARDS

THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG (UJ) HAS ONCE AGAIN BEEN RECOGNIZED FOR ITS EXCELLENCE IN PRODUCING YOUNG LEADERS WHO ARE MAKING A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE 19TH EDITION OF THE MAIL & GUARDIAN 200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS AWARDS, ANNOUNCED ON FRIDAY, 28 JUNE 2024, FEATURES OVER 40 UJ ALUMNI, STAFF, AND STUDENTS.



Scan here to
read more
about the UJ
recipients

Since 2006, these awards have annually celebrated young South Africans who have made notable contributions in fields such as civil society, health, technology, arts, and entertainment.

Professor Bettine van Vuuren, UJ Registrar, expressed her delight at the university's continued strong presence in the awards. "With the many challenges that South Africa faces, it is encouraging to see the UJ alumni community, along with our staff and students, being recognized for their work that contributes to solving societal problems. These 200 Young South Africans represent the very best of what our country has to offer. We are immensely proud of their contributions to South Africa, which actively and purposefully align with UJ and the Vice-Chancellor's vision of Global Excellence and Stature 4.0 for Societal Impact."

UJ Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi, remarked on the recognition: "Since the inception of the Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans Awards almost two decades ago, UJ has consistently featured across various categories through its outstanding alumni, staff members, and students or postdoctoral fellows. This is a testament to the robustness and excellence of our academic programs and the quality of our research in making a long-lasting impact on our graduates and equipping them to be responsible members of society. We pride ourselves on creating a community of young people who, through their innovative and resilient spirit, inspire others and contribute towards societal development." ■

Among the UJ recipients are:

- Sthabile Kolwa:** UJ Lecturer in the Physics Department
- Curwyn Mapaling:** UJ Senior Lecturer and Clinical Psychologist
- Louis Koen:** UJ Law Lecturer and Convener of the UJ Moot Court Programme
- Edith Phalane:** UJ PACER Researcher and Specialist Scientist
- Maipato Caroline Mmako:** UJ Staff Member

MANDELA DAY IMPACT: COWAN-HARPER-MADIKIZELA ATTORNEYS JOINS UJ IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Mandela Day 2024 was a remarkable day of unity and compassion as Cowan-Harper-Madikizela (CHM) teamed up with UJ Development and Fundraising as well as the Student Affairs division for a meaningful cause. As part of the 2024 Mandela Day activities, teams from CHM and UJ distributed essential food parcels at the Auckland Park campus, benefiting nearly 200 students. This initiative underscores the university's commitment to addressing food insecurity and supporting our students' well-being.

Cowan-Harper-Madikizela's dedication didn't stop at just giving their 67min towards the distribution of the food parcels, but the firm went above and beyond by generously contributing toiletries to the UJ Food Bank which forms part of the institutions meals assistance programme. The success of this event would not have been possible without the collaboration and hard work of everyone involved. The combined efforts of Cowan-Harper-Madikizela, Student Affairs, and the UJ Development and Fundraising office demonstrate the power of coming together for a common cause. This collaboration not only provides immediate relief but also fosters a sense of community and shared purpose.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the volunteers and contributors who made this day possible. Your dedication and hard work have made a significant impact on the lives of many students. It is through these collective efforts that we can create a supportive and nurturing environment for all members of our university community.

LET US CONTINUE TO EMBODY THE SPIRIT OF MANDELA DAY BEYOND JUST ONE DAY OF THE YEAR. BY WORKING TOGETHER AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER, WE CAN UPLIFT OUR COMMUNITY AND CREATE LASTING POSITIVE CHANGE. TOGETHER, WE ARE STRONGER, AND TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND US. THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THIS JOURNEY OF COMPASSION AND SUPPORT.

Scan Me



Select UJ Food Bank Project

Donate Today!

Be part of a generation that takes a stand against the scourge of student food insecurity



Ms Azoulay and Dr Mlambo-Ngcuka interact with the pupils of Funda UJabule at the Makerspace. Photo: UJ

In a heartfelt celebration of Mandela Day, the dedicated team at UJ Development and Fundraising Office came together to create a meaningful impact at Kids Haven. Driven by a spirit of generosity and service, we aimed to embody the values that Nelson Mandela championed throughout his life. Our staff collected and donated essential food items, a gesture that went beyond mere charity. It was an act of solidarity and support for the children at Kids Haven, ensuring they receive the nourishment they need. The spirit of giving was palpable as each item was carefully selected and packed with love.

Our contribution didn't stop at donating the food items, side by side with the dedicated staff of Kids Haven, we packed and counted donations, each task a step toward a greater cause. Our efforts were a testament to the power of unity and the difference that can be made when we work together, said Ms Daphney Nemakhavhani, UJ Development and Fundraising, Director.

Nelson Mandela once said, "There can be no greater gift than that of giving one's time and energy to help others without expecting anything in return." This profound truth resonated with us as we witnessed the smiles and gratitude of the staff at Kids Haven. Our time and energy, given freely and willingly, became the greatest gifts of all, she said.

Mandela Day is more than just a date on the calendar; it is a call to action, a reminder of our shared humanity, and an opportunity to reflect on Mandela's legacy. His selfless contributions inspire us to look beyond ourselves and to make meaningful changes in our communities. Every act of kindness, no matter how small, carries the potential to create ripples of positive change.



DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING OFFICE SPENDS THEIR 67MIN FOR MANDELA DAY AT KIDS HAVEN

At UJ Development and Fundraising, we are committed to carrying forward Madiba's legacy. Our actions on Mandela Day are just a part of our ongoing efforts to uplift and support those in need. We believe that through continued dedication and compassion, we can create a brighter, more equitable future for all.

As we honor Mandela's legacy, we are reminded that the spirit of giving should not be confined to a single day. Let us strive to spread warmth, kindness, and generosity every day, transforming our communities through acts of service and love. It's in our hands to make a difference, and together, we can build a world that reflects the values Mandela cherished. ■

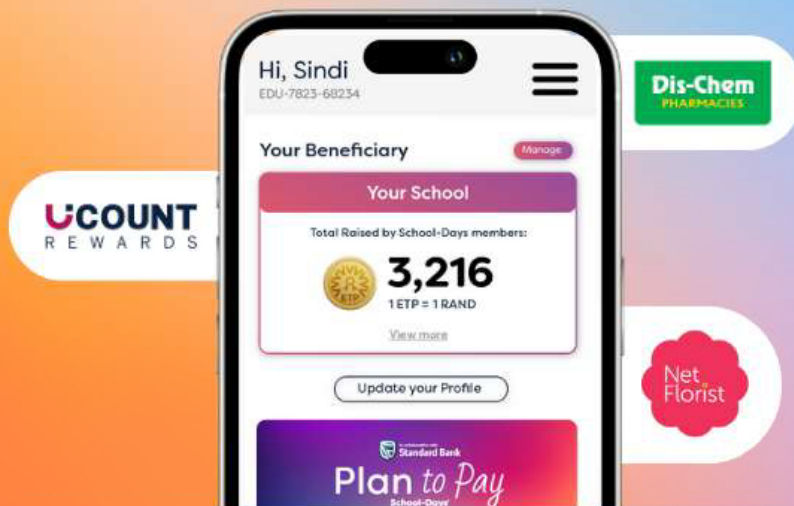




School-Days®

YOU CAN RAISE FUNDS FOR OUR UNIVERSITY!

Help support our university by joining School-Days and shopping at Dis-Chem and other partners.



**JOIN ONLINE
OR DOWNLOAD OUR APP**
www.schooldays.co.za

**It's
free!**

Join School-Days

Select UJ as a beneficiary and enjoy
the benefits that come
with being a School-Days member!

Shop + Swipe = Give a gift of Education



SCAN ME
and join