



MMUST NEWS

Post

A Weekly Digital Publication of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

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A Chat with Prof. William Toili



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MMUST

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14th Graduation Ceremony



Editor's Pen



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We greet you MMUST Community!

Welcome to the eleventh edition of our online University newsletter.

We bring back the 'Know Your Professor' column and this time we are up, close and candid with Prof. William Wanjala Toili; a Professor of Education and a guru in curriculum development.

We also bring you the inaugural Symposium of the Western Jurists Forum which is a conglomerate of lawyers and legal practitioners from Western region. Find out why they are pushing for the awakening of the western Kenya socio-economic bloc.

We also bring to you the day to day events happening at the University. We thank you, greatly, for patronising this newsletter.

As always, let us tell our stories together.



Dorcas Sandra Awuor
Writer



Wambugu Mary Wangari
Writer



Wilberforce Shiundu
Photographer

A portrait of Prof. William Wanjala Toili, a Black man with a shaved head, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is sitting at a wooden desk with his hands clasped in front of him. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) Necessary for Shaping Future Citizens”

Prof. Toili

By Wambugu Mary Wangari and Awuor Sandra Dorcas

Q: Tell us about yourself and your family.

My name is Professor William Wanjala Toili. I was born in Bungoma County at a place called Bokoli but I moved from there, now I stay in Chwele. I just celebrated my 65th birthday; so I’ve been around for quite some time. I am married to Margaret Toili, and we have been blessed with six (6) children. Five (5) of them have undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, one (1) is currently doing PhD in Belgium, and the youngest is in Standard Eight (8).

Q: Please tell us about your academic journey and how you joined MMUST.

I started primary school education at my place of birth, and later went to Kolanya Boys High School in Busia County, where I did so well after Form Four. As a matter of fact, I set a record in that school during that time.

In 1973, I joined Kapsabet High School for ‘A’ level which I completed the following year and proceeded to the University of Nairobi for a Bachelor of Education in Science; I particularly focused on Biology, that is, Botany and Zoology. After that, I taught for a few years.



In 1983, I enrolled for a Masters in Teacher Education at Kenyatta University and finished after two years. Thereafter, I went back to teach briefly in a Teacher's College before joining the Kenya Institute of Education where I served as a curriculum developer. At that time, the institute was very busy formulating the 8-4-4 system, so I was given the Primary Science docket. We wrote books and materials for school pupils and teachers, right from Standard One (1) to Eight (8).

Early 1990, I was called upon to go to the Ministry of Education as a Senior Inspector of schools in charge of primary education, specifically science, but I only worked there for about three (3) months then I joined Maseno University College as a lecturer. I started as an Assistant lecturer, moved on to a Lecturer and was later promoted to a Senior Lecturer even before I completed my PhD because of my good work.

I was awarded with a PhD in the year 2001 and around September 2003, I joined MMUST.

Immediately I came to MMUST, the then Principal, Prof. B.C.C Wangila, gave me an opportunity to be a Chairman of the new Department of Science and Mathematics which I built from scratch.

In 2006, I was promoted to Associate Professor and then in 2016, I became a full Professor.

Q: How would you define a Professor?

Being a professor means that one has reached the apex of his or her academic work. A professor's main role is to profess knowledge. In other words, a professor is somebody who is endowed with knowledge, skills and has changed his or her attitudes, and is capable of guiding

others in the academic field. He or she should even be able to assist in making academic programmes better. As a professor, you should be able to see the world in various perspectives as well as be at hand to help out in the development of humanity.

Q: Walk us through some of your academic achievements as a Professor.

I have won a number of research awards, one being the Lake Victoria Basin Research Initiative which was titled, *An Evaluation of the Production and Utilization of Pumpkins (Curcubita pepo) for Poverty Reduction among Smallholder Farmers in Lake Victoria Basin*. The research was sponsored by the Inter-University Council of East Africa. The award brought some really good money to MMUST.

Apart from that, in teaching and research, I have seen so many young men and women pass through my hands. I have mentored quite a number of them especially postgraduate students. In my shelf, I have over forty (40) theses that I have supervised and I have been able to publish about twenty (20) papers with my students, which have been very helpful. So to me, that's an achievement.

Q: You have held various administrative positions in the University. Please tell us about some of them.

From 2003 to 2009 I was Chairman of Department of Science and Mathematics Education. I am the one who started the Department and recruited staff. To me, that was very important because we started off the Department from the scratch.

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Currently, I am the Chairman of Curriculum Review Committee and I help Departments in reviewing, renewing and developing their programs. Furthermore, I represent the University in the Commission for University Education (CUE) on a program called CATS (Credit Accumulation Transfer System), which facilitates credit transfers from one University to another, within Kenya and East Africa after students satisfy conditions, rules and regulations on credit transfer. The CUE seconded me to benchmark a program with the Inter University Council of East Africa, which is situated in Kampala. I usually go there to attend conferences and meetings and to make benchmarking resolutions. I have been doing that for the last 4 years now.

Q: Which of your publications do you consider your best and why?

The best is my first one. The one I published a long time ago when I was in Maseno. I published it with a British Journal called 'Environment'. The article was on action oriented environmental education for schools and colleges. For your article to be accepted by a British Journal then it must be very good.

Q: What advice would you give to scholars in terms of increasing their chances at publishing their research in refereed journals?

Doing research is a journey and one needs to have inner motivation as well. For academicians like me, it is not a problem because there is that adage that says 'Publish or Perish'. If you don't publish, you don't get promotion from one level to another. Publishing is fairly expensive, therefore, one requires financial help and support in acquiring

research skills.

In my experience, I have noticed that universities, for the last 20 years, have not been keen on their side because scholars do research depending on their own initiative. Therefore, universities have not been very supportive because funding from the Government is also not encouraging. For example, we have the Directorate of Research and Postgraduate Support but it receives very little money for research yet research is very expensive. I think the best thing is to train staff in research because the research one does for their degree is very different from the research done out here for funding. Once a scholar gets past this, there are so many journals that can publish their work.

The only thing is that we also have 'Predator' journals, which are out to just look for what they can publish but eventually, your work may not be recognized. Young scholars should be on the lookout so that they publish their work in good renowned journals. There are also bodies and agencies online which give funding for research, therefore, once they know how to write proposals, they will always get money. It requires a lot of effort for one to come up with a good proposal.

Q: Do you think that your work has had any influence to the society? If yes, how?

I can put my work in two categories; One which contributes to the betterment of education in this country and I believe that has had an impact on the society in terms of equipping young people and those preparing to

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be professionals in education with skills and attitudes that are required to be successful in education. The other category is on the environment. I have submitted and presented papers in conferences and workshops which contribute to our understanding of sustainability and what we can do to contribute to sustainable development. I trained in Israel for one month just on sustainable development. You see, tribalism leads to unsustainability because you want to fragment the society into bits and pieces yet we are supposed to have cohesion as a society. That has been my gospel; trying to pull people to come together because that togetherness contributes towards sustainable development. There are sixteen (16) indicators of sustainable development and social cohesion is just one of them. My focus has been to help people understand sustainable development and participate in creating sustainable environment for society.

Q: Are there any challenges you have encountered in your profession?

Oh many! There are many challenges at University level. Funding is one of the many challenges because you may have an idea but how do you generate knowledge from it without money? For example, one way of growing your knowledge and ideas is by attending conferences and workshops internally and externally but if you can't do that it is very difficult. The world out there is developing very fast and you can be left out so without financial support to be able to attend such workshops has been my biggest challenge.

Since I came here, MMUST has helped me to attend three conferences in India, Malaysia and Turkey, therefore I am very

grateful. Publishing, especially publishing a book, is also very difficult. Publishers want you to publish secondary school books because readership is very high and they get their profits. Therefore, publishing academic work is a big problem unless you source funding for it

Q: What are your current research interests?

My current research interest is on sustainable development. Today, sustainability can be applied in various situations. I thank the International Agency for Israel for sponsoring myself and other nineteen (19) people for serious training on sustainability. I could see that word from very different perspectives.

Apart from that, I also conduct research on metacognition which is an old area of research. However, there is still a lot of grey areas that we need to understand such as how people learn. If you understand how people learn then learning becomes very good. One of the books I have written is on training Biology teachers so I have made suggestions in that book on how best we can train teachers who can now train our students to be self-reliant.

Q: STEM courses hold the key not only to well-paying jobs in fast-growing countries, but also to solving the global societal challenges. What can you comment on this?

This is very true because what these STEM areas do is to provide both knowledge to transform your environment and skills to solve problems. However, STEM areas cannot operate in a vacuum,

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therefore, we should not overemphasize on them. We should also look at the social sciences. The two must complement each other for a complete society. STEM is very good at giving us skills for innovation which you may not get through social sciences. That is why Kenya Vision 2030 emphasizes on STEM and the Government wants universities to put a little bit more effort and resources towards STEM so that we have more students enrolling in STEM courses.

Q: CUE has set an upper limit on the number of students, both PhD and Masters, that a Professor or Lecturer can supervise at a given time. What are your views on this and why?

I totally agree with CUE's move. The limit is okay with me. You see, for you to conduct quality supervision, you require a lot of time with your student due to the intensity of work that is involved. So, if you have, let's say 5 PhDs you are supervising, that is doing disservice to the student.

Q: The Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) has elicited a lot of debate in the country. What is your take on that?

When the 8-4-4 curriculum came, there was also a lot of debate and eventually when it took off, people embraced it but somewhere on the way, people killed it.

We have not had a lot of publicity with CBC but it is not a new thing. It has been done elsewhere in developed and developing countries.

CBC means that there are certain competences, about seven (7), we want our children to develop in life without which they will not be very good citizens. These competences will help children.

Q: What is MMUST doing in line with the new curriculum?

We have had one Conference here for lecturers to understand what CBC is all about but we have not gone into it yet because, one, lecturers themselves do not know what it is, and two, there is no one to give direction towards it.

MMUST has a big role in enlightening people on CBC because we are one of the custodians of knowledge in this country.

Q: Please tell us about your contribution in development and evaluation of several University Programmes in the country.

I have been a resource person with the Commission for University Education, in terms of reviewing and even vetting of programmes for various universities since 2008. I have vetted quite a number of programmes, mainly in Education, for private institutions such as Mt. Kenya University and Catholic University. I am also doing the same in MMUST.

The purpose of me doing this is to ensure that there is quality, so that students have the best for their money.



County Security Team Assures MMUST of Continued Support

By Wangari Mary Wambugu

Above: The Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Asenath Sigot, members of the University Management Board and the Kakamega County Security team.

Senior security officers from the County Government of Kakamega, led by the County Commissioner and the County Police Commander, paid Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) a visit on Tuesday, 12th September, 2019 to discuss issues of security pertaining MMUST especially during this period of terror activities targeting students and learning institutions in general. The team had a meeting with members of the University Management Board (UMB), along with the MMUST Senior Estates and Security Officers. The aim of their visit was to reassure the institution of their continued support and to brainstorm on ways in which they can work together.

The County Commissioner, Mrs. Pauline Dolla, said that students should be sensitized on security matters stating that they should be aware that terrorism is real. She stated that students should be counselled enough on how to live responsibly especially girls who are more vulnerable to crime.

“Students are seen in town at wee hours of the morning and night,” said Mr. Bernard Muli, the County Police Commander.

One of the many concerns raised during the meeting was on crime rate against MMUST students particularly those residing outside the University. According to Mr. Mabilia, the most crime-hit area is Kefinco, followed by

Koromatangi and *Lurambi*, where many students reside. Mr. Mabilia further stated that there is need to take action in order to reduce these crime rates before they get out of hand. He mentioned that there is a proposal to put up a police post at *Kefinco* to improve security. Meanwhile, students were encouraged to take care of their properties as well as identify safe places to live. Senior security officers from the County Government of Kakamega, led by the County Commissioner and the County Police Commander, paid Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) a visit on Tuesday, 12th September, 2019 to discuss issues of security pertaining MMUST especially during this period of terror activities targeting students and learning institutions in general. The team had a meeting with members of the University Management Board (UMB), along with the MMUST Senior Estates and Security Officers. The aim of their visit was to reassure the institution of their continued support and to brainstorm on ways in which they can work together.

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Dr. Bernadette Sabuni,
Ag. Deputy Vice
Chancellor, Academic
and Student Affairs.

“I wish it was possible to restrict students in staying at designated places. That way, it would be possible to monitor them. Parents should also make an effort to know where their children reside”

The visiting team assured the University that it had done a security survey of the institution about twice, to examine risks that it is exposed to, and review measures to protect it. Mr. Julius Mabia, the Chief Security officer, confirmed that MMUST currently has three (3) armed security officers who provide round the clock services.

“Many of us are in the darkness about issues concerning security,” said Prof. T. Sakwa, the acting Registrar (Academic Affairs). “How safe are our buildings and how do we protect ourselves as individuals?” he asked, adding that the team’s visit was of great benefit to the University.

Prof. Sakwa also said that as much as the institution takes care of the students, it should not forget about the welfare of the staff especially the University managers.

MMUST continues to struggle with a couple of other security threats like the use of the University logo and name to write blogs which damage the image of the University, the MMUST-ASK land wrangle, cybercrime to mention but a few. The County security vowed to team up with MMUST in fighting these challenges.



Above: The Kakamega County Commissioner, Mrs Pauline Dola, making a point.



MMUST Holds Special Olympics Training for Optometry students

By Nashilluh Brendah Kabindio

Special Olympics Kenya, in collaboration with Optometry Giving Sight, held a two-day medical training to Optometry and Vision Sciences students of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya Medical Training College, Kakamega Campus and Kenya Medical Training College, Nairobi Campus. The training took place on September 20th-21st 2019 at the University and attracted one hundred twenty (120) students and lecturers.

According to the Special Olympics Kenya, empowering medical students and healthcare workers is a powerful tool to help ensure people with intellectual disabilities are included in mainstream health policies, laws, programs, services, training, research, and funding streams. In this regard, the two-day event was a pilot training program for medical students and Masinde Muriro University of Science and Technology was identified as the ideal institution of higher learning since it is the only University that offers Optometry and Vision Sciences training at a degree level in the country.

The goal of the Special Olympics Global Health Strategy is to improve access to quality health care for eleven (11) million people with intellectual disabilities by 2020. To reach this goal, Special Olympics partners with health departments, ministries of health, universities and international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to create sustainable health systems and services inclusive of all people with intellectual disabilities

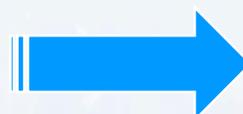


Left: Dr. Peter Bukhala (in brown T-shirt) with Optometry students during the training

Special Olympics is a global inclusion movement using sport, health, education and leadership programs every day around the world to end discrimination against and empower people with intellectual disabilities. Founded in 1968, and had celebrating its 50th Anniversary in July 2018, the Special Olympics movement has grown to more than 5 million athletes and Unified partners in more than 190 countries. With the support of more than 1 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 32 Olympic-type sports and over 108,000 games and competitions throughout the year.

Dr. Peter Wisiuba Bukhala, the Chairman, Department of Health Promotion and Sports Science was the Coordinator of the training having been a Special Olympics volunteer for more than ten (10) years providing meaningful contribution towards the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities.

**More Photos from Special Olympics
Training Next Page**



Photos from Special Olympics Training





The Vice President, Law Society of Kenya, Ms. Harriette Chiggai and Mr. Buluma Morris, Speaker of the County Assembly of Kakamega, presenting a gift to H.E Hon. Wilbur Ottichillo, Governor, Vihiga County, on behalf of H.E Hon. Wycliffe A. Oparanya, the Governor, Kakamega County. Looking on is Prof. Charles Ngome, Deputy Governor, Bungoma County and the Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Asenath Sigot.

Jurists Forum in the Quest to Awaken the Socio-Economic Bloc in Western Kenya

By Wangari Mary Wambugu

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, on Friday, 20th September 2019, hosted the annual Western Jurists Forum (WJF) Symposium whose theme was ‘Awakening the Socio-economic Bloc in Western Kenya. The Conference was organized in conjunction with the County Government of Kakamega, the Law Society of Kenya (LSK), Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE), ABNO Softwares International, Nzoia Sugar Company, Metropol East Africa Limited, individual law firms among others.

According to Ms. Harriette Chiggai, Vice president LSK, WJF comprises of a group of lawyers from Western region who have come together as professionals to uplift their home areas, socially and economically.

“We have a lot of potential that needs to be awakened in this part of the country,” said Prof. Asenath Sigot, Ag. Vice Chancellor, MMUST.

Through a speech read by Mr. Buluma Morris, Speaker of the County Assembly of Kakamega, on behalf of Hon. Wycliffe Oparanya, the Governor, said that WJF has done the County proud by believing in its own.



Above: Prof. Asenath Sigot, Acting Vice Chancellor, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST).



Above: Dr. Permain Ole Narikae, the Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE)

“Our sons and daughters are shinning out there, so why is this region lagging behind in economy and even politics?” he asked, stating that people from the western region should help in elevating their homeland.

Prof. Charles Kibanani Ngome, the Deputy Governor Bungoma County, blamed Western’s slow economic development to lack of proper participation by the region in the state government.

“We have taken part in the Government of Kenya but in the periphery instead of being at the centre. For us to participate well, we must set our priorities right and organize ourselves,” he said.

The Professor of Education also encouraged *Mulembe* people to embrace the culture of saving and investing in their land.

H.E. Dr Wilber Ottichilo, Governor Vihiga County, said that he was happy to see that WJF has taken the lead in awakening Western and appealed to the political leadership and other professionals to join in order to take the region to another level. In addition, he mentioned that the region is well endowed with resources that have not been well-utilised.

“There is a lot of money out there but it needs smart people to handle it. For us to improve the economic welfare of our region, we must bring on board all professionals,” he stated.

He also said that the region should focus on technical training to create jobs for the youth, adding that the society should move away from making them believe that they must be employed.

During the event, there was a panel discussion that touched on technology, agriculture, industrialization and finance. Mr. Sam Omukoko, the Chief Executive Officer Metropol East Africa Limited, also the founder of Credit Reference Bureau (CRB), talked about finance and investment opportunities in Western Kenya. According to him, he founded CRB because he realized that people were unable to borrow due to lack of collateral.

“How can people develop if they cannot acquire credit?” he asked. He went on to say that credit acquisition encourages purchasing which in turn motivates investment.



Photo: Dr. Sam Omukoko, the Chief Executive Officer, Metropol East Africa Limited



Above: Dignitaries during the Western Jurists Forum Symposium at the University



Above: Participants during the WJF Symposium

“We need more SACCOs and micro-financing institutions in this region because they allow you to access as little as Kshs.10, 000 compared to banks,” he added. Mr. Omukoko also emphasized on the culture of saving, saying that if a society does not save, it does not create wealth.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE), Dr. Permain Ole Narikae, discussed the role of the youth and women in industrialization, specifically in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMSEs), which are very crucial for economic development. As stated by Dr. Permain, many SMSEs in the Western region are women and youth owned. However, according to him, these enterprises, like any other parts of the country, have challenges which include; access to affordable finance, adequate managerial and entrepreneurial skills, availability of technology and marketing of products.

“The job of KIE, therefore, is to incubate SMSEs to ensure that they don’t fail. The best route to economic development is through supporting them,” he stated.

There was productive discussions on how technology can help the economy of the Western region. Mr. Evans Meyo, the Technical Operations Manager from ABNO Softwares International, said that the youth should transform themselves into using technology to create wealth.

The Managing Director, Nzoia Sugar Company, CPA Makokha Wanjala, said that the organization is in the process of developing an Application to sell sugar online, hence creating opportunities for the youth.

Prof. Dr. Moni Wekesa, the Dean, School of Law at Daystar University, has developed a technological model to reduce time spent on the road by motorists and one that will discourage corruption.

Opinion: MMUST Students' Demo Flipside

By Albert Induli

There are several key aspects which determine the stability and success of any given institution in the society which keeps it up and running with quality production. One among them is its financial soundness. Masinde Muliro University's student leaders claiming that they want to pay fees as they wish and no one should dictate how and when they should pay fees is quite an absurd and retrogressive call.

On Wednesday, 18th of September 2019, MMUST students, in the company of their leadership, went on rampage citing; unprecedented fee payment deadline, internet breakdown hence delay in upload and disappearance of marks on portals, gross harassment of students at the Finance Department and violation of the MMUSO Constitution 2017 by the Administration.

Every institution operates with clear policies which guides its decisions in order to achieve its desired goals and objectives. Some of these policies may be unfavourable but are for the common good. Acting Registrar Academic Affairs (MMUST) has been branded a black sheep by the students' body when tasked with the burden of implementing the Zero Balance Policy which has seen many students being locked out of the exam rooms. The Policy touches on fee payment dateline.

Internet at MMUST and any other institution of higher learning is important as it is necessary. Students pay up to a tune of Kshs 5,000/= for this service. The Administration has an obligation of giving clear reasons why there is internet breakdown and how the issue is being handled. In this case, the institution claims some ICT equipment were recently struck by thunder and they are under repair.

According to sources, MMUST has the best Finance Department setting amongst many institutions within western region. However, communication gap between the Departmental staff and the students generate misinformation which promotes unprecedented misunderstanding leading to a big strife. Information has it that, student leaders could not bear with the fact that there were new financial requirement/procedures to adhere to in order to execute their budgets according to the Public Procurement and Disposal Act which overrides the MMUSO 2017 Constitution.

It is quite imperative to hold frequent students-administration leadership forums where dialogue is embraced to avert future misunderstanding and ease the running of higher learning institutions.



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