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OUT-Alumni

Newsletter



Lindi Regional Centre Hosts the 38th Graduation Ceremony



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Cover Photo:

Above: The Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hon. Kassim Majaliwa

Below: High table guests in a group photo with foreign students during the 38th graduation ceremonies held on 12th March, 2020 at Ilulu Stadium in Lindi.

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Editorial

Dear Readers

Welcome to the first edition of the Directorate of Links and International Affairs (DLIA) Newsletter. This edition captures issues related to the new Directorate of Links and International Affairs, Alumni Association and 38th graduation ceremony conducted in Lindi Region on 12th March 2020.



The Directorate of Links and International Affairs is one of the newly established Directorates of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). The Directorate was established by the University Council in July 2018. It is under the office of Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic (DVC-AC). The Directorate works with other departments across the University in order to accomplish its tasks. Basically, the core functions of the directorate is to oversee the University activities carried out locally and internationally.

OUT's vision is to participate effectively in the global efforts on the Internationalization of higher education. The Open University of Tanzania fulfills this vision by integrating ICT in Teaching and Learning. The University has also focused in the delivery of affordable and quality education for all through Open and Distance Learning, dynamic knowledge generation and application. The University has established collaborations with a number of institutions with the intention to increase the number of international students across the globe.

This issue covers articles about the Directorate and issues that have transpired during the 38th graduation ceremony. The Vice Chancellor in this newsletter has also insisted on the importance of Alumni Association and its roles to the University development. The newsletter has also covered key messages delivered during the 38th graduation ceremony in Lindi. The Prime Minister in his speech emphasized on the role played by ODL institutions including OUT in the national development agendas. The Regional administration was very much pleased for hosting the 38th graduation ceremony and promised to continue supporting OUT operations in Lindi. All these issues and others from different stakeholders are well highlighted in the newsletter.

I wish you a pleasant reading
Dr Maulid Maulid
Editor



A word from the Vice Chancellor to OUT Alumni

Dear Alumni,

I am profoundly honoured for exciting time to share my views with OUT Alumni across the globe. Recently, the University has upgraded a unit responsible for Alumni into a fully-fledged department under the Directorate of Links and International Affairs. The idea of establishing this department came as an effort to improve university contacts with its alumni.

The department is responsible for connecting alumni with the university. It communicates information about events, developments and other transformations happening at the University. The department has also designed an Alumni portal in the University Website where OUT Alumni are able to update their information and suggest better ways to improve university operations. The department is also coordinating issues related to Alumni Association across the University.

The University is doing all these efforts in order to improve the operations of this Association. The university understands that its development depend on ideas and contributions from its Alumni. Therefore, the University wishes to see OUT Alumni Association organizes social events, publish newsletters or magazines and raise funds for the University's development projects. In other Universities, Alumni associations provide a variety of benefits and services that help alumni maintain connections to their educational institutions and fellow graduates.

I am an Alumni of one of the Universities in the UK. I am proud to be a member of the association and the success stories of my University. I normally receives information about developments of my University. I also contributes ideas through surveys and other platforms as my responsibility to assist my University to improve its operations.

Currently, an Alumni Association at OUT is not strong enough to carry out

its functions effectively. The association is not financially stable due to poor contributions from graduates/Alumni. The Association in most cases is supported by contributions from OUT staff and the University management.

Basically, the involvement of alumni in the University activities is improving slowly apart from its potential alumni working in various sectors of the economy and their significant contributions to the national development. This is a serious challenge to the association when members are not assuming their responsibilities seriously. I am not saying that the association is not doing well at all, No! My message is that the involvement of Alumni in the University operations and its development is not pleasing.

The Association has not managed to create platforms which allow alumni to air their views about the University's competitive advantage in the labour market. Furthermore, the University has several platforms during convocations, graduations and during anniversaries. Efforts have been made to invite alumni to participate in these activities yet very few have shown up. The University does not know why alumni don't want to participate in the University activities/events. Do they lack updated information from the association about the progress of the University? As an association we need to come up with concrete strategies and revive the operations of this association.

As the Vice Chancellor my task is to remind all alumni to become active members of the association. Your membership in the association goes along with responsibilities. All the success stories and failures of the University depends on you as a key stakeholder of the university. You need to take your responsibilities seriously by engaging yourself with the university activities and contributing your ideas to assist the university to improve its functions. The University is proud of its alumni and therefore you need to be proud of the Open University of Tanzania. Thank you!



*The Vice Chancellor of
The Open University
of Tanzania Prof.
Elifas Bisanda*





OUT celebrated its 38th Graduation in Lindi

The Open University of Tanzania on 12th March 2020 has celebrated its 38th graduation ceremony in Lindi Regional Centre. The idea to celebrate the 38th Graduation ceremony in Lindi was proposed by the Prime Minister in 2018 during graduation ceremony in Singida. The Prime Minister was a guest of honour and was very much impressed the way Singida Regional Administration had organized the event. The Prime Minister challenged other regions including Lindi to host similar graduation ceremonies in their respective regions.

The proposal by the PM to host graduation ceremony in Lindi was taken seriously by Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) which eventually submitted the request to the University council on the intention to conduct 38th graduation ceremony in Lindi. The University Council accepted the request and granted Lindi Regional Administration the permission to host the 38th graduation ceremony on 12th March 2020.

The procession was led by the Police Brass Band followed by University dignitaries and the guest of honour and other invited guests. Juhudi Traditional Troupe entertained the audience during the event. The troupe is originated from the Makonde tribe in Lindi and Mtwara Regions. The troupe managed to hold the attention and interest of the audience, and gave the maximum pleasure and delight to the graduands and other invited guests. Basically, the troupe was so talented and managed to perform a brilliant performance to international students and other graduands who were very new to Makonde traditional dance.

The Regional administration had invited a cross section of potential guests to witness the conferment of various degrees in Lindi Regional Centre. Some of the invited guests were Hon. Gelasius Byakanwa the

Regional Commissioner Mtwara, Hon. Mama Salma Kikwete former first lady and the MP special seats, Her excellency Mama Kassimu Majaliwa the wife of the Prime Minister and OUT Alumni. Others were Religious leaders, Regional Administration, Members of Parliament, Politicians, continuing students and secondary school students. Members from the public, council members and officials from higher learning institutions were also invited.

The Open University of Tanzania wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairperson of Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) his Excellency Godfrey Zambi the Regional Commissioner and his team for successful preparations and organizations of the 38th graduation ceremony in Lindi. In fact the event was very successful as a consequence of a well-coordinated team from the Region Administration. The University understands that graduation ceremony involves a lot of preparations and during the process a substantial amount of resources must be committed. In this regard, the Regional Administration had to use some of its administrative resources in order to host the 38th graduation ceremony.

The Open University of Tanzania appreciates the efforts of all stakeholders from the Regional Administration, for their tireless efforts, contributions and sensitization to the general public, government organisations and non-governmental organisations to participate in this celebration. The OUT management has recorded all the efforts done by Lindi Administration towards the 38th graduation ceremony. Lastly, the University cannot forget the DRC Lindi and her team for the hospitality they have shown throughout the event. In fact it was a good experience to be learnt by other regions across the country.

Official opening, prayers, word from the Chairman of the University Council

The former Prime Minister his Excellency Mizengo Peter Kayanza Pinda officiated the ceremony at 11:00 am. His official opening was followed by prayers from Bruno Ngonyani the Bishop of Lindi Region and Alhaj Mohamed Mushangani the Sheikh of Lindi Region. The Bishop in his prayers urged the graduands to be responsible citizens of their country. He insisted that the graduands should observe the moral values and maintain their integrity since the society is expecting a lot from them. The sheikh in his prayers has urged the graduands to use the acquired knowledge effectively and benefit the entire society. He highlighted on the outbreak of corona virus and requested the audience to centre their prayers towards this pandemic. The two religious leaders have also put the leaders of the nation into their prayers to keep the nation safe and stable towards this crisis.

The prayer was followed by speeches from the chairperson to the council Prof. Rwekaza Mukandara and the Vice Chancellor Prof. Elifas Tozo Bisanda. In his speech Prof. Mukandara highlighted on the developments the university is undertaking to ensure smooth implementation of its functions. The chairperson also hinted on the changes the University has incorporated in its Charter and in the Organization Structure where some positions such as financial controller have been created to enable OUT to use its resources wisely and deliver its services effectively.



Chairperson to the Council of The Open University of Tanzania Prof. Rwekaza Mukandara

The Vice Chancellor's Speech

The Vice Chancellor Prof. Elifas Tozo Bisanda acknowledged the government for supporting OUT operations in regional centres. The VC has extended his appreciations to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology and regulatory authorities for supporting OUT programmes across the country. Prof. Bisanda insisted that the Open University of Tanzania is a public institution and

belongs to regional administration. He called upon Regional administration across the country to support developmental agendas of the University. The VC has acknowledged the support given by Regional administration in Tanga, Geita, Mwanza, Singida, Manyara, Lindi, Arusha, Pemba and Unguja for allocating land and fund raising for construction of offices and examination venues.



The Vice Chancellor of The Open University of Tanzania, Prof. Elifas Bisanda

Message from the Regional Commissioner

The Regional Commissioner Hon. Godfrey Zambi extended his appreciations to OUT Management for accepting their request to conduct graduation ceremony in Lindi. The RC has promised to be the first region to raise sufficient amount of funds and construct new buildings in the allocated plot. He emphasized that he has a remarkable relationship with the leaders of OUT. The RC will continue working closely with the leaders of OUT in order to realize their institutional goals in Lindi. The RC also took this opportunity to invite the Prime Minister to deliver his speech to the audience.



Lindi Regional Commissioner Hon. Godfrey Weston Zambi

A speech from the Guest of Honour

On his speech the prime Minister was very happy to be invited as the Guest of honour to the 38th graduation ceremony in Lindi. To me OUT is my family. My wife has graduated with OUT. I am sure she will enroll for PhD in the future. The PM was so excited the way graduation ceremony was conducted in Lindi. He was very happy for the invitation of secondary school students in the event.





The Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hon. Kassim Majaliwa

These secondary schools students will get inspired and motivated by the graduands and perhaps they will perform very well in their final examinations.

The PM was impressed the way OUT has implemented the philosophical ideas of the former President Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere since the University was founded in 1992. The central idea was to increase access to higher education for those qualified. The Open University of Tanzania has given many Tanzanians from different sectors an opportunity to join higher education. The University has enabled those with multiple roles and responsibilities to study while working in different sectors of the economy. "Congratulations OUT for embracing the ideas of Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere our first President of the nation"

The PM insisted OUT to increase enrolment and meets its target registration of one million students per year. He pointed out that OUT should stick on the ideas for its establishment. The University should

work closely with TCU and ensure that it is not treated in the same ways the conventional Universities are treated. "The ideas of ODL Institutions on aspects such as Open Admission, Open Learning should be embraced".

The prime Minister explained the importance of ODL institutions during crisis. He cited an example of the corona virus and the way higher learning institutions are operating in China. The Universities are now closed in China and students have been quarantined but yet studies are delivered through online platforms. The online platforms have connected students with their tutors during the outbreak of corona virus in China. There is a student in one of the Chinese Universities has defended his dissertation through skype and scored an "A" while in Tanzania. You can see the potential of online education. Let's congratulate this student and let's learn from our counterpart China. The Open University of Tanzania should lead others to utilize the online resources during the outbreak of corona virus.

The Prime Minister congratulated graduands for their hard working and perseverance throughout their studies. I understand studying while working is not easy at all. I congratulate you all for remarkable achievements. Make sure you utilize what you have gained and assist our societies across the country. I also congratulate sixteen graduands from Lindi Regional Centre. You have shown the way to your colleagues and to the secondary school students who are with us today. My call to employers is to grant permission for those who want to pursue their studies at OUT. You should also give them permission during examination sessions.



The DVC Academic of the Open University of Tanzania Prof. Deus Ngaruko

DVC Academic invited Deans, Directors to proceed with the Conferment of Degrees

The Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Prof. Deus Ngaruko informed the audience the number of graduands per programme and gender. The total number of graduands from non-degrees to PhDs programmes was 696. There were 20 PhDs of which 5 were female and 15 males. Masters programmes were 142 of which 48 were Female and 95 were Males.

Postgraduate Diploma were 23 of which 6 were Female and 17 were Male. Undergraduate were 344 of which 110 were Female and 234 were Male. Non degree programmes were 166 of which 80 were Female and 86 were Male. The grand percentage for female was 35.8 and Male was 64.2.

The trends show that there is

dramatic improvement of female students to register at OUT for subsequent years.

This indicates that there is no discrimination to the access of higher education at the Open University of Tanzania. Those with sufficient qualifications have equal chances of being admitted and completing their studies.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor has then called upon Deans and Directors to proceed with the conferment of degrees as can be seen on the photos. The Deans and Directors have attended their gradu-

ands to the University Chancellor who eventually conferred the degrees as per the authority bestowed in him by the President. The majority of graduands were Tanzanian nationals and the rest

were 8 graduands from Rwanda, Kenya, Libya and Namibia. They were doing PhDs in Law and PhD in Business Administration, Masters of Education, MA Kiswahili, MHRM, MPM and MSW.



Head of the Assistive Technology Unit (ASTU) Dr. Cosmas Mnyanyi, supporting Mr Erick Mato who graduated BSc ICT during the 38th graduation ceremony held at Ilulu Stadium in Lindi

Students with Special Needs

The Open University of Tanzania has a special Unit known as Assistive Technology Unit (ASTU) which is supporting students with special needs. The Unit is under Dr. Cosmas Mnyanyi pictured supporting the graduand with special needs. The Unit is doing very well to make sure that all students with special needs are taken on board and do their studies smoothly without any kinds of discriminations. Mr Erick Mato a student with physical impairment graduated in BSC ICT during the 38th graduation ceremony in Lindi as it is seen on the photo

Council members visited Tunduru centre, attended graduation ceremony

The council members visited Tunduru Regional Centre a day before graduation ceremony. They were very happy on the developments and efforts OUT is doing to ensure that all Tanzanians have access to University education. Some of the council members are Prof Ndelilio A. Urrio the Vice Chancellor Tumaini University, Dr. Eugenia Kafanabo Dean Faculty of Education University of Dar es Salaam, Prof. Suleiman Ngware University of Dar es Salaam, OUT students organisation leaders, Director of Finance and Accounts, Chief Internal Auditor and Tanzania Higher Learning Institutions Trade Union leaders. The council members insisted OUT management to strengthen its services and meet its targets of enrolment increase by attracting as many applicants it can from within the country and beyond borders.

Views from the general public about graduation ceremony in Lindi

The local citizens were so excited to see graduands attending graduation ceremony in Lindi. They were

very happy to see their relatives with graduation gowns. The procession was really nice. I was very happy to see the graduands and the brass band in town. It was really nice. The town was busy for the past two days. I wish this graduation could be in Lindi for the next coming years. It has stimulated our local economy for the past two days. The bodaboda drivers, the hotels, the lodges were occupied with guests from across the country. Small business owners and others in the small markets were able to do business with the guests. Buses and other means of transport were able to commute all these guests across Lindi and Mtwara. In fact we are very happy for this graduation ceremony in Lindi.

Views from Graduands

Graduands were very happy to change the environment. Majority were very new to Lindi Regional Centre. They were able to see the ocean and other beauties of Lindi. Others were very happy with the cashew nuts and sea food. The city is very cool and safe. The weather is warm but miserable to those coming from temperate climate.

Views from OUT staff

The OUT Staff were very happy for the success of this graduation ceremony in Lindi. They were happy with the Lindi Administration for hosting this ceremony in their Region. They were also happy the way Regional Administrations value and consider Open University of Tanzania in their operations. The graduation ceremony in Lindi was also considered as an initiative by the University and Regional Administration to market the University in Regions across the country. It is also an effort for regional administration to conscientize people about the presence of the Open University of Tanzania in Regional Centres.

Views from sec school students, teachers

The secondary school students were happy for this experience. They had never experienced a University graduation in Lindi. This was their first time to be involved in this event. They were so excited and promised to study hard in order to join higher learning institutions upon completion of their secondary education. Their understanding about university education has now broadened.

They have requested OUT officials to visit schools around Lindi Regional Centre and educate students about the programmes OUT is offering and how students can prepare themselves in order to qualify for these programmes. Their teachers were also impressed the way OUT delivers its programme by open and distance mode. They were also impressed on the affordability and flexibility of the programmes. Some school teachers have already registered with OUT programmes while others have promised to join the University for the Higher Degrees in the future.



OUT Response to COVID-19

The Vice Chancellor Professor Elifas Bisanda in April 2020 has led the University community towards efforts to redress the effects of COVID-19. The Vice Chancellor has presented his paper to University Management and Heads of Departments on the strategies the University can employ to mitigate the situation at the University. The VC has said that the education sector has been affected, with most face to face institutions closed, while many others have shifted/transformed to online teaching and learning. The threat of the virus remains high, until when a vaccine will be found and distributed, which may take two or more years.



Dean of Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment Studies (FSTES) Dr. Matobola Mihale

The Vice Chancellor has insisted that teaching and learning should not stop at the Open University of Tanzania. The Vice Chancellor in his paper came up with various strategies which could help the University to facilitate its teaching and learning services smoothly. The VC has proposed the use of online platforms as an alternative to face to face sessions. Professor Bisanda has also advised the University community to apply some best traditional practices against COVID-19 and compliance of WHO guidelines as highlighted by responsible authorities in Tanzania.

Following the Vice Chancellor's presentation the University has come up with various strategies to enable smooth teaching and learning during COVID-19 pandemic. One of the strategies was the introduction of online lectures and online assessment which have been considered as the best options for social distancing and lessening contracting of COVID-19.

The proposed strategies has enabled the University to conduct its functions smoothly. Recently in June and July 2020 the University has managed to conduct online lectures for 100 series for both local and international students. Students were also able to write their assignments/quizzes in the eLearning platform. They will also attempt their oral examinations (OREX) in July and August 2020 through zoom platform. This is a huge milestone to the University towards its goal of becoming a fully online institution.

The appointment of top University officials

The Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania, Hon. Mizengo Kayanza Peter Pinda, has appointed Prof Elifas Tozo Bisanda to the position of Vice Chancellor for the second and last term of five years starting from 2nd June, 2020. Prof. Elifas Tozo Bisanda has been the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) since his first appointment on 2nd June, 2015. Before his first appointment, Prof. Bisanda, who is a Full Professor of Mechanical Engineering, was the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Regional Services) for two (2) years (2007-2009), then Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics) for a period of six (6) years (2009-2015) at the Open University of Tanzania.

In a similar vein, the Chancellor of The Open University of Tanzania Hon. Mizengo Kayanza Peter Pinda has appointed Prof. Deus Dominic Ngaruko to the position of Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics for the second term of four (4) years starting from 23rd April 2020. Prof. Dr. Deus Dominic Ngaruko is an Associate Professor of Development Economics. He began his academic carrier at the Open University of Tanzania in 1998 when he joined Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences as a tutorial Assistant.

Consequently, the Chancellor of The Open University of Tanzania Hon. Mizengo Kayanza Peter Pinda has ap-

pointed Professor George Sylvanus Oreku to the position of Deputy Vice Chancellor Resources Management for a period of four (4) years starting from 23rd April 2020. George Sylvanus Oreku is an experienced information Computer systems security research professor. He was appointed as a Director of Institute of Educational & Management Technologies (IEMT) at The Open University of Tanzania in 2019, served as a Director of ICT and Technology Transfer at Tanzania Industrial Research Development Organization (TIRDO) under the Ministry of Industry Trade and Investment Tanzania since 2009 to 2017 prior to joining The Open University of Tanzania in 201

New Appointments in the Directorate of Links and International Affairs

Since its establishment in July 2018, the University Council has appointed Dr. Maulid J. Maulid as the New Director of Links and International Affairs. His appointment was effected in December 2019. Following this appointment the Vice

Chancellor has also made some changes in the Directorate. The Head of International Students is Dr. Flora Kiwonde who was a DRC in Mara. The head of Links and Alumni is Mr. Richard Parezzo who was the head of International Students. Mr. Parezzo

is replacing Ms. Celia Muyinga who has been hospitalized for a couple of months.

The Directorate wishes to congratulate all these officials for their new roles in the directorate.

OUT mourns the passing of its former Vice Chancellor Professor Tolly S. A. Mbwette

The University Community mourns the sudden death of its former Vice Chancellor Professor Tolly Mbwette who passed away on 02 July 2020. Professor Mbwette passed away at Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es Salaam where he was receiving treatments. Professor Mbwette has served various positions in higher learning institutions. He was the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) at the Open University of Tanzania between January 2004 and April 2005. He also served as the Vice Chancellor at the Open University of Tanzania for two terms from May 2005 to May 2015.

On behalf of the OUT Community and all stakeholders of the Higher Education Community, the OUT extends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, and commiserates with the Ministry of Education as well as the entire citizenry of Tanzania, and Africa on this sad event. We will fondly remember him for his immense contribution to academic scholarships in Africa. Indeed, Africa has lost a great scholar and leader. May His Dear Soul Rest in Perfect Peace!



The Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania Prof. Elifas Bisanda sign a book of condolence for the deceased former Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania Prof. Tolly Mbwette

