



BIUST, NPC HOST VISION 2036 PUBLIC LECTURE

The Botswana University of Science and Technology (BIUST), in conjunction with the National Planning Commission (NPC), hosted the inaugural Vision 2036 Public Lecture. The remarkable event was held at BIUST in Palapye.

The lecture, held under the theme "The Case of BIUST: Transitional Development Plan (TNDP) - Contribution Towards Innovation and Digital Transformation", marked a significant milestone in fostering innovation and digital transformation in Botswana.

Professor Otlogetswe Totolo, Vice Chancellor of BIUST, welcomed the distinguished guests and attendees, emphasizing the university's commitment to producing scientists, technologists, and engineers. He expressed gratitude on behalf of BIUST for being selected to host the public lecture, highlighting the university's role in transforming Botswana's economy through research, innovation, and technology.

Professor Totolo acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the adoption of technology and digital transformation. He emphasized BIUST's dedication to addressing societal challenges, particularly during the era of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

BIUST's achievements in digital transformation were underscored, including the BOTSAT 1 Ground communication station and the upcoming BOTSAT1 satellite project, spanning various academic fields. Additionally, BIUST's partnership with a Dutch Drone Engineering Company, Avy, was highlighted, showcasing their joint effort to build a drone delivery ecosystem for essential supplies.

The university's collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture in developing a system to manage grain crop production in Botswana was also recognized.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

By Wandipa Gachala

In the August edition, we present stories and events that underscore our commitment to education, innovation, and collaboration. We share remarkable journeys, such as Ms. Rowena Dinah Koloji's inspirational path to empowerment, and highlight significant events like the Vision 2036 Public Lecture, emphasizing the role of technology and innovation in addressing societal challenges. The "Taking the Ministry to the People" event showcases the Ministry of Education's dedication to transforming education for a prosperous future. Additionally, the ongoing collaboration between CUT and BIUST reinforces the power of strategic partnerships in driving economic and social transformation. These stories collectively exemplify BIUST's proactive role in fostering progress, innovation, and empowerment locally and beyond.

As we continue to evolve and adapt, our unwavering commitment to education, collaboration, and societal transformation remains at the forefront. We eagerly anticipate sharing more inspiring stories and updates on the remarkable initiatives that define our journey at BIUST as we collectively shape a brighter future.

The newsletter team appreciates all your support and urges you to continue making this edition a success by informing us of any research or event you host to capture those moments.

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This system aims to provide a comprehensive database of arable farmers and monitor grain crop production data.

In conclusion, Professor Totolo invited all the guests to join BIUST in celebrating its 10th Anniversary, which will include a week of activities culminating in the Graduation ceremony on September 22, 2023.

In his opening remarks, Honourable Onneetse Ramogapi, Member of Parliament for the Palapye constituency, emphasized the timeliness and relevance of the lecture. He noted that the theme was well-suited to stimulate critical debates among academics, government officials, researchers, and the public. Honourable Ramogapi stressed the importance of innovation and digital technology in addressing the challenges posed by climate change, especially in a country prone to droughts.

The highlight of the lecture was the discussion surrounding BIUST's role in the development of the Transitional Development Plan (TNDP). Honourable Ramogapi praised BIUST for its involvement in satellite design and management, which could provide valuable data for farmers to enhance food production. Additionally, he acknowledged the significance of BIUST-developed drones, emphasizing their potential impact on the health sector.

The Palapye legislator called for all educational institutions to align their initiatives with the government's Mind-Set Change initiative, emphasizing a need for collaboration in achieving national goals.

Addressing the audience, Honourable Kabo N.S. Morwaeng, Minister for State President, described the lecture as the first of its kind on Vision 2036. He highlighted the theme's focus on using science, technology and innovation to drive the economy and commended BIUST's role in supporting this vision. Minister Morwaeng challenged BIUST to accelerate its efforts in research, innovation, and creativity to contribute to the achievement of the TNDP.

Minister Morwaeng announced that the lecture marked the beginning of the annual Vision 2036 commemorative events, aiming to update the nation on progress and challenges. He emphasized BIUST's pivotal role in achieving high-income status through a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

Acknowledging BIUST's achievements, Minister Morwaeng recognized the university's significant contributions to industry growth and development. He lauded BIUST for producing industrious students whose impact is felt globally.

The event concluded with a panel discussion moderated by Professor Patricia Makepe, Director of the Center for Business Management, Entrepreneurship, and General Education at BIUST. The panellists included Mr. Diane Mongudi, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Botswana Innovation Hub; Prof Joseph Chuma, Dean Faculty of Engineering at BIUST; Mr. Mpho Koolese, Technical Executive at Botswana Fibre Networks; and Ms. Marang Mbaakanyi, Chief Executive Officer of Drones for Africa and a BIUST alumna.

The Vision 2036 Public Lecture marked a significant step in aligning national goals with innovation, technology, and the role of BIUST in shaping Botswana's future.



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: CUT & BIUST COLLABORATE FOR SUCCESS

In a display of continued commitment to fostering strategic collaborations and advancing their shared mission, BIUST welcomed the recently appointed Central CUT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Pamela Dube, and her delegation on a courtesy call. The visit served as a reaffirmation of the strong partnership established between the two institutions through a Memorandum of Understanding in 2019. BIUST's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Otlogetswe Totolo, began the meeting by congratulating Professor Dube on her historic appointment as the first female Vice-Chancellor of CUT. He acknowledged that both universities, being STEM-focused, hold a significant responsibility in driving economic and social transformation in their respective countries. The meeting provided an ideal platform to explore avenues for collaboration that can yield fruitful results. Highlighting the importance of serving the communities they operate within, Professor Totolo stressed that joint activities between CUT and BIUST should aim to forge cross-border business and cultural ties, benefiting both individuals and government relations. He emphasized the need for universities to continuously evolve their academic delivery methods to remain relevant and impactful in today's dynamic world. "The trend in universities is moving towards partnerships that leverage on complementary strengths," Professor Totolo said. He expressed the importance of close collaboration between the two institutions to optimize the use of limited resources, fostering a culture of success in research, teaching, and learning. Professor Totolo believed that as institutions of higher learning, CUT and BIUST are well-positioned to lead the economic development agenda of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Africa as a whole, harnessing their research talents and academic output to drive progress.

The ongoing partnership between CUT and BIUST exemplifies the power of collaboration in driving economic and social progress. By leveraging their complementary strengths and shared vision, both institutions are poised to play pivotal roles in the development of a knowledge-based economy and society, not only in their respective countries but across the SADC region and the continent.

Professor Dube commended BIUST for their rapid successes and acknowledged the mutual understanding the institutions share regarding the importance of global engagement and a student-centric approach. She encouraged BIUST to not only focus on research and technology but also prioritize campus life and staff welfare, ensuring a holistic and supportive environment for all stakeholders.

Both Vice-Chancellors emphasized the significance of partnerships in addressing global challenges, particularly in finding homegrown solutions for African issues while fostering international engagement. They stressed the importance of instilling an entrepreneurial mindset in students, preparing them to be innovative leaders and problem solvers.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Elisha Shemang, emphasized that BIUST depends on the expertise of others to propel and develop the university further. As a technology-driven institution, they expressed their willingness to learn from CUT while also collaborating on mutual development. The visit concluded with a tour of BIUST's facilities, allowing the CUT delegation to appreciate the resources and potential for collaboration between the two institutions.

BIUST: EMPOWERING THE FUTURE AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S TRANSFORMATIVE EVENT



Taking the Ministry to the People event highlights a significant gathering hosted by the Ministry of Education and Skills Development in Tshesebe on August 24, 2023. The event, themed "Driving a Knowledge Economy through Skills Development and Mindset Change," brought together education enthusiasts and stakeholders from all corners of the nation.

The core objectives of the event were twofold:

1. **Raising Awareness:** The Ministry aimed to shed light on its critical role in shaping Botswana's education landscape, ensuring everyone understood its mandate.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement:** It provided a platform for stakeholders to interact with ministry management, offering valuable feedback to improve education in Botswana.

Ms. Miriam Maroba, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, emphasized that the Ministry's establishment in 2022 aimed to streamline government Ministries for seamless service delivery. The Ministry's primary goal is to enhance the management and coordination of education throughout one's life, equipping Botswana with skills to succeed domestically and globally.

Encouraging parental involvement in education, the Permanent Secretary stressed transformative change, innovative project management, and the importance of breaking free from limitations. She highlighted the Ministry's collaboration with various stakeholders as crucial in the ever-evolving educational landscape.

Honourable Minister Dr. Douglas Letsholathebe highlighted the Ministry's role in facilitating scientific discoveries and innovations. He showcased research outputs from esteemed institutions like UB, BIUST, and BUAN, including BIUST's satellite project, UB's Bio-Fuel Production project, and BUAN's Agrovoltaic project.

The Minister emphasized the need for a mindset change, illustrated through tangible actions such as using local languages in early childhood education, digitalizing pedagogy, and expanding e-learning. Inclusive education, demonstrated by the Maun Centre for Learners with Severe and Multiple Disabilities, showcased the Ministry's commitment to leaving no one behind.

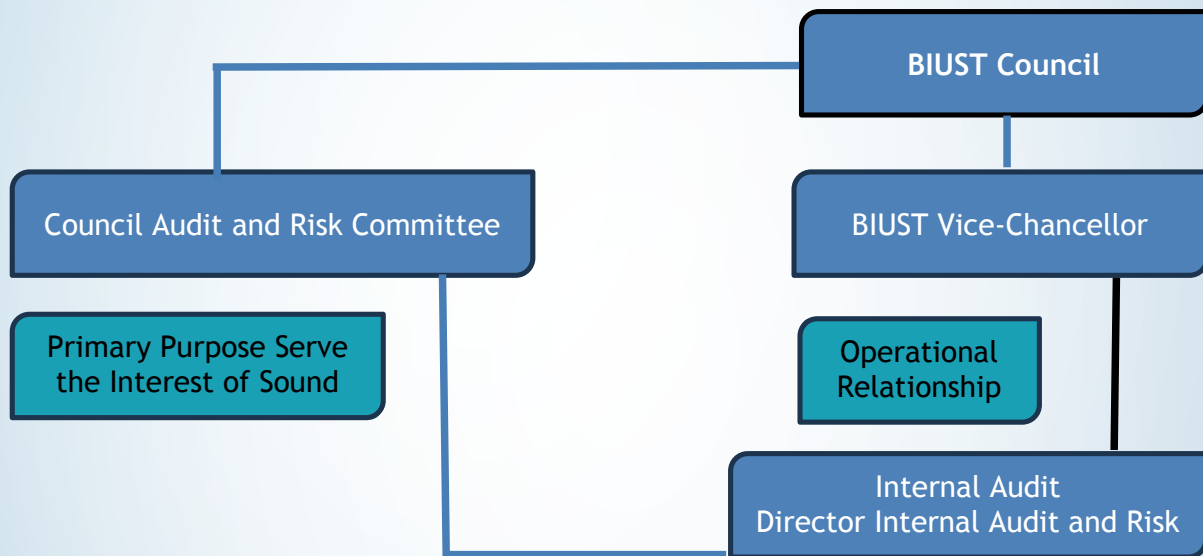
In conclusion, Minister Letsholathebe thanked attendees and encouraged the Permanent Secretary's continued exemplary work. Mr. Davis Tele, BIUST's Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, expressed gratitude to the Ministry, highlighted BIUST's achievements, and urged continued collaboration.

The event exemplified the power of collaboration, innovation, and a shared dedication to shaping a brighter educational future in Botswana. Together, they pave the way for a more prosperous tomorrow.



THE STRUCTURE OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTION (IAF)

Let us self-introspect, for one to reach their goal they should focus and set clear objectives and actively work towards them. By taking small steps each day, you can create lasting changes that will have a positive impact on the attainment of your goal. These small steps are what we can call a structure, a road map that will take you to your destination. This is how you place, organize, and coordinate all the elements you need to achieve your goal. The following is an ideal structure for reporting lines and independence in BIUST.



Standard 1100- Independence and Objectivity, states that the internal audit function must be independent, and internal auditors must be objective in performing their work. The BIUST IAF achieves its independence through the following;

- i) Dual reporting, administratively to the Vice Chancellor (VC) and functionally to the audit committee and/or directly to the Council.
- ii) Use of the Internal Audit Charter approved by the Audit Committee.
- iii) Operating with a risk-based internal audit plan approved by the Audit Committee.
- iv) Internal audit budget and resource plan approved by the Audit Committee.
- v) The function's assessment on performance relative to its plans.
- vi) The Council's responsibility to appoint, remove and approve remuneration of the Director of the Internal Audit and Risk.

Internal Audit Function interacts with Management and other Directorates to develop business and operational understanding, leveraging their expertise to bridge silos within the institution. The Director assesses the operational design, business processes, technological advancements, control environment, and maturity of other assurance providers within the institution.

This assessment helps align the IAF resources and strategic plan with the overall institutional strategy, technologies, budgets, external consultants, and potential consultancy engagements in the future. This interaction is visible through important meetings such as the Management Audit and Risk Committee (MARC) meeting, facilitation of the audit needs analysis to enable the formulation of the annual risk-based audit plan and through the engagement audit process.



ROWENA DINAH KOLOI: AN INSPIRATION OF EMPOWERMENT, ADVOCACY AMIDST ADVERSITY

In a remarkable achievement that resonates with the spirit of perseverance and determination, Ms. Rowena Dinah Koloï, a shining star within the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) community, has been honoured with the prestigious Best Youth Living with Disability award at the Botswana Youth Awards. This accolade stands as a testament to her unwavering commitment to empowerment, advocacy, and making a positive impact on her community.

Ms. Koloï's journey was nothing short of inspiring. Battling the challenges brought on by keratoconus, a corneal disorder, she has navigated life's obstacles with unparalleled resilience. Through sheer determination, she has emerged as a beacon of hope for countless others facing similar challenges. Holding a BCom in Real Estate, Ms. Koloï currently serves as an Estates Assistant at BIUST, showcasing her dedication and professionalism in her chosen field.

Beyond her professional achievements, Ms. Koloï's indomitable spirit has led her to become a published author with her motivational book titled; "A Walk to Remember: Disability is not Inability." Drawing from her personal journey, the book serves as a source of inspiration for individuals striving to transcend their circumstances and embrace their true potential.

One of Ms. Koloï's remarkable endeavors is her role as the founding Director of Abilities Expo, an annual exhibition designed to empower young people with disabilities. The event provides a platform for showcasing diverse talents, from music and arts to crafts and entrepreneurship, highlighting the limitless potential within the disabled community.

Ms. Koloji's leadership extends to her role as the chairperson of the Network of Young People with Disabilities, where she passionately advocates for the representation of young individuals with disabilities in various policy and programming platforms. Her influence has reached regional and continental stages, including participation in the UNFPA Flagship program and the African Disability Forum's leadership program.

Reflecting on her journey, Ms. Koloji emphasizes her determination to challenge society's negative perceptions about disabilities. "Every day of my life is an opportunity to educate one person," she affirms, embodying her commitment to altering the narrative and promoting inclusivity.

Botswana's recent ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities presents a significant turning point. As the country strides forward in mainstreaming disability into policies and structures, Ms. Koloji emphasizes the importance of targeted interventions and support to ensure that individuals with disabilities can achieve their full potential.

With a heart full of compassion and an unwavering drive to make a difference, Rowena Dinah Koloji stands as a true inspiration, redefining the boundaries of possibility and reminding us all that disabilities do not define limitations but rather to serve as a wellspring of unique strengths. Her journey is a beacon of hope and empowerment, illuminating the path toward a more inclusive and compassionate society.

For those seeking inspiration, Ms. Koloji's words resonate deeply: "There is absolutely nothing wrong with having a disability. It doesn't make you less human. Get up every morning and live beyond those limitations and barriers that have been put before you because you are able."

As she continues her impactful journey, we eagerly anticipate the positive changes and transformative initiatives that Ms. Koloji will undoubtedly bring to the world.