

## AN ONLINE JOURNEY THROUGH THE HISTORY OF MATHS AND SCIENCE

By Gofaone Motswagole



**BIUST Vice-Chancellor Professor Otlogetswe Totolo**

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology's (BIUST) Department of Mathematics and Statistical Science recently held the Central Botswana Mathematics and Statistical Sciences Conference II (CBMSSC II) 2022.

The conference was held virtually under the theme, *“Mathematics and its applications; an accelerator for scientific research and innovation in a knowledge-based economy”*.

The CBMSSCII conference brought experts, researchers, graduate and undergraduate students in the different fields of Mathematics and Statistics under one roof to interrogate the scope. The main objective of the conference was to increase collaboration and connectivity between researchers with common interests around the region and the globe.

The session comprised of talks from eminent Mathematicians, contributions from academia in; I: Financial Mathematics, Actuarial Science, and its Applications; II: Optimization and Control; III: Industrial Mathematics and Numerical Analysis; IV: Algebra, Analysis and

Topology V: Mathematical Biology; VI: Mathematics Education.

In his welcome remarks, the BIUST Vice-Chancellor, Professor Otlogetswe Totolo applauded his colleagues for their hard work and determination. He classified them as researchers who can generate knowledge so that policymakers and administrators can make informed decisions.

“This transition can be achieved by speeding up the teaching of science, engineering, and technology of which mathematics is the core. Indeed, mathematics is the mother of sciences, that is one or another involves the application of mathematics,” Prof. Totolo said. He further declared the conference as a platform for sharing new knowledge and ideas in the field of STEM and related areas.

For his part, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs in BIUST, Professor Elisha Shemang affirmed BIUST as a research-intensive university, which strives to position itself among the leading innovative institutions in the world. Prof. Shemang highlighted that the

conference does not only bring together researchers, students, and educators across the globe in one platform but enwalls researchers’ culture among the entire education fraternity aligned to the aspirations expressed in Vision 2036.

Acting Dean for the Faculty of Sciences, Professor Amare Gessese indicated that Mathematics is the basis of all Sciences; physical sciences, engineering, life science, economics, and social sciences. “Mathematics is the language of science and without it, there is no development. I am confident that this conference will create a very good opportunity of network for the Faculty of Sciences,” the Professor noted.

According to the academic, the term mathematics entails a group of related sciences, including algebra, geometry, and calculus concerned with the study of numbers, quantity, shape, and their interrelationships by using specialized notation. On that note, the Mathematical model is a representation in Mathematical terms of the behavior of real systems and objects.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



*Mrs Rebecca Richard*

We welcome you to yet another edition of our newsletter.

"There is no force equal to a woman determined to rise," this notion is attested by the power and strength shown by women across the globe. In this issue, women's efforts were celebrated during international women's day.

It also features women in STEM who continue to impact school-going girls

through mentoring them at Girls Excelling in Science and Mathematics (GEMS). The newsletter team congratulates Dr. Otladisa who is an aspiration to young girls with the recent Ph.D. degree she bagged.

Of particular interest is the hosting of the virtual Central Botswana Mathematics and Statistical Sciences Conference II (CBMSSC II) 2022 for Mathematics and applications, where BIUST took a larger stake addressing stakeholders.

The editorial team urges you to continue being safe from COVID-19 and reminds you that the clinic is open for vaccine jabs and boosters as statistics shows lack in numbers due to unknown fear of taking the booster shots.

This is our last edition of the financial year 2021/22, and I am hoping for a better and more exciting new year full of narratives from all our internal stakeholders. For content submission or being part of the next edition, kindly email [barutir@biust.ac.bw](mailto:barutir@biust.ac.bw) and [gachalaw@biust.ac.bw](mailto:gachalaw@biust.ac.bw)

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In addition, he outlined other fields which are part of biomathematics; bioinformatics, bio-economics, mathematical ecology, mathematical medicine, mathematical immunology, computational biology, and biomechanics.

Furthermore, diverse dignitaries graced the

forum with exceptional expertise in the field of Mathematics and Statistical sciences. Many believed that the conference will boost the visibility of BIUST and Botswana on the knowledge creation map.

"We are not limited to exchanging our views only on this platform. I believe we have the contact details of the participants, and we will continue engaging one another for the progress

in STEM, particularly in Mathematics," Professor Jean Baptiste Gatsinzi emphasized as he closed the talk of the day.

The plus to it is that the History of Mathematics is a fascinating starting point for anyone interested in learning about the origins of the mathematical concepts that so many of us use every day but often take for granted.

# INTRODUCING THE NEW PhD KID IN THE BLOCK

By: Rebecca Richard

Dr. Masego Otladisa recently succeeded in defending her Statistics thesis after almost five years of no sleep as she had to strike a balance of being employed and at the same time studying in BIUST. Her research work was focused on making inferences using robust rank-based estimation in complex semi-parametric regression models when the responses are not completely observed.

The problem of missing data is relatively common in almost all research and can have a significant effect on the conclusions that can be drawn from the data. Because of the prevalence of the missing data problem and the threats it poses to statistical inferences, her methodological and theoretical research as well as collaborative work deals with promoting robust estimation of complex regression models with missing data.

Before enrolling for Ph.D., in 2019, she was hired as a Teaching Instructor after six years of working as a Teaching Assistant in BIUST. She is currently a Teaching Instructor-Statistics and soon to be a Lecturer-Statistics.

Before joining BIUST, Dr. Otladisa was called for a government internship at the Ministry of Health, where she worked as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at Princess Marina Hospital under the Department of Records and Management. Prior to that, she was a Research Assistant at the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA).

Her Statistician career began when she studied BSc (Hons) Statistics at the University of Namibia. She was awarded five accolades for good academic performance and being the best student in the Statistics Department.



Dr. Masego Otladisa, BIUST Stastician

# ALIVE FOR PURPOSE CLUB DONATES TO THE NEEDY

By: Rebecca Richard

Alive for a Purpose club donated groceries and toiletry to two families in Palapye through the Social Worker's office in Khurumela ward, adjacent to the BIUST campus. Speaking during the handover, the BIUST club Chairperson Mr. Harrison Montsho said Alive for a Purpose club is a BIUST student initiative mandated to provide and participate in charitable activities. He expressed his gratitude towards the social work office for working with them on this project. He said the nine club members collectively chip in funds from their monthly stipends and work together to assist those in need as identified by the social work office.

Chairperson Mr. Montsho also expressed that despite funding challenges, they always regard the notion of blessing as the hand that gives. Therefore they will continue to strive to help where possible. Mr. Montsho said initiatives of this nature were testimony of BIUST's Social Relevance impact on its local communities.

One of the beneficiaries, Mr Innocent Motshabi, a qualified medical Doctor could not hide his delightfulness and thanked BIUST students for the warm gesture. He said this is also an eye-opener for him to do the same for the needy once he is hired. He applauded the donors and urged their socially responsible obligation.

Passing a Vote of thanks, Social Worker Ms. Kgano alluded that even though the government has programs for the needy, sometimes the assistance is not enough and the classification does not feature their various circumstances. She further highlighted that since joining hands with the BIUST club, they have successfully impacted three families as part of the club's evolution. She urged beneficiaries to use the food hampers and toiletry wisely and assured them of continued support where deemed appropriate.

Since its inception, beyond the food hampers and toiletry, the club has donated; to more than three families, donated school uniforms for the needy, and has been a critical partner with the House of Hope in Palapye. The club is the best platform for every selfless individual wishing to partake in local charity work.



Food hampers donated by the club.

# COVID-19 VACCINATION AND BOOSTER SHOTS CAMPAIGN

By: Gofaone Motswagole



BIUST Nurse Ms. Qhele

As COVID-19 continues to plug global economies and the general populace, organizations continue to adhere to the World Health Organization (WHO) protocols and instill strict measures to curb the spread of the pandemic. A Communicational and Public Affairs (CPA) Newsletter reporter, Ms. Motswagole probes a BIUST Nurse Ms. Qhele on the pandemic-related issues.

**CPA - Kindly introduce yourself to the readers of the CPA Newsletter**

My Name is Tsholofelo ka Qhele. I am a Family Nurse Practitioner currently allocated for COVID-19 initiatives and implementation in the BIUST clinic.

**CPA - As a health professional, what are your views regarding the COVID-19 pandemic?**

My concern is the disruption to human life that COVID-19 has brought. The Economic downfall, limited health care resources, limited human resources due to isolations, quarantines, and eventually death and loss of income, and the fear that triggered mental health conditions and exacerbated existing ones.

**CPA- What are COVID-19 vaccines in place?**

Vaccines use the body's natural defenses to build resistance to COVID-19 mRNA. They

contain material from the virus that causes COVID-19 and gives our cells instructions for how to make a harmless protein that is unique to the virus.

**CPA-What are the common side effects of these vaccines?**

The adverse effects following vaccination may include any untoward medical occurrence that follows immunization. They may include fever and chills, headache, fatigue, pain and swelling at the site of injection, redness, itching, lump or bruise at the injection site, nausea and vomiting muscle pains, swollen lymph nodes.

**CPA - How do we relate health conditions and the coronavirus vaccine?**

A person with any pre-existing chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma, etc. is more likely to get severe COVID-19 disease and suffer complications when unvaccinated but when vaccinated the severity of the disease and the likelihood of hospitalization and complications are reduced.

**CPA-What are booster shots and why are they required?**

A booster shot is an additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to a vaccinated person who has completed a primary vaccination. A booster dose can help prolong protective immunity in someone who responded fully

at first. Boosters are being recommended because data is showing that protection against mild and moderate COVID-19 via the initial series declines over time.

**CPA-Can you kindly share the statistics of those who have been vaccinated in the BIUST clinic.**

Target population	First dose only	Fully vaccinated (1st & 2nd dose)	Booster dose only
3158	64(2.02%)	1756(56.6%)	171(9%)

**Fully Vaccinated with Booster = 327**

**CPA- In reference to statistics, what can you say about the response?**

The total number of vaccinated BIUST population including those who have taken 1st dose and 2nd dose is 58.62%, which means that as per the target population 41.38% might not have been vaccinated in BIUST. COVID-19 booster dose coverage is very low. People are not coming forward to take the dose.

**CPA- What challenges do you face at the facility?**

The paramount challenge is the unvaccinated pool of individuals that are providing a reservoir for the virus to continue to multiply, therefore greater opportunities for new variants to emerge.

Individuals who do not turn up to take their second dose and booster shots contrary to the scheduled time become problematic when doses are out of stock. And the wastage of vaccine doses, especially when booster dosing started due to people coming in fewer numbers.

**CPA - What interventions have been made to the challenges?**

A series of interventions including the intensive awareness on health education on the importance of taking COVID-19 vaccines, an appraisal on side effects, conducting more vaccination campaigns at student halls of residences, and booking arrangements for booster and first doses by grouping people to complete all doses in a vial to avoid wastage of vaccines.

The importance of keeping the vaccination card safe cannot be over-emphasized as it is a requirement for international travel, and other local undertakings.

# GEMS MENTORS INTRODUCED TO MENTEES IN SIX SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The BIUST through the Pre-University Academic Programme (PUAP) in 2021 launched six (6) mentors for the Girls Excelling in Science and Mathematics (GEMS) projects in senior secondary schools. The mentors were profiled for appreciation by each school to promote the uptake of STEM at an early stage in life. Mentors have already met their mentees physically and virtually because of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. These are Scientists and Engineers from BIUST and Industry locally and from as far as Cyprus. Below are the brief profiles;

1. Ms. Germinah Modimoopele who mentors at Ghanzi
2. Dr. Lemme Kebaabetswe who mentors at Shakawe SSS
3. Ms. Julia Tshabang who mentors at Maun SSS
4. Dr. Bokani Mtengi is working with the GEMS at Matsha College
5. Dr. Batatu Mazhani at mentors at Mahupu Unified SS
6. Dr. Linda Mpofo-Dobo mentors at Matsha College



## MS. JULIA TSHABANG NEE CHEPETE

I am Julia Tshabang nee Chepete. A microbiologist with years of academic, management, and consultancy experience. I consider myself very fortunate to have been trained to be able to perceive the world through the lens of science because the world looks so much more exciting from this vantage point. I currently lecture students in life and health sciences at Botho University and at various times have done the same at the Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Sciences (BUAN), and the University of Botswana. So, in summary, I am part of the production line that churns out Botswana's scientists. I am also fortunate to be a direct consumer of the products that

come out of this production line. As a manager and consultant, I lead and manage, and collaborate with other scientists to contribute our bit towards building a great Botswana.



## DR. BOKANI MTENGI

Dr. Bokani Mtengi is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Electrical, Computer, and Telecommunications Engineering at Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST), where she has been a faculty member since 2018. She holds a Ph.D. and MEng degrees in Electrical Engineering from Howard University, Washington DC, and a BEng degree in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Hartford in the United States of America.

She has worked as an Electron Microscopy Imaging Engineer at Howard University in Washington DC, responsible for providing product research and development analysis to bioengineers. From 2004 to 2007, she worked as a Biomedical Engineer for the Ministry of Health. She has more than a decade of academic research and undergraduate teaching experience. While in postgraduate school, she was engaged in undergraduate Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education advocacy, curriculum design, and STEM gender inclusion program implementation to increase enrollment and retention of female students in STEM fields.

She worked as a STEM instructor at Mindframe® Academy, an afterschool program for introducing children to STEM. She also worked as a coordinator at Boolearngirl® Inc., a computer programming school for girls designed to promote gender inclusion in STEM fields. In 2019, she was one of the participants of the Recirculate Research and Entrepreneurship knowledge exchange program at Lancaster University, U.K, and continues to contribute to the project on issues of

Women in Research. She is a member of the Women Innovators Network of Africa (WINA), a network sponsored by the Recirculate Grant from Lancaster, UK, designed to assist African Women in STEM with networking, engaging, and exchanging ideas that impact innovative solutions to Africa's development challenges. She is a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). She was elected the 2020 Vice Chairperson of the IEEE Botswana Subsection and the current Secretary for the Botswana Subsection. She is the country representative for the Women in Power (WiP) Chapter of the Power and Energy Society under IEEE. She is a member of various local academic committees and has given talks at numerous events promoting advocacy for gender balance in the STEM professions. She is a member of the Gender Issues and Disadvantaged Groups under the Education for Laser-Based Manufacturing Africa Mobility project.



## DR. LEMME KEBABETSWE

Dr. Lemme Kebaabetswe is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Biological Sciences and Biotechnology at BIUST, where she has been working for six years. Her duties include teaching and mentoring both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Furthermore, she is a researcher specializing in viruses and microbiology, where she supervises postgraduate students in various projects. She holds a Ph.D. in Microbiology, Molecular Biology, and Biochemistry from the University of Idaho, USA. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Business Administration, at the University of East London, UK. On social responsibility, she is a member of the Rose of Sharon Pre-School board in Palapye. She was involved in the previous cohort of GEMS as a mentor for STEM girls from Francistown Senior Secondary School. She is continuing with the GEMS Mentorship program as a mentor for girls aspiring to STEM careers assigned to the Shakawe Senior Secondary School.

Continues on next page...



**MS. GERMINAH MODIMOPELO**

Ms. Germinah Modimoopele is the Customer Service Manager at Botswana Power Corporation, professionally a registered Electrical engineer with Engineering Registration Board. She holds a Bachelor of Electrical & Electronics Engineering and a Master of Science in Strategic Management. Currently, her role covers managing Transmission and Distribution operations in Central Region including its Customer Services. She has over twenty years (20) wealth of experience in the power industry. She is a Trustee & Chairperson in Botswana Power Corporation Staff Pension Fund (BPCSPF). On social responsibility, she supports academic excellence in her former school, Matshekge as an award sponsor and she recently joined the GEMS Mentorship program under BIUST for girls aspiring in STEM careers at Ghanzi Senior School.



**MS. LINDA MPOFU-DOBO**

Ms. Linda Mpfu-Dobo is a molecular scientist (medical) with a keen interest in genetics and immunology. She recently completed her MSc in Molecular Medicine and is looking for opportunities for a Ph.D. project where she can combine these two interests. She has previously worked in the pharmaceutical industry in the management of medically relevant and ethical marketing of products. She is determined to one day work at the intersection of research and industry, making sure that discoveries made in her field make a difference in patients' lives. She is excited to be a GEMS mentor as fostering youth who are interested in science is a cause close to her heart. She can't wait to see the heights that the girls reach!



**DR. BATATU MAZHANI**

Dr. Batatu Mazhani is a Veterinarian by profession and is currently employed as a Lecturer at the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN). Dr. Mazhani began her career in the Department of Veterinary Services upon graduation in 2002, where she held different positions. During this time, she acquired expertise in the fields of animal health, animal welfare, and veterinary public health. In 2013 after she reached the position of Principal Veterinary Officer, she joined BUAN (formerly known as Botswana College of Agriculture).

She has a Bachelor's degree in Veterinary Medicine from the University College, Dublin, and an MSc in Food Studies from the University of Queensland.

## MY FIRST SOCCER EXPERIENCE

By: Rebecca Richard

On a beautifully sunny Saturday of the 19th March 2022, yours truly watched BIUST All Stars as they logged horns with FC Palapye at the Palapye United ground popularly known as PU.

The BIUST All-Stars players took to the pitch for a warm-up two hours before kick-off. Their supporters clad in the club's regalia arrived with BIUST combis. They produced an exciting and thrilling atmosphere as they rallied behind the squad in songs and cheers. For a minute I thought they had it all figured out and would have an upper hand compared to their opponents who arrived 30 minutes before starting time.

Throughout the 90 minutes, I was fascinated by the cheer from both sides supporting benches. They teased and swore but none seemed to be offended! Indeed, soccer is a universal game loved and followed by people from different walks of life. The people, music, dancing, and shouting made my experience worthwhile as it was for the first time I enjoyed being around different charismas. I admired their technical talks and analysis on the formation of teams.



I watched with great enthusiasm after I witnessed people betting on the winner. I watched in enjoyment the neat interchanges of the ball, dribbles, and fast-paced counter-attacks from both ends. It is FC Palapye that burst the dam in the 38th minute of the game to take a 1-0 lead on BIUST and the latter played a chasing game since.

Despite the hosts bagging another goal and ultimately winning 2-0 against the team I am aligned to, my first soccer experience was 90 minutes filled with pleasure and excitement. I am grateful and pleased to inform you that the BIUST soccer team is here and needs your support BIUSTicians.

# WOMEN EFFORTS CELEBRATED

By: Wandipa Gachala



**Left: Hon. Khumo Lekoko – Palapye Administrative Authority Council Chairperson**  
**right: Ms. Serwalo Mokgosi - A Senior Lecturer at the Department of Environmental, Earth & Sciences at Botswana International University of Science and Technology**

International Women's Day is a global day commemorated annually on the 8th of March celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political women's achievements.

The University in collaboration with the Palapye Sub-District Gender Committee and the Gender Affairs Office joined the world in honoring women under the theme "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow."

The day is a prospect to reflect on the progress womenfolk have made towards gender parity, to celebrate women who have been at the forefront of unity obligation of pursuing meaningful change. It also seeks to recognize inspirational women and girls who are working tirelessly towards building a more sustainable future.

In her Keynote address, the Palapye Administrative Authority Council Chairperson Hon. Khumo Lekoko alluded that the year 2022 calls for advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis and disaster risk reduction as this is the greatest global challenge of the 21st century.

She noted that the nation makes every effort to empower women to reach their full potential amid challenges such as natural disasters, drought, COVID-19, and HIV/AIDS. In addition, Lekoko cited women in historically male-dominated industries which on its own is commendable as we shift focus to embrace STEM careers.

Hon. Lekoko challenged all to collaborate in addressing challenges faced by women, girls,

and boys especially gender-based violence and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

"My priority area as Palapye based Council inequality and to end Gender-Based Violence in our Sub-District. The status-quo calls all to stand in solidarity, to say NO to gender inequality in our generation. YES! In our lifetime, I want to witness gender equality! Happy International Women's Day," she recited.

In retrospect, the theme resonates with one of BIUST's goals of stimulating the interest of young women to study and participate in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) careers. Speaking at the event, the BIUST Senior Lecturer at the department of Environmental, Earth and Science, Ms. Serwalo Mokgosi extended her appreciation to the organizing committee for inviting BIUST to speak to the topic "Women for STEM – Pathway to a better tomorrow". "This is very relevant because the government is striving to move from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based one, and STEM is the driver towards that journey," she said.

Mokgosi highlighted that STEM occupations are among the top sought-after skills worldwide, however a gender gap in STEM persists across the world. She added that the gap is fueled by gender stereotypes and expectations regarding women's work associated with specific stereotypical jobs.

Furthermore, she applauded Botswana women actively involved in the STEM male-dominated industries like mines and farming. "As we

call for gender parity in STEM, it is important that we start nurturing the girl-child at the early stages-preschool level because their curiosity level is high, expose and encourage them to participate in STEM activities such as the annual National Science Week and STEM Festival," she said.

In conclusion, she implored women in STEM leadership positions to serve as leaders for young girls for they hold the future, support learning opportunities, and take charge in educating and influencing the girl child's choices.

"Today as we celebrate women, and the girl child let's recognize that gender diversity is critical to innovation and economic success. Motswana a re "se tshwarwa ke ntsa pedi ga se thata" She concluded.

## Beke le Beke

### Ga lo ja dinama

netefatsang gore

### Melawana ya Covid 19

e a obamelwa

– Melawana –



Netefatsa gore o re sebipa molomo ntle nako tsothe fa o leng teng



Thapa matsogo ka molora le metsi a a phepa kgapetsakgapetsa



Dirisa metswako e e bolayang megare nako tsothe (sanitizer)



## Call FOR APPLICATIONS

August 2022 Intake

# Undergraduate Programmes 2022/2023 Academic Year

### Faculty of Engineering & Technology

BEng Chemical Engineering  
BEng Civil & Environmental Engineering  
BEng Computer & Telecommunications Engineering  
BEng Electrical & Electronics Engineering  
BEng Geological Engineering  
BEng Industrial & Manufacturing Engineering  
BEng Materials & Metallurgical Engineering  
BEng Mechanical & Energy Engineering  
BEng Mechatronics & Industrial Instrumentation  
BEng Mining Engineering

### Faculty of Sciences

BSc Biological Sciences & Biotechnology  
BSc Computer Science & Software Engineering  
BSc Earth & Environmental Science  
BSc Environmental Sciences  
BSc Forensic Science  
BSc Geology  
BSc Information Systems & Data Management  
BSc Physics  
BSc Pure & Applied Chemistry  
BSc Pure & Applied Mathematics  
BSc Statistics

### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

- A minimum combined points score for admission from best six subjects including Mathematics, English, two science subjects or Science Double Award, must be 38 points and above.
- BGCSE/ IGCSE holders or equivalent should possess a minimum of 20 points from any of Mathematics, and Physics and/or Chemistry and/or Biology or Science double award.
- The University will consider A-level holders and those who have already completed year one (1) BSc General at any recognised University for direct entry into second year.
- Diploma holders will also be considered based on the relevance of their prior programmes of study to their programmes of interest.

August Intake Closing Date: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Application Fee: P200 (Non-refundable)

### BANKING DETAILS

STANBIC BANK BOTSWANA  
Account Name: BIUST OPEX Current Account  
Account Number: 9060003441445  
Branch Code: 064967  
Branch Name: Fairgrounds  
Swift Code: SBICBWGX  
Please use your full name as reference.

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