



The entry of Mount Kenya University as a cross-border educational institution into Rwanda



MOUNTAIN MEETS

LAND OF 1,000 HILLS

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DEDICATION

This publication is dedicated to the thousands of students who chose Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR) as the place to quench their academic thirst. To them all, we say: You did your due diligence and were convinced this was the higher education institution to make your dreams come true. Time has proved you right. It's here that you acquired your career-enhancing knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in your chosen field. We appreciate the opportunity to take you through our brand of education. We wish you all the best as you seek to fulfil your life's dreams while serving your community, country and the world. The ever-expanding MKU family that you helped to build will always treasure you.

VISION

To be a Global Hub of Excellence in Education, Research and Innovation.

MISSION

To provide world class education, research and innovation for global transformation and sustainable development.

PHILOSOPHY

To harness knowledge in applied Sciences and Technology for the service of humanity.

ACADEMIC CHARACTER

With an emphasis of Science, technology and humanities, Mount Kenya University offers an all rounded education including moral and professional education to all persons irrespective of religion, race, gender or political affiliation, social or cultural background. It endeavors to develop well trained man power equipped with technological scientific knowledge and capacities from certificates, diplomas, under graduate and post-graduate degree courses.

CORE VALUES

The University's core values that form the basis of engagement, teaching and learning are:

- Innovation
- Integrity
- Academic Freedom
- Equity
- Competitiveness

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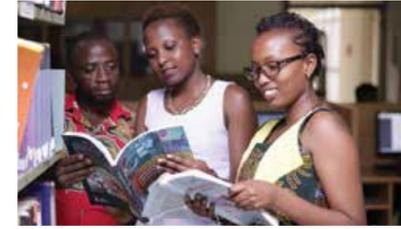
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Acronyms/Abbreviations

AKU	Aga Khan University	HEC	Higher Education Council	NUR	National University of Rwanda
BBM	Bachelor of Business Management	IT	Information Technology	NUR	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission of Rwanda
BBICT	Bachelor of Business Information Communication Technology	IUM	International University of Management	PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Program
BBIT	Bachelor of Business Information Technology	JKUAT	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	ODel	Online Distance and Electronic Learning
BCom	Bachelor of Commerce	JKIA	Jomo Kenyatta International Airport	PACFA	Protection and Care of Families against HIV/AIDS
CAMS	Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme	KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development	PBB	Pharmacy and Poisons Board
CAO	Chief Academic Officer	KIE	Kenya Institute of Education	PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
CBS	Chief of the Order of the Burning Spear	KIST	Kigali Institute of Science and Technology	QMS	Quality Management Systems
CHAN	Africa Cup of Nations	KHI	Kigali Health Institute	RBC	Rwanda Biomedical Centre
CHE	Commission for Higher Education	KMTC	Kenya Medical Training College	RBC-NCBT	Rwanda Biomedical Centre-National Centre for Blood Transfusion
CNLG	National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide	LMG	e-Leadership Management and Governance	RDB	Rwanda Development Board
CTO	Chief Technology Officer	LIA	Letter of Interim Authority	RTUC	Rwanda Tourism University College
CUE	Commission for University Education	MBA	Masters of Business Management	RURA	Rwanda Utility and Regulatory Authority
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	MKU	Mount Kenya University	TIT	Thika Institute of Technology
DVC-APIA	Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Administration, Planning and Institutional Advancement	MIRD	Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy	TSC	Teachers Service Commission
DVC-ARA	Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic and Research Affairs	MIS	Management Information Systems	TTTI	Thika Technical Training Institute
EAC	East African Community	MKUSA	Mount Kenya University Students Association	TUC	Turkana University College
EMBA	Executive Masters in Business Administration	MUBS	Makerere University Business School	UAE	United Arab Emirates
EPRN	Economic Policy Research Network	MKUR	Mount Kenya University Rwanda	UoN	University of Nairobi
ESL	English as a Second Language	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	UTB	University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies
IFRDN	Institute of Fundraising and Resource Mobilisation Network	NCNM	National Council of Nurses and Midwives	USA	United States of America

Preface

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY
Rwanda (MKUR) has grown in leaps and bounds over the last

12 years.

It's rich breadth of alumni work within and beyond Rwanda - including United States of America (USA), Canada, United Kingdom (UK), various European countries, Middle East, other Sub-Saharan Africa nations, China and Australia.

A commitment to the internationalisation of higher education has been the university's aspiration since its establishment in Kenya in 2008.

In this book, we narrate MKUR's history. What is its origin? How did the institution enter Rwanda? How did Mount Kenya University overcome the challenges it encountered when it swam headlong into the uncharted waters of cross-border education? What has

been the social and economic impacts of this move? Read it and learn more about this institution of higher learning, and how, together with the parent university – MKU – they are helping to transform lives in the continent and beyond.

We are grateful to the MKU Chairman and Founder, Prof Simon N. Gicharu, for the invaluable support and guidance he has extended towards the compilation and publication of this book.

Thanks also to MKUR staff, alumni and students, who have contributed towards enriching its contents through their stories of interaction with the campus.

Finally, I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Rwanda, its agencies, and above all, His Excellency President Paul Kagame, for welcoming MKU into this country. Without the hospitality, MKUR wouldn't have

thrived, and neither would this book have been necessary.

As an institution, we look forward to a bright future as we contribute towards a prosperous Rwanda.

We're humbled that, in our small way, we've helped grow Rwanda's human resource pool, and are encouraged that our graduands are highly employable.

That success is sufficient impetus for MKUR to invest more resources in expanding access to higher education.

Prof Deogratius JAGANYI, PhD
Vice-Chancellor,
Mount Kenya University

Foreword

MKU ARRIVED WITHOUT much fanfare or marketing blitz. There were no billboards. Neither were there road shows to announce its arrival.

I remember at that time, our country was intensifying efforts to rebuild the education sector.

Slightly more than a decade earlier, the 1994 Genocide Against Tutsi had claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and had decimated our institutions.

During that national tragedy of monumental proportion, we lost human capital in a massive way.

Then here comes the first ever foreign university, from our East African neighbour, Kenya. MKU came in to help us rebuild our education.

From an investment perspective, that was quite a bold move. As a long-serving educationist, and, like other Rwandans, I took note of MKU when I learnt that it had opened several teaching centres in Kigali, and even one in Cyangugu! That was unusual, unprecedented and totally unexpected in Rwan-

da. Being a new university from a foreign country, many people in Rwanda were curious about what it offered.

Many people who could not travel to Kigali impressed upon the university to open centres closer home. I understand that's how these various centres came about.

Naturally, you expect a university to have own infrastructure in place before opening its doors to the public. But then, those were unusual times that probably needed a creative approach to offering university education.

Our country sorely needed the personnel to drive it forward socially and economically as it sought to recover from a haunting experience. It needed massive numbers of trained people. Yet opportunities for higher learning were limited within the country. Then came MKU, ready and willing to bridge that gap. What were we to do? To tell them, “pack your things, go back to Kenya and return to

Rwanda once you've built a campus here”?

Frankly, in MKU, we saw an institution arduously committed to sharing knowledge. It was therefore easy to nudge and guide them to offer academic services within the confines of Rwanda's standards and regulations for higher education.

You can be sure that even as the people of Rwanda embraced MKU and encouraged it to sustain investments in quality infrastructure and personnel, challenges always loomed.

I laud MKU for consolidating its resources in one central location. There's plenty to learn from MKU's exploits in Rwanda, its memorable interaction with our people and the unique legacy it is building.

Dr Innocent Mugisha
Former Executive Director, Higher Education Council- Rwanda, and veteran educationist

Acknowledgements

MKUR OWES ITS existence, growth and development to the amazing support it has received over many years from different quarters.

First, we would like to acknowledge and deeply appreciate the entire Government of Rwanda for extending a warm welcome to MKU. In typical African hospitality, it made MKU feel right at home from the first day.

Rwanda Development Board assisted in registering the campus. We thank Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority for according us the frequencies to operate a radio station.

The Higher Education Council of Rwanda has walked with us throughout this journey.

We recognise Rwanda National Police as a key partner. Diplomats of our two countries – Rwanda and Kenya – have contributed to the success of the university. MKUR has successfully been training

health personnel thanks to the university's ties with a host of hospitals in Kigali. Hospitals such as King Faisal Hospital, Kanombe Military Hospital, University Teaching Hospital of Kigali, Kibagabaga Hospital, and Muhima Hospital have been the training grounds for our students.

Various financial institutions were generous enough to give us loans to develop our campus in Rwanda.

We also give credit to Rwanda media for showcasing our challenges and our achievements.

The landlords of the facilities we had rented before constructing our own campus opened the doors to success. New Life Ministries has supported us by sponsoring students to MKUR.

Imbuto Foundation has been a pillar of support, helping us to identify brilliant students who need scholarships to sharpen their talents.

We thank Kagarama Secondary School for allowing

us to use their boarding and sporting facilities. We also appreciate Harvest School for allowing us to use their accommodation facilities.

RwandAir has been our air travel partner, for which we are grateful.

But, without any doubt, MKUR would not have been born had it not been for the encounter with the Rwanda Tourism University College, now called the University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies. We thank the founders of this great institution for welcoming us and accepting to collaborate with us to build human capacity in Rwanda.

Finally, we must acknowledge parents, guardians and student for their incredible trust in us. It is impossible to mention every individual or institution who has contributed to MKUR being what it is today: A centre of excellence in training manpower for Rwanda and the rest of Africa.

We appreciate everyone's support to us.

Executive Summary

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY (MKU) is a private chartered University committed to a broad-based, holistic, and inclusive system of education. It is ISO 9001:2015 certified, confirming that its quality management systems and practices are world-class, therefore guaranteeing its students outstanding education.

Within East Africa, the University has distinguished itself as the alma mater of thousands of professionals who serve humanity in different capacities. This stems from the University's passion to develop people's talents for both self-fulfilment and the advancement of society.

Through its flexible modes of study, MKU has expanded access to affordable and quality higher education, as people are enabled to study at their convenience from anywhere in the world.

The University offers various study-mode options:

Regular; Part-time (Evening and Weekend); Open Distance, and electronic Learning (ODeL); and Distance, Institution-Based, and electronic Learning (DIBeL).

Since its inception in 2008, MKU has maintained a strong bias for science and technology, while also teaching the humanities. Thus, its rich menu of highly competitive programmes offers a wide range of people the chance to pursue careers of their choice.

MKU is a member of various international bodies, including the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA); Association of African Universities; Association of Commonwealth Universities; Talloires Network of Engaged Universities; Association of Africa Business Schools, and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

It is also a member of United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) and UNAI SDG 10: Reduced In-

equalities Hub.

The University's Main campus is located in Thika town, Kenya. Other campuses are in Nairobi (Nairobi Campus & MKU Parklands Law Campus). In addition, MKU has ODeL centres in Malindi, Kisumu, Kitale, Kakamega, Kisii and Kericho in Kenya, and country offices in Kampala in Uganda, Bujumbura in Burundi, Hargeisa in Somaliland, and Garowe in Puntland.

In Rwanda, MKU is in the process of becoming the first university to build a hospitality training hotel. The bespoke facility is expected to serve students drawn from the Great Lakes Region.

The university is also investing heavily in the field of professional nurses' training. It has benchmarked against Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA. The School is one of the best in the United States.





Sonatubes-Bugesera Highway: Road to MKU Rwanda

THE SONATUBES-BUGESERA Highway, which is another of Rwanda's architectural marvels, is the artery that leads to MKU Rwanda.

That is, when you approach the university from Kigali International Airport in Kanombe or from Kigali Central Business District.

The dual carriageway, 13.8 kilometres long, links the Sonatube roundabout to the River Akagera bridge in Bugesera district.

It leads to the site of the upcoming Airport in Bugesera, 40 kilometres south of the Kigali International Airport. MKUR is located in Gatenga, Kicukiro District. It is off KK28 Avenue in Kagarama.

Before the year 2022, the Sonatubes-Bugesera Highway was a single carriageway. It was also twisty and narrow. The new Highway has two lanes on either side, with adequately spaced-

out street lights and designated bus stops. As is the norm at many public places in Rwanda, the road also features beautiful greenery on the median strip. There are palm trees, red roses and lily turfs among others.

Rwanda has a relatively good road network with all roads in urban areas properly paved.

The road is served by various modes of transport notably inter-city buses, taxi-cabs, and the ubiquitous motorbikes popularly known as 'moto'.

To reach the Campus, you disembark at Kagarama stage. Motos and taxis will gladly wheel you right up to the gate.

MKUR, which is perched atop a hill, is visible from many parts of Kigali. It is appropriate labelled with neon lights that illuminate the night sky, symbolic of the university's educative impact on society.

Down memory lane: Brief history of higher education in Rwanda

Education is among the key sectors in Rwanda. Soon after the 1994 Genocide Against Tutsi, the Government focused on education as one of the means of creating a vibrant economy. Education was seen as a solution in solving the problem of manpower. The country was focused on evolving into a knowledge-based economy, so as to shift from agriculture and mineral extraction, which were the tradition.

ONE OF THE earliest institutions of higher learning in the country is the Grand Séminaire de Nyakibanda, established in 1936.

It was followed by the Université nationale du Rwanda (National University of Rwanda) in 1963 -nearly 30 years later.

In *Education in Rwanda: Rebalancing Resources to Accelerate Post-conflict Development and Poverty Reduction* by the World Bank, it is reported that students looking for higher education often went to other countries.

But the country's higher education experienced a rebirth after 1994. The government rolled out a human resource development policy that focused on 'education for all' and education 'without any discrimination'.

Other institutions of higher learning that start-

ed before 1994 are Institut Supérieur d'Agriculture et d'Élevage (ISAE), Institut Supérieur des Finances Publiques (ISFP), Université Laïque de Kigali (UNILAC), Université Adventiste d'Afrique Centrale (UAAC), Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Gitwe (ISPG), and Grand Séminaire Catholique et Faculte de Theologie de Butare.

Institutions that came after 1994 include MKUR, Kigali Health Institute (1995), Kigali Institute of Science Technology and Management (1997), Kigali Independent University (1995), Catholic University of Kabgayi (2003) and the University of Agriculture, Technology and Education of Kibungo established in 2003.

The human resource development policy was the bedrock of the quantitative progress in the education sector.



Monument depicting Rwanda traditional dancers at Sonatube roundabout in Kigali.

According to the book *In History of Rwanda; From Beginning to end of the Twentieth Century* by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission of Rwanda (NURC), the policy was inspired by Rwanda Vision 2020, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (PRSP). "Since the Government of National Unity inherited a complicated situation in July 1994, education was seen as a last resort in solving

the problem of manpower," notes the book by NURC, published in 2016.

The book adds that during Rwanda's rebirth, "it was hoped that the economy should not only be based on agriculture and mineral extraction as per tradition, but on human resource."

Between 1963 and 1993, there were only 1,962 graduates in the country. With the changes

post 1994, the number of graduates and students enrolled at institutions of higher learning increased substantially. "All this was possible because of the efforts of the government and the private sector," notes NURC.

From 1995 to 2002, the total student enrolment at private universities was 5,073. Among public institutions, it was 10,280.

According to the Ministry of Education (MINUDEEC), from the academic year 2006/'07 to 2018/'19, a total of 87,558 students graduated from public higher learning institutions. Private institutions produced 92,308 graduates over the same period. There were also 3,401 Rwandans who graduated from universities abroad.

MKUR is one of the most notable private universities in Rwanda, offering high quality international education.

MKU RWANDA

MKU Rwanda is located at KK28 Avenue in Kagarama, Kicukiro District, Rwanda.

It was established in 2010. It offers high quality, international academic programmes, which are approved by the Higher Education Council of Rwanda.

The university strives to contribute to Rwanda's human resource pool by training well-trained, competitive professionals in various fields.

These include Nursing, Hospitality, Tourism, Business, Mass Media, Development, Counselling and Psychology, Public Relations, Diplomacy, Communication Technology, Information Science, and Education.



"Empowering generations through Education"



How to get there



By Bus

Rwanda has an efficient public transport system. There are public buses from Kigali Central Business District or the Bugesera direction to MKUR in Kagarama.



By Taxi

Whether ride-hail or stand-alones, cabs are also available.



By 'Moto'

The ubiquitous motorbike taxis are quick and efficient.

"Everything important in Rwanda happens on a hill."

- American author Stephen Kinzer in 'A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It.'

Welcome to 'land of a thousand hills'



THE REPUBLIC of Rwanda is a landlocked country located in Central/East Africa. It is nicknamed 'Land of 1,000 hills' because of its many undulating hills. The country's capital city is Kigali.

Kigali is a modern metropolis that has consistently been voted for as the cleanest and safest city in Africa.

Kigali is the main artery into the country, and is served by Kigali International Airport - a major international transport hub.

The country has four provinces and the City of Kigali, and a further 30 districts.

The Rwandan people speak English, Kinyarwanda, and Kiswahili. There are also some French speakers.

The country has a rich culture that is displayed in the beautiful fashion (for both men and women), dances, cultural-historical establishments and cuisine.



Map of Rwanda
SOURCE: United Nations

COUNTRY FACT SHEET

POPULATION:
13,792,268 (According to World Population Review, 2022)

LANGUAGES:
Kinyarwanda, English, Swahili, French

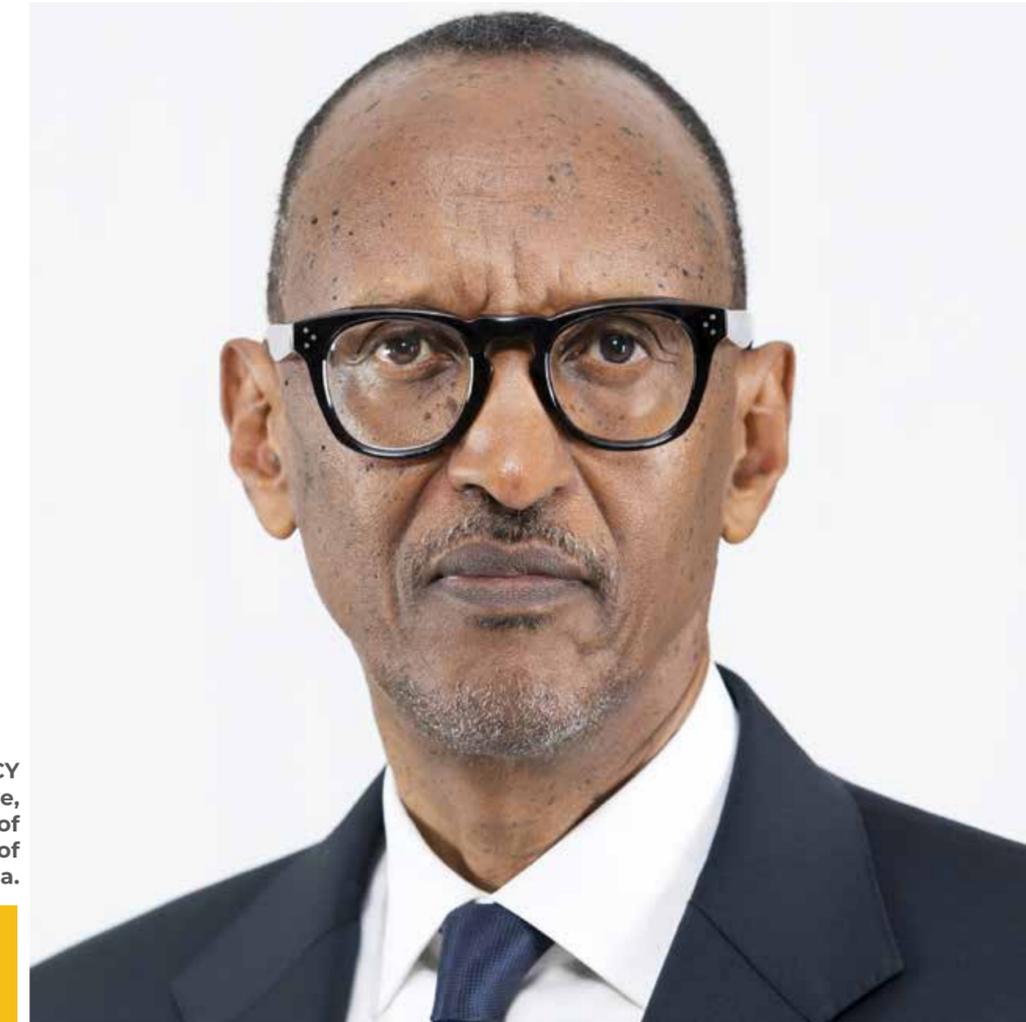
CURRENCY:
Rwandan Francs

ECONOMIC MAINSTAY:
Tourism, Manufacturing, Agriculture

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS:
Liberation Day (July 4), Heroes Day (January 1); Independence Day (July 1); National Heroes Day (February 1); Umuganura Day (1st Friday of August); Genocide Against Tutsi Memorial Day (April 7)

COUNTRY CODE:
+250

NATIONAL ANTHEM:
Rwanda Nziza (SEE PAGE 179)



HIS EXCELLENCY
Paul Kagame,
President of
the Republic of
Rwanda.



Rwandans want to live close to the families they love and watch them thrive.

They want access to world-class education, right here at home.

They aspire to travel the world in search of new ideas and experiences, unhindered by barriers.

And then fly proudly back home to Rwanda, because there is no other place they would rather live."

- H.E. President Paul Kagame, State of the Nation address | Umushyikirano, December 2015

IN RWANDA, there is no higher compliment than to describe someone as “serious”. On the other hand, there is no worse insult than to describe someone as “not serious”. “A good Rwandan,” writes Stephen Kinzer in *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda’s Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* “must be serious and correct. It is a stern ethos, born of both tradition and the crucible of modern Rwanda.” And Rwanda is a serious country. It is serious about Human Development, Competitiveness and Integration, Agriculture for Wealth Creation, Urbanization and Agglomeration, and Accountable and its Capable State Institutions. These are the five pillars of the country’s Vision 2050. Rwanda is also a good place for doing business. According to the *World Bank Ease of Doing Business* rankings, it is one of only two countries in Africa that feature among the top 50 in the global rankings. Rwanda is also one of the safest and cleanest countries on the continent.



Kigali Convention Centre at the heart of the city. It is one of the country’s main attractions, besides being a host for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions.

“ Rwanda is one of only three places where travellers can see the world’s 880 remaining mountain gorillas in their natural habitat. The country is also recognized as one of Africa’s most exciting new luxury travel destinations.”

Have a feel of beautiful Rwanda

<p>DELICIOUS CUISINE</p>  <p>Includes ‘Umutsima’ (cassava and corn), ‘Isombe’ (cassava leaves with Eggplant and spinach) and ‘Mizuzu’ (fried plantains)</p>	<p>‘KWITA IZINA’ CEREMONY</p>  <p>The annual ceremony for naming newly-born Gorillas also celebrates the country’s commitment to sustainable and responsible tourism.</p>	<p>INTORE AND AMARABA</p>  <p>These traditional music dances involve men women and a set of large drums. The dances are common in major ceremonies.</p>
<p>HONOUR DEAR DEPARTED</p>  <p>The Memorial in Kigali is a place of remembrance and learning, to honour victims of genocide against Tutsi.</p>	<p>KINGS PALACE MUSEUM</p>  <p>Visit the once royal residence of King Mutara III Rudahigwa, located in Nyanza, Southern province.</p>	<p>GORILLA TREKKING</p>  <p>World famous activity at Volcanoes National Park, which shares a border with Uganda.</p>
<p>GAME DRIVE</p>  <p>Akagera National Park boasts the ‘Big Five’. At Nyungwe Forest National Park, you can also see chimpanzees.</p>	<p>LAKE KIVU OASIS</p>  <p>Lake Kivu is described as an “emerald-green oasis, surrounded by misty mountains.”</p>	<p>KIGALI</p>  <p>Kigali is a clean, safe modern metropolis. It has a vibrant population and an ever-growing skyline of skyscrapers.</p>

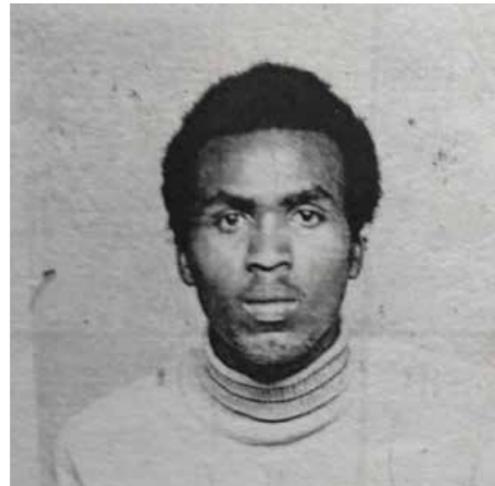
Tracing the genesis of university

When MKUR founder Prof. Simon N. Gicharu first visited Rwanda, he hoped to see the world famous gorillas at Volcanoes National Park, and re-unite with his former Biology teacher in high school Mr. Peter Claver Nyombayire. He was successful in the gorilla trekking but his hopes of meeting Nyombayire were dashed when he learnt that he had passed on some few years before.

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY, MKUR's parent university, was founded by Prof. Simon N. Gicharu.

The career educationalist was born in 1964 in Gathirui village in Kiambu County, Kenya. He undertook his elementary schooling at Kiawairia Primary School, and thereafter at Gathirui Secondary School. He also studied at Murang'a High, one of the top performing schools in Kenya, before pursuing university education at Kenyatta University and later Cranfield University in the United Kingdom. It was while schooling at Gathirui Secondary between 1979 and 1982 that his curiosity about Rwanda was first aroused.

One of his teachers was called Peter Claver Nyombayire. He was usually very well dressed, his hair neatly combed. He taught Biology.



A young Simon Gicharu during his secondary school years at Gathirui Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya.

It was one of Gicharu's favourite subjects in school, alongside Mathematics. Gicharu recalls that Mr. Nyombayire's interactive teaching style and resourcefulness endeared him to his students.

As a foreigner, Mr. Nyombayire could not speak some of the local languages. This added to the mystique about him.

founder's curiosity about Rwanda



Gathirui Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya, where MKUR founder had his first 'taste of Rwanda' in the 1980s.

Gicharu recalls: "Mwalimu (as he was fondly referred to) was very committed to his work. He taught even beyond class time. I remember him visiting our home many times where he met my parents. He was always eager to know whether I did revision after school. He inspired us and had a good sense of humour."

Prior to his teaching stint at Gathirui Secondary, Mwalimu Peter Claver taught at Muihohi Secondary School in Gatundu. Gatundu is the home village of Kenya's founding President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta.

Six years after MKUR founder completed his university education in 1990, he was awarded a scholarship to undertake a course in Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Management at Cranfield University, U.K.

The transoceanic travel and Mwalimu Peter Claver's commitment to leave Rwanda for Kenya for the sake of education exposed Prof. Gicharu to the transformative importance of education.

When opportunity to establish an educational footprint in Rwanda arose, it was met by a passion for a country he first knew about in the 1980s through a former teacher.

'Why I honoured my former teacher from Rwanda'

When I was a Secondary school student at Gathirui in Kiambu County, Kenya, one of my teachers was a well-dressed man from Rwanda called Peter Claver Nyombayire (Inset). He taught us Biology, a subject that involved combination of theory and practical lessons. At Gathirui Secondary, we had no scientific equipment. Mwalimu Nyombayire often fabricated equipment in order to teach us, and when it was not possible, he used humour by asking us to close our eyes and imagine what the practical was about. He never absconded teaching due to lack of equipment. During one lesson on how to make Sodium Chloride [salt], he told us to imagine the ingredients boiling inside a test-tube. It was a form of 'virtual practicals'. Many years later after I invested in education, I told myself that I would do anything possible to provide my students with all the equipment so that I would also not tell them to close their eyes and imagine what was being taught. Our library at MKUR is named in honour of Mwalimu Nyombayire.

-Prof. Simon N. Gicharu



MKUR founder: Educationalist with

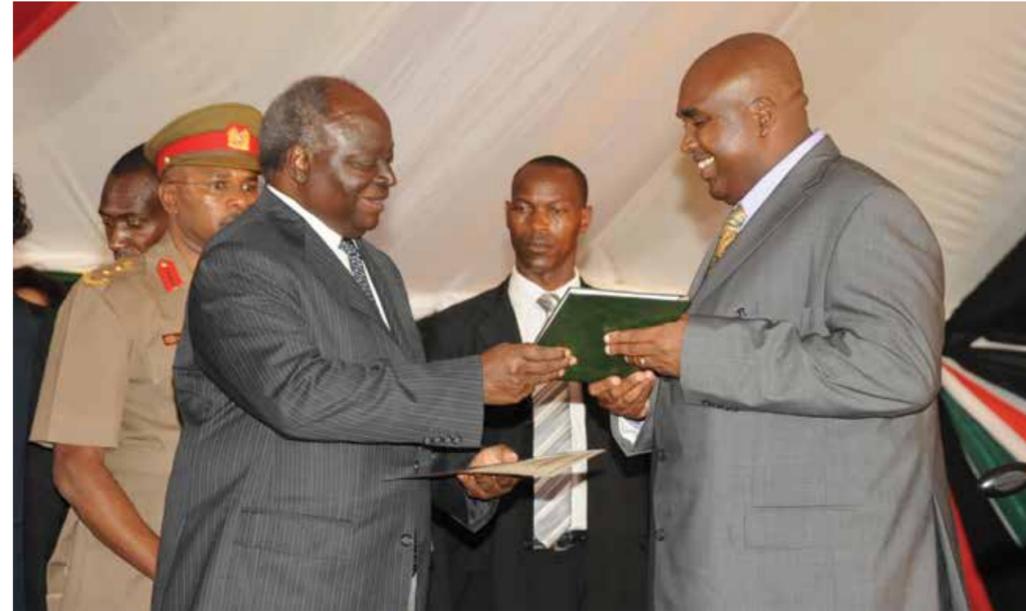
MKU RWANDA IS a scion of Mount Kenya University, one of the largest private universities in East and Central Africa.

It traces its roots to 1996 when its founder Prof. Simon N. Gicharu, a career educationalist started a computer outreach programme targeting unemployed youth in rural Kenya.

The outreach programme equipped youth with computer skills at a time the country's economy was undergoing computerisation.

Some of his pioneer trainees secured jobs at local tea factories to manage the newly computerised records. This was Prof. Gicharu's first-hand encounter on the importance of proffering skills that are relevant for the job market.

In mid 1995, Prof. Gicharu was awarded a scholarship by the British Council to study En-



Prof. Simon Gicharu (Right) receives the MKU Charter from third President of Kenya Mwai Kibaki on January 11, 2011. The Charter certified MKU as a fully-fledged university.

trepreneurship and Enterprise Management at Cranfield University's School of Management in the United Kingdom (U.K).

Here, he witnessed the desire young Africans harboured for quality higher education. Some of the Africans who were not on scholarship encountered many financial challenges as they combined work with self-sponsored ed-

ucation, which was unaffordable to many.

Prof. Gicharu asked himself: Why couldn't the African continent find homegrown solutions that would equip young people with higher education at home first before exploring other opportunities abroad?

He vowed to do something about it in future. Once back in Kenya, he continued with the

interest of continental Africa at heart

computer training, under a Non-Government Organization he founded called Kenya Entrepreneurship Promotion. He also shared the entrepreneurial lessons he had learnt from Cranfield University with youth who wanted to pursue self-employment.

Those who wanted to pursue training at Diploma or Degree level prodded him for academic certificates that would serve as a stepping stone.

The request saw Prof. Gicharu establish a college by the name Thika School of Management Studies (TSMS). The college was registered by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST).

Later, TSMS grew into Thika Institute of Technology (TIT) with a diversified curriculum but mainly focused on technology and science. In 2006, TIT was recognised by MoEST's Direc-

tor of Technical Training as the "leading private technical and vocational education and training institution in Kenya."

By that time, it not only offered an array of market-driven Diploma programmes but also Degree programmes in partnership with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

Owing to this growth, TIT morphed into a university called Mount Kenya University. The institution derives its name from Mount Kenya, the second tallest mountain in East Africa - after Mount Kilimanjaro.

It was accredited by Kenya's Commission for Higher Education in 2008.

Three years later, Mount Kenya University was awarded a full Charter by Kenya's then President Mwai Kibaki, confirming it as a fully-fledged institution of higher learning.

IGIHEMBO! MKUR Founder has received numerous awards



Prof. Simon Gicharu was inducted into the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Hall of Fame in Monaco, 2015.

Dr. Gicharu became a Professor at the 12th graduation ceremony of the International University of Management in Windhoek, Namibia in 2016.



Receiving the honorary doctorate from Gulu University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nyeko Pen-Mogi in October, 2014.

In 2013, Prof. Gicharu was awarded the 1st Class Chief of the Order of the Burning Spear (CBS) by Kenya's then President Mwai Kibaki. It was in recognition of his contribution to the growth of tertiary education.



Flagging off the dream: History of the

BESIDES THE INTEREST in Rwanda sowed into the heart of MKUR founder Prof. Simon Gicharu by a good teacher, the university's entry into the country was inspired by inquiries from Rwanda citizens.

From the mid-to-late 2000s, the mother institution in Kenya underwent a transition from an Institute of Technology to a fully-fledged university.

In the quest to keep the public updated about this transition- and the academic programmes offered- the institution placed advertisements in many daily newspapers.

One of these newspapers was the *East African Standard*, published in Kenya but circulating throughout the region.

It brought together Prof. Gicharu and an intrepid young man called Henry Musisi who



Mount Kenya University founder and Board of Directors Chairman hands over keys to a fleet of vehicles for MKU Kigali Campus (as it was known) to Vice Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudo.

university's entry into Rwanda

worked at the newspaper..

The meeting sparked a close working relationship that strengthened over the years, later on bearing a job for Mr. Musisi at MKUR.

Having studied the trends in international education in the East African region, Mr. Musisi convinced the management at Thika Institute of Technology (as the Mount Kenya University forerunner college was known) to advertise in the widely circulating newspaper. They did.

"We received 25 inquiries for our academic programmes from interested students in Rwanda," recalls Prof. Gicharu. "Almost all of them were written in Kinyarwanda or French."

The courses were Diploma in Pharmacy, Information Technology, Hospitality and Tourism, and Degree programmes in Commerce, Medical Laboratory Sciences, and Science in Analytical Chemistry, which were co-of-

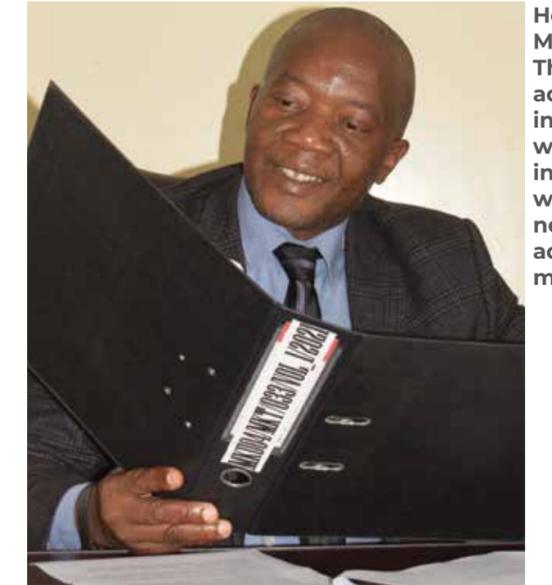
fered through a partnership with the government-owned Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).

Through a translator, TIT learnt that the Rwandan students yearned for an international education.

In the quest to provide this education, TIT decided not to re-invent the wheel. If its partnership with JKUAT had been successful in reaching more students, it would be equally successful if it partnered with a local college in Rwanda.

Members of TIT management visited Rwanda and met some of the discerning students who had sent inquiries.

They also surveyed the local higher education landscape and were impressed by the predominantly youthful population eager to acquire quality education.



Henry Musisi: The file on admission inquiries was growing bigger with every newspaper advertisement.

The country was on an upward trajectory after a difficult past. Through a local contact, TIT management met Dr. Zulfat Mukarubega, founder and legal representative of Rwanda Tourism University College (RTUC).

The college was one of the main players in the country's tertiary education sector. Dr. Mukarubega had launched it in 2006, after



Dr. Zulfat Mukarubega, founder, Rwanda Tourism University College (now University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies) and her MKUR counterpart Prof. Simon Gicharu sign a partnership. RIGHT: A newspaper article announcing the partnership.



conducting a six-year feasibility study.

An entrepreneur and philanthropist, she knew the Rwanda higher education landscape like the back of her hand.

In the course of discussing about the partnership, TIT graduated into Mount Kenya Univer-

sity after it was granted a Letter of Interim Authority by Commission for Higher Education in Kenya.

It was good news for Rwandan students who would enrol through RTUC since they could acquire international degrees from the Ken-

yan university.

The collaboration agreement was signed on October 27, 2008, in Nairobi, Kenya.

It was a historic moment witnessed by officials from the Rwandan Embassy in Nairobi. Emmanuel Murenzi, former commercial attaché, represented the then Ambassador Her Excellency Joy Mukanyange.

Prof. Stanley Waudu, the then MKU Vice Chancellor represented the university while RTUC was represented by Dr. Mukarubega and Calixte Kabera, the Rector.

Others present at the ceremony were Prof. Gicharu and the then MKU Dean of Students Peter Waweru.

Kenya and Rwanda have always enjoyed close ties

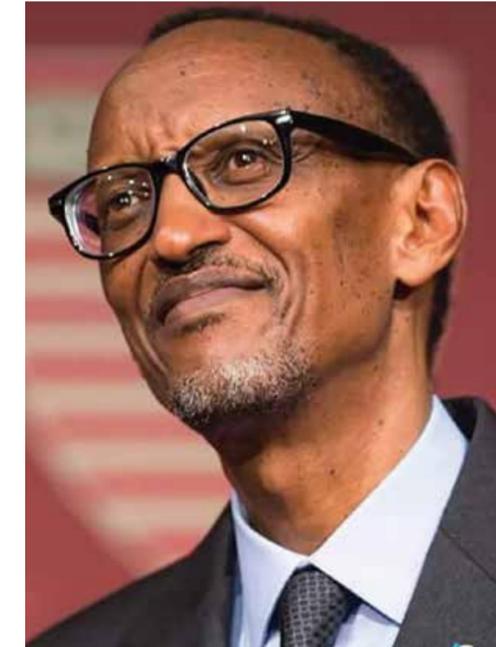
YEAR 2000 WAS momentous for two East African nations that gave birth to the MKU Rwanda campus.

On April 22, 2000, President Paul Kagame took the oath of office. Nearly a month later, on May 12, 2000, the then Kenyan President, Daniel Arap Moi, landed with his entourage at Kigali International Airport. He was on a one-day working visit to Rwanda.

In a lovely encounter, President Moi met and congratulated his host, President Kagame.

Two months later, President Kagame reciprocated. Precisely on Friday July 14, 2000, at 10.30am Kenyan time, his plane touched down at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi.

The trips by the two presidents marked the beginning of close ties between the two nations. President Moi and President Kagame



His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.

made public pronouncements on the cooperation they wanted to cultivate. President Kagame said Rwanda was open for Kenyan expatriates and investors. The country was rebuilding after the effects of the 1994 Genocide Against Tutsi.



The trips by the two presidents marked the beginning of close ties between the two nations. President Moi and President Kagame made public pronouncements on the cooperation they wanted to cultivate.”

The role of driving home the message that Rwanda was open for Kenyans and other international investors lay on the hands of Joy Mukanyange, the then Rwandan Ambassador to Kenya. Amb. Mukanyange, made it her mission to woo Kenyan expatriates to go and work in Rwanda. This campaign bore fruit, and, consequently, hordes of Kenyan professionals streamed into Rwanda. The East African nation welcomed them with open arms.

How students' request for specific courses gave rise to MKU Rwanda

MKU STARTED BY partnering with Rwanda Tourism University College, whose core academic programmes were in Tourism and Hospitality.

The programmes were timely since the country was rebranding itself as a major international tourism destination.

Fast forward to the year 2022 and Rwanda has become the choice destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions tourism. Those who started their journey into this line now have successful careers.

Besides Tourism and Hospitality, another popular programme with the Rwandan students was Bachelor of Business Information Technology. The first batch of 92 students held Diplomas from Kigali Institute of Technology. They would later make history as the first

Rwandan students to graduate with a Bachelor's degrees from MKU. And as they made history, they launched MKU onto a path to establishing a permanent presence.

"They were pleasantly surprised to find that we offered an array of academic programmes," recalls the first Vice Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudu. "This gave them several career options. One of them even mentioned that she'd have preferred to undertake a programme in health sciences to fulfil her dream of working in the medical field."

Other graduands mentioned the career aspirations of their siblings and expressed their wish to have the programmes available in Rwanda. It was the trigger MKU management required to set up a permanent university in Rwanda.

Key Enablers



East African Community Common Market Protocol ratified by the five Partner States namely Rwanda, Kenya, Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania.



Conducive environment by the Government of Rwanda and its institutions such as the RDB and Higher Education Council.



Welcoming nature and friendliness of the Rwandan people. They were also eager to acquire international education.



MKU Rwanda students on a past visit to the university's mother country in Kenya.

'White Paper' paves way for University setting up base in Rwanda

HEEDING THE CALL by students from Rwanda, Mount Kenya University sought to establish a Campus in Rwanda in 2010.

The institution applied for approval from the Ministry of Education. A White Paper with a summary of the university's history in Kenya, accreditation credentials, and its higher education plans for Rwanda was addressed to the then Minister of Education Dr. Charles Murigande.

On April 28, 2010, the Ministry approved the application. "On the basis of the White Paper submitted, the Ministry of Education grants MKU permission to open a campus of the parent institution in Kenya," a letter by Dr. Murigande addressed to MKU board chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu read in part.

The approval letter listed four core attributes



Rwanda's Ministry of Education approved the establishment of MKU Kigali Campus on the basis of:

- Mt. Kenya University is a fully accredited institution of higher learning in Kenya and therefore falls under the Cross-Border provision of the Rwanda Code of Practice.
- The curriculum to be offered will be the same as used in the accredited institution in Kenya.
- Mt. Kenya University will award degrees of the Kenyan institution, which falls under the mutual recognition protocols of the East African Community.
- Mt. Kenya University has a memorandum of understanding with RTUC in Rwanda to rent premises where it will conduct classes.

of MKU that influenced the positive decision by the Ministry.

"As required in the cross-border provision of the Code of Practice Mt. Kenya University Rwanda Campus will adhere to the provisions of the National Qualifications Framework

and the requirement for registration with the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) as an investor in Rwanda," the letter added.

With this letter in hand, the sky was truly the limit for MKU in Rwanda. Henry Musisi, who had since left the *East African Standard* (See

page 14) to work in the Marketing and Public Relations department of the university says they laboured day and night to get the campus off the ground.

“We started bringing in some of the learning materials and infrastructure from Kenya even as student inquiries poured in,” Mr. Musisi recounts.

“Alongside my colleagues namely Laila Pendo, Milly Kayibanda, Zachary Thiga, Stanley Kirika (founding Principal at the Campus), Humphrey Mutegi, Douglas Nyambura and Florence Waweru, we worked past hours and cleaned up the premises ready for the students on a fresh day.”

The premises was along KN4 Avenue in Kigali. It became the first location of MKU Kigali Campus.

Pioneer Location



WHERE IT ALL STARTED: This building along KN4 Avenue in Kigali was the first location of Mount Kenya University in Rwanda. It was then a campus under the wings of the mother university in Kenya. The two-floor building had a versatile design that accommodated lecture rooms, a library, help desk, staff offices and other facilities essential in the day-to-day running of a campus. A good number of the students were working professionals seeking to bolster their skills and competitiveness. They attended evening courses. As the student numbers grew, the university opened more locations enroute to building its own permanent premises.

One foot in front of another: Campus dream takes shape

THE CAMPUS developed fast, owing to good reception by Rwandan students who were eager to get an international education.

“After opening MKUR in August 2010 in Kigali city on *Avenue De La Paix* (now KK Avenue), the campus was filled to full capacity within seven months,” recalls Henry Musisi, MKUR Marketing Director.

This naturally led to opening of other centres at Camp Kigali, St Paul Pastoral centre, and Kicukiro. The latter focused on science training.

The centres were well served by public transport. This provided students and staff easy access to hospitals, sporting facilities, shopping centres and food markets.

“St Paul Pastoral centre, which we rented from the Catholic Church, was situated within the vicinity of Kigali City centre and was used for

learning in the evening classes,” says Mr. Musisi.

The university operated the centre for five months in 2012, later moving to Camp Kigali, Nyamirambo, which was a larger facility.

The huge demand for science programmes

such as Pharmacy, Nursing, Public Health, Environmental Science, Medical Laboratory, and Communication and Mass Media contributed to the opening of Kicukiro Science Centre in April 2011.

The university Board invested heavily in the

Kicukiro Centre



KICUKIRO CENTRE, which was popular with regular students undertaking Science programmes.

MKU co-founder and Board member Dr. Jane Nyutu cuts a tape to mark the official launch of MKUR e-learning at the Kicukiro Centre. Looking on is the then Director Prof. Musa Nyakora and other staff members.



centres. Camp Kigali was equipped with a library, classrooms, offices and IT laboratories. At Kicukiro Science Centre, modern science laboratories plus a radio lab for the School of Journalism were set up. The centre was also equipped with classrooms, a library, conference room, a modern IEMBA class, MKUSA of-

lice, and a canteen. It also housed the office of the director of the campus, the dean of students, various heads of departments in the health sciences and the School of Journalism, Career Guidance and Counselling. It also housed the Examination, Finance, Mar-

keting, Postgraduate and School of Business offices.

In the year 2011, Dr. Jane Nyutu, MKU co-founder and a member of the Board officially opened the Kicukiro e-learning Centre.

During the launch, the campus celebrated its one-year anniversary in Rwanda.

Prof. Callixte Kabera, (Rector at RTUC-now UTB), and officials from the Ministry of Education and Kicukiro District attended the ceremony.

Dr. Nyutu was complimentary of the campus' achievements, including starting online learning in Rwanda. She thanked the government for allowing MKU to operate in Rwanda and the support accorded to the campus.

She described the journey MKUR was taking as "reflective and analytical", and addressed the various challenges faced by online learn-

ing and how the university was committed to tackle the challenges by consistently investing more in learning facilities.

Prof. Nyakora said the campus would take advantage of the enabling environment provided by the government and offer quality training in the fields relevant for Rwanda's economic growth, while complying with the Higher Education Council guidelines.

With a total space of about 1,200m sq and housed on a three-storeyed building, Kicukiro centre symbolised the MKUR corporate culture and commitment to providing adequate learning facilities for students. It was a central location for about 60 staff members and a growing student population.

The centre helped in cementing a new working environment. The shorter distances between departments encouraged team build-

ing and helped to increase productivity.

Staff and students found the centre an inspiring and exhilarating place for studying. It also promoted communication between individuals and students, thus strengthening team cohesion.

To translate its vision into reality, MKUR staff and students actively participated in community activities such as 'Umuganda', a monthly clean-up exercise. They also organised blood donation activities.

Students took up sporting activities, drama, debates and cultural activities like 'Mr and Miss MKUR'.

The centre hosted ISO 9001:2015 trainings and short courses. It was open throughout the week, serving day and evening students.

Camp Kigali

This place has an interesting history. It was once a correctional facility. But whereas there is a similarity between an educational institution and a correctional facility - in that one develops talents and the other character-, MKUR pitched camp here only in the short term. The facility was spacious, alright, and served the growing pool of day and evening students. But in line with its vision and ultimate goal of establishing its own permanent learning infrastructure, MKUR did not want its students to have a historical connection with the suspected law breakers formerly incarcerated at the Camp. This accelerated its dream to establish its own university building.



Camp Kigali in Nyamirambo. It was one of the centres of MKU Kigali Campus.

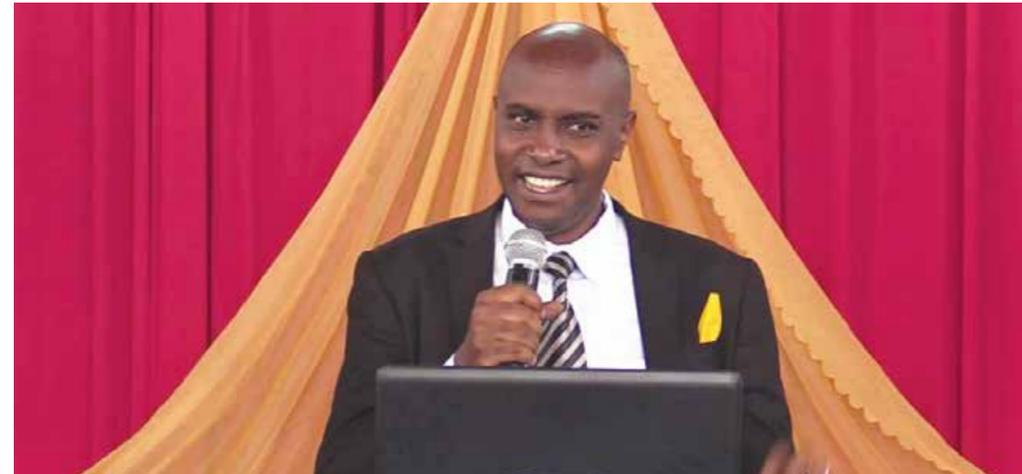
Pioneer Programmes

At inception in the year 2010, MKU Kigali Campus (as MKUR was known then) aspired to offer an array of Certificate, Diploma and Bachelors degree academic programmes:

- Bachelor of Business Information Technology
- Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Arts in International Relations
- Bachelor of Pharmacy
- Bachelor of Science in Information Technology
- Bachelor of Arts in Tourism & Hospitality Management
- Bachelor of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication
- Diploma in Information Technology
- Certificate in English language
- Master of Business Administration

Word from pioneer director

“I loved Kinyarwanda. I loved the people. Hunger for education was conspicuously written all over. As an educator, I felt that the challenge was much more fulfilling than it was worthwhile.”



Dr. Stanley K. Kirika, PhD, who was at MKUR at its inception.

IN AUGUST 2010, I went to Kigali as the founding director of MKU Kigali campus. I had the huge task of steering the process. I had visited Rwanda only a year earlier; an event I later learnt had played a substantial part in the decision to hand me the assign-

ment when I had first met Prof. Simon Gicharu, the MKU Chairman and Founder, on 29 July 2010. I loved Kinyarwanda. I loved the people. Hunger for education was conspicuously written all over. As an educator, I felt that the challenge

was much more fulfilling than it was worthwhile. Rwanda was in the process of changing over from its colonial master’s Francophone education system to Anglophone. You can bet English was a great challenge to Rwandans in general, both to write and to speak. For this reason, I had to introduce compulsory English classes alongside mainstream course units to enhance at least written English, if not the spoken. After door-to-door marketing, the initial enrolment of 134 MBA students and 14 Bachelor of Commerce students had given me a great sense of achievement, hence the confidence and inspiration to steer the campus higher. Human resource for the campus was my next greatest challenge. I had to source most of workers from Kenya. The notice was short; really short, for the campus required at least 20 full-time lecturers in a fort-



I was elated and felt vindicated when the East African third Joint Medical Regulatory Bodies ranked MKU’s Medical School as the best.”

night to serve 600 students expected in January 2011. Gladly, I managed. Lots of Rwandan government sponsored students set the campus on the pathway to success. I was able to have run a staff of 26 without a single application for transfer back to Kenya. The staff would assist in serving in other capacities to generate extra income, both for the campus and for themselves, through the Income Generating Activities policy of the university. Managing through cultural diversity is a great

takeaway from the experience. Besides offsetting domestic bills, the professional visibility earned me an opportunity to set up Equip Africa in Nairobi (then Institute of Capacity Building) as the first director. That was in May 2013. It excites me greatly to hear the mention of Mount Kenya University rivalling long established public universities in Kenya in matters of quality education. It is on this basis that I have recommended two students to enrol in the university’s Medical School. Naturally, I was elated and felt proud when the East African 3rd Joint Medical Regulatory Bodies ranked MKU’s Medical School as the best in Kenya (See page 102). As a frequent visitor to Rwanda, I’ve had numerous encounters with the campus alumni in various forums.

Why MKUR quickly became the preferred choice for Rwandans seeking international higher education



Prof. Tom Nyamache: “We attracted 1,000 applications in the first semester. Most of the students then were pursuing postgraduate studies (MBA).”

Prof. Tom Nyamache joined MKU Rwanda campus in January 2011 as Chief Academic Officer. Six months later, he was appointed Principal for a period of three years. He shares his recollections:

“RWANDA OFFERED AN interesting experience altogether: strict laws, clean city, disciplined people, staunch Seventh Adventists, great and variety of foods, just to name a few good things.

Housing was nevertheless expensive then. Generally, the cost of living was high, largely attributed to gradual development of the country during post-genocide.

In 2011, Rwanda had only one public university – the National University of Rwanda (NUR) – located some 200km from the capital city of Kigali. There were also just a few private universities and middle level colleges. MKU had become the first foreign university to set foot in the country and was the preferred destination for higher education by Rwandans. As new as we were, we attracted over 1,000 applications in our first semester. However, most of the students then were pursuing postgraduate studies (MBA). They preferred MKU because they had found out that our curriculum had good content.

My job description covered the following duties: providing overall direction, organisation, administration, and marketing of programmes of the campus; planning, implementing and coordinating teaching programmes; promoting research, innovations, and publications; championing best governance practices; promoting and sustaining the academic standing of the campus; being responsible for general student and staff discipline and welfare; initiating and coordinating campus income generating units; and ensuring compliance with university policies, regulations and service charter.

I was also responsible for coordinating activities relating to conferences, seminars, workshops and in-service courses for capacity building; ensuring maintenance of proper records; overseeing the preparation and imple-

mentation of campus budget estimates and operational budgets; enhancing university corporate image; promoting participation in community outreach programmes; and ensuring availability of adequate academic resources.

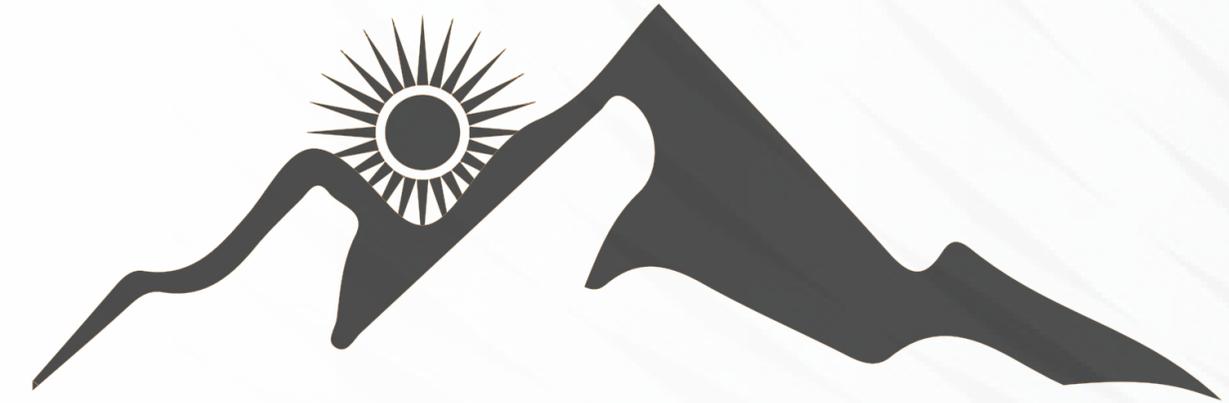
I helped establish collaboration with RTUC through the BBIT programme. I was also present at the opening of Kicukiro Centre. Further, I signed MoUs between MKU Kigali Campus and RPA-Rwanda, KASNEB and IPAR Rwanda. Working in Rwanda increased my experience, especially in starting an institution from almost zero to one of the well-established campuses in the region.

I also got a chance to learn much about the Abanyarwanda and their culture. Kinyarwanda is Bantu and sounds more like Gikūyū and Ekegusii. I could pick a lot from a Kinyarwanda

conversation. I had wonderful personnel whose support made me succeed in my administration. The students with whom I started the campus were committed and many of them are now decision makers in government and the private sector. I have a good feeling because what started as a campus is now a fully-fledged university of repute.

The education sector in Rwanda is now richer than it was before the entry of MKU. I am proud to have added my voice to the progress the country made in the education sector, especially in higher learning, through an article on Rwanda’s main newspaper, ‘The New Times’, of 14 July 2011.

The eye-opening article was titled: “*Higher Education in Rwanda: Opportunities and Challenges.*”



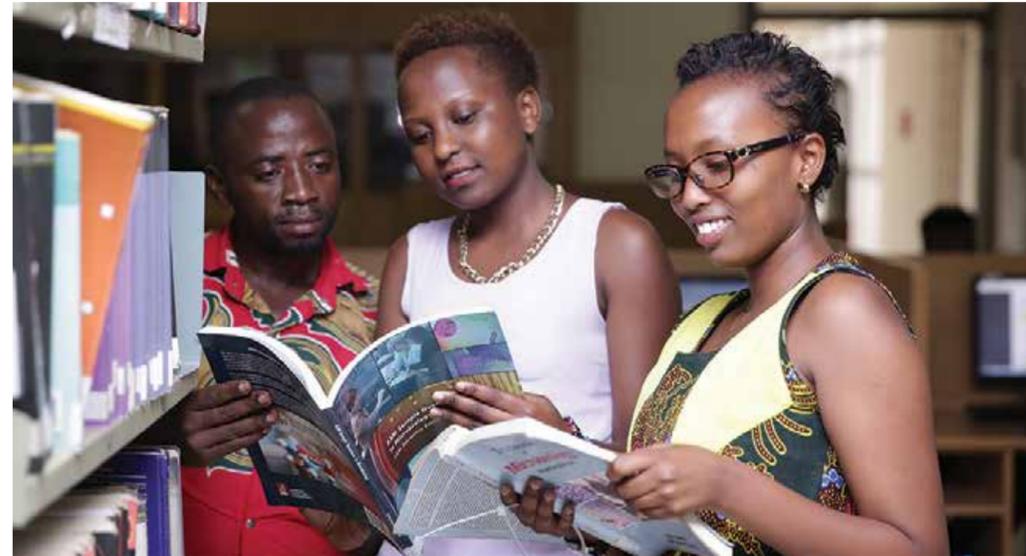
**UBUMWE NI
IMBARAGA**

Unity is strength

MKUR gets into psyche of Rwandans as it entrenches its

IN AUGUST 2010, Kigali witnessed a new phenomenon. Suddenly, streets in the central business district, which would previously be deserted by 7pm, started getting busy until late. Hordes of people huddled together at bus stops as late as 9pm – a spectacle never seen before in the city.

What had caused the change?



MKUR students pore over books at the institution's library. The university's market-driven academic programmes quickly gained popularity among the predominantly youthful population.

Anyone who bothered to look closely at these late evening crowds would have noticed something common among them. They carried with them, books and/or files.

These were ambitious Rwandans who had trooped back to university to earn postgraduate qualifications. They wanted to advance academically so as to become better in their

work.

Among them were working people who could only attend evening classes – after completing their daily shift.

Before August 2010, evening classes were unheard of in Kigali. They did not exist. In those days, higher education institutions in the country conducted only day classes. Employed people or those running businesses during the day could not leave their work to attend these classes. They longed for, but couldn't. Circumstances did not allow.

Then Mount Kenya University established a campus here, and soon after, introduced evening and weekend classes. Working people got the opportunity they had desired. They would earn from their day's work and use the money to sponsor their postgraduate education in the evening.

MKU Rwanda had brought a significant shift

academic roots

in Rwanda's higher education sector. It became possible for Rwandans to learn after work. They did not have to quit their jobs. They did not have to uproot themselves from their country in search of further education abroad and leave their families behind.

Introducing evening and weekend classes is one of the many things MKU introduced in Rwanda and ended up building a reputation in the country's academic circles.

Whereas by August 2010 the acronym MKU was mentioned only in some places in Rwanda, a few years after, it had become a household name.

Accessibility, made possible by MKU's many modules, has also contributed to making the university attractive to students in search of learning that suits their specific, unique circumstances. While those directly from high school prefer fulltime classes, the ones with



MKUR pioneered evening classes in Rwanda; employed students could earn during the day and learn in the evenings, thanks to this flexibility.

commitments during the day find evening and weekend classes just perfect. Others are more comfortable learning from wherever they are, whenever they want. They, therefore, opt for online studies.

What has been the impact of this kind of access to higher education? How has the campus affected communities around it?

MKU Rwanda is the labour of love that many hands and minds have nurtured with dedication for over a decade.

The campus is also a manifestation of Rwanda's warm hospitality, extended to investors such as those behind MKU.

The Government of Rwanda threw its doors wide open to the investors and guided them to prosper. MKU wrote history when it became the first East African university to successfully initiate and sustain cross-border education in Rwanda. The phrase 'cross-border education' had not been tried and tested in Rwanda, until MKU came into the scene.

At the same time, cross-border education was a totally new experience for MKU. Through its programmes, it had to abide by Rwanda's national qualification framework, rules and regulations.

Fully accredited in Kenya, MKU quickly became 'a child of two worlds.' And Rwandans quickly embraced it as one of their own.

“We launched a very successful International Executive

Prof. Musa Nyakora joined MKU Rwanda in 2010 as head of the Research Department. After a few months, he was appointed campus principal

“BEFORE JOINING MKU, I had been in Rwanda as a principal consultant of a regional consulting firm called Institute of Fundraising and Resource Mobilisation Network (IFRDN).

Therefore, Rwanda was like a second home.

At MKUR, we had four centres. In addition, the university had established two marketing and awareness satellite centres in two provinces: Nyamagabe satellite, and Karonji marketing satellite centres.

MKU had also acquired two parcels of land for future development, namely: one in Kagarama in Kicukiro district; and the other in Nyaru-



Board representative Mr. Sam Ng'ang'a (left) and MKUR principal Prof. Musa Nyakora present a calendar to Equity Bank Rwanda officials after the two institutions signed an MoU in January, 2012.

tarama in Gasabo district.

The campus was offering slightly over 10 undergraduate courses and more than seven Master's programmes in various disciplines, among them pharmacy, nursing, business, social sciences and education, just to mention but a few.

We were also running a very successful Inter-

national Executive MBA (IEMBA) programme, mainly for government leaders and other private sector personalities. The programme focused on sharpening practical skills.

MKU was regarded as a role-model for university education in Rwanda. I recall that in one of the Higher Education Council (HEC) meetings with all the university rectors/principals,

MBA programme”

the HEC CEO, Prof Geoffrey Rugege, urged other university rectors (VCs) to emulate MKU, which was already running very successful programmes.

Cherished Memories

- I managed to cause change in the education sector by introducing English as a sole medium of instruction, whereas most of the other universities were still shuttling between French, Kinyarwanda and some English in their instructional and learning sessions.
- I managed to put in place several academic performance measurement tools and guidelines, such as:

- (i) Management Information System (MIS)
- (ii) Quality Management System (QMS)
- (iii) Approvals by the Commission for University Education (Kenya) and HEC (Rwanda), both of them being higher education oversight authorities.



Prof. Musa Nyakora: MKUR has made a big contribution to the Rwandan education sector.

In fact, MKU scored very highly in this area, hence the favourable cross-reference by the leadership of the education sector in Rwanda.

It is no surprise that many government ministries and other semi-government organisations in the country have several graduates of MKUR within their ranks.

It is my honest opinion that MKU Rwanda has made a big contribution to the education sector in Rwanda since its inception.

“**MKUR had also acquired two parcels of land for future development, namely: one in Kagarama in Kicukiro district; and the other in Nyarutarama in Gasabo district.**

Supporting Rwanda's transition from French to English

ONE THING THAT distinguished MKUR from other universities right from the onset was its focus on the use of English language as the tool for curriculum instruction, and communication within the campus.

English is the most spoken language in the world. Data shows over 1.13 billion people speak the language. In the East African Community, of which Rwanda is a member, English is the

first official language. Rwandans largely use native Kinyarwanda, and also sprinklings of French.

In 2008, the country adopted English as its official language. The transition from Franco-phone to Anglophone would be propped up by language lessons such as those offered at MKUR.

The university has an English lab dedicated for such training. Through this lab, non-native

English speakers have perfected their grammar and diction. This has helped them gain competitive advantage in careers where language proficiency (oral and written) is a must. In March 2017, MKUR hosted a major conference on use of the English language in Rwanda. The event brought together English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, specialists, and publishers.

The conference theme was: "Emerging Issues in Education and English Language Learning." Besides its impact on the education scene and future training in the English language, it was felt that the conference would be beneficial to the country at large.

Rwanda had observed that many foreign investors coming into the country used English as the main medium of communication.

Hence, MKU Rwanda's initiative to invite schol-

ars to discuss ways of boosting the quality of English language among its graduates was a noble contribution to this effort. The conference provided the clearest indication of the university's keenness on lifting the standards of English language among Rwandans.

"Today, it's almost impossible to be in big position of employment for a company if you do not speak English language," stated a section of the abridged version of the conference report.

A key recommendation that came out of the conference was that MKUR should put in place an elaborate system for enabling more Rwandans, and not just its graduates, to improve their English.

The establishment of a "language proficiency laboratory" at the university was thus proposed. This was in light of the fact that oth-



MKUR students who participated in the English conference organised by the campus display their certificates of participation. The Government of Rwanda's switch to English also gave MKU impetus to open a campus in the country.

er than students, entrepreneurs in Rwanda would also need help with their English.

The university was further asked to work closely with employers keen on sponsoring staff for English courses. Conference participants asked MKUR to design programmes that would specifically suit such working students.

Milly Kayibanda, one of the conference attendees says it was a timely discourse as the country prepares to go full throttle on the international economic scene.

Ms. Kayibanda works at MKUR, having joined as a French-speaking intern several years ago.

She was initially absorbed as possible translator on marketing and outreach programmes. Later on, she enrolled for a Bachelors degree in Social Work. "We were taught in English. It was a very good experience because the lecturers were patient with us."

In just two years and three months, she graduated and now, confidently speaks very good English.

Jean de Dieu, English language-instructor with students at the MKUR English lab



The wholesome, vibrant student life at MKU Rwanda

IT IS GENERALLY accepted that a good university is one which presents students with the opportunity to experience life in all its forms. In fact, it is while at university that many young people make lasting friends and gain networks that become useful all through the remaining parts of the lives. How is MKUR fairing in this respect? Some brief insights:

Modern hostels

MKUR provides modern student-friendly hostels to accommodate those who opt to reside in campus. Those who do so benefit from their choice, given that living in campus offers a number of advantages. It promotes social networking, allowing students of diverse backgrounds to connect, become friends, and develop useful life skills such as interpersonal relationships, critical thinking, conflict resolu-

tion and communication.

Co-curricular Activities

MKUR offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities that open opportunities for talent management. Students participate in national, regional and international events that expose them to wider knowledge beyond academics.

Sports

Sports are an important part of growth and



A swimming instructor imparts some skills on the MKUR students.



A past edition of the Mr. and Miss MKUR beauty pageant.

development. Sports help in the development of mental health and the body's physical fitness. Sports play a major role in shaping character. Sports bring students together and entrenches a sense of unity.

Through participation in sports, students gain the skills, experience and confidence that are helpful in shaping positive personalities.

At MKUR, students get the opportunity to engage in various sports, such as basketball, ath-

letics, volleyball, and swimming. The university has a modern swimming pool that gives students the opportunity to have fun while workout at the same time.

Cultural and Social Activities

At MKUR, students have a chance to engage in various cultural and social activities. Community work, known in Rwanda as 'Umu-ganda', is one of them. Every last week of the month, MKUR staff and students participate in Umu-ganda, which is a national effort to nurture a



A Salsa performance during a past edition of Mr. & Miss MKUR



Students at the university in Kagarama, Kigali

shared national identity.

In addition, MKUR organises a variety of cultural functions and traditional dancing competitions. Students showcase their skills in traditional dances, such as Ikinimba, the most celebrated musical tradition that tells the stories of Rwandan heroes and kings; and Intore, the strongest pillar of the Rwandan culture done as a type of war dance, traditionally prac-

ticed to encourage warriors or hunters.

Students usually entertain visitors using cultural dances during notable events at the university.

Clubs and Associations

Club and associations allow students to "take on responsibilities or challenges to lead and make a difference in the university community". They also enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities to become good leaders.

The university has a strong tradition of student bodies and clubs. Debating, Christian Union, and cultural clubs are just but a few examples of the clubs that provide students with avenues to acquire extra life skills.

Hence, at MKUR, students have much to look forward to besides academic achievements.

Creation and growth of MKUSA Rwanda

Student Council

When MKUR's mother university in Kenya received a Letter of Interim Authority in 2008, one of the administrative structures that came into force was the Mount Kenya University Student Association (MKUSA).

Through this association, students got a seat on the high table of university management and administrative affairs.

They could directly interact with the management especially in addressing issues that touch on their welfare.

Inevitably, the collaborative structure was rolled out at MKUR soon after the campus was established in August, 2010.

The MKUSA officials are President, Vice-President, Secretary and Cabinet Ministers. They are democratically elected by the students.

Through MKUSA, students sharpen their leadership skills. They also acquire skills such as networking, empathy, financial management, problem solving and persuasion.

Some of the past MKUSA leaders have gone on to become influential members of society.

MKUR ESTABLISHED ITS chapter of Mount Kenya University Students Association (MKUSA) in 2011, one year after starting operations in Rwanda.

The student population was just about 200 when the university management organised the first MKUSA elections. That was in

March 2011, at the campus' rented premises

along KN4 Avenue in Kigali. MKUSA office

was later moved to Camp Kigali, one of the two centres the campus had expanded to. The other learning centre had been established in Kicukiro.

MKUSA Rwanda was headed by a guild president and ministers democratically elected by the students.

In the first few years, membership of MKUSA

Rwanda was not structured as per the overall MKUSA constitution. It had less members,



A past MKUSA Cabinet and some MKUR staff members at a past event.

and little attention was drawn to international students' representation and gender equality.

However, over time, Rwanda's MKUSA structure has transformed in response to changes in the university's ever-growing population, gender roles, and students' diverse cultures.

MKUSA Rwanda is now aligned with the overall MKUSA constitution. It has incorporated the previously missing components of its leadership, which include women and a multicultural integration.

Diversifying the students' body has been one way through which Mount Kenya University Rwanda has achieved inclusive campus diversity over the years. The results have been tremendous representation of the disadvantaged groups, improved students' welfare, and problem-solving.

MKUSA Rwanda leaders engage the universi-

ty management on various issues of concern through a diplomatic and participatory approach that ensures peace and harmony on campus is maintained and learning goes on uninterrupted.

Acknowledging MKUSA's presence and legitimacy, the university governing body often engages the leaders in constructive discussions through meetings and by regularly consulting them on matters concerning students.

Student leaders are also included on major administrative organs of the university.

Over time, the relationship between management and MKUSA Rwanda has developed into one that champions collaboration, support and recognition.

Currently, MKUSA Rwanda is led by a democratically elected cabinet consisting of six members as follows:

- President
- Vice-President
- Minister, Finance
- Minister, Academic Affairs
- Minister, Social Welfare & Entertainment
- Minister, Sports
- Minister, International Students



The first MKUR students guild, circa 2011.



“When your beard appears, childhood disappears.”
 - Rwandan proverb

IN AUGUST 2011, MKU Rwanda Campus celebrated its first anniversary. The ceremony at Kicukiro Science Centre was graced by university co-founder and board member Dr. Jane Nyutu.

During the elaborate ceremony, staff and students who had excelled in their various roles were awarded by the university management.

The Campus was MKU's first outside Kenya. It had surmounted several odds to enrol more than 3,000 students in its first year. It had also strenuously adhered to the laid down guidelines by the Ministry of Education's Higher Education Council.

Dr. Nyutu reiterated the Board of Directors' commitment to continue providing adequate academic and physical infrastructure to enable MKUR offer the best quality of university education.



MKU co-founder, Dr Jane Nyutu awards Henry Musisi a laptop for his exemplary performance as a MKUR member of staff.



A cake to mark the anniversary ceremony.



The then MKU Board representative in Rwanda Sam Ng'ang'a, and Lilian Makandi of MKU-Thika.



Lecturer Kuria Gitome (in suit) presents a prize to pioneer students' guild president Godfrey Kasekuro during the event.



MKUR students and one of the staff members Francis Mwangi at the ceremony.

Royal FM grows from backroom media lab to vibrant commercial station with pulse of Kigali

In the year 2012, MKU Rwanda sought to provide a practical platform for training students in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The platform was a short circuit radio broadcasting on 109.7 FM. The station operated from a small back room at the Campus.

In 2014, the university having trained a pool of broadcast professionals successfully applied for a commercial license.

The outcome was 94.3 Royal FM, Rwanda's

first English broadcast commercial radio station. The station operated from a rented building in Kicukiro.

The station was launched at an elaborate ceremony held at Gikondo Expo Grounds in February, 2014.

The ceremony, which also coincided with the launch of Rwandan chapter of MKU's Institute of Capacity Building, was graced by university founder Prof. Simon Gicharu, Slovakian Ambassador to Kenya and Rwanda Dr. Michal Mlynar, and Prof Shyaka Anastase, Chief Executive Officer, Rwanda Governance Board.

After gaining traction in the Rwandan media space, the station later relocated to its permanent home - Royal Plaza- within the precincts of MKU Rwanda in Kagarama.

At the beginning, owing to its limited coverage, the station hardly attracted commercials. Therefore, it was fully supported by MKU Rwanda. Gradually with time, it started registering popularity, capturing the attention of the business community as well as some of the best radio hosts in the country.

The station that now broadcasts nationally targets the youth (18-35 year-olds). It has a good listenership. The youth use it as a platform to express themselves on varied topical issues



The radio station's logo is unique and appealing.

and hold interactive debates that involve call-ins and exchange of ideas. In addition to these plus music, among other programmes that host dignitaries, the station has a comprehensive news bulletin at every top of the hour, mainly in Kinyarwanda. This has helped to keep listeners hooked.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in a span of 10 years, 94.3 Royal FM has grown into a leading brand with impressive loyalty, both in terms of listenership and advertising.



MKU Chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu, and the then Kenyan High Commissioner to Rwanda H.E. John Mwangemi (extreme right, seated), and other visitors at the Royal FM studio after the official opening of Royal Plaza.

The then RURA Director General Patrick Nyirishema officially opens Royal Plaza on October 5, 2018 accompanied by MKU Chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu.



Imbuto Foundation Director General Sandrine Umutoni during a visit to the Royal FM studios.



The rented building where Royal FM began its operations before moving to the Royal Plaza in Kagarama.

GEA: Nurturing job creators, not job-seekers

THE FOUNDER AND Chairman of Mount Kenya University Prof. Simon Gicharu has unlocked the entrepreneurial potential of many young people in East Africa.

This has been through the Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA), an empowerment programme targeted at the university's alumni.

The aim of the programme is to equip graduates with entrepreneurial skills and in some cases, capital for investment.

Through the GEA, discerning entrepreneurs receive first hand entrepreneurial tips from top business leaders.

At MKUR, GEA hosted famous entrepreneur Sina Gerard, the famous hand behind Urwibutso company. The company based in Nyirangarama in Rulindo District is involved in the agro-processing sector. It is behind some



Celebrated Rwandan entrepreneur Sina Gerard and MKUR's Dr. Mercyline Kamande. Gerard shared his success secrets with MKUR students during a GEA-organised event at the campus.

of the most famous products in Rwanda. In Kenya, some of the leaders who've trained the alumni include billionaire industrialist Vimal Shah of Bidco Africa Ltd., and former Family Bank CEO Peter Munyiri. In Rwanda, the business leaders include former Safaricom official Rita Okuthe, and celebrated entrepreneur Sina Gerald. The primary aim of GEA is to mould graduates



Rita Okuthe, who was then Chief Enterprise Business Officer at Safaricom Ltd, gives MKUR students a talk on entrepreneurship.

into job creators and not job seekers. The programme was first rolled out in Kenya in 2014. So far, countless alumni have benefitted from it and are running successful enterprises in their chosen fields. One such person is Serge Shyirambere, who won an entrepreneurial challenge organised by MKU Rwanda and bagged RWF6 million (See next page).

How MKUR initiative brought sunshine to my life

“When English writer and philosopher Aldous Leonard Huxley said that experience is not what happens to you, but what you do with what happens to you, he might as well have been referring to me. I lost my parents during the Rwanda genocide. I was only six months old.

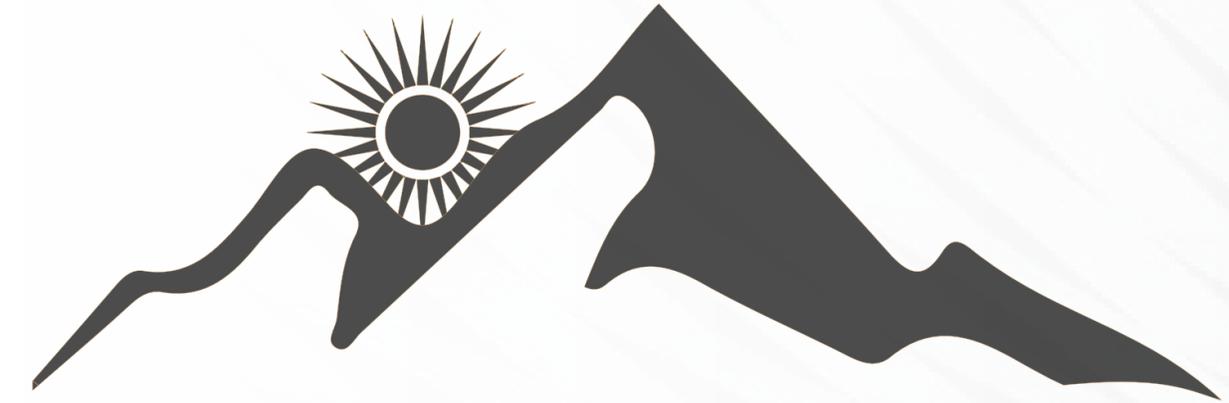
I was raised by his paternal grandfather in Rusizi near the Democratic Republic of Congo boarder. My father was a renowned, Belgium-trained contractor. I am told my mother was gainfully employed too. Were it not for the sharp vicissitudes of fortune, it seems I was destined for a comfortable childhood. Nevertheless, my grandfather taught me that I shouldn't let my past dictate my future. He counselled me on virtues of hard work and spotting opportunity. It was a philosophy I grew up with in my ele-



Serge Shyirambere, a beneficiary of the MKU Graduate Enterprise Academy with dummy of the RWF 6 million cheque.

mentary schooling. In 2014, I won a business plan writing competition hosted by the Institute of Capacity Building- (Graduate Enterprise Academy MKU Rwanda). I received RWF6,000,000 grant to rollout a business. I invested part of the money in a service that enables people conduct mobile money transactions through the Tigo mobile network provider [now Airtel]. In a good day, I could transact up to RWF1,000,000. The com-

pany paid a commission of 20%. My parents had a four bedroom house in Kicukiro. But it had been derelict. I used part of the money from MKU to renovate it. This saw me increase the rental income from RFW120,000 to RWF200,000. I used the money to pay my fees at the university. I also ran a website www.imibereho.com that offered an array of IT services including website design and software vending.”



KWAKIRA ABASHYITSI

Welcoming Guests

Rwandan dignitaries' visit MKU and Kenyan parliamentarians reciprocate with historic trip to Rwanda



Former Minister Hon. James Musoni is welcomed at the MKU Graduation Pavilion.



Rwanda's former High Commissioner to Kenya, Amb. James Kimonyo joins Rwandan students studying at MKU Main Campus in a cultural dance.



MKU Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu (left) conducts the then Rwanda's Minister for Local Government, Hon. James Musoni around Thika Main Campus.



Rwandan students studying at Main Campus, Thika, welcome H.E Dr Richard Masozera, the Rwandan High Commissioner to Kenya, on September 24, 2019.



Dr. Masozera receives a gift from MKU Chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu when he paid him a courtesy call at his Thika Main Campus office.

reciprocate with historic trip to Rwanda

MKUR HOSTED a group of Members of Parliament (MPs) from Kenya in 2014. The three-day education tour also saw the official launch of the Kigali arm of the Institute of Capacity Building (ICB), which is sponsored by Mount Kenya University. The MPs visited two primary schools in Rwanda to understand the country's successful One Laptop Per Child project. As at that year, about 400 schools in Rwanda had received 210,000 of the distinct green plastic laptops. The MPs were benchmarking on the Rwandan project. They also visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial and learnt about the Genocide Against Tutsi. It was an educative, eye-opening experience for the Kenyan politicians. After the trip, they vowed to preach peace among the communities in Kenya.



MPs Julius Melly and Sabina Chege at Kigali International airport. They were among the group of parliamentarians who visited the country at MKUR's behest in 2014. BELOW: The MPs visited a primary school that's a beneficiary of the One Laptop Per Child project, and the Kigali Genocide Memorial.



Isabukuru Nziza: When MKUR students heeded former

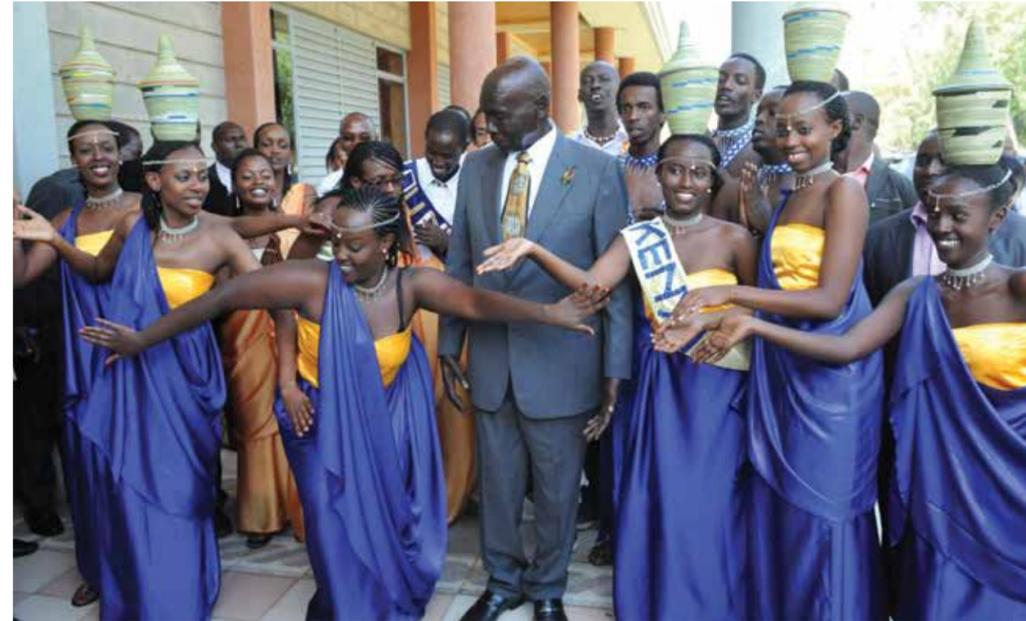
ON SEPTEMBER 1 2012, a group of students from MKUR visited Kabarak in Kenya, the home of former President Daniel Arap Moi.

Moi, who died in February 2020, had left office in 2002. He had led Kenya for 24 years. Under his leadership, the country had made great strides in education.

These strides included the unveiling of a new 8-4-4 education system, increase in the number of universities and improvement in student transition rates.

In November 2009, President Moi graced MKU's inaugural graduation ceremony at Thika as the chief guest.

The university feted him with an honorary doctorate in Education for his contribution to the growth of the education sector in the country. During the ceremony, MKU students



MKUR students engage former President Daniel Arap Moi in a traditional dance on the occasion of his 88th birthday in 2012.

from different parts of Kenya showcased traditional dances as part of the day's entertainment. President Moi was enthralled. Later on, he mentioned to the university management that he would love to see more of such traditional dances. This is how the idea for MKUR

students visiting Moi at his Kabarak home came about.

During the ceremony, the students freely interacted with the ex-President. They recreated the memorable Rwandan traditional dance 'Intore'.

Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi's call for special dance

Says Murenzi Emmanuel who was among the students: "As students who were focused on reaching our dreams, we were quite happy to listen to him narrate his achievements. We left the place motivated and inspired. One of the statements he made was that we were the 'Africa of tomorrow'. He said we needed to work hard when we were still young. I personally took that as a great encouragement for advancing my life in a way that would create a positive impact in society."

Kenya's second President Daniel Arap Moi receives a ceremonial spear and shield from MKUR student Alex Bwankarikari during the ceremony.



Gushimira! One good turn deserves another

Kenya's second president Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi graced the university's first graduation ceremony in May, 2009. As president, he had built a legacy as a champion for education. During his 24-year reign, he was the Chancellor of all public universities. One of the actions that underscored his love for education was witnessed in May 1990, when he ordered that the number of students admitted to public universities under the Joint Admissions Board be doubled. The move increased opportunities for students admitted to public universities. President Moi had a favourite expression which he often used in describing successful projects. "*Na hiyo ni maendeleo*," he would say in Kiswahili. (And that's development!) Words that can be used to describe the impact of MKUR.



MKU co-founder Dr. Jane Nyutu assists President Moi to cut the cake during the occasion.



President Moi receives the 'Honoris Causa' (Honorary Degree) from MKU on May, 15, 2009.

When Presidents (former, sitting and future) came



DANIEL ARAP MOI
Years in Office: 1978 -2002
Visit to MKU: 2009

He left an indelible mark on the higher education sector. While he was in office, he ordered all public universities to conduct a double intake in order to accommodate qualified students who couldn't get places due to the limited infrastructure at that time. When he graced MKU's inaugural graduation ceremony, he commended the university for expanding educational opportunities for youth. In 2013, MKU students hosted an 88th birthday party for him at his Kabarak home in Nakuru, Kenya.



EMILIO MWAI KIBAKI
Years in Office: 2003- 2012
Visit to MKU: 2011

In January 2011, Kibaki awarded MKU a Charter, legally confirming it as a fully-fledged institution of higher learning. Two years later, the then Head of State conferred on MKU founder Prof. Simon Gicharu the 1st Class Chief of the Order of the Burning Spear (CBS)- one of the highest awards a civilian can get in Kenya- for his contribution to the growth of tertiary education. In 2020, MKU named its newly-built Convention Centre in honour of the former President.



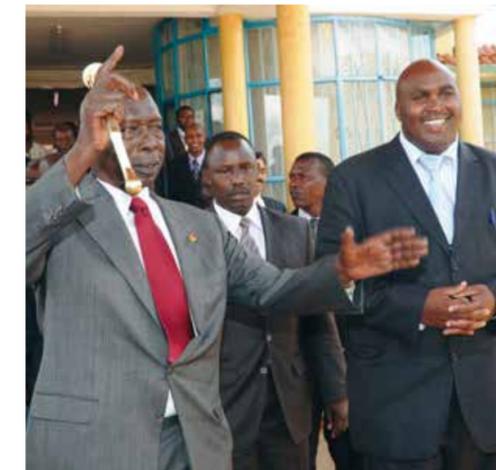
DR. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO
Years in Office: 2022 -
Visits to MKU: 2010, 2017

He first visited MKU in 2010. It was on the occasion of the 2nd Graduation ceremony, and he was the Minister for Higher Education. He challenged the MKU founder Prof. Simon Gicharu to transform the university's front fascia. In 2017, Ruto returned to the institution while he was Kenya's Deputy President. Prof. Gicharu had taken up the challenge and replaced the small administrative block with an ultra-modern, multi-storeyed block called Alumni Plaza. Dr. Ruto officially commissioned the plaza.

calling at MKU Main Campus



ABOVE: Kenya's President William Ruto (then Deputy President) at MKU Thika Main Campus in 2017. He graced the 12th Graduation Ceremony and also commissioned the ultra-modern Alumni Plaza.



LEFT: Retired President Daniel Arap Moi (now late) was the chief guest at MKU inaugural graduation ceremony in 2009. Years later, Rwandan students visited Moi at his Kabarak home and thanked him for supporting MKU.

Charter Award ceremony

26.01.2011



MKU founder Simon Gicharu holds aloft the Charter document soon after receiving it from His Excellency Mwai Kibaki, Kenya's third President (left), on January 26, 2011.



H.E President Mwai Kibaki, then President of Kenya (left) presents the Mount Kenya University Seal to the institution's founder Prof. Simon Gicharu.

History as first cohort of MKUR Masters students graduate

IN DECEMBER 2013, Rwanda made history in East Africa. A batch of its citizens made the long trip to Kenya and precisely to the small industrial town of Thika – and back. They had not travelled to Kenya as tourists. They had not gone there to visit some relatives. Neither were they there to attend a conference or to participate in a sports event. This was a bunch of ambitious Rwandans who had attained lifelong dreams. They had gone to Thika to graduate after completing their Master’s studies while studying in Rwanda. Graduate they did, and in the process, made history. This was the first ever Masters lot that MKU graduated after it transformed from a commercial college. This Thika Institute of Technology, the precursor of

Effectively, that cohort cemented MKU’s place as a citadel of higher learning. The pioneering class had a big hand in MKU setting up base in Rwanda. How these scholars found themselves in class studying for Master’s degrees was the product of a quirk of fate.



Rwandan Students celebrate during their graduation. MKUR’s first ever graduands studied at RTUC.

MKU had placed an advert in the *East African Standard* newspaper, which was circulated in Rwanda also. It sought applications from interested students. Twenty-five sent in applications to the university’s main campus in Thika. It didn’t take long for the university to get its first students in Rwanda. Because it didn’t have a campus then, the university collaborated with a local institution- RTUC. The students were registered and attended classes at RTUC, duly completing their two-year programmes. Dr Jacob Niyoyita, a senior lecturer at UTB (as RTUC is now known, was present when the two institutions forged a partnership. He remembers: “The partnership was initially limited to the exchange of programmes. The courses were developed to fit the local context. The first programme we shared with

MKU was BBIT (Bachelor of Business Information Technology).” Dr Niyoyita was at that time the deputy vice-chancellor in charge of finance. “I ran the programmes in collaboration with MKU for some time. It was a win-win situation. MKU then decided to introduce more courses and to rent a building where they could teach their students. We were limited to Bachelors programmes.” He adds: “MKU saw more opportunities on the ground. The demand for IT, health and education programmes was huge. Dr Niyoyita explains that during that time, Rwanda had a shortage of technicians in IT, health and hospitality. “MKU,” says Dr Niyoyita, “is doing a great job in training people in health, IT and other courses.”

Graduate-Speak

PATRICK KARANGWA, Chairman, International Executive MBA 2011-2012 on what he learnt under this world-class programme

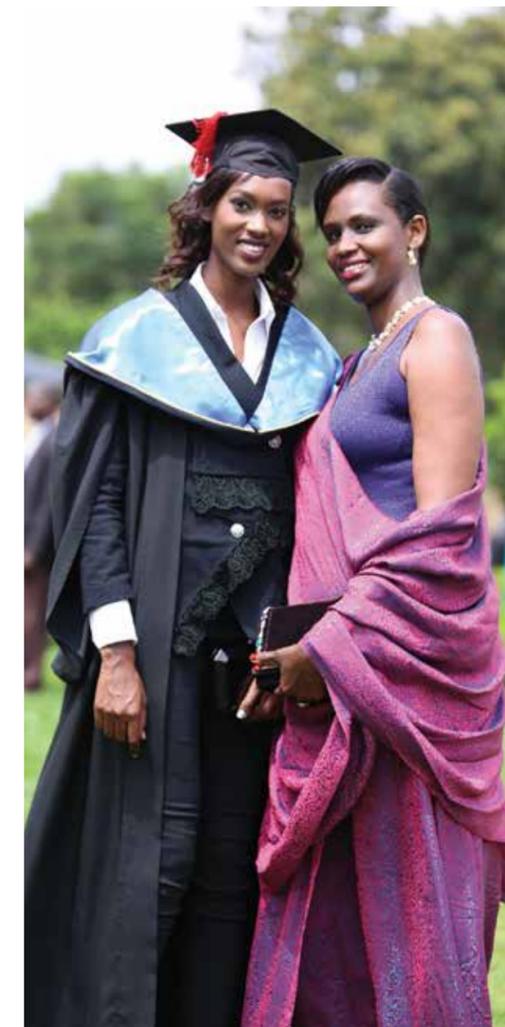
Career advancement, flexibility and better prospects were the primary motivators for our team to register and take up the programme in full spirit. A cross-cultural environment, like the one at MKUR is the best breeding ground in which to develop international thinking. MKUR and IEMBA in particular is a mosaic of cultures, where diversity in terms of nationality, gender, and most importantly, different outlooks on the world, is the ideal environment for training international professionals and entrepreneurs. As IEMBA students, we became part of the architects of the future’s global society and our beloved nations by putting emphasis on entrepreneurial thinking, discovery of new business opportunities and reinvention of the world’s institutions. We were equipped with relevant micro and macroeconomic data analysis skills from a country or region where we could interpret and draw conclusions on which to base the assessment of commercial risks in our own businesses and organizations. Besides the prosperity, we have given our best to the community and helped those in need using that extra special skill acquired through IEMBA.

Crowds, crowns and gowns: Pomp and colour at



Elated MKUR graduates at the institution's compound in Kagarama.

MKUR graduation ceremonies



CLOCKWISE: A graduate on her big day; MKUR students on the occasion of the 10th graduation ceremony; Graduation party cum launch of ICB Rwanda Chapter in Kigali, 2013





Cherish your visions and your dreams as they are the children of your soul, the blueprints of your ultimate achievements.



-NAPOLEON HILL, American self-help author, best known for his book 'Think and Grow Rich'



BBIT graduand Gerard Gatete receives a present from his parents during his graduation.



MKU chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu, Kenya's Ambassador to Rwanda John Mwangemi toast to the success of a graduating class in 2015.



'Putting one's best foot forward'-literally- is a humorous ingredient of all MKUR graduation ceremonies.



Memorable Quotes

"The future of Rwanda rests in your hands. We will do our best to ensure you continue receiving the best education. It is a challenge for you to take the next step in scaling the heights of education."

- Sylas Rwakabamba, the then Rwanda Minister for Education at MKUR graduation luncheon on February 27, 2015 at Gikondo Expo Grounds, Rwanda

"Only God generates; Man only educates. God has generated talent in you. We as Mount Kenya University have educated you. Put your trust in Him and you will succeed."

- Prof. Simon Gicharu, MKU chairman addressing graduands at a luncheon held at Nobleza Hotel, 2016.

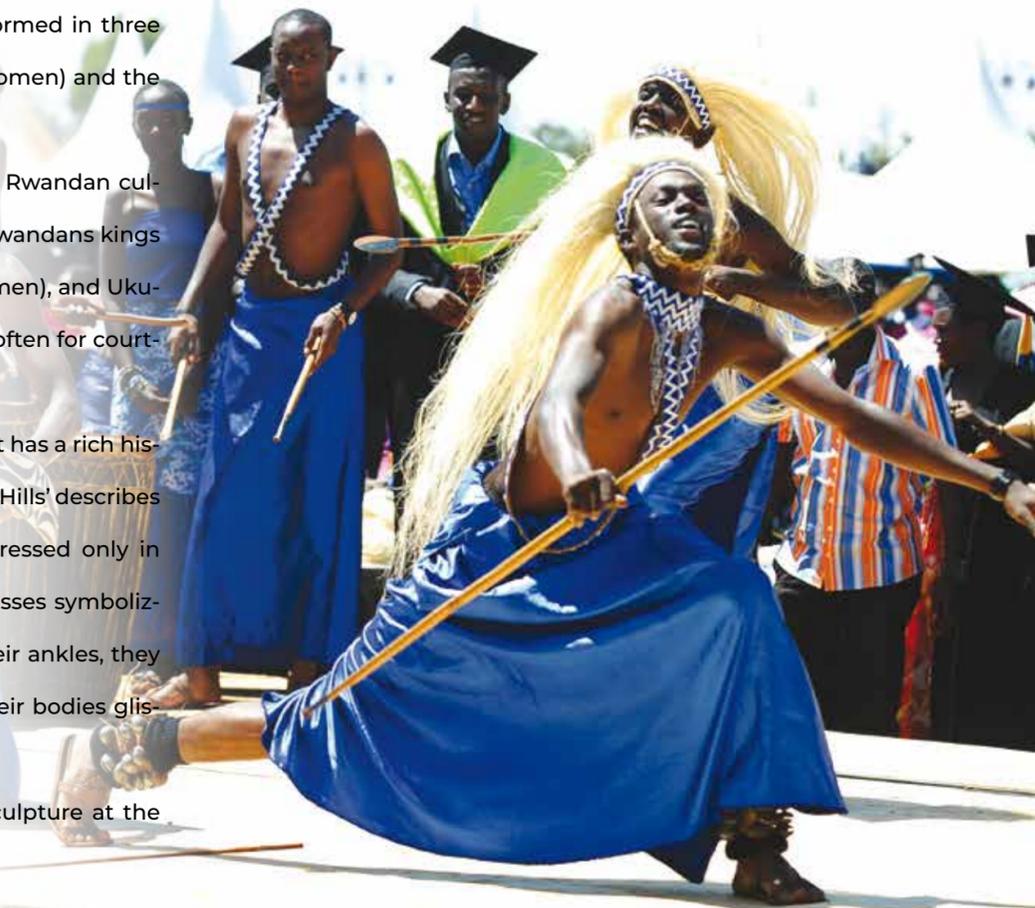
How 'Intore' lights up MKU graduation ceremonies and

IN EVERY MKUR graduation ceremony, the traditional 'Intore' dance performed by students is usually part of the entertainment. The dance is performed in three forms: A heroes dance (by men), ballet (by women) and the unmistakable drums known as "ingoma."

There are also two other common dances in Rwandan culture. These are Ikinimba (tells the stories of Rwandans kings and heroes), Umushayayo (performed by women), and Uku-rambagiza (dance of both women and men, often for courtship).

Intore however, is the most popular. In itself, it has a rich history. Journalist Stephen Kinzer in 'A Thousand Hills' describes a past performance of 'Intore': "[Dancers] dressed only in undershirts and wearing long white headdresses symbolizing lions' manes, with bells jangling from their ankles, they leaped, twirled, drummed, and sang until their bodies glistened with sweat."

The dance has been immortalised by the sculpture at the Sonatubes roundabout (See page 2).



fosters strong admiration of Rwandan culture



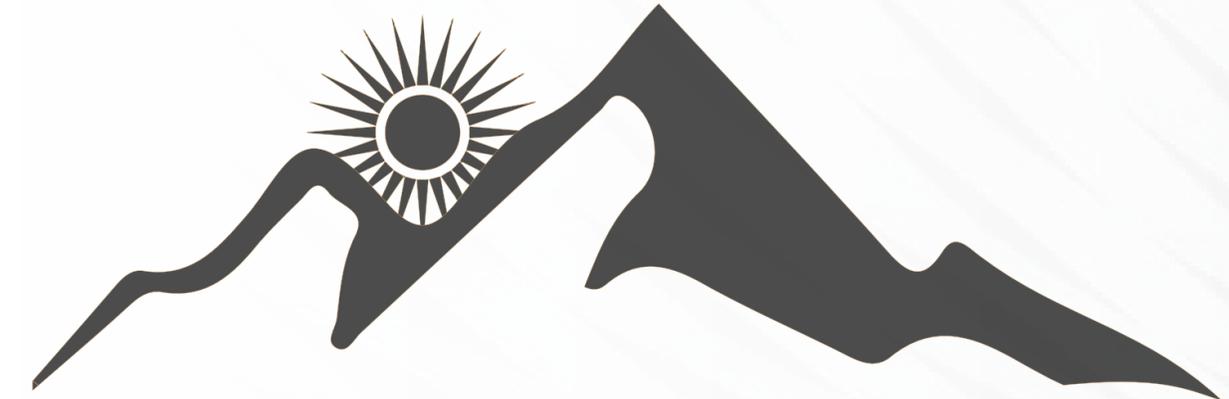
MKUR students resplendent in traditional gear dance the enthralling 'Intore'. The world-famous dance is staple entertainment at the university's graduation ceremonies. It is also one of Rwanda's key tourist attractions.



The symbol of national power was the kalinga, a royal drum that passed from one king to the next."

-Stephen Kinzer in 'A Thousand Hills'





SHAKISHA
URUGO RWAWWE

Quest for own home

Student numbers blossom; What next for novel Campus?

WITH THE GRADUATION of the first cohort of students, MKUR continued to grow from strength to strength. The growth was propelled by career progression of the graduands (they secured plum jobs), and the investment environment in Rwanda.

The very first group of 51 students graduated in December 2012. The following year, the number had increased threefold to 141. In July 2014, the number of graduands were 191 and later the same year 326.

Majority of these students/graduands were in the MBA programme. It had become an instant hit due to its affordability and demand especially among the working classes.

Other popular programmes included Masters of Business Management (MBA), Masters in Public Administration and Management, International



Journalism students at MKUR Kicukiro Centre circa 2013. The pressure on available resources and need to continuously deliver quality education prompted a bold decision.

Executive Masters in Business Administration, Masters of Arts in Development Studies, Masters in International Relations, Masters in Public Health, Bachelor of Business Management (BBM), Bachelor of Commerce (BCom), Bachelor of Business Information Technology (BBIT), Bachelor of Social Work and Administration, Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration, Bachelor in Pub-

lic Health, Bachelor of Environmental Science, Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science, Bachelor of Pharmacy, and Diploma in Pharmacy.

It's notable that at that time, no other university was offering an MBA programme in Rwanda. This explains why it attracted serious students who wanted to forge ahead academically and position themselves strategically in the job market.



MKUR students on a trip to mother university in Thika, Kenya. The students wanted the university to have its own building in Rwanda.

The rise in the number of highly-trained graduates and the concomitant number of students led the MKUR Board of Directors to make a bold decision.

To accommodate the growing number, the university had opened centres in Kicukiro, St Paul Pastoral Centre, Camp Kigali and Rusizi.

The university also invested heavily in staff and modern learning facilities, notably IT, Science lab-

oratories and library. It also signed MoUs with a number of hospitals that included the University Teaching Hospital of Kigali (CHUK), which paved the way for science students to carry out hands-on training. There were corporate openings for attachment. Students wanted more facilities for sports, recreation and creative arts. In a nutshell, the available facilities were bursting at the seams.

In addition, it became capital-intensive to operate a university campus with centres scattered all over. Coordination from one to another was difficult. Managing the various centres became a headache.

The Board's bold decision was in the form of purchasing of a prime piece of real estate at Kagarama in Kicukiro District, Kigali. It was where the university would set up a permanent home, to where all its academic activities would be carried out, a one-stop centre.

During the 2013 graduation ceremony, the university founder Prof Simon Gicharu said: "Due to the warm reception by the Government of Rwanda and its citizens, MKU has purchased a prime piece of land in Kicukiro District, which is a clear testimony that we are here to stay. We intend to set up a modern university on this site."



MKUR used to operate from different centres. The consolidation of these centres would give the university greater visibility. Service delivery to students would be seamless as all inquiries would be handled from one roof.

- Sam Ng'ang'a, former member of MKUR Board of Directors.

The quest for own premises begins in earnest

THE RISING STUDENT numbers piled pressure on the available academic resources.

In March 2011, the Higher Education Council (HEC) visited MKUR at the rented premises and advised that the growth in student numbers was outpacing the learning infrastructure.

HEC counselled that the only way to secure the future of the institution without inhibitions in growth was to erect its own infrastructure.

“In tandem with this advice, I foresaw a bright future for the campus,” recalls Sam Ng’ang’a, who was the then MKU Board of Director’s representative in Rwanda.

The quest for own premises would be historic. MKUR was the university’s first venture outside its Kenyan borders. To erect a multi-million shilling university was a stamp of confi-



A small restaurant that gave way to the MKUR Campus in Kagarama. Nikobasanzwe Gerald Ntwali, the owner, sold the land to MKU.

dence in Rwanda’s future and her people.

Decision made, the MKUR team started scouting for a suitable piece of land on which the campus premises would be built.

The scouting took the team to every corner of the hilly Kigali metropolis. Finally, they identified a plot along KK 28 Avenue in Kagarama,

Kicukiro district, Kigali.

On it was a restaurant owned by Rwandan entrepreneur Nikobasanzwe Gerald Ntwali. It was perched on one of Rwanda’s ‘1,000 hills’.

[“Everything important in Rwanda happens on a hill”- Stephen Kinzer in *A Thousand Hills*] Mr. Ng’ang’a recounts: “After having identified

and being satisfied with the land where we could put up a campus, I emailed the chairman the pictures and other details of the land.

He gave the nod to buy the plot. Even though he hadn’t set eyes on it, the idea of developing our own educational facility was enough for him to make the decision.

The university acquired the Title Deed to the land and waited for permission to begin constructing the building it had sought to have for so long.

Then, a misstep. The parent university in Kenya sent an architect and an engineer to develop the building. The architect’s ideas, as the MKUR Board of Directors soon found out, were square pegs in a round hole.

According to the requirements set out by the One-Stop Centre of the Government of Rwanda, the new university building was required

to have space for planting trees, a graduation square, parking space and recreational facilities for students.

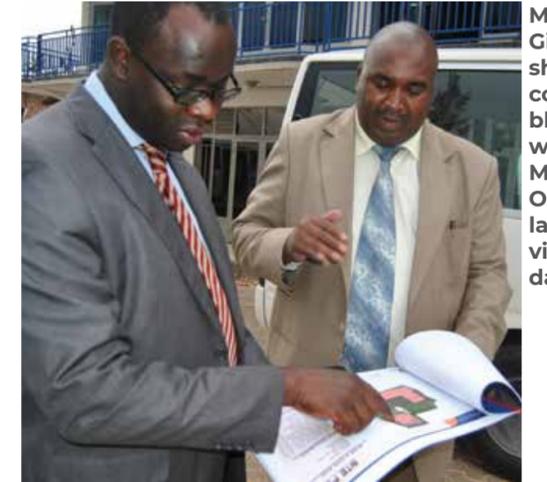
The team went back to the drawing board. It wanted to get all the procedures and requirements right.

“We hired a local professional architect to guide us on the procedure of erecting the building,” Mr. Ng’ang’a narrates.

Properly guided, the approvals were finally issued and construction commenced in late 2014. Construction was financed through a loan from Equity Bank.

The plot on which the university was building its campus was only 20 metres from the main road, a strategic location in Kagarama.

With the purchase of the land and the decision to construct a building on it, MKU had showed it was a serious investor in Rwanda.



MKU’s Prof Gicharu shares the construction blueprint with Kibra MP Ken Okoth (now late) during a visit to Rwanda in 2013.



Kenya’s Commission for University Education CEO Prof. Chacha Nyai-goti waters a tree at the site of university construction.

MKU Founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu shows the then Rwanda High Commissioner to Kenya Amb. James Kimonyo an architectural drawing of the MKUR campus.



The construction of the new MKUR in Gatenga, Kagarama, commenced in 2014. It went on uninterrupted for three years. Dr. Mercyline Kamande (above, right) lends a hand during the ground-breaking ceremony.

Construction and eventual move to game-changing home

CONSTRUCTION WENT on uninterrupted for three good years. Since the location - as is the case with most of Rwanda- is hilly, it called for some creative landscaping. The contractor, working hand-in-hand with the architect provisioned for several flat surfaces that would accommodate study villas, and

several co-curricular activities. An enquiry by the students directly to the university founder Prof Simon Gicharu also contributed to the design of MKUR. "We have studied here in Rwanda, why shouldn't we graduate here?" posed the students. In those days, they had to travel to MKUR mother univer-

sity in Kenya since a campus does not graduate students. The outcome was a pavilion where graduation ceremonies would be held in future. It would become one of MKUR's signature designs, and a passport to its future status as an autonomous university headed by its own Vice-Chancellor.

Fast-forward to January 2017 and the construction is now complete. MKUR has closed the centres it had been operating. Student and staff are moving to the campus's new home in Nyanza Cell of Gatenga Sector in Kicukiro District, Kigali. The new home is a four-storey building, including the basement. The premises covers 9,351 sq.

metres. The basement houses the examination offices, journalism studio and laboratories. The ground floor has the main library, which has a sitting capacity of 250. The same floor houses a computer laboratory and the administrative offices. Each floor has a computer lab in addition to

spacious lecture rooms. The largest lecture hall can sit more than 500 students. There are a total of eight separate laboratories – one each for Nursing, Molecular Biology, Haematology, Histology, Microbiology, Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmacology and Pharmacognosy.

Had you been present the MKU family arrived at the premises, you would have felt the tension, the excitement and air of expectation. After a sojourn of many years in Kigali's different corners, the campus had finally arrived at its new home.

One of those who witnessed this epochal event was Zachary Thiga, who is now in charge of Admissions.

He says: "Yes, I witnessed the big shift to the new, ultra-modern Campus at Kagarama, Kicukiro, which took place at the beginning of 2017."

New Dawn for Varsity

This, he adds, was a happy moment and a new dawn for the campus in many ways.

In his words: "In the decentralized centres, operations were both time-consuming and

costly for both the staff and students, mainly in terms of time and transport costs. For example, the office of the DVC Academics was at the Kicukiro Centre. Any student or staff member who needed the services of the office would have to travel from the other centres to Kicukiro."

Thiga, who was among the first staff that MKU sent to Rwanda to establish the new campus, knew the significance of the move to Kagarama. He had witnessed the challenges the university faced over the seven years it had operated from centres scattered around Kigali.

He notes that consolidating the campus in one state-of-the-art, ultra-modern building has been very effective in terms of operations. The building has more infrastructure, such as modern computer labs, science laboratories, a spacious and well-equipped library, spacious



lecture rooms, and has created a much better learning environment in general.

Adequate Resources

"Operations moved to the newly constructed campus with vast physical resources and manpower was unleashed to conquer the academic arena," says Mr. Thiga who joined Henry Musisi as the campus's second employee in Rwanda.

He says the campus's health programme received a lot of mileage after the move to Kagarama.

The campus was equipped with medical and nursing skills laboratories.

On the day staff and students shifted to the campus's new home, their excitement was palpable.

In particular, students were excited to arrive in

their new home and were happy to have left behind the four rented MKUR centres strewn across Kigali City.

Expansion in Acreage

The university later expanded the initial acreage of the land on which the campus sits. The campus has excellent facilities for learning such as: women and men's hostels, a swimming pool, a well-stocked library, a modern hospitality facility for practical training, the pavilion, the alumni globe and a radio station, Royal FM.

Kigali Paramount Hotel, a 40-room hotel for the practical training of tourism and hospitality students, is coming up next to the radio station.

10 things you'll like about MKU Rwanda

What's there to dislike about MKUR at Kagarama, Kicukiro District? Nothing! The faculty, students and environment itself is nothing but good vibes. Biratunganye! Nothing more to add. But if you are a student, potential student or just visitor, you'll find these 10 things particularly enthralling



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
MKUR degrees are internationally recognised.



ENGLISH IN INSTRUCTION
MKUR has a dedicated English skills lab to train in oral and written versions of the language.



ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
Staff and faculty have adequate facilities for learning and instruction.



ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY IN LEARNING
From Kindles to e-learning and Management Information System, tech is core to MKUR functions.



STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES
MKUR students can study at the mother university in Thika, Kenya, and experience a different society and network with peers.



LOCATION
Located along KK28 Avenue in Kagarama, MKUR is easily accessible by public bus, motorcycle taxi or private car.



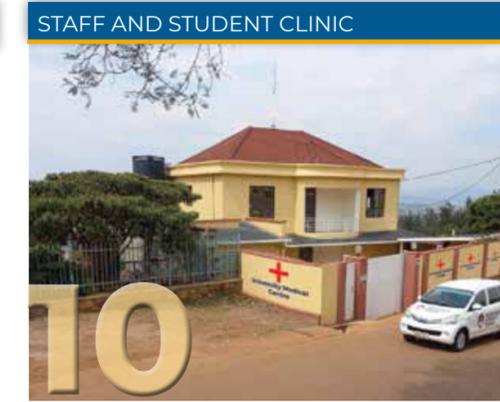
VARIETY OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES
Students are spoilt for choice as the array of academic programmes provides a doorway to different professional careers.



GRADUATES EMPLOYABILITY
MKUR graduates are highly employable, thanks to the all-rounded education they receive, and opportunities for networking.



STUDENT WELFARE
Dedicated student hostels, a Student Council, and open-door policy ensure MKUR students enjoy their time in campus.



STAFF AND STUDENT CLINIC
The University Medical Centre is for use by students, faculty and the community in Kagarama.

MKU pursues its goal of ‘education for public good’

THE BOOK YOU are holding in your hands, *Mountain Meets the Land of One Thousand Hills*, is a historical account that demanded to be told.

This story is a celebration of achievement, in the same way a baby is celebrated after hitting several milestones. There's something to celebrate when a child turns one.

There is a report by the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, titled, *Learning: The Treasure Within*. It summarises the value of education as follows: "In confronting the many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice."

The Commission perceives education "as one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human

development, and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war."

MKU founder and chairman Prof. Simon N. Gicharu, expresses similar ideals. He has not once, nor twice, urged African with means to invest more in higher education to help youths to develop their talents and engage in decent work. More trained individuals would be better placed to solve intractable problems such as disease and poverty that African nations grapple with, he maintains. Hence his confession that if time was wound back, he would still invest in education.

It is therefore no wonder that Prof. Gicharu did not hesitate to set up a cross-border campus in Rwanda at the slightest opportunity, only a few years after establishing MKU in Kenya, and even more interestingly, ahead of older universities in the region.

As it would appear, MKU had stepped onto hallowed grounds when the Government of Kenya had granted it a Letter of Interim Authority. It is this letter that had authorised its precursor, Thika Institute of Technology, then a middle-level college, to transform into a university. Thus began Prof. Gicharu's journey to expand access to education, first in Kenya, then outward to the East African region, armed with a strong belief in education as a public good.

He made this known during a graduation ceremony at Makerere University Business School (MUBS) on July 18, 2017, where he was the keynote speaker.

Prof. Gicharu expressed the same during a workshop on "Higher Education and the Public Good", hosted at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, on

May 23, 2017.

In much of Africa, he pointed out then, the contribution of higher learning institutions to public good was well cut out in view of the "numerous pressing woes" the continent faced. He named these as poverty and conflicts motivated by narrow interests such as regionalism, tribalism and clannism.

"Our focus then should be on how higher learning can be harnessed to churn out solutions to these myriad challenges and hence promote the public good," he stressed.

"We have seen students contribute positively to society only a few years after graduating from Mount Kenya University and indeed other institutions, by applying the skills attained during training," he explained.

To date, Prof. Gicharu continues to express the view that the objectives of institutions of high-

er learning must be intricately intertwined with the greater good of society.

A diverse range of countries, such as Japan, Korea, and Singapore in Asia, and Finland in Europe, all poor in natural resources, have relied substantially on their human resources to develop economically and socially.

At the Witwatersrand conference, Prof Gicharu decried African failure to adequately invest in relevant technical education, subsequently forcing its youth to seek other opportunities abroad, sometimes with dire consequences, such as the death that meet those trying to illegally cross the Mediterranean Sea to migrate.

With MKU, Prof. Gicharu is intent on making a contribution to providing youths with a worthwhile education, one that will empower them to help transform their communities

for the better, in both big and small ways, but progress nevertheless.

MKU's success in Kenya and eventual entry into Rwanda has happened out of heavy investments in capital development, human resource and student welfare.

The university's pioneer Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stanley Waudu, says: "While getting employment is the most obvious reason why people invest in education, there are other reasons. It changes the way societies solve problems. It provides opportunities for socio-economic and political success. It is the great leveler, the choice giver and the door opener for a happy tomorrow."

Today, MKU has established Centres of Excellence in Rwanda and Kenya, seeds that are being sowed by one institution towards community growth, cohort by cohort.

Centre of excellence: Why MKUR is the last word in

ON MARCH 2, 2018, Eng. Aimable Rutagarama of the Rwanda Tourism Chamber visited MKUR.

He was the chief guest during the unveiling of the university's dedicated, state-of-the-art hospitality training facility.

The facility consists of a restaurant, a demonstration kitchen with individual stoves, fully furnished guest rooms, executive front desk and spacious lecture rooms. It is a centre of excellence in Hospitality and Tourism training. Present during the event were a host of dignitaries, among them Kenya's ambassador to Rwanda, His Excellency Amb John Mwangemi; MKU Chairman, Prof Simon Gicharu; the then MKUR Vice-Chancellor Designate, Prof Evans Kerosi; RwandAir officials; and guests from hotels and tour firms, among others.

When he spoke, Prof Gicharu made a massive



MKU Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu lays a foundation stone for the hospitality training hotel.

pledge: "We will forge more partnerships and establish a five-star, 40-room hotel to make MKUR a centre of excellence in hospitality and tourism training." The MKU Chairman added that the hotel would complement the new facility and "help build capacity and hands-on skills". He said the university had taken note that many Rwandans spent a lot of money to study abroad in this field. "But with our modern fa-

cilities and partnerships with renowned institutions such as Kenya Utalii College, it is now convenient and affordable to study at MKUR and acquire an international qualification right here."

Fast-forward to 2021, a mere three years later, and the university had made good Prof Gicharu's promise. Construction of the hotel had begun early in the year, but the official ground-breaking ceremony took place in December.

Benson Abuto, head of MKUR's Hospitality and Tourism Department, sees the facility playing a key role in training personnel for establishments in East and Central Africa. "I see our department, backed by the hotel, performing a similar role as Kenya Utalii College: Training for the region," he says.

MKUR started offering hospitality and tour-

hospitality training

ism programmes in 2014 under the Faculty of Business and Economics. It began with eight students. To date, the campus has numerous students.

The school has signed MoUs with some of the prestigious hotels and tour companies in Rwanda and across the border, where students undertake internship.

The hospitality department is run by a team of dedicated and passionate staff who are approachable and ready to attend to student issues at any time. It boasts of being the alma mater of some high-ranking industry professionals across East Africa, working at top-rated hotels. Some graduates of the school are running their own tour companies. A good example is Vincent Ngarambe, who owns *Let's Go Tours Rwanda*.



MKUR School of Hospitality students at a practical lesson.



Construction of Kigali Paramount Hotel within the MKUR compound in Kagarama, Kicukiro District. In a way the university has fostered the original idea by Nikobanzwe Gerald, the restaurant owner who sold the land onto which the institution now sits. (See page 65)



An architectural impression of the MKUR-owned 40-room Kigali Paramount Hotel.

Why MKUR School of Nursing now mirrors its counterpart

IT WOULD NOT be an exaggeration to say that MKUR School of Nursing is a centre of excellence in the East African region.

Why? Because its training and equipment is benchmarked against the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in the US.

Based in Baltimore, Maryland, the university is one of the most prestigious universities in the world (SEE SIDEBAR).

The journey to this prestigious status for MKUR started in 2018. “The founder and Board chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu asked me to identify one of the best universities in the world where

he would send me and one National Council of Nurses and Midwives member to benchmark for the nursing skills laboratory and how nursing training was managed,” narrates Dr. Connie Mureithi, senior lecturer and academic head of the MKUR nursing department.



Dr. Jane Karonjo, Dean MKU School of Nursing (left), Dr. Beth Sloand, Associate Professor and Chair of Acute and Chronic Pain at Johns Hopkins University, and Dr. Connie Mureithi, head of Nursing department at MKU Rwanda.

“I searched and settled for Johns Hopkins. The institution continues to redefine nursing education through a unique combination of academic rigor, extraordinary nursing scholarship, and unparalleled opportunities for nursing graduates.”

She says the choice was prompted by the university’s unique nature in the field. On the maiden trip to Johns Hopkins, Dr. Mureithi was accompanied by Dr. Jane Karonjo, Dean School of Nursing at MKU. Their mission was to fulfil the following objectives:

at Johns Hopkins University (USA)



The Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in Baltimore, Maryland. Two dons from MKU visited the institution in 2018 for benchmarking. Founded in 1889, it has consistently been ranked among the best in the world.

- Familiarise with the state-of-the-art skills laboratory equipment and facilities at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing.
- Benchmark the state-of-the-art nursing skills laboratories.
- Learn about the best practices in students’ acquisition of skills that would aid them in giving optimal patient care.
- Facilitate formation of state-of-the-art nursing skills laboratory at MKU School of Nursing, both in Kenya and Rwanda.
- At Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Mureithi says they received a warm welcome and met the planned objectives. “We met nearly all the

About Johns Hopkins University

Johns Hopkins University is a private research university in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. It was founded in 1876, and is the oldest research university not only in the US but also in the western hemisphere.

It consistently ranks among the most prestigious universities in the world. The Johns Hopkins School of Nursing was established in 1889. It is one of the country’s oldest.

The School has four research centers namely Center for Innovative Care in Aging, Center for Nursing Research and Sponsored Projects, Center for Collaborative Intervention Research and the Center on Health Disparities Research.

U.S. News & World Report has continuously rated it the top nursing school in the U.S. MKUR is proud to be associated with the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing.



Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. It was founded in 1876.

members of the teaching fraternity as well as those working in hospital departments. After the visit, I was inspired and better armed to improve and enhance the MKU nursing skills laboratory," she adds.

MKU bought the nursing equipment that Dr. Mureithi and Dr. Karonjo identified at Johns Hopkins for making the nursing skills laboratory a modern facility. The purchase of the equipment began immediately in 2018 and by 2022, the MKUR School of Nursing rivalled even some hospitals in terms of equipment.

The equipment include high fidelity mannequins, blood pressure simulator, incubator and radiant warmers.

The outcome of the Johns Hopkins visit and the state-of-the-art training equipment has been tremendous.



Muhire H. Dieudonne (left) and MKUR nursing students Jbishimirwe Olivier, Volonte Celeste, Chukwuebuka Uchenna and Princess Tuagben with an incubator at the School of Nursing's state-of-the-art laboratories.

"Most of our graduates, especially those on upgrading programme, have been promoted to managerial positions," says Dr. Mureithi. "The direct-entry graduates are employed in both public and private health facilities."

Two of the graduates from direct-entry pro-

gramme have also been recruited in the Nursing department as laboratory technicians. They are doing extremely well in their respective responsibilities, says Dr. Mureithi.

Looking ahead, she says there is high demand for Master's programme in nursing and MKUR

has already come up with a Master of Science in Nursing curriculum awaiting validation by the relevant bodies, namely, National Council of Nurses and Midwives, Higher Education Council, and other senior members of the nursing fraternity in Rwanda.

"Once the programme is approved and commenced, our next plan is to start a Doctorate degree in Nursing."

Dr. Mureithi says they are also preparing curricula for undergraduate programmes; namely, BScN in Child Health, Midwifery and Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing. The three have a high demand in the nursing field.

Having been permitted by the NCNM to undertake professional development for nurses in Rwanda, the School is coming up with the modalities of starting the same after identifying areas of learning needs.

Can you spot the difference?

How MKUR is matching up to Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in training of professional nurses



Nursing students at Johns Hopkins (above) and MKUR (right) learn using a Basic Life Support Simulator and oxygen rebreather at their respective labs.



Students from the two nursing schools - Johns Hopkins (left) and MKUR (above) using high fidelity mannequins while in training.

“This will benefit the nursing fraternity in Rwanda, given that every nurse is supposed to renew nursing license for practice every year after undertaking a specified number of professional education options,” says Dr. Mureithi. Already, the School is offering e-Leadership Management and Governance (LMG) for a health system strengthening course in conjunction with Amref Health Africa, to both alumni and current students.

To effectively prepare academic staff in their teaching, the school conducts orientation of new staff and also enhances academic work through planned meetings and professional development. Faculty is also encouraged to apply for further education in order to remain competitive and keep up-to-date with latest trends in the nursing profession.

MKUR School of Nursing: From conceptualisation to reality



Dr. Connie Mureithi nursed the School of Nursing from conceptualisation to its current international status. She relives the journey with snippets of her academic achievements

“BEFORE JOINING Mount Kenya University, Rwanda, I worked at the Aga Khan University (AKU) in Kenya as Senior Lecturer and Academic Head of the School of Nursing. That was from 2001 to 2012. For a

while, I had been wanting to work in Rwanda as part of my ambition to share knowledge beyond Kenya. Earlier, I had worked at AKU Uganda Campus for two years (from 2008 to 2011), before returning to AKU School of Nurs-

ing Kenya Campus as Academic Head. I held the position until August 2012 when I left to join MKU Rwanda.

Joining MKU and relocating to Rwanda was an interesting journey. A colleague and I had visited the university to find out the possibility of starting a Master of Science in Nursing there. We had a discussion with the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Stanley Waudu, who in turn referred us to the Board Chairman for further talks. Prof Simon Gicharu liked the idea and asked us to write a concept paper, which we did and delivered to the Principal of the School of Health Sciences.

But, for some unknown reason, we received no formal feedback. However, my colleague was later recruited to the position of the Dean of Nursing.

I joined the university later as Senior Lectur-

er and headed to Rwanda, where on arrival, I was appointed Academic Head of MKU Rwanda Department of Nursing – a position I have held up to now.

I was happy to finally relocate to Kigali to offer my services to the MKU Rwanda campus and Rwanda, where I sincerely thought I would make a difference to the nursing profession and fraternity as a whole. My only worry was: How do I fit in socially within the university community and Rwandans?

You see, I am a social person and back in Kenya, I had many friends. I was also a member of Parklands Sports Club in Nairobi, where I socialised with friends on weekends. Also, I had the habit of going to the gym every day.

In Rwanda, I knew no ‘Parklands Club’, no women groups and would not meet my grandchildren on weekly basis as I did back

home. All the same, because my thoughts had been bent on coming here, I figured I would have to do my best in whatever I was supposed to do at the university and create some time to socialise and keep myself busy and fit at the gym.

The gym part did not happen. I hardly got the time to exercise apart from a bit of walking.

I worked day and night and ultimately managed to get the nursing training at MKU Rwanda recognised by the National Council of Nurses and Midwives in Rwanda (NCNM).

NCNM challenged the university to improve on the facilities and we duly complied. This led to recognition by NCNM.

Once that was achieved, I forfeited my leave and started marketing the programme.

At the time I joined the campus, there were 22 students in nursing upgrading programme.

They had been admitted in May 2012 and September 2012.

We advertised for the Direct Entry option and the first cohort joined the university in January 2013.

We visited health facilities and high schools to recruit students and managed to get a good number for both Upgrading and Direct Entry programmes.

We are well-equipped with other skills lab equipment that meet nursing practice in all fields of learning before students go to the clinical area to practice on real patients. This helps us to produce nurses who are well armed with knowledge and skills for the job.

Having a state-of-the-art nursing skills lab and a conducive learning environment after relocating to the new campus owned entirely by MKU Rwanda in Kagarama Location, has



A model baby at the state-of-the-art nursing skills lab at MKUR.

added to the reputation of the university. The campus is well furnished with modern classrooms, teaching aids such as Smart TVs, and a rich, well-manned library to cater for the students and faculty.

The university also has well-resourced computer laboratories that cater to students and meet their learning requirements. We

also benefit from a very supportive and forward-looking management personnel who often take a helicopter view to scan what is happening on the ground and act, not only to improve the situation, but also to enhance the university's ideals. This, coupled with a Quality Management System, the university is moving to greater heights."

Impacting Rwanda's pharmaceutical sector

J **JEAN-CLAUDE** Mujoyarugamba, Teta Christa Bella, Theogene Uwizeyimana, Nelly Diane Ndirimana and Serge

Tuyizere, have a lot in common. In addition to all being Rwandans, they share much more.

The five are among the more than 100 Rwandan pharmacists trained in Kenya between 2017 and 2021. After graduating in different years, they all returned to their country to participate in nation-building.

Jean-Claude stayed longer in Kenya after graduating from MKU in 2018, to pursue a Masters degree in pharmacy in 2021. "I joined MKU's Rwanda campus in May 2014, transferred to Thika in September 2017, and graduated in 2018 with a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree," he recalls.

Jean-Claude belongs to the pioneer cohort of MKU Rwanda students to study at the mother

campus in Kenya. Four other cohorts followed suit at different times, with the last one graduating on December 10, 2021.

During their stay, various Rwandan officials, including then High Commissioner to Kenya, His Excellency James Kimonyo, visited the MKU main campus on several occasions to

check on the students' welfare and progress. Studying in Kenya was a unique experience, according to Theogene, who remembers that his cohort arrived in Thika in August 2017 to complete the two semesters they were remaining with to finish their degree course. "Our journey to and stay in Kenya was fun," he



H.E. Amb James Kimonyo during a visit to the MKU main campus to check on Rwandan students studying pharmacy

Jean-Claude Mujyarugamba (centre), with Rwanda pharmacy students at MKU's main campus in Thika, Kenya.



says. Theogene and Jean-Claude say they enjoyed the best of both worlds. They began their pharmacy studies in Rwanda and continued their academic journeys in Kenya, where they also underwent attachment. After graduating, they returned to their home country for internship. "I returned to Rwanda in May 2018 and went back to Kenya in December of the same year, to graduate," Theogene remembers.

After graduating from MKU, the pharmacy graduands sat the requisite Rwanda exam to start practising. Theogene worked as a pharmacist for one-and-a-half years then joined American firm – University Global Health Equity – that also has operations in Rwanda. Keen to advance academically, he enrolled for a Masters degree in Public Health at MKU Rwanda in 2019, and, as an alumnus, received a 10 percent fees discount.

On his part, Serge says when he visited the MKU Rwanda campus in 2014, he was focused on pursuing a degree in either medical lab technology or nursing. "But when I learnt the university also offered pharmacy, I became interested."

He was among the lot that graduated in 2018. He then sat for Rwanda's National Pharmacy Council exam, obtained a licence to practise and started working with a pharmacy. At the same time, he decided to enrol for a Master's degree in procurement and supply chain management. He was later employed by Zipline Rwanda, a firm that delivers medical products using drones.

Christa Bella, who graduated in August 2018, was employed by pharmaceutical products wholesaler FLR Ltd in February 2019. She joined the firm as the Responsible Pharmacist



Rwandan students studying pharmacy at MKU main campus in Thika, Kenya.

and Chief Operating Officer. "We were few in class, and so we were well taken care of by MKU," says Christa Bella, adding that pharmacy students at the university didn't share instruments and materials in the labs; there was enough for all. She further says the students' interaction with lecturers was close and it was possible for each student to present assignments individually

in class – and be corrected by the lecturer. Also in the first cohort to train at Thika was Diane, who graduated in August 2018, obtained a professional licence and became employed as a pharmacist in Rwanda. She returned to MKU in May 2019 to study for a Masters degree in public health. "I felt comfortable going back to MKU because my experience at the university was good," she explains.

MKU School of Pharmacy has a rich history

The MKU School of Pharmacy where Rwandan students receive training has a rich history. It goes back to November 2004 when Thika Institute of Technology- the university's forerunner college- was accredited by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of the Ministry of Health to train pharmaceutical technologists. TIT made history as the first private college in Kenya to receive this accreditation. Since then, the School has continuously grown to become one of the best in East Africa. The secret has been in equipping it with top-notch training facilities and qualified staff.



A newspaper advert published in November 2004, confirming Thika Institute of Technology as the first private college in Kenya to be accredited by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board to train pharmaceutical technologists.

Advancing MKUR's research agenda in health

IN DECEMBER 2013, MKUR graduated its first 44 health sciences students. Nine were from the public health department and 35 from the medical laboratory technology department.

In July 2014, the campus released its first 14 nursing students. That month, MKUR graduated students from the three health sciences departments. This marked the beginning a long tradition of graduating the three cadres of health sciences professionals.

All this while, MKUR was equipping its laboratories to meet the needs of a growing health sciences student population. That investment has paid off because by December 2021, the university had graduated hundreds of health sciences professionals.

The massive investment is opening another path for MKUR and the health communi-



MKUR Nursing students at one of the skills labs.

ty in Rwanda. Dr. John Nyiligira, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Administration, Planning and Institutional Advancement (DVC-APIA), says the campus has found a way to optimise the use of its eight science labs. These eight are in addition to two other well-equipped labs dedicated to the training of nurses (in areas such as emergency, inten-

sive care, and delivery). Nursing is a niche programme at MKUR.

Four of the labs are used in training pharmacy students. The other four serve medical laboratory sciences students. "These labs are highly equipped and are comparable to those found in referral hospitals in the country," says Dr Nyiligira.

sciences and the birth of University Medical Clinic



The MKUR's University Medical Centre near the university's main entrance. The clinic is open to students, members of staff and community in Kicukiro district.

"We intend to open a health clinic at our campus," adds the DVC-APIA. This, he explains, is because the university has "advanced equipment that helps us in training health sciences students, and still do more."

The DVC-APIA says the clinic will serve people from the Gatenga area that is home to about

50,000 residents. The campus has undertaken a study and identified where to locate the clinic.

Dr. Nyiligira says the clinic will help advance MKUR's research agenda. "Research being one of our missions as an institution, we see health sciences faculty and students using

these labs for that purpose."

The labs, he says, will also serve researchers from outside the institution because they have adequate capacity to provide external support. The campus also plans to use them in training students pursuing Master's in Medical Laboratory. This will be a first, since most institutions in Rwanda only offer a Master's in Public Health programme.

The DVC says MKUR has developed the relevant curriculum for this programme that it will offer under the Rwanda framework of education.

Looking further into the horizon, and hoping that the campus gains autonomy as a standalone university, Dr. Nyiligira says it may be possible for the institution to later offer a Masters in Nursing programme.

International Standards: MKUR goes for ISO Certification

IN FEBRUARY 2012, Mount Kenya University Rwanda started the process to implement a quality management system (QMS) based on ISO 9001:2008. The top management appointed a project team to spearhead the necessary processes, led by a Management Representative.

The first process was training of the top management itself. This was done via a one-day workshop. Then followed a week-long training of the middle level staff – the would-be implementers of ISO standards.

The project team then carried out documentation of the procedures and processes during a five-day intensive workshop. This entailed identification of all the university processes so as to list every step involved to deliver results under each process. The outcome of this was a compilation of procedures manuals.



A smiling MKUR Director Prof Musa Nyakora receives the ISO Certificate on August 3, 2013, which was also graduation day.

The team then moved to create awareness among all staff through training. This was conducted in May 2012 by a consultant, Mr Morrison Ngari, from ACAL Consulting.

On 29 June 2012, the University Council validated the QMS manual in readiness for launch and subsequent implementation.

MKUR trained process owners. This was followed by training of Quality Management System Auditors, who were to later be charged with carrying out regular reviews of the implemented QMS to assess the fulfilment of ISO 9001:2008 standards and other requirements, and to also identify areas of improvement in

the procedures and processes.

Mr. Antony Kiarie from MKU main campus in Thika, Kenya, spearheaded the preparations for certification of MKUR, in consultation with Mr. Elias Juuko, then MKUR Management Representative.

A certification audit was conducted from September 10-14, 2012. The undertaking of corrective actions and subsequent follow up for implementation of the same was concluded between October 25 and November 1, 2012.



On 29 June 2012, the University Council validated the QMS manual in readiness for launch and subsequent implementation.

Recertification

ISO standards are usually revised after every five years. This meant that ISO 9001:2008 would be due for revision in 2013. However, this was not achieved until September 2015 when the revised standard was published.

Therefore, all ISO 9001:2008 certified institutions were granted a window of three years to seek recertification under the new standard.

Accordingly, MKUR began the recertification journey in 2018, with implementers trained from May 2-5 and the auditors on May 8-11.

The training was facilitated by Mr. Charles Nginya of Dual Dimensions Consulting Ltd. Several staff members were trained as implementers and 18 staff members trained as QMS auditors. Recertification under ISO 9001:2015 was subsequently affirmed.

Milestones

Results of ISO 9001:2008 certification at MKUR included the following:

- Enhanced service delivery
- Consistency in service delivery
- Improved client satisfaction
- Continuous improvement of processes.



Home away from home: Why these international students

MKUR is home to students from across the world. The students hail from Africa, South America, Asia and Europe. Some of the countries with nationalities studying here are Congo, Pakistan, Venezuela, Cameroon, Guinea, Congo Brazzaville, Burundi, Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda, Gabon, Chad, Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania.



"The international students are a good indicator of the true international calibre of MKUR. Nonetheless, universities in East Africa are yet to achieve the threshold set by the United Nations on the reach of higher education. The current higher education enrolment rate is only between 5%-7% for the age cohort; the UN benchmark is 10%. We should aim to reach this threshold if we are to attain our development goals."

- PROF. Shyaka Anastase, CEO, RGB on the occasion of graduation luncheon and launch of ICB and Royal FM on February, 28, 2014

chose to study at MKUR



IQRA NAEEM
Bachelor of Business Management



I came with my family to Rwanda in 2012. My dad is an investor in the country's agricultural sector. I started schooling at Senior II at Lycée Notre Dame de Cîteaux in Kigali. At

first, it wasn't easy integrating with the other students but now I am used to it. The learning at MKUR has met my expectations. I am however looking forward for more practicals. After graduation, I will either proceed with my Masters or look for a job."

I came to Rwanda for the first time in February, 2021 and immediately fell in love with the country. I was about to complete an Associate Degree at Stella Maris Polytechnic in Monrovia where I was undertaking Laboratory Technology. When I floated the idea to my parents about studying at MKUR, they were supportive. My mother has a degree in Nursing while one of my aunts is a physician. After graduation, I hope to undertake my Masters at MKU Thika. I will also volunteer at a Rwandan hospital for about two years. I believe it will be fun helping others. Volunteerism brings employability; it's not always about the money."



PRESTON DEAREST LEEMUE
Bachelor of Science in Nursing





NWOZAR CHRISTIAN EZUGO
Bachelor of Business Management



I hail from the Eastern region of Nigeria. I learnt about MKUR from a relative back home. She has referred five or six relatives to MKUR. I joined in September, 2021. Initially, I wanted to go and study in Canada but was discouraged by the relatively high cost. The learning at MKUR has met and surpassed my expectations. Unlike Nigerian universities, MKUR is focused on imparting knowledge,

not just teaching for the sake of it. The curriculum is focused, unlike that in Nigerian universities, which is bold. However, I'd like to challenge the MKUR management to consider setting up hostels for male students. I am glad that I've experienced life in this part of Africa. I am planning on studying at MKUR till Masters level and thereafter I move to Canada".



ALAIN CIBALONZA
Bachelor of Business Management



When I told my brother who at UTB Kigali what I wanted to study, he advised me to enrol at MKUR. You see, universities in Rwanda are known for specializing in specific programmes. MKUR's reputation is in international business programmes (as well as Science and Medical Health). My degree will enable me work anywhere in the world – as long as there is opportunity. Learning at MKUR has been great. As the representative of all international students, I would like to point out that sometimes we face a challenge while paying the fees in dollars."

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“Uwagenze wenyine arashobora kuvuga icyo akunda.”
(Only he who has travelled alone can tell what he likes.)
- RWANDAN PROVERB



HAWA EVA LAMA
Bachelor of Business Management



I came to Rwanda for the first time in 2021. I had learnt about MKUR through internet research. Guinea is a predominantly French-speaking country. At the time of my research, I was learning English. So, I wanted an international university that would offer me a chance to speak both languages. My father was very supportive in my choice to study at MKUR. After graduation, I hope to go to the U.K for my Masters."



AKADONYE CHUKWUEBUKA
Bachelor of Science in Nursing



I hail from Imo State in Eastern Nigeria. I was informed about MKUR quality of training by a friend. I was enquiring about a university where I could receive a degree that would be accepted in every country. The training at MKUR has been amazing. We have adequate tools for practicum. I have a proposed scholarship for the U.K which I hope to pursue once I graduate."



OGANDAGA CHRIS DARWIN
Bachelor of Business Management



I studied IT before and I realized that I want to specialize in Digital Marketing in future. This is why I decided to undertake this international course at MKUR. My parents were very receptive to the idea of me studying in a foreign country. The training has been up to par. I have easily integrated into the Rwandan culture. I am planning to relocate to Canada once I graduate."



CHARLES BAPTISTA OYOKO
Bachelor of Business Management



CONGO BRAZZAVILLE

I arrived in Rwanda at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic when most countries had closed their borders. This made me feel welcomed at MKUR. My goal in life is to be an international business man and the experience I have gained at MKUR is preparing me for this. I started my course by learning English at MKUR. In my country, French is the official language. I have also interacted with people of different cultures and this has been beneficial."



MANENAH MARCELLE
Bachelor of Business Management



CAMEROON

I have always been attached to my mother. My father felt that for me to grow independently and develop a career, I needed to be a bit independent. That is why when I suggested that I'd fly out to Rwanda and study at MKUR, he was very supportive. My brother had studied BBIT at MKUR so as a family, the university was not new to us. The tuition fee was relatively affordable for international universities of the equivalent calibre in Yaoundé."



PRINCESS K. TUAGBEN
Bachelor of Science in Nursing



LIBERIA

Initially, I wanted to go and study in Cypress. But the tuition fees for this academic programme was too high. My uncle researched on the internet for an international university offering quality Nursing degree and that's how we learnt about MKUR. He offered me a choice between MKUR and University of Rwanda and I choose MKUR. I have no regrets whatsoever. I am happy with MKUR."



VOLONTE ANGE CELESTE
Bachelor of Science in Nursing



CONGO BRAZZAVILLE

As I was researching on the internet for an international university that was affordable and its nursing programme was recognized, I landed on the website of MKU- the mother university in Thika. Upon further research, I learnt that the Nursing degree was cheaper at MKUR. I came here in January 2022 and I must say that I am happy I made the right decision."

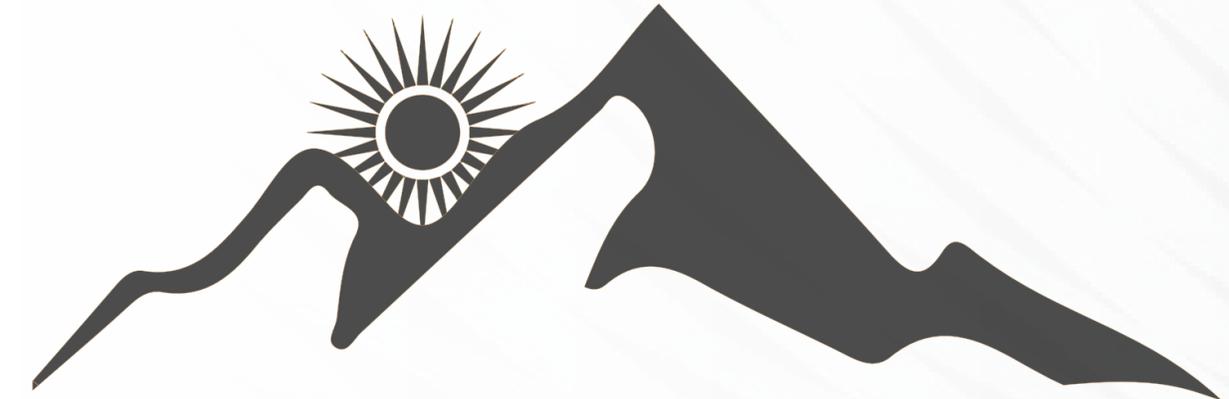
How's life like for an international student at MKUR?

The life of an international student at MKUR mirrors that of his or her peers in every corner of the globe. They face initial challenges of culture shock and homesickness. But MKUR is unique in several ways. Students from Francophone countries easily integrate with local students since French is one of the widely-spoken languages in Rwanda. In addition, the dedicated English laboratory at MKUR helps students from non-English speaking countries acquire oral and written

skills on the language. The students are chic and urbane. They live either at the university hostels, or in rental apartments that are within walking distance from the university. The tuition fee for academic programmes is also relatively cheaper as compared to that charged foreign students in other countries undertaking equivalent disciplines. MKUR international students have a representative at the student council (MKUR Students Association), where their concerns and challenges are promptly addressed. The representative is picked by the students themselves.



Some of the international students at the university library.



GUFASHA ABATURAGE

Reaching out to the community

How MKUR-Imbuto Foundation partnership is boosting

In 2018, MKU Rwanda entered into a five-year partnership with Imbuto Foundation.

The principal aim was to increase educational access for bright students in Rwanda who hail from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Prof. Simon Gicharu, and Sandrine Umutoni, founder of MKU Rwanda and patron of the MKU Foundation, and Director General, Imbuto Foundation, respectively signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at MKU Rwanda boardroom in Kagarama.

Imbuto Foundation (Imbuto means seed), is one of Rwanda's most impactful organizations. "A seed well planted, watered, nurtured and given all the necessary support successfully grows into a healthy plant – one that reaches high and stands tall. Imbuto Foundation envisions this for all its current initiatives



MKU Chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu and Imbuto Foundation Director Umutoni Sandrine exchange copies of signed Memorandum of Understanding at MKU Rwanda. MKU Foundation donated \$150,000 in support the Foundation's education programme over a five-year period.

and those in the future," says the organization. It has the vision of creating a nation of empowered and dignified Rwandans, through the values of excellence, integrity, solidarity, and commitment. Its mission is to support the development of a healthy, educated and prosperous society. Some of its programmes are Health, Education, Youth, and Support to

education in Rwanda

family initiatives.

Through this partnership, MKU Rwanda will contribute US\$150,000, to Imbuto Foundation's "Edified Generation" scholarships programme.

The money is disbursed in five annual instalments of US\$30,000, in support of 100 vulnerable students in secondary schools.

In addition, the university will provide five scholarships to brilliant girls – also beneficiaries of Imbuto Foundation, every year, through to 2023.

In an effort to promote East African integration, three of those scholarships will be offered at MKU Rwanda, while the other two will be at MKU Main Campus in Thika, Kenya.



MKU Founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu (2nd from left) with Imbuto Foundation's Director General Sandrine Umutoni (3rd from left) after signing an MoU



MKU officials led by the Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu in a meeting with Imbuto Foundation delegates led by Director General Sandrine Umutoni.

Imbuto Foundation

In 2001, Protection and Care of Families against HIV/AIDS (PACFA) was established as a project under the Office of the First Lady, to mobilize resources desperately needed in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This initiative primarily focused on providing a holistic approach for dignified lives of families, including women deliberately infected with HIV/AIDS during the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Over the years, PACFA grew to embrace more programmes and in 2007, it changed its name to Imbuto Foundation to reflect its evolution and new fields of activity, through programmes in health, education, youth and economic empowerment.

Literally translated Imbuto means "seed". A seed well planted, watered, nurtured and given all the necessary support successfully grows into a healthy plant; one that reaches high and stands tall. This vision shapes the Imbuto Foundation's current initiatives and future projects.



AN EDIFYING PAST. AN EMPOWERED FUTURE

Scholarship beneficiary set to become Rwanda's first MKU-trained medical doctor

ANGELIQUE REDEMPTA ICYISHAKA is set to make history. Once she graduates, she will be Rwanda's first Mount Kenya University-trained medical doctor. This is courtesy of Imbuto Foundation that connected her to the university, and she landed a scholarship to undertake a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree at Thika Main Campus. The last born in a family of five gets her inspiration from her mother, a nurse. She outlines her academic journey:

QUESTION: Angelique, how come you enrolled for medicine at MKU's main campus in Thika, Kenya, and not anywhere else?

ANGELIQUE: MKU offered me a full scholarship to pursue a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree. Imbuto Foundation informed me of the scholarship possibility. I applied and got it. I don't remember the exact date, but it was sometime in August 2015. My heart was full of joy when I received the scholarship. I am very grateful to Mount Kenya University for offering me the opportunity to achieve my dreams. If all goes well, I will graduate in 2023.



Tell us about your most notable school background.

I studied at Ecole Des Science de Musanze (for Advanced Level), graduating in 2014. I scored all 'A's and was among the top students in the country. My focus subjects were Physics, Chemistry and Biology. I received two Imbuto Foundation awards for 'Best Performing Girl', in both primary and secondary school national examinations.

How has your MKU journey been like?

My journey has been pretty smooth since I joined MKU, all thanks to my lecturers, who have done everything in their power to train me. I also appreciate

LEFT: Angelique Redempta Icyishaka at MKU Medical School training lab in Thika, Kenya.

MKU Medical School "the best in Kenya"

MKU Medical School based at Thika Main Campus in Kenya is the best in Kenya. This is according to a survey conducted by the National Medical and Dental Councils of East African Community partner states in March, 2020.

The ranking followed an intense inspection exercise. MKU Medical School scored 82 out of 100 points. The inspection focused on the major areas of governance and management, academic programmes, human resource, student affairs, infrastructure, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, research and innovation.

Thika Main Campus is a centre of excellence in medical and health science training. Numerous students from Rwanda study the various programmes offered at the university's College of Health Sciences: Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory, Nursing, Medicine.

Noella pledges to pay school fees for others in future

ON SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2020, Noella Dushakimana stirred a sizeable crowd gathered around the MKUR swimming pool.

A Bachelor of Business Information Technology (BBIT) student at MKUR, she promised to pay school fees for other students in the future. No one prompted or coerced her to say that. She did so voluntarily.

Her declaration was the culmination of a series of events that began in September 2018. Before then, earning a university degree and a promising career were a pipe dream.

It all changed when she received a scholarship from Imbuto Foundation, courtesy of MKUR. The scholarship guaranteed that she would study smoothly because her fees will have been paid. “Growing up in a less privileged community not only posed financial



Noella Dushakimana speaking at a past MKUR-Imbuto Foundation event.

and educational challenges to me, but also helped me to become aware of the value of university education,” she said, explaining that she was a recipient of an MKUR scholarship through Imbuto Foundation.

In the presence of the assembled crowd, Noella informed MKUR chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu: “Your generosity inspires me in greater ways to help others in my future, so I would be able to equally give back to the

community. I hope that one day I will be able to support other students to achieve their academic goals just as you have done for me.”

Noella completed her high school studies in 2017 from GSNDL, scoring 73 out of 73 points.

This earned her a place in the University of Rwanda’s College of Science and Technology. She was to study computer engineering.

However, Noella was of a different mind. Her interest was in BBIT.

Furthermore, as she explains, she could not take her place at the University of Rwanda because she was already busy during the day taking a video production course.

“For my degree, I wanted to do an evening course and this was not possible at the university the government had placed me in,” says Noella. So, she applied for the MKU scholarship. She was successful.



Elyse Kaliza: “The scholarship award was like a dream.”

THE TRICKS OF nature have been at play in Elyse Kaliza’s life. She readily acknowledges this and vows to make good use of the bounty that nature has thrown at her feet.

Elyse was born at the turn of the current dec-

Meet Elyse, recipient of ‘Edified Generation’ scholarship

ade – 1999, to be precise. When she was a toddler, causing the kind of mayhem only toddlers are known to unleash, the world around her was busy crafting something special for her. She would not know that nature was building the road she would walk towards her future.

PACFA Re-named

Elyse was three in 2001 when another kind of child was born in Rwanda – a child that would cross paths with her 15 years later. That unique child was ‘born’ by Rwanda’s First Lady, Mrs Jeanette Kagame. It was named PACFA (Protection and Care of Families against HIV/AIDS), an initiative for HIV prevention.

By 2007, PACFA had expanded its scope. The

organisation changed its name to Imbuto Foundation.

A year later – in 2008 – another child was born in another part of Africa. The child, born in Thika, Kenya, thousands of kilometres from Kigali, would also cross paths with Elyse. That was Mount Kenya University (MKU).

When MKU was born, Imbuto Foundation was seven years old and Elyse, 9.

Neither First Lady Mrs Kagame nor MKU Founder and Chairman, Prof Simon Gicharu had an idea that the two institutions would come together and help shape Elyse’s future. But nature, in all its mystery, had planned precisely that.

The MKU-Imbuto Foundation pact is what Elyse, a beneficiary, refers to as “the good net-

work". This is a partnership wrought by the forces of nature around her.

In September 2018, MKU entered Elyse's life through Imbuto Foundation.

Elyse says the day she received the scholarship from the foundation, she was ecstatic. "I felt like I was in a dream and thought I would wake up and find I had been dreaming. But it was not a dream. I had received a scholarship to study at MKU Rwanda, a campus near my home! So, I felt happy, lucky and was thankful to God."

Elyse goes on: "I still remember that exact day. I was with mum and my young brother at home. They became excited about the news and started praising the Lord for what He had done."

Elyse is a beneficiary of Imbuto Foundation's Edified Generation scholarship programme

that was initiated in 2003 to financially support secondary school students from economically vulnerable backgrounds, in their pursuit of education.

The Foundation says on its website: "Beneficiaries of this programme receive assistance of up to \$300 per year to help pay for their living costs, health insurance and school supplies."

Elyse gladly appreciates that support.

"As an Imbuto-MKU scholar, I will contribute to the community by encouraging young girls to build self-confidence and work hard by using the little resources and opportunity they have the best way they can," she says.

Reflecting on her situation, Elyse urges young girls not to give up life and promises to be society's voice when she completes her Bachelor's studies at MKU Rwanda.



The then MKUR Principal Prof Musa Nyakora hands over a cheque of 2,000,000 RFW to Komuzusenge Daniel, President, FAGER. MKUR donated the money to assist genocide survivors in the Southern Province to construct houses.



MKU staff and students participate in the 'Kwibuka 20' event, a special walk held to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Genocide Against Tutsi.

How talented Louise is painting her future

PEERING INTO the future is impossible for any ordinary mortal, Louise Kanyange knows.

But, in her gifted hands, Louise holds some delicate talent strands she is diligently and patiently weaving into the future she dreams of.

In her own words: "I am an artist. I do art that focuses on the beauty of the world – painting, fashion designing and illustration."

Louise confidently wields brush and palette to paint images she believes will appeal to art aficionados or even the untrained eye. Painting is one of her talent strands.

She has had a challenge, though: How to make her art unique and not a run-of-the-mill stuff.

It bothered her that, like other artists in Rwanda, she would dash to the internet to scour for

impressive images to paint. This, she acknowledges, is not that original.

"I focus on realism, which involves producing with paint, something as it is in real life," Louise explains. She adds that her technique requires that she uses a photo to reproduce the object in a painting.

What has been her problem? "I used to download images from the internet in order to paint them," says Louise.

Why did that bother her? "I would suspect that the image may have been downloaded by others from one source and you find we painted the same in different artworks," says the budding artist. "Finding similar artworks of the same image would hurt my pride as an artist."

Louise decided to take her own photos instead of downloading from the internet.

"Nowadays, I make original paintings based on pictures I have taken," says the proud artist, adding that she also decides on her objects' poses.

What is it that changed for Louise, that made her adopt an avant-garde approach to this form of art?

Louise is a second year Bachelor of Arts in Mass Media student at MKU Rwanda. She credits her photography classes with the change in her painting approach.

"I studied how to take photos and now I am a better, skilled photographer," she explains, adding that, "this helps me to be a good artist and a painter with uniqueness."

Photography skills are not the only thing Louise has gained while studying at MKU Rwanda. She says her public speaking skills have improved.

Louise is a leader at Rwanda's Art Federation. She explains the importance of acquiring public speaking skills: "As an artist, I attend various exhibitions and workshops and it requires great communication skills to communicate with different people."

This journalist student declares that she speaks with confidence and will never again be afraid of standing in front of people to explain her artworks. "I am now a good speaker," she declares.

Louise says after completing her studies, she "will create an art show to promote artists in Rwanda". The reason? "I am one of them," she says.

Louise is studying for a degree in journalism courtesy of a scholarship she received from Imbuto Foundation after emerging "the best candidate from all the Rwanda TVET schools in 2017."



A life-saving relationship deepens

ALEXIA IS A senior officer at the Rwanda Biomedical Centre – National Centre for Blood Transfusion (RBC-NCBT).

Since 2016, the centre has been cooperating with MKUR on blood donation.

"Once a year, we mobilise students and staff of MKUR to donate blood," says Alexia.

She reveals that blood donors are few countrywide.

From MKUR, RBC-NCBT gets about 40 pints of blood, which the national blood bank sorely needs.

"We are happy with the annual blood donation drive at the campus and would like this to continue into the future," Alexia declares. She particularly appreciates the effort by the MKUR Dean of Students to mobilise blood donors at the campus.



One-time MKUR faculty member Dr Mercyline Kamande donates blood

RBC-NCBT and MKUR organise the blood drives when students are available, since they form the largest population on the campus. Usually, this is when they are not doing exams – at the beginning of the semester.

The MKUR campus is one of the more than 500 sites from which the centre collects blood in Rwanda.

Alexia reveals that every day, the centre collects 250 blood units.

RBC-NCBT has five centres. They are in Kigali, Bwamagana, Butare, Ruhengeri and Karongi.

"Our wish is that MKUR becomes one of the regular blood collection sites," says Alexia.

On February 4, 2020, RBC-NCBT collected 39 blood units from MKUR.



MKUR's Prof Edwin Odhuno assists masons during the construction of a class in Gahanga secondary School. MKUR built the classroom which accommodates 46 learners.

MKUR grows with the community

ONE THING HAS remained constant since MKU Rwanda's birth: growth. Importantly, the campus has not been growing in isolation but with the communities around it.

After being warmly welcomed by the Govern-

ment and the people of Rwanda, MKU vowed to support the local communities. Students such as Patrice Baraka and Gerard Gatete treasure the support that MKU has been extending to the people of Rwanda for many years. Patrice, who was at the campus as a

student and as an employee after graduation, witnessed first-hand MKU participating in several initiatives to improve the lives of communities in Rwanda. Indeed, he took part in some of those initiatives.

In addition to participating in the Umuganda programme – the monthly cleaning of neighbourhoods – the campus is also involved in Girinka, the Rwandan practice of donating cows to the less fortunate members of society.

On June 16, 2016, MKUR donated three cows to the less privileged in line with the government's programme of one-cow-per family

(Girinka), initiated by His Excellency President Paul Kagame to help alleviate poverty among the less fortunate in rural areas.

The donations took place at MKUR grounds in Kagarama. It was presided over by the Mayor of Kicukiro District, Dr Nyirahabimana Jeanne, as the chief guest. Other local leaders attended too.

Speaking during the ceremony, MKUR Vice-Chancellor designate, Prof Edwin Odhuno said: "Since opening a campus in Rwanda in 2010, the university has been giving back to the public. Our corporate social responsibility is centred on education, employee and student volunteerism, and providing support to build healthy communities. A small act of compassion can change lives for development, and we shall continue pursuing our strategic core goal of corporate social respon-



On May 29, 2019, MKUR founder Prof. Simon Gicharu and Hon. Dr. Eugene Mutimura, the then Rwandan Minister of Education officially commissioned a classroom built by MKUR in Gahanga.

sibility with the district and the country at of Kicukiro district and the country through large."

Mayor Nyirahabimana applauded the university for contributing to the economic growth of Kicukiro district and the country through its world class teaching and global dynamism. MKU Rwanda continues to support families affected by the 1994 genocide. It does so in

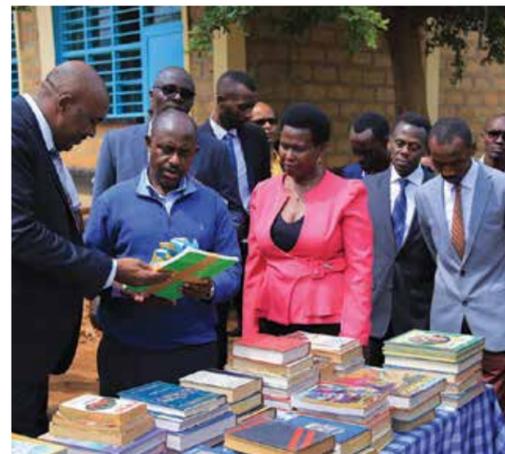
every annual commemoration of the tragedy. During a genocide anniversary, the university donated food and other items to 20 families in Nyakabanda sector and started building a new house for a widow identified by the sector local authorities as requiring such support. Further, MKUR contributes to Agaciro, a fund that supports government development initiatives.

As a further example of support to communities, on 30 July 2016, MKU Rwanda officials handed over a house they built for a blind widow who had survived the 1994 genocide. Dr John Nyiligira, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Administration, Planning and Institutional Advancement (DVC-APIA), led the team in presenting the gift to the widow, her daughter and a grandchild.

Dr Nyiligira handed over the keys of the fin-



MKUR founder Prof. Simon Gicharu during the commissioning of the classroom. BELOW: A donation of books made to the school by the university.



ished house to the executive of Nyakabanda Sector in the presence of the Rwanda patriotic Front (RPF) Nyakabanda representative, the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG) representative, and the advisor of Nyakabanda Sector. Also present were other people from two Midugudu (villages).

Dr Nyiligira said helping the needy was one of the university's pillars (community service), and that the university would continue contributing to the Government of Rwanda and RPF programmes of developing the country and the people.

The university has also awarded scholarships to genocide survivors and will continue donating cows to needy families as identified by the local authorities.

MKUR's active participation in 'Kwibuka' and national commemoration of Genocide Against Tutsi



Kenyan Member of Parliament Sabina Chege and MKU Chairman Prof. Simon Gicharu lay a wreath of flowers at Kigali Genocide Memorial, in remembrance of victims of the 1994 Genocide Against Tutsis. TOP, RIGHT: MKUR students clean up one of the genocide memorial sites in Rwanda. RIGHT: Lighting a fire during one of the 'Kwibuka' (remembrance) events held at MKUR in Kagarama. MKUR has a partnership with Aegis Trust, an organisation that works to prevent genocide and mass atrocities worldwide.



Kimisagara widow, 91, gets a new roof over her head

In 2015, the local administration at Akarere District approached MKUR with a humble request.

At KN185 street in Kimisagara village, the officials said, an old widow and her grandchildren were living in a dilapidated house.

The roof of Nyirashyirambere Margeuritte's dwelling was leaking while the muddy walls, slanting perilously, could cave in at any time.

Some of the doors were off their hinges. Could the university intervene as part of its Community Social Responsibility?

Yes, said the Marketing Manager Henry Musisi. Flanked by other officials from MKUR, he visited the site and assessed the status of the house.

The university decided to tear down the crumbling house and build a new one for Nyirashyirambere, 91.

"We contracted a professional to put up the three-bedroom house," says Mr. Musisi. "On the actual day of erecting the house, our students were on the site to offer a helping hand. It was completed in record time." The house is relatively modern, with electricity and running water.

It also has a separate bathroom and clean rooms for ablution.

Akimanimpaye Chantal, 30, is Nyirashyirambere's granddaughter. Besides her grandmother, she lives in the house with five other family members.

She was born and bred in the previous house, and she endured many nights of cold, especially when it rained.

"MKUR has really been a miracle to us. We didn't expect that a foreign university would be the one to give us a new home. Now we

feel MKUR is part of Rwanda," says Akimanimpaye who wants to become an accountant.



The permanent house built for 91-year-old Nyirashyirambere Margeuritte in Akarere District. **BELOW:** Nyirashyirambere's granddaughter Akimanimpaye Chantal and MKUR's Umuhire Cyuzuzo.



Nizeyemaliya Leonie and Munkatete Concilie with the cow gifts from MKUR. Munkatete has nicknamed her cow 'Mutesi'.

MKUR's support of Girinka project

IN RWANDA, cows are a national treasure. Milk is part of the staple diet. Realizing this social economic and cultural importance, the government rolled out a One-Cow-per-Family Program called "Girinka".

In July 2017, MKU Rwanda donated four heifers to the program, whose other partners include Partners include Heifer International

Program, and World Vision. Among the beneficiaries were Nizeyemaliya Leonie, a mother of four. Nizeyemaliya is a tailor in Sabaganga village, Gatenga sector. She milks about 15 litres per day. She feeds her children, and sells the surplus. Under the programme, a beneficiary is sup-

posed to 'pass-on' the calf to another needy family, once the cow gives birth. The receiving family rears the calf to maturity and after an offspring of its own, hands it over to another family. They cycle is replicated over many families. So far, over 200,000 families all over Rwanda have benefited.

How fruitful partnerships lubricate MKUR's processes

HE DID IT in Kenya, where he founded a computer outreach programme that grew into a middle-level college that then transformed into a university – Mount Kenya University (MKU).

Prof Simon N. Gicharu, an investor neither easily fazed by challenges nor scared to take calculated business risks, dared to approach a church to give him space to teach young people on matters computers. His request was motivated by the fact that church facilities are mostly idle on weekdays. Prof. Gicharu succeeded in his mission.

That is a lesson he retained. Now, what if the training institution lacks specialised facilities for, say, practical lessons? Strike partnerships! MKU has retained a tradition of forging partnerships and collaborations. The culture has never disappointed.

When the university advertised for students in Rwanda, it received overwhelming responses. Yes, Rwandan students were keen to enrol in MKU. The challenge was that the university had campuses only in Kenya.

What was the way forward? Gicharu instructed his man in Rwanda, Henry Musisi, to look for an institution MKU could buy and begin training the Rwandan students in their own country.

As Mr. Musisi recalls, “the institution I found to collaborate with was RTUC.” The collaboration marked the beginning of MKU’s fruitful partnerships with scores of other institutions in Rwanda.

One of MKU’s strengths has been its quality health sciences training. So, when Rwandan students showed interest in programmes such as nursing, medical laboratory science,

What's the role of partnerships?

“The role of partnerships to a university is equivalent to the role of engine oil to an engine. An engine needs oil to run. Partnerships lubricate the running of universities and add to the efficiency of our institutions by giving them long life and making them more efficient for the best output. Thus, the survival of each university today and in the future, is and will always be dependent on the quality of its partners.”



-PROF. JOHN STRUTHERS, MKU CHANCELLOR

pharmacy and public health, MKU sought to collaborate with hospitals in Rwanda. Such partners included the University Teaching Hospital, Kigali, Masaka District Hospital and Nemba District Hospital.



Signing of a MoU between MKUR and the City of Kigali in May, 2014. The agreement saw City of Kigali staff undertake short professional courses offered by MKUR's Institute of Capacity Building.

To maintain smooth operations in the centres at which it trained students, and to build its own campus, MKU needed a steady financial partner. It already had one in Equity Bank, a strong ally since the formative days of the university's precursor, Thika Institute of Technology.

To fly its staff between Rwanda and Kenya, MKU needed a reliable airline as a partner. For that purpose, the university struck a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with RwandAir.

MKU also signed a training contract with Rwanda National Police. This was for the university to train Rwanda police officers at doctoral level, in the area of law enforcement and justice administration.

Study in Rwanda is yet another partner MKU is cooperating with.

English Proficiency



Students from different secondary schools patronised MKUR for the Brain teasers Spelling Bee Competition. The competition is under an umbrella partnership for schools meant to enhance proficiency in use of the English language.

Partnership with New Life Ministries blossoms

WHEN JOHN AFRICA claims he is a true citizen of East Africa, you may wonder what he exactly means. But you need not wonder for long because immediately he touches on his education, you will fully understand.

“I studied for my Bachelor’s degree at Makerere University, Uganda,” explains John, the College Programme Sponsorship Manager at Africa New Life Ministries Rwanda.

After graduating, he returned to his homeland, Rwanda, in 2007. By then, he recalls, no university in Rwanda was teaching in English. In Makerere, that was the language of instruction.

When he decided to advance his education, he didn’t have to leave Rwanda. In 2011, he enrolled for his Master’s in Education Planning



New Life scholars currently studying at MKUR

and Management the Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR) campus. By then MKUR operated from different centres located in Kigali City.

These days, both New Life Ministries and MKUR are located in Kagarama, only a few metres apart. When he wants something from the campus, he strolls southwards and in less than five minutes, has arrived.

In 2013, John Africa completed his Master’s

studies at MKUR, an institution with its roots in Kenya, yet another member state of the East African Community (EAC). And so, John Africa has studied in Rwanda, Uganda and Rwanda again, but the last time, at an institution affiliated to a Kenyan university.

Where to next in East Africa will he go to study for his doctorate (if he has such plans)? Currently, though, he is busy helping the scholars New Life Ministries sponsors to join institu-

tions of higher learning. MKUR is one of these institutions.

“We sponsor close to 10,000 students in secondary schools and universities,” says John, adding that, as an alumnus of MKUR, he recommends the institution to the scholars.

Based on his experience at the university, he does not hesitate to encourage them to study there. So far, more than 200 New Life scholars have graduated from MKU in pharmacy, nursing, hospitality, business management and business information technology, among others.

“We sponsor students in almost all the courses offered by MKUR,” says John.

He adds that some of scholars sponsored by New Life Africa are studying pharmacy at the MKU main campus in Thika, Kenya.

This partnership started in 2016 and has con-

tinued to flourish.

“In 2019, we sponsored more than 160 students to study at MKU,” says John.

He adds that New Life Africa is delighted that MKU reciprocates, and offers the organisation two to three scholarships during the January, May and September intakes.

John at times lectures at MKUR in the school-based programme for teachers.

“MKU is an international university, has good lecturers and teaches in English,” notes John.

“When I went to Thika to graduate, I met the faculty there and saw the impressive infrastructure,” says John, explaining that this is why refers New Life scholars to the university.

MKU gives us books for children learning in primary schools. For example, in 2018, it gave us more than 3,000 books to donate to one of our schools in Kayonza.

Good Neighbourliness



Each year, about 60 percent of students sponsored by New Life Africa for post-secondary training join MKUR. A good number of them have graduated from the university over the years and joined the world of work.

Elijah Nyemina, the College Co-ordinator at New Life Africa (above), says the relationship with neighbouring MKUR has remained positive. “We have built a strong partnership that benefits both parties,” he declares, saying those who graduate from MKUR with Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees join New Life Africa or other institutions.

Joint efforts that fine-tune Health sciences' students

THIS IS A fact: Somewhere in a hospital or medical facility in Rwanda, you will likely find a Mount Kenya University alumnus.

At more than 10 hospitals, you are also likely to find some of the university's students undergoing attachment or internship – under the watchful eyes of their lecturers.

That should not surprise you. Between September 2010 and December 2019, the university had trained about 1,500 Rwandan health-care professionals. Many more are in the pipeline.

MKU Rwanda has trained nurses, pharmacists, public health professionals and medical laboratory technologists. The training is at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This training would have failed had MKU not signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs)



A lecturer guides health sciences students at one of the MKUR's well-equipped labs.

with various hospitals in Rwanda.

The list of these hospitals is impressive. It includes: University Teaching Hospital Kigali (CHUK), Byumba District Hospital, Muhima District Hospital, Ruhengeri Referral Hospital,

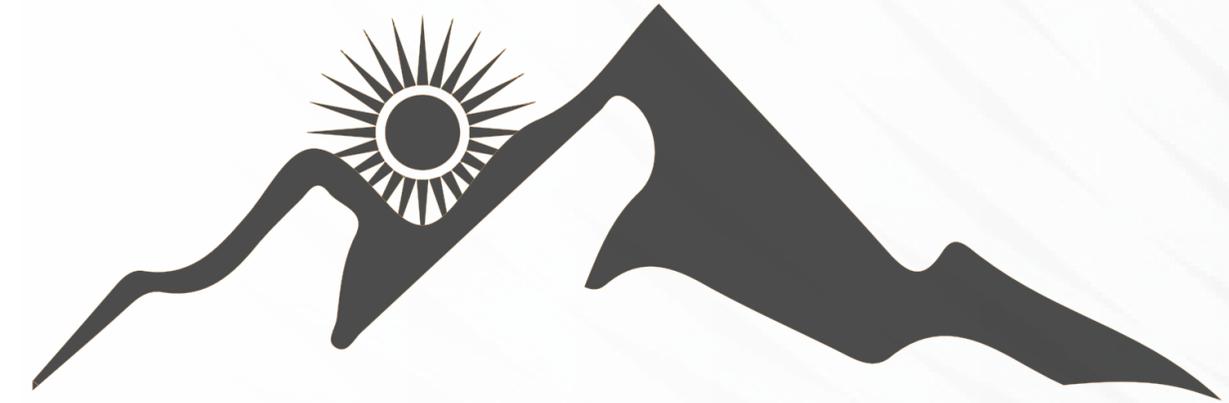
Nemba District Hospital, Masaka District Hospital, Kibagabaga District Hospital, Gisenyi District Hospital, Nyamata District Hospital, and University Teaching Hospital Butare. Others are Rwanda Military Hospital, Munini

District Hospital, Gihundwe District Hospital, Kabagayi District Hospital, Kiziguro District Hospital, and Ndera Psychiatric Hospital.

The MoUs last three years. Some were signed in 2015, others in 2018. The most recent ones were signed in 2020. Others are in the process of renewal.

MKU is a chartered university established and registered by the Commission for University Education in accordance with Section 12 of the Universities Act Cap 210B, Laws of Kenya. MKU Rwanda is a constituent institution of MKU. The university conducts training, research and community outreach activities through programmes offered in the Schools of Health Sciences, namely, Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Public Health and Nursing.





**ABAHOZE ARI
ABANYESHURI**

Alumni/Former Students

MKUR alumni association grows from strength to strength

The first batch of 92 students to enrol for MKU degree courses were alumni of Kigali Institute of Technology (KIST). They held Diplomas in IT. They undertook their Bachelors degree studies (BBIT) and entered the history books as the first class of MKUR graduates. When these students visited the university's main campus in Thika for the graduation, they were pleasantly surprised to learn that MKU offered not just BBIT but a host of other academic programmes.

One student said she would have preferred to study nursing to fulfil her lifelong dream of marching in the footsteps of Florence Nightingale. Others said they'd recommend their relatives to the highly marketable courses at MKU.

This was the passion that sowed the seeds of MKUR's permanent presence in Rwanda, and ultimately, a bulging roll of former students who are working in various places around the globe.

Besides Rwanda, their mother country, MKUR alumni are to be found in the United States, Britain, UAE, Canada, Kenya, Uganda, Spain, France and other countries.

The alumni include notable personalities in the public and private sector. They are government administrators, senior police officers, heads of Non-Governmental Organizations, successful businessmen and women, nurses, university lecturers, film stars, prominent journalists, ICT entrepreneurs and teachers.

DURING THE 2013 graduation party, MKU Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu launched the Rwanda Chapter of the MKU Alumni Association.

He urged MKU Rwanda to join the association, network and share ideas with colleagues. "With the full EAC integration, cast your net even wider," he told them.

MKU Rwanda established an Alumni Relations Office. This office keeps in constant touch with MKU Rwanda graduates to keep them abreast of all the exciting activities open to them as alumni, and the benefits that come with being a graduate of the university.

The coordinator who ran the office in the early years, Patrice Baraka, said the host of activities it organises goes a long way in opening new paths for alumni. Activities such as career networking, social events, educational pro-

grammes, cultural and sporting activities as well as volunteerism, enhance alumni profiles. The office also organises and facilitates exit trainings, workshops, exhibitions, conferences and inter-student academic competitions and forums.

"The Alumni Association provides a lifelong connection to our alumni through a variety of programmes and services," says Patrice Baraka. "You get more than the satisfaction of staying connected and making a difference. Membership gives you access to exclusive benefits, unique events, and valuable discounts."

He was the first Alumni Relations Officer. In the beginning, the task was hard because the office was new and "I was supposed to create activities and looking for contacts of people who graduated in MKU, getting such Records was very hard but in the end I made it. I had



to create the vision and mission of the office." The Alumni office connects graduated students and the university, for them to continue to feel that they are part of MKU. This was for the alumni to also give back to the University and at same time, benefit from it.

Alumni plaza at Mount Kenya University main campus in Thika, Kenya. The high-rise building was named in honour of the university's alumni. It houses all key administrative offices -including that of the Vice Chancellor.

Patrice says: "We held a party and even Chairman (Prof Gicharu) was around to support us. It was a very nice day when all Alumni met after a long time when they were at the campus. They met with the management sharing stories on how lessons learned are helping them in their career out there...and the exchange contacts do that who need supports in any institution or company will find and alumni and life will be easy through our connections." He adds: "From there I helped the University open new Masters classes through Alumni, such as Master's in IT, Master of Media Management. The campus had stopped offering the Master of International Relations programmes. It had also stopped offering a Master of Development Studies. Membership in the Mount Kenya University Alumni Association is a great way for alumni

to show their pride in MKU. Says Patrice: "First, you have a place to call home in Kigali. Your membership is also a vote for the value of MKU education, and enables the Alumni Association to do great things for members, students, and alma mater. Membership offers many other great benefits." Additionally, MKU Alumni Association members can re-connect with former friends, find old classmates and network with the rest of the MKU alumni community through access to relevant WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Twitter etc. The alumni association sponsors activities as varied as MKU's alumni. Cultural events and reunions are fruitful opportunities to connect with each other and to share experiences.

WHY SHOULD YOU BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE MKU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION?

-  Maintain social network with friends made during your study days.
-  Link up with alumni in similar businesses for sound business partnerships
-  Network for job placement services
-  Fundraise for the Association's development agenda
-  Use the Alumni platform to mentor ongoing students
-  Utilise opportunities for market-testing innovative ideas and gain peer support
-  Gain feedback from Alma Mater on various unexplored growth opportunities

“The knowledge gained from the MKU has greatly contributed to the development of Rwanda”

“MY NAME IS John Gacinya. I have served my country both as a police officer and a military officer. I was the head detective in the Rwanda National Police for a period of time. I later went back to the Rwandan army and rose through the ranks up to my retirement as a Brigadier General. I was a regional reserve force commander when I retired.

Doctorate from MKU

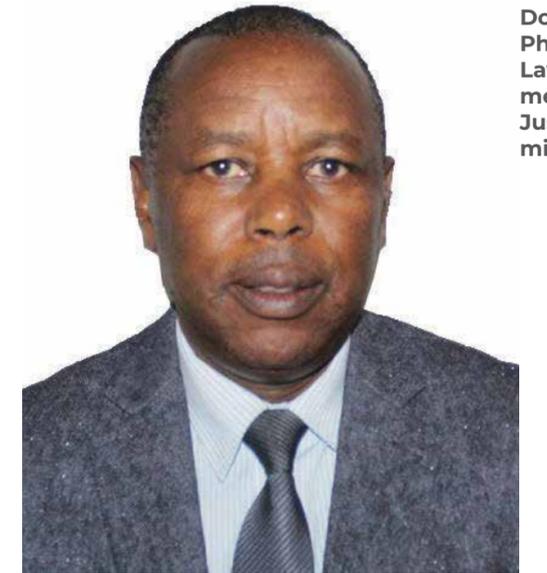
I am happy to have earned a Doctorate degree from Mount Kenya University. A Doctorate is about research and research is entirely getting close to problems. As a social scientist, a Doctorate degree will help me to understand crimes that pervade the Rwandan community. I am better informed to lecture Police and military officers issues related to crime

and security. Mount Kenya University runs a thesis track that is quite ideal and suitable for students who are working while studying. Secondly, Mount Kenya University is not expensive in terms of tuition when compared to other universities offering education at a Doctorate level.

The quality of education for MKU is very good. I for one had not understood research methodology until I joined and studied at MKU. The university has best lecturers delivering lectures in good and correct English.

Ability to conduct research

My expectation has been to obtain a doctorate degree in the field of law enforcement and my dream has been fulfilled. Am now able to conduct any research in social sciences because I have skills and tools to use.



Brigadier (Rtd.) John Gacinya, Doctor of Philosophy in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration

Tutorial assistants need to be many with MKU and these will allow doctors and professors improve quality of lectures. Professors and doctors will get time to prepare the right learning material. I had my formative education in Uganda. I

hold a Bachelor of Arts degree (Criminology and Penology) from the University of South Africa (UNISA).

I also have a Masters of Science degree in Criminology from the University of Cincinnati, OHIO (USA). Besides, I have a Masters degree in International Security studies from the University of Nairobi (IDIS).

More qualifications

I have a diploma in Public Administration from Vaal Technikon University (South Africa) in collaboration with Rwanda Institute of Management (RIAM) and I am a graduate of the Federal bureau of investigations (FBI), Quantico (USA).

I also hold a Diploma in Education from Mount Kenya University-Rwanda.

MKU has produced many graduates in many



I am happy to have earned a Doctorate degree from Mount Kenya University. A Doctorate is about research and research is entirely getting close to problems.

- Dr. John Gacinya, MKU PhD graduate

fields who have been absorbed in the mainstream of the government of Rwanda. The knowledge gained from the MKU has greatly contributed to the development of Rwanda. Mount Kenya University graduates are currently employed in different government de-

partments.

PhD graduates are researchers. They can easily realize issues and know problems as they pervade the community.

This is very important because if one can identify the problems then he/she can recommend for solutions to the government.

Research on crime

As for crime they are so many discoveries one has to undertake. Drugs and human trafficking scourges are among the crimes one has to probe as human rights issues of our times.

My future plans are to form up a criminology society of Rwanda.

I have to do research crimes on emerging crimes and better understand why they keep up emerging and if possible recommend what has to be done.

Nursing degree holder now leads team at government hospital

CHANTAL MUKARUZIGA is the Director of Nursing and Mid-wifery at Kibagabaga Hospital, Kimironko.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from MKUR in 2018. The job at the government hospital was her first and, she says, the MKUR degree had adequately equipped her with the relevant professional skills.

As the Director, she leads a team of nurses and midwives. She says the interactions with faculty and fellow students at MKUR also taught her public relations and interpersonal skills, essential to her day-to-day work.

Incidentally, Chantal always knew the profession she wanted to pursue. At Senior Six, she had studied Nursing at School of Nursing-Rwamagana.

“My passion has been to be a nurse, ever since I was small,” she says. “I wanted to help other



Chantal Mukaruziga at her office

people.”

She enrolled for the nursing degree at MKUR after a friend introduced her to the university.

“I have no regrets at all. In fact, I encourage my friends and relatives to pursue this course at MKUR. It is very marketable and rewarding.

In the course of her duties, she encounters



The main entrance to Kibagabaga Hospital in Kimironko.

MKUR students on industrial attachment at the government facility based in Gasabo District.

“I am very strict on MKUR students on internship. This is because I want them to excel and be the best,” she says.

Chantal is now planning on pursuing her Masters in Nursing at MKUR, which she says is flexible and will allow her to work and study at the same time.

With *Igicyeli*, Hope Yvonne Mbabazi is uplifting the lives

MBABAZI HOPE Yvonne is the co-founder of the Mother & Child Development Centre (MCDC), a non-governmental organisation that uplifts rural women economically.

She undertook her Masters degree in Public Health at MKUR, graduating in 2014. Before then, she had earned a Bachelors degree in Social Studies at NUR-Butare.

“The location of MKUR was convenient,” says the mother of four. “I didn’t have to travel for a long distance as was the case when I undertook my undergraduate.”

MCDC brings together rural women in groups and educates them on entrepreneurship and money management.

The women can borrow money to fund their enterprises, and other economic activities notably in small-scale agriculture. The initial aim



Mbabazi Hope Yvonne with happy children and right, one of the homesteads that have benefited from MCDC’s programmes in rural Rwanda. Her NGO has disbursed more than RWF50 million.

was to also impart skills in tailoring, beauty (manicure and pedicure), catering and nutrition.

Through a project known as “Igicyeli”, they guarantee one another the loans within their groups. A group has 35 members.



MCDC started by training women how to save RFW100. Gradually, the women were had the skills to handle larger amounts of money.

In the current 2022-’23 year, the NGO has disbursed more than RWF30 million into Igicyeli. This is a massive increase from the RWF18

of women in rural Rwanda

million last year, RWF11 million in 2020- ’21 and RWF3 million in 2018- ’19.

The women repay the loans at 2% interest. But the money does not go to MCDC. It goes back into the women groups as Ingoboka (social fund) that caters for emergency needs of the members.

And when there is no emergency, the members share out the money. Ingoboka also steps in to aid those who are unable to repay their loans for one reason or the other.

One such project area in Musanze, Northern Province, has 771 women organised in small groups.

Mbabazi, who is also an entrepreneur and farmer, says she applies the Public Health skills received from MKUR in ensuring the women groups’ families have proper nutrition.

“You see, in some villages, some of the fam-



ilies used to survive on a meal a day. But after we trained them on, for example, rearing cows and subsistence agriculture, they have enough food to eat at least three times a day.”

MCDC is also a contributor to the Girinka programme, in which economically disadvantaged families in the rural areas receive a cow. Girinka has had positive impact in improving nutrition and livelihoods.

In 2017, Mbabazi received community service award from MKUR for her efforts. “MKUR has really transformed my life. The education is internationally recognised and it’s surprisingly affordable. I would recommend it to anyone looking for quality education,” she says.



Mbabazi: “The Public Health training from MKUR is helping boost nutrition for families in rural areas.”

Nyampinga Ushoboye: Giving teen mothers a second chance

UWIZEYE GRACE Neelyma is the founder of Nyampinga Ushoboye a non-governmental organization based in Gahanga sector, Kicukiro district. Nyampinga Ushoboye, which means “Miss Capable”, has various programmes targeted at the girl child. Among them are fighting against teen pregnancies, capacity building/ economic empowerment for teenage mothers and vulnerable women, and leadership training.

We visited the NGO on a bright sunny morning and found the beneficiaries busy at the classroom learning about dressmaking. They are also taught how to make shoes.

Grace studied Journalism and Mass Communication at MKUR. She started the organization in December 2018, soon after graduating from Cornership Leadership Academy.



Uwizeye Grace Neelyma with some of the beneficiaries at a dress making class. The NGO is based in Gahanga sector but caters to beneficiaries from around the country.

“The American government through a programme called ‘Global Grassroots’ equipped me with skills on how to mobilize funds, reach out to stakeholders and collaborate with the local government,” Grace recalls. On its part, MKUR was a good platform to learn how to talk to people, Grace says.

By combining these skills, she approached

various benefactors who could back her idea. A local bank donated the initial 30 machines required for training. The government gave her the space and building where she conducts the training with help of a certified tutor. “MKUR also supported our project, especially during the pandemic,” says Grace.

Born of a teenage mother, and raised by a sin-



Uwizeye Grace Neelyma poses outside the building in which she operates Nyampinga Ushoboye. RIGHT: Uwinagiye Reberatha, one of the beneficiaries at a training session.

gle mother (who is also her grandmother), she sees her life in those of the girls she helps. Since Rwanda does not allow importation of used clothes (‘Mitumba’), dress making and tailoring skills are highly sought after. The NGO has benefitted more than 200 young mothers. It also has an Early Childhood Development section where the children of the



teen mothers are accommodated. Uwinagiye Reberatha, 20, one of the beneficiaries says plans to start her business soon after finishing the six-month dressmaking and leadership courses. “May God bless Uwizeye for giving me this chance,” she says. Grace is also a script writer and movie director. She is the hand behind Dunami, a short Chris-

tian movie on the power that affects change. “MKUR is appealing due to its international education. The quality of education is also high,” she says. In addition to these reasons, the university is near her NGO and the choice to study here was easy for her due to the convenience.

MBA graduate's take on MKU's bold journey into Rwanda

FORMER MP and Minister Jean Marie Gatabazi adopts a broad but interesting view of Mount Kenya University's remarkable journey into Rwanda.

He doesn't view the university's cross-border Rwanda campus as concerning only the approximately 10,000 students who have passed through it. Instead, he maintains that the East African region, as well as diverse institutions of higher learning, can draw many valuable lessons from MKU's bold entry into Rwanda. Gatabazi describes MKU's epic journey outside the confines of Kenya's borders as a positive example of the varied strands of East Africa's integration dream.

"The MKU strategy highlights what should be done to realise a stronger East Africa through investments," he says, adding that the university's education, enriched by its African con-

text, has been a major attraction for students, himself included.

Gatabazi joined MKU Rwanda in May 2012 and graduated with an MBA in Strategic Management in 2014. He says the knowledge and skills he gained while studying for his MBA sharpened his management and governance acumen, and helped him succeed in high profile public jobs.

He served as Member of Parliament for 12 years and afterwards as Governor of the Northern Province of Rwanda from August 2017 to March 2021. He was appointed Minister in 2021 and served until 2022.

Gatabazi says institutions should invest across borders, especially given that "East Africa offers a favourable business environment because of a shared need by our people across our countries, and most importantly, the need



Jean Marie Gatabazi: "EAC can be strengthened through investments."

to bridge the gap in knowledge and skills development."

What does he say has been MKU's impact on Rwanda's higher education sector and job market? "It is good to note that MKU has raised the standard of education infrastructure through building high quality campuses to accommodate and educate our people to international standards."



Enterprising Emmalito excels

They could be chatting about his exploits as a master of ceremony. They could probably be talking about the talent shows he has been organizing in Rwanda.

There is yet the chance that these could be his former classmates at MKUR reminiscing about their time together.

This young man has worn so many hats that most of Rwanda knows him as a jack of many trades – but a master of some. He is a radio anchor, TV presenter, talent scout, event organizer, master of ceremony, Murenti "Emmalito" Emmanuel is a bubbly personality, he has squeezed maximum value from his association with MKUR. In many ways, this daring young man embodies

He enrolled with MKUR in September 2011 for a Bachelors degree programme and immediately started taking interest in the social affairs

at the campus. The following year, he contested the 'Mr MKUR' title and finished the first runner-up.

He was just warming up for more activities. "I realised that after participating in the contest, I had become well known on campus," recalls Emmalito. So, what did he do?

"I decided to run for the post of Social Affairs Minister in the students' leadership elections. I won," he says.

From that time, he started organizing events. One day in 2013, Henry Musisi, the MKUR Marketing Director, asked him if he could prepare a troupe to perform during the MKU graduation in Thika, Kenya. He obliged.

"I said, as students, we can do it," he says. That is how Emmalito and his troupe found themselves later performing at former Kenya President Daniel arap Moi's 88th birthday par-

ty in Kabarak, Nakuru (See Page 49)

“That is a moment I will always treasure,” asserts Emmalito who says the trip to Kenya was an exciting experience for his group.

The cultural dance troupe became big and performed at four more MKU graduation ceremonies.

Quite active in campus, Emmalito took to emceeing at Mr and Miss MKUR competitions and began practicing a skill that he would later use after graduating.

Emmalito remembers that during one of the graduations where his troupe performed, MKU Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu intimated that he thought of starting a radio station.

And when the dream became a reality, Emmalito immediately came on board as a presenter. Emmalito graduated in 2015 and joined TVI as a presenter.



Emmalito (right) at the Royal FM studios with a colleague.

MKU called him back in February 2016 to present “The Sun Up” morning show on Royal TV with Yvonne. He did so until MKU closed the TV station in September 2017. He then wrote a proposal to the Ministry of Youth on how to nurture talents in Rwanda. As a volunteer, he organized “Youth Connect Festival.” Appreciative of his talent, the Ministry employed him in July 2017. He worked there until

April 2018. Earlier, in 2016, Emmalito had returned to MKU to study for his Masters degree programme. The following year, he contested for the MKU Students Association Vice-Presidency and won. He returned to event organization and co-ordinated blood donation and cultural events at the campus.

‘MKU is connecting young East Africans in a big way’

QUESTION: When did you join the MKU campus in Rwanda and who influenced you to?

GLORIA IRAKOZE: I joined MKU in 2011. Truthfully, no one influenced me. I wanted to go international and MKU was my best chance to get an international bachelor’s degree at that time, at a lower price.

Which course did you pursue and why?

I pursued a Bachelor’s degree in social work and administration. I love making an impact on people’s life, so I wanted to do humanitarian work. That course was my starting point.

What was your experience like at the campus?

I enjoyed it. I met different people. I learnt to connect with people of different backgrounds and cultures. We are now employed in different sectors and many times we found our-



Gloria Irakoze at work with UNHCR in Rwanda

selves working together on different projects. **I understand you once travelled to the home of Kenya’s former president, Daniel Moi, to dance. Tell us about the trip, the experience, and the dates?**

Hahahaha. I was a traditional dancer at that time and I used to train others. So when MKU

prepared a birthday dance for president Moi in 2012, I was among the dancers included in the trip. I don’t remember the exact dates, but we reached there two days before the D-day. It was fun. We travelled as classmates and schoolmates, but most of us were already used to dancing in different big events. We



Gloria (left) and fellow MKUR students when they visited former Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi (now late) at his home in Kabarak, Nakuru County, in 2014.

performed as professionals.

You mentioned that you were training others to dance. When and where did you learn dancing?

Oooh my God; I started dancing at the age

of three years! So, I have been dancing since my childhood, just for fun and to appreciate our cultural dance. I was taught by my grandmothers.

When did you graduate from MKUR, and

where did you get employed?

I graduated on 11 December, 2014. I have been employed in different international NGOs. Currently, I am working with UNHCR Rwanda.

What did you like the most about MKU?

MKU is connecting young East Africans in a big way. Today, if I need something from Uganda, Burundi, South Sudan, Tanzania and from almost all parts of Kenya, I have someone to talk to for assistance.

What is your 10th anniversary message for MKUR?

Happy 10th anniversary to MKU Rwanda Campus. Continue to scale the heights of education.

“I will always recommend MKU Rwanda”- Gatete

BUBBLING WITH youthful enthusiasm, Gerard Gatete made a solemn promise to his father. Nearly a decade since his impetuous vow, he relives the memories of his mission and smiles with satisfaction.

“I promised my father I would be the most educated person in the family,” he reminisces.

He delivered.

Gerard became the first member of his family to earn a Master’s degree. Later, another member joined him.

What, however, brings the smile of satisfaction to his face is not just that scholarly achievement, but also the memories of his academic journey.

Gerard studied for his BBICT degree at MKU Rwanda from 2011 to 2015. He returned to the campus, which he refers to as “familiar



Gerard Gatete during his graduation

grounds” in 2016 for his Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy and completed the studies in 2018.

During the seven years it took him to complete his first and second degrees, he learnt a lot about his university.

Gerard was the first ‘Mr MKU Kigali’, a title he won the year he joined the campus. This remains one of his enduring memories from

MKU Rwanda.

He later served as Sports minister in the MKU Students Association, and was also among the students who started a blood donation drive at the campus, and a cultural troupe that performed widely.

On the academic front, Gerard remains fascinated by what the campus gave him. He does not shy from praising a university he considers “the fastest-growing in Rwanda.”

When he enrolled, MKU was the only ISO certified university in the country. He remembers that the course he took was available only at MKU Rwanda.

He was personally delighted that the university granted him a 10 percent discount on tuition fees when he registered for the Masters programme since he had undertaken his undergraduate there.

Multi-skilled Patrice Baraka keeps winning

“THIS IS MY home,” Patrice Baraka declares. Anyone who hears him utter these words may think he is merely being cocky.

Patrice has a valid claim though. He spent six eventful years at the campus, in many ways building part of its lore.

Tall, Patrice can easily be noticed from far. His physique is among the attributes that won him the ‘Mr MKU Kigali’ 2012-2013 title. Then again, he always put it to good use when competing against other university volleyball players in East Africa. The man can also dance and had opportunities to showcase his skills during a tour of Kenya.

His achievements in academic circles as well as in Rwanda’s nascent film industry speak of fellow who is also very intelligent.

Patrice’s love for books was evident right from



Patrice Baraka when he was crowned Mr. MKUR 2013. Next to him is Jane Kayitesi, the year’s Miss MKUR.

the time he joined the campus. “I joined in May 2012,” he says. “In September of the same year, the campus allowed me to work as a library assistant while studying.”

Patrice would later serve as an anchor at Royal FM, a radio station owned by MKU.

“The management trusted me to do these

jobs and that made me happy,” says the alumnus now making waves in the film industry.

He undertook a Bachelor’s degree in Information Science and then a Master’s in Media Management.

Winning the ‘Mr MKU Kigali’ title confirmed his popularity on campus and he didn’t want to disappoint those who voted for him.

So, he behaved responsibly and this, he says, “contributed to making me the person I am today.”

After winning the title, he was emboldened to seek the Sports minister’s post during the MKU Students Association (MKUSA) elections and won.

He used his position to organise the 2013 volleyball competition for East African universities. Patrice retains his many happy moments in his memory.



HENRY MURINZI obtained an Advanced Diploma in Nursing and landed a job in a hospital in Kigali.

He should have been happy, even contented because he was engaged and earning a living. But Murinzi was restless. He dreamt of being much more than that. He wanted to rise higher in the nursing profession.

His job, though, which ran from Monday to Friday, wouldn’t let him attend school during weekdays. How would he advance in his career

Were it not for MKUR’s flexibility...

if he couldn’t obtain at least a first degree? Henry agonised over his situation. Should he quit his job to pursue university studies or remain stuck in his job with little prospects of advancement? The dilemma troubled him. When he later found a solution, he was rather amused.

Henry’s brother was a Master’s student at MKU Rwanda. One day, Henry presented his dilemma to him. Suddenly, a door opened. Henry could continue working while studying for a Bachelor’s degree! MKU had just what he needed.

He says: “The university’s weekend programme suited me. My brother gave me the information about the programme.”

And so, Henry’s unlikely journey began – and continues. Knowing that he could study during weekends spurred him to aim higher ac-

ademically. “I joined MKU in September 2013 while working in a public hospital, and graduated in December 2015,” he recounts.

He duly completed his Bachelor’s studies and graduated. Earning the degree enabled him to compete for better jobs. He received a better offer and moved to BabyI Rwanda, a global health organisation based in the United Kingdom and which offers telemedicine services. The ambitious nurse was determined to advance his education further. He returned to MKUR in September 2019.

“I come to class during the weekends,” says Henry. “This enables me to be self-sponsored. I earn and pay my fees.”

He is pursuing a Master’s in Public Health degree and plans to specialise in epidemiology.

Obiero, a proud product of MKU Rwanda

CLEOPHAS OBIERO is the Country Manager for Smart Applications International (Rwanda) Ltd. He recounts his days at MKUR:

“In 2013, my company in Kenya transferred me to work in Rwanda. Five months after settling in the country, I decided to do some online research about the universities in Rwanda. I was excited to learn that MKU had a campus here, using English as the language of instruction. It was therefore a good fit for me. I enrolled in May 2013 to pursue a Bachelor of Business Information Communication Technology.

My experience there was amazing. I learnt so many new things and time went by so fast. For starters, I found MKUR to be a very welcoming place. I felt right at home from the very first day.

I later made many new friends from different backgrounds and countries. That offered me good insights into other cultures.

Classes were great. I enjoyed all of them. The depth and detail of what we are learning was far beyond any school experience I had before.

My business classes were also interesting because they talked to me directly as a young entrepreneur in an emerging market. In high school, we only studied easy aspects of business, but now we are relating them to the real business ideas and motions. It has made me realise how every piece of information we learnt relates to the real business world. That is probably the best part of university – introducing new concepts that change our view of the world.

As for extracurricular activities, I was part of the football team. We played in quite a number of tournaments and we won some.

The education I received from MKUR not only encouraged me to be academically strong, but also caused me to be a better person in life. My approach to life improved and the inner confidence I gained while at MKU have aided me to be the successful Country Manager I am today for my company, which delivers a wide range of world class ICT solutions in Africa.



Cleophas Obiero during his graduation

The education I received from MKUR not only encouraged me to be academically strong, but also caused me to be a better person in life.

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Ndoli: I owe my career growth to MKUR

DIDAS NDOLI, an executive at MTN Rwanda, belongs to that special group of students who helped set off Mount Kenya University (MKU) on its Rwanda odyssey. He was among the students who enrolled at the then Rwanda Tourism University College (RTUC) in 2009 to undertake programmes offered by MKU through a partnership with the college.

This cohort had earned their diplomas in ICT from the then Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST), a campus of the University of Rwanda. They then proceeded to MKU Rwanda through an accreditation process that qualified them into running a one-year programme to earn a degree from the university.

Ndoli explains that he and fellow KIST graduates opted for MKUR because it offered the



Didas Ndoli, an executive leader in Rwanda's telecommunication industry

telecommunications courses they wanted and was ready to establish itself in Kigali to enable them continue their studies right in the country. “This was ideal because most of us were already working while studying part-time,” he says.

This inaugural ICT cohort enrolled in the Bachelor of Business Information Technology (BBIT) course. They felt it fitted into their prior

ICT programme and offered them a pathway to advance in their chosen field.

Ndoli says that having joined the university when it started degree level programmes in Rwanda, he was a first-hand witness to a higher education history unfolding before his eyes. He particularly appreciates the level of organisation the university demonstrated and the commitment from the main campus in Nairobi.

Where did he go after graduation? “I continued with my work journey, to which MKUR contributed in enabling me to grow. Later on, in 2012, I again enrolled at MKUR for a Master’s degree in Strategic Management. I successfully completed the course and graduated. This enabled me to continue growing (in my job) as the industry evolved.

E-commerce platform conceived at MKUR thrives

FIVE MONTHS before graduating in August 2019, Pascal Twezerimana cast his eyes into the future and registered an e-commerce firm. He named it Iduka Online. Three months after graduating, the company commenced operations. To date,



Pascal Twezerimana

Twezerimana still runs the company. However, he is not doing it alone, but in partnership with Uwase Nadette. Both were young when they established the firm: he, 23, and she, 22.

Other than their mutual interest in entrepreneurship, the two have much more in common. Twezerimana holds a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology degree from MKUR. Uwase is a BBICT student at the same university. They are the ones who developed the app for Iduka.

At Iduka, sellers place various products (mostly electronic goods, furniture and fashion items) on the firm's portal for buyers to view and order.

At the beginning, getting sellers to list on the portal was tough because the concept of e-commerce was not well understood by



Uwase Nadette

many. Their patience has since paid off and now they have numerous products and customers.

The duo has also employed several people, thus creating jobs and helping grow the Rwandan economy.

They have also developed apps for other firms that offer a wide variety of services and products, including entertainment and coffee.

Excellence through the eyes of Maclean



Maclean Raissa Tuyisenge Kayitare

IT WAS on November 23, 2016 and MKUR Vice-Chancellor designate Prof Edwin Odhuno was attending an event of the Inter-University Council for East Africa in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Then, at the Academia-Public-Private Partnership Forum and Exhibitions, something strik-

ing happened. Who did the don see on stage during a plenary discussion? Seated among the panelists was a former student, who had just graduated from MKUR the same year. Prof Odhuno was excited and proud to watch his former student, Maclean Raissa Tuyisenge Kayitare, discuss issues with much more experienced ICT professionals. The panel was discussing the topic, "Innovations in ICT as Accelerator of New Economies in East Africa".

Maclean, an ICT graduate, was attending the event in her capacity as Head of Membership and Office Manager at Rwanda ICT Chamber. She was later given an opportunity to serve as Head of Operations. Thereafter, her professional trajectory hit a higher note.

"In 2018, I joined Volkswagen Mobility Solution as advisor to the CEO, before leaving for my Master's programme in Intellectual Property

Law and New Technologies." She talks about her academic journey and how that led to her fulfilling employment: "I cannot remember from who or how exactly I heard about MKU. What I recall clearly is that at the time, MKU was a new university in town and those who had started to attend spoke highly about 'the university from Kenya'. I decided to go and learn more about the university personally. After a few discussions and consultations with personnel at the applied sciences department, I decided to enrol. That was around September 2013."

Maclean studied information science, specialising in Information Communication and Technology (ICT), from 2013 to 2016.

"May MKUR continue to provide for the region the model of excellence, and unlock infinite possibilities!" she says.

Meet Pascal Ngurinzira, an ICT innovations' trailblazer

PASCAL NGURINZIRA joined the MKU Rwanda campus in January 2013 to study for a Bachelor in IT degree.

Immediately thereafter, he attended an android software development boot camp at the campus hosted by electronic giant Samsung and Zalego Institute of Technology and Innovation.

It sparked a success story that interweaves entrepreneurial and IT prowess.

While still a first year student, he developed his first Android app, which made more than 500 gospel songs available to users. That same year, Smart Africa organised a continental event dubbed 'Transform Africa' in Kigali, Rwanda.

Among other activities, the forum invited the continent's young innovators to showcase



Pascal while graduating from MKUR in 2016. "I am still pushing myself harder as I feel I am only doing a small percentage of what I am capable of doing," he says.

their works and urged them to relentlessly pursue their dreams. Pascal was among them. When the competition's organisers announced the winners, he was delighted to be among the top five contestants. "Transform Africa was one of the biggest ICT summits to be hosted in Africa," says Pascal, revealing that a medical app he had developed won him the award. He founded his first company, PSW Developers soon thereafter.

"We were students at MKUR," recalls Pascal who was the main developer and funder of the then nascent firm. He acknowledged his inexperience in running an ICT firm. He therefore joined eVolve, a software firm and digital agency, for eight months for internship. While at the Rwanda branch of the UK firm eVolve, he gained more software development experience. After that training, Pascal went on to develop



Pascal at the Abu Dhabi Fintech Conference in 2019.

a trading system for the Rwanda Stock Exchange. He was the project's team leader and software developer.

"After developing that system, I became an ICT superstar," enthuses Pascal, indicating that companies started looking for him.

In 2014, Pascal joined Appreciate, a Belgian firm based in Rwanda. The firm recruited him

together with his friends.

"I gained more experience, especially on working methodologies," the celebrated software developer remembers.

Pascal's stay at Appreciate gave him the courage to venture into entrepreneurship – again. He asked himself why he should continue working for others. Emboldened, he founded Raisin, a firm he still owns and runs.

He thereafter worked with Appreciate using Raisin. Pascal couldn't believe that he could do so much. "I had no idea what my company could do, what it could achieve," he says.

On analysing his firm's capabilities, he realised that it could turn it into a fintech. That presented new opportunities.

Pascal developed a ticketing system for events, then another for public transport. All this while, he was still a student. Then he

graduated in July 2015.

"Two months after graduating, I left Appreciate and signed a deal with MobiKash as head of IT."

Pascal worked with the firm for one year. In 2018, he won 'Face the gorilla' competition. This earned him a trip to Israel, where he received additional business training as well as a medal for 'Best sustainable project'.

He won Hub Africa Rwanda competition in 2018 and represented his country in an ICT competition in Morocco. In 2019, Pascal represented Rwanda in the FinTech Abu Dhabi Rwanda 2019 competition. He was ranked among the top four in the 'Emerging Markets Fintech in the MENA region'.

He says: "I am still pushing myself harder as I feel I am only doing a small percentage of what I am capable of doing."

Ngarambe and the echoes that won't stop bouncing back

WHENEVER VINCENT Ngarambe drives near MKUR, echoes of his past in another country ring strongly in his ears.

It all began in 2006.

He recalls that year vividly because his career took root then. He had just completed high school and the Government of Rwanda had plans for young people like him.

Rwanda was planning on joining the East African Community (EAC) and the Government deemed it necessary to send 20 of its young citizens – among them, Vincent – to Kenya to study hospitality and tourism. The idea was to prepare the country to conform to the EAC tourism and hospitality standards.

“The Government was convinced that we would form the core personnel for the industry when we returned home,” Vincent nar-



Vincent Ngarambe (in maroon sweater) receives a certificate from Dr. Mercyline Kamande.

rates. And so, Vincent and his 19 compatriots joined Kenya Utalii College. Rwanda became a member of the EAC in 2007, just a year after he and his colleagues begun their training.

The Government sent four other cohorts to Kenya. At the end of the programme, more than 100 Rwandans had received the training.

Vincent knows that many of these former college mates are in Kigali City, contributing to national development in different ways since

their graduation from Utalii College in 2008.

On his part, after working with a number of tour firms in the country, he took the path of entrepreneurship. That happened in June 2012, when he established Let's Go Tours Rwanda, to become his own boss.

For five years, he nurtured the firm. Then he decided it was time to make another move: Upgrade the diploma he had obtained from Kenya Utalii College.

In May 2017, he enrolled for a degree in hospitality at MKUR. It took him only two years to complete the course, since he already had a diploma. He graduated in December 2019 with a First Class Honours degree.

Vincent is happy that his former university is building a 40-room facility to train hospitality and tourism students. “Well done, MKUR,” he says.

Dreams come to life for two bossom buddies

YOUNG PEOPLE can dream, and dream big at that. They can imagine themselves doing some great deeds and excelling in life in a big way, in years to come. Amazingly, some dreams have a knack for acquiring a life of their own to ultimately grow into reality.

Two young men – M. Lavie and Sam Kalisa – had an interesting encounter in which their dreams kept bringing their paths together in coincidental ways, to ultimately enable them to turn their dreams into life at the same institution.

For starters, they schooled together and became bosom friends. They completed high school and, having passed the final exams, looked forward to advancing to university. Well, it seemed like the time had come for them to take divergent routes.



Sam Kalisa: “I joined MKU in May 2017 to follow my passion in journalism.”

Life, in its mysterious ways, had something else in store for them. In a benevolent twist, it conspired to deal them some interesting cards.

Lavie reflects on the moment his career took a definitive path and marvels at life's puzzling ways. Well, he was supposed to join a public

university. He ended up at a private university. How come he joined his friend Sam at Mount Kenya University Rwanda, doing the same course they had dreamt of in their high school days? How come the two did their internship at MKU's Royal FM?

Lavie credits that internship opportunity to who he is today: a media professional who has enjoyed a stint as a journalist before switching to public relations.

On his part, Sam has remained within the journalism field, and, as a TV presenter, he is a well-known media personality in Rwanda.

In high school, both young men were passionate about journalism.

“I was interested in media and served as a journalist in high school,” Lavie reminisces, explaining that journalism was the only course he was keen to pursue at university.

Consequently, he enrolled at the MKUR campus in May 2017 to pursue a Bachelor's degree in mass media and communication.

"I was looking for a place where I could gain the skills that would enable me to play a role in Rwanda's media industry," he says.

He goes on: "A former high school colleague, Sam Kalisa, informed me that he had enrolled at MKUR to pursue a degree in mass media and communication."

Lavie explains that although the public university he had been called to offered the same course, he became impatient when the institution took long to admit students. "I had to look for another university," he says.

Sam, too, explains his journey: "I joined MKUR in May 2017 to follow my passion in journalism and mass media. I visited the university and learnt that it offered a wide range of what I



Lavie M: "I have always been interested in a career in media."

wanted to pursue as a career. Hence, I joined the university."

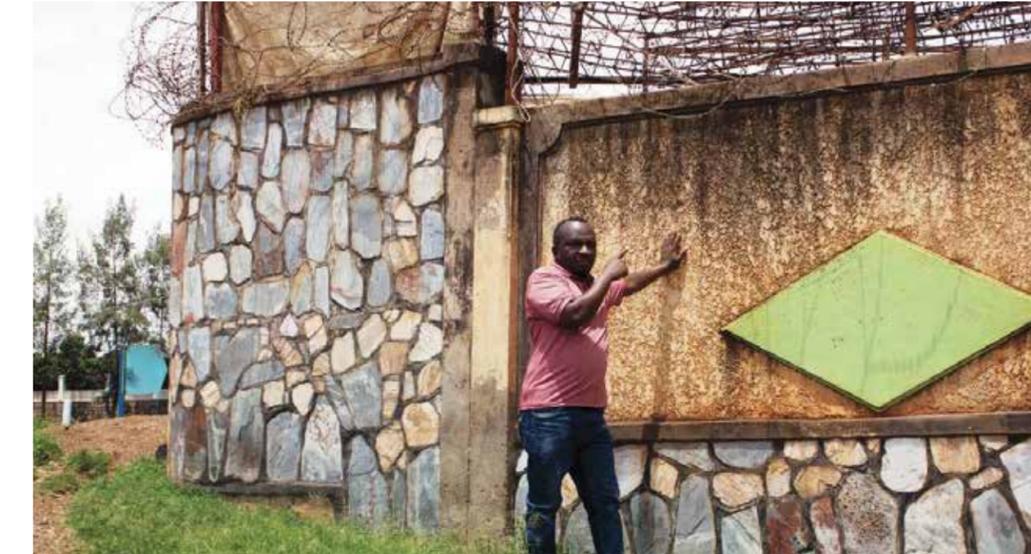
He continues: "I joined Royal FM in May 2018 on the recommendation of my then lecturer, Mr Henry Mapesa. That helped me to gain the reality of some of what I had been learning in class, plus exploring a variety of other new stuff in the media industry. I can confirm that

Royal FM became a path to where I am today, and where I had envisioned to be. By the time I graduated at MKU, I was already employed at RBA (Rwanda Broadcasting Agency).

"As a stable higher learning institution, I'd say MKU has been significant in Rwanda's education sector, which is absolutely a nursery for the job market in Rwanda and everywhere.

"I always recommend MKU to others because the university brought in what I can call a revolution in the country's education system, although there is always room for improvement.

"I graduated with a First Class Bachelor's degree in mass media and communication. Some of my classmates have managed to get jobs in different media houses and institutions as PR officers. I have plans to advance and add a Master's degree in corporate communications."



Twahirwa Jean at his scrap metal enterprise: "The education I received from MKUR enables me to prepare business reports."

"I saw my expectations met," he says. Twahirwa says he chose to study at MKUR because of its excellent facilities, a good studying environment, and, as he later noted, qualified lecturers.

"MKUR is now my neighbour," he says in relation to his scrap metal enterprise in the same neighbourhood as the university's, less than a kilometre apart.

A business success fostered at MKUR

FOR TWAHIRWA Jean, it all started in May 2017 when he joined the university for his Master of Business Administration studies. Earlier in the year, MKUR had moved into its new campus building. So, Twahira was going to undertake his studies at brand new campus premises.

The newness of the place gave him a business opportunity, and MKUR gave him the chance to operate a canteen at the campus. He did so from 2017 to 2019.

And so as he was pursuing his MBA in Finance through evening classes, he was gaining vital practical experience at the canteen.

Twahirwa says the education he received at MKUR has been useful to his business. "In preparing business reports, I no longer rely on other people. I do that myself," he proudly declares.

He considers the campus his second home, where he interacts with a number of people, especially faculty members.

She came, she saw, she stayed

I FEOMA ENEBELI Odili tells you where she wants to be in the next five years, you might dismiss her as an overly ambitious person.

A Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at MKUR, she sees herself graduating, getting a job, pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health thereafter, and later proceeding to work in Canada.

That is the career dream of this young Nigerian girl. Is this attainable? Ifeoma believes so. On February 20, 2019, destiny opened a door for her and she drove her foot in. On that memorable day, she arrived in Rwanda from her home country.

"I came to Rwanda on vacation and to meet people," she narrates. And people she met, and made friends with some, who, she says, developed into family. One of them, also a Nigerian, whispered some information to her

and she took it seriously. "My friend informed me about MKUR and I became interested," Ifeoma says.

She dug online for more information on the university. The MKUR nursing programme impressed her. "One amazing thing is that the course was a crash programme that takes three years," she says. "That spurred me to enrol with the campus, not just because of the academic years, but also because the School of Nursing was well-equipped with enough facilities and qualified lecturers. I decided that I had come to the right place at the right time and to be honest, it was all God's guidance."

What did she do next? "I called my parents back in Nigeria and convinced them, and by God's grace, here I am today," says Ifeoma. "Nursing has been my dream career since I was a child."



Ifeoma Enebeli Odili, Bachelor of Science in Nursing student

An MKU in Kinshasa? Bob thinks it would be worthwhile

B Y AIR, the distance between the cities of Kinshasa and Kigali is 1,658km. By road, the distance extends to 2,727km – a difference of nearly 1,000km.

So, the mode of transport determines how far apart the two cities are. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda are neighbours. However, the distance between their two capital cities is massive.

Does this distance matter?

To one Mwanza Monga Bob, it does; a lot. That is the distance he has travelled each semester to get to his campus. A Congolese from Kinshasa, he found his ideal university in Kigali.

That distance matters a lot to him and that is why he is making an appeal to the university. "I request the leaders of MKU to open a campus in Kinshasa, *kwa sababu ikifika Kinsha-*



A section of international students and MKUR staff outside the university in Kagarama.

sa, ni kwangu kabisa," says Bob, explaining in Kiswahili that by so doing, the university will have arrived at his home town.

Bob imagines how convenient it would have been for him to study in an MKU campus in Kinshasa. He wouldn't have to travel all the way to Kigali.

And so he wishes that other Congolese students would be luckier in the future if the MKU leadership ever decides to set up a cam-

pus in Kinshasa. Bob is a Bachelor in Hospitality and Tourism Management student.

Comfortable communicating in Kiswahili, French and Lingala, Bob was surprised to learn that MKUR teaches in English, a language he was not used to. He says the security in Rwanda attracted him and he was impressed by the clean environment that greeted him when he arrived in the country and at the campus.

Pride of students playing for national soccer team

HAD EVERYTHING gone according to plan, Mbanza Joshua would have featured at the 2021 African Nations Championship, popularly known by its French acronym, CHAN (*Championnat d'Afrique des Nations*).

He wouldn't have been at the soccer bonanza as a fan or a match official, but as a Rwandan player, proudly representing his country on the pitch.

Way back in February 2020, Joshua looked forward to scoring many goals to lift Rwanda past the group stage into the elimination stages and all the way to the final, where he hoped to score the winning goals. Of course, he would have been banking on the support of his teammates as they would on his, since soccer is a team sport.

However, success on the CHAN pitch would have presented a flipside for Joshua.



“At any given time, you’re likely to find four to five MKUR soccer players also playing for the national team,” says Eric Nyasani, a sports co-ordinator.

While representing his motherland, he makes a big sacrifice. He usually takes plenty of time away from class. And, the further his team progresses, the more class time he loses. This does not bother him in the least, though, being a patriotic Rwandan.

Joshua is a Bachelor of Mass Media and Communication student at MKUR, and among Rwandan soccer players honing their skills at the campus.

He hoped to be at CHAN with compatriots Bukuru, Jesse, Olivier, and others. These are boys he often plays with. The quartet practises together and represents their university, MKUR.

These skilled footballers also play against each other in the national league. Olivier plays for REG, Bukuru for Patriot, Joshua for Muhanga FC and Jesse for APR. At the same time, they all turn out for the national team.



Several of the MKUR students play professionally for local clubs. They have a strong foundation to potentially lucrative soccer careers in future.

“At any given time, you are likely to find four to five MKUR soccer players also playing for the national team,” says Eric Nyasani, one of the sports co-ordinators and a lecturer at the campus.

His colleague, Emmanuel Ochako, also a lecturer and a sports co-ordinator, says the university’s investment in sports is paying dividends.

MKUR has an arrangement with Kagarama Secondary School for its students to use the school’s playground during matches and for weekly practice.

“Our students engage in a wide variety of sports,” says Emmanuel, listing basketball (for both men and women), volleyball, swimming and indoor games (table tennis and pool table) as the other disciplines played on campus.

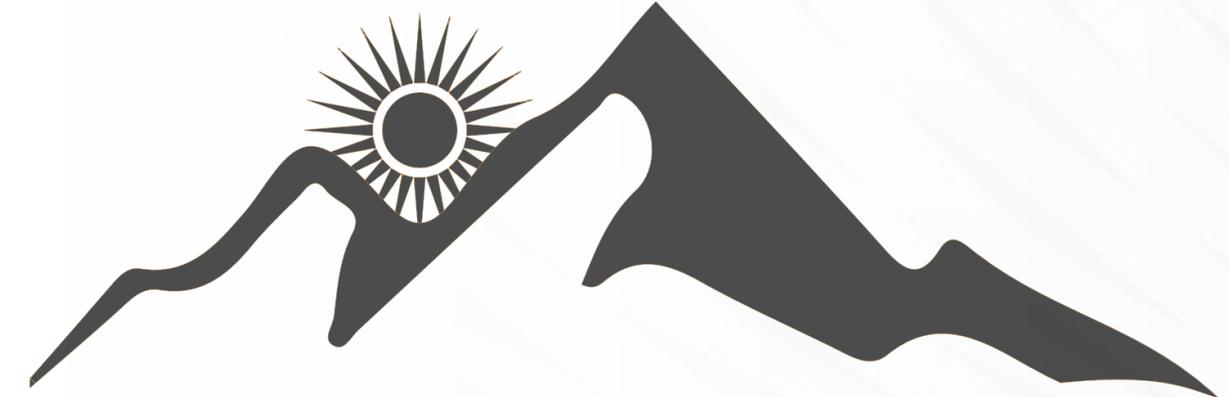
Eric, who joined the university in 2011, explains

that moving the campus to Kicukiro in January 2017 created room for the establishment of sports facilities.

The campus has nonetheless always enjoyed success in soccer, he says, citing the teams of 2014 and 2016 as among the strongest they’ve had. The campus even participated in a regional inter-universities competition in Rwanda.

Success in soccer spurred the university to launch a Vice-Chancellor’s Tournament in early 2019. It has hosted three competitions, which it uses to identify talent. It also organises an inter-secondary schools’ soccer tournament through the marketing office.

MKU Rwanda has also been strong in volleyball. During the 2014 East African universities’ tourney, the men’s team reached the quarter-finals.



ABAKOZI N'ABAHOZE

ARI ABAKOZI

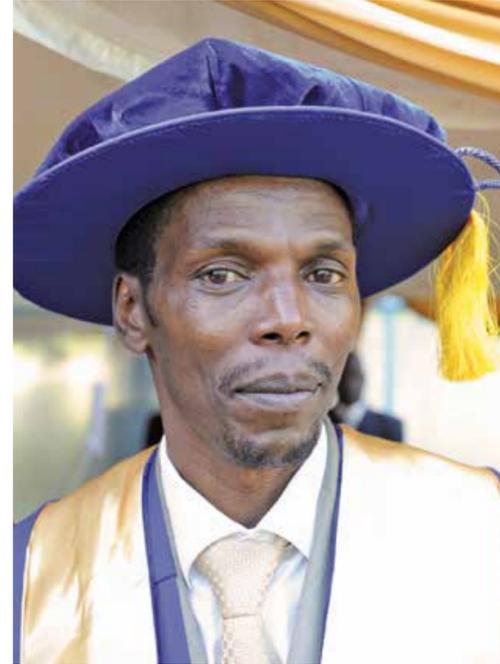
Current and former employees

Former VC-designate: 'What I see when I look back'

“WHEN I joined Mount Kenya University (MKU) in 2011 as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Coordination of Campuses and Centres, Kigali Campus was a major focus. It was the only campus located outside Kenya and was at that time going through some teething problems as would be experienced by any young institution of higher learning.

The campus presented a unique situation: that of cross-border education, represented by a different mode of entry to university, a different regulatory regime and variations in curricula, all occasioned by dissimilar policies of the two governments.

The campus also found itself in the unique situation of being the only one in Rwanda from a foreign country. The inimitability attracted frequent inspections by the Higher Educa-



Prof. Evans Kerosi, former Vice Chancellor-designate, MKU

tion Council of Rwanda (HEC) with the aim of aligning its operations with the Rwandan system and ensuring compliance with the council regulations.

The process of fulfilling the necessary

cross-border education alignment offered a good exposure and opportunity for us to learn more about the operations of different institutions of higher learning. This, together with the experience of providing leadership during the inspections, happens to be one of my satisfying moments in Rwanda.

Students were equally treated to an exposure of a range of professionals drawn from the region and the world at large.

At times, however, the campus would feel overburdened with challenges. But we always found a reason to keep moving on.

I wish to honestly appreciate the commitment, resilience and robustness with which the Board of Directors, university management, academic staff and the students' body embraced the challenges as a single team with no boundaries on rank, age, nationality

or tribe.

There is unanimity that the campus has made gigantic steps in the growth of physical facilities since its inception. When one looks at the campus now, one may fail to actually relate it to its simple beginning in a relatively small rented building in Kigali city centre.

Many have been curious and inquisitive as to the ownership of the campus that has kept growing. They wonder what secret lies behind the success of the campus that now matches international standards. Well, the secret is “teamwork”.

During my tenure as the DVCCC & C, DVC APIA and VC designate, I learnt a lot on how to interact, engage and persuade the Board of Directors and university management to make huge investments in a foreign country.

The Government of Rwanda also contributed

greatly to the growth of the campus by providing an enabling and conducive environment. The whole experience leaves us with a good lesson of doing the right thing always because the fruits are sweet.

When I was appointed as a VC designate, I had the chance of interacting with the students and the staff on a daily basis. This gave me the opportunity to share my experience and, at the same time, learn different cultures and beliefs.

I found student management systems in Kenya and Rwanda to be very different, coming from a background where occasionally, students would demand their rights forcefully, sometimes shouting: “comrade power!” and so on.

The Rwandan students are friendlier but particular in their approach in solving a problem.

It is rare for them to be confrontational. This behaviour is heavily embedded in their historical background and culture. The interaction with students from the mother university and other countries provided them with a good opportunity of learning how to strive and manage issues in different situations and scenarios.

Largely, our unique situation and delivery of quality education made the campus a choice of many students.

Working in MKU Rwanda provided me with a good opportunity to add to my career and experience, given that I had also worked in other East African countries.

When I look back, I only refresh the sweet memories and wish the MKU Rwanda campus all the best in many more years to come.

DVC Dr. John Nyiligira reflects on a rewarding

DR JOHN Nyiligira, MKUR Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Administration, Planning and Institutional Advancement (DVC-APIA), remembers that how he met the MKU Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu in February 2011. The meeting marked a turning point in his career.

"I met Chairman through Henry Musisi," he recalls. "Haruna Atinda was teaching nursing at Kigali Health Institute (KHI) the same time as I was. He knew me."

He adds: "I was (also) working at Kigali University Teaching Hospital. Atinda hooked me up with Musisi, who introduced me to Chairman."

Prof Gicharu asked Dr Nyiligira about gaps in health sciences training in Rwanda. "He asked me if I could help him to mount some health programmes at MKUR," recalls Dr Nyiligira.

He narrates his experience: "I used to work



Dr John Nyiligira, Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Administration, Planning and Institutional Advancement.

with nurses. They used to travel to Goma or Bukavu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) or Kabale in Uganda for further training. They would travel there to study over the

weekends to upgrade their education."

He informed Prof Gicharu of this gap.

Says Dr Nyiligira: "I told Chairman only one university offered nursing training in the country, and at Master's level. No university in Rwanda offered Bachelors in Nursing. I told him there were gaps in pharmacy, public health, nursing and medical laboratory technology at undergraduate level."

Prof Gicharu asked what was required to mount these programmes.

"I told him: curricula, infrastructure and faculty," says the DVC. "He told me the curricula would be sent to me. He sent curricula for undergraduate and postgraduate training in nursing, public health and medical laboratory technology."

Leased premises

Dr Nyiligira adds: "We leased premises in

career journey he has come to love

Kicukiro to start offering these health sciences programmes."

In May 2011, the centre opened with a Diploma in Pharmacy programme. "We started with 11 students from Rwanda Military Hospital," recalls Dr Nyiligira.

More training

He further explains: "I met the commandant and he had some idea of using pharmacy technicians to support pharmacists. He gave us one nurse to train on pharmacy techniques."

In September 2011, the centre started offering programmes in medical laboratory (undergraduate upgrading), Bachelors in Public Health and Masters in Public Health.

"I was working with MKU in the evenings and during weekends," says Dr Nyiligira. "I created

timetables and sourced lecturers."

His efforts did not go unnoticed and the university appointed him the coordinator of health sciences training.

Dr Nyiligira capped a fine year by wedding in December 2011.

When he returned from his honeymoon, the university sent him to Canada for three months for further training.

"I brought in Marete in January 2012 to stand in for me," recalls Dr Nyiligira. "Humphrey was the in-charge as the Dean. Mwangi was helping."

Follow-ups from Canada

While still in Canada, he followed up on what was happening at the university campus. I had prepared the timetable and Marete was brought on board full-time to co-ordinate

health sciences training. I came back in April 2012 and in May, we started offering the direct entry pharmacy programme and the Bachelors in Nursing (upgrading) course.

That year also, MKU witnessed plenty of developments in health science training. Says Dr Nyiligira: "Dr Suje was brought in in June. Marete was helping me set up nursing. Dr Connie came in on 1 September during the second intake. Dr Suje was overseeing pharmacy training."

MKUR continued on its health sciences training journey. "From October 2015, Chairman requested me to join the campus fully and become DVC-APIA. I have remained in that position to-date," says Dr Nyiligira.

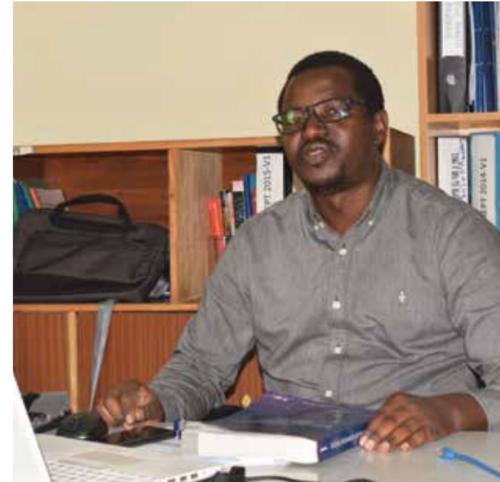
The don who teaches public health with supreme pride

WHEN YOU meet Dr Erigene Rutayisire in his office at MKUR, you will immediately notice that he carries a studious look. He appears to be in deep thought most of the time, and his face rarely breaks into a smile.

But when you engage him in matters public health, the reflective face quickly lights up. The don adjusts his spectacles and prepares to talk about an area he is passionate about. Teaching public health at MKUR, he says, is a highly satisfying job.

It was that sense of satisfaction, he confesses, that drove him from China where he had gone to obtain his doctorate, to return home and serve fellow Rwandans.

He could have remained in China if he had wished to, or gone elsewhere in search of more lucrative jobs. But he chose not to do



Dr. Erigene Rutayisire: “Our students are making a difference.”

that and joined MKUR in October 2017 as a lecturer. Three years later, he was promoted to head of the public health department.

On November 11, 2019, MKUR signed a memorandum of understanding with the country's National Council of Science and Technology (NCST). The council gave researchers at the campus a Rwf47 million grant to study the

problem of pre-term deaths in Rwanda.

The researchers investigated the effects of maternal characteristics and dietary patterns, among other factors, on pre-term births.

Dr. Rutayisire became the principal investigator. He explains that pre-term birth is one of the causes of death among children under five years. Rwanda has a pre-term prevalence of 10 percent. Ultimately, the study was supposed to help determine the cases of pre-term deaths in Rwanda.

MKUR Researchers at work

The MKUR researchers then embarked on the study in 30 health facilities. In July 2020, they recruited 1,159 women who were in their first trimester of the pregnancy (less than 12 weeks since they conceived).

Of the research candidates, 843 completed

the study. The researchers monitored them until they delivered. They found the pre-term births prevalence to be 14 percent overall. However, the prevalence was double – at 28 percent – in the Southern Province.

“We found that nutritional deficiencies (such as anaemia and lower body mass index before pregnancy) and high blood pressure during pregnancy were major risk factors,” the don says.

On December 7, 2021, the researchers disseminated the key findings to directors of hospitals, Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), NCST and universities that offer public health programmes.

Dr. Rutayisire says with pride: “I want to give my contribution to the public health sector, especially by ensuring our students get the skills they need to make a difference out there.” He

points out that MKUR's public health programmes have contributed towards improving Rwanda's health sector. He estimates that 40 percent of hospital heads in Rwanda graduated from MKUR.

MKUR builds capacity

“The university has built the country's capacity in the health sector,” he observes, adding that MKUR is the only private university in Rwanda offering a Master's in Public Health programme, since 2011.

A public health alumnus from MKUR is Espe Dusabe, who joined the campus in 2011. She was a laboratory technician with the Rwanda Military Hospital before she enrolled in the Bachelors in Public Health programme, to study during weekends and evenings. She completed the programme in 2014.



The MKUR researchers then embarked on the study in 30 health facilities. In July 2020, they recruited 1,159 women who were in their first trimester of the pregnancy (less than 12 weeks since they conceived).

“I was promoted after completing the degree programme,” Espe says, and adds: “Learning at MKU was a good experience for me.”

Such experiences and impact, says Dr. Rutayisire, are the source of his job satisfaction.

'My contribution to the growth of MKUR'

DR CLAUDE RUSIBANA is one of the personalities who significantly contributed to the growth of MKUR

Question: When did you join MKU Rwanda?

Dr Rusibana: I started off in 2013 as an Assistant Lecturer in the School of Business and Economics. I then became Head of the Department of Business Management. My slogan was: "Don't send a customer away".

Implementing the slogan, I identified the challenges that students faced. We addressed these issues until there were few student complaints.

At that time, the University operated a manual system, but within a short time, it installed a robust, integrated management information system (MIS). This made the provision of academic services easier.

Specifically, what was your contribution to

the growth of the campus for the period you were there?

Dr Rusibana: In collaboration with local leaders, I participated in a community exchange programme. Through this initiative, the University constructed houses for locals in Nyamirambo sector, and in Kicukiro District. We organised a youth business competition that attracted more than 2,000 applicants. I also participated in preparing students for graduation and served as the master of ceremony. In 2015, together with the then deputy vice-chancellor for academics, Dr Mercyline Kamande, I reviewed the postgraduate and undergraduate curricula.

When I received my PhD in 2016, the university promoted me to Dean (coordinator) of the School of Business and Economics.

Q: The memories you retain of the campus?



Dr Rusibana Claude: "MKUR installed a robust Integrated Management Information system."

Dr Rusibana: I was also later appointed as Dean of Students. I linked MKU Rwanda with industries and our students were getting easily placed for internship.

MKUR is an active member of the Joint Action Development Forum, which helps the Kicukiro District to ensure the economic and social welfare of citizens are maximised.

Board representative: We now have top-notch facilities

FOR MORE than a decade, Anthony Kamau has been a witness to the impressive growth and development of MKUR. He says he has seen it all: the challenges, the successes and generally, the exhilarating experience of watching an institution evolve from humble beginnings into an academic giant in just a decade.

In October 2015, Kamau was appointed the representative of the MKU Board of Directors and has held that position ever since.

He remembers how it all began for him: "I joined MKUR on January 5, 2011 as an accountant. Being the first time to leave my home country, I was a bit worried and anxious because I knew no one there.

"I learnt that MKUR had just started in late 2010, and that it was the only foreign university in Rwanda."



Anthony Kamau who represents the board at MKUR. "We now have state-of-the-art training facilities."

Kamau also observes that in those days, Rwanda's education sector lacked enough teaching personnel, since the country had just switched from French to English.

That change of language, Kamau notes, eventually made a positive difference. Kamau sums up his experience at the campus this way: "The memory I have retained is the growth of the campus from scratch to a modern institu-

tion with its own ultra-modern buildings. We now have state-of-the-art training facilities."

He says students were able to bear with the university even when it was operating from three centres in town.

The staff have been also outstanding in their dedication, Kamau adds, and this has contributed to the growth of the university.

His memory of the alumni is "how they have been successful in life and the way we have trained even prominent people in the society. They confess how the university has helped them improve their careers."

Kamau pays tribute to the late Prof Elim Lokapel, who impacted the campus in an interesting way.

"He infused new energy into the institution's marketing drive and staff culture of serving our students."

My role in launching of postgraduate training at MKUR

WHEN SHE landed in Rwanda in 2011, Dr. Mercyline Kamande had no inkling that she would be a key participant and witness to history. Well, fate had all that in store for her. She thought she was set for a short stay, but she gradually fell in love with the 'land of 1,000 hills'.

Dr. Kamande met a people thirsty for knowledge and became passionate about helping them realise their dreams. She loved what she was doing and immersed herself in the job. "The thirst for knowledge in Rwanda is big," she says. "That eagerness to acquire new knowledge excited me and made me stay. When I saw the impact MKUR was having on the people of Rwanda, I was convinced I was making a real contribution to humanity." Dr. Kamande joined MKUR as a senior lecturer

in May 2012 and gradually rose to Deputy Vice Chancellor. She became part of the campus' budding reputation when she was appointed the first co-ordinator of postgraduate studies soon after joining the campus and was instrumental in establishing the School of Postgraduate Studies.

"MKU became the first private university to offer postgraduate training in Rwanda and the only private university offering training exclusively in English, which was a plus and something that the community appreciated," Dr. Kamande says. "I was consumed with the joy of seeing students who joined the university with little or no English proficiency standing in front of their peers to present completed Masters projects in the English." A consummate scholar, Dr. Kamande appreci-



Dr. Mercyline Kamande, who served in different capacities at MKUR before eventually being posted back to the mother university in Kenya.

ates working at the campus because this has helped her to grow professionally. "Being here has had a massive impact on me as a person," she says, adding: "It has helped me to build my career as an administrator and researcher."



Dr. Nyabuga undertook his PhD at Donghua University, China. He is replicating the learning to students at MKUR.

SOON AFTER graduating with a Masters degree in Information Technology from Periyar University India in 2010, Douglas Nyabuga secured a teaching job at MKUR. He was one of the pioneer faculty members. He taught diligently for six years. In 2016, he

Imparting IT skills on MKUR students



secured a scholarship to undertake a PhD at Donghua University, China. He sought an unpaid study leave from MKUR, and the administration gladly gave him an open contract. "While in China, I kept tabs with the progress at the Department of Computing and Informatics," he says. "We consulted frequently." Dr. Nyabuga worked hard and earned his PhD, subsequently resuming teaching at MKUR in

August, 2022. He says that even in his absence, he harboured a deep-seated responsibility over the future of MKUR, noting that the university's success would be as much his own success. "MKUR is like my baby. I was among the people who implemented the initial programmes. We started with Bachelor of Commerce, and Master of Business Administration. Gradually, other programmes followed." Donghua University is ranked among the world's top 1,000 universities in the *QS World University Rankings 2023*. Dr. Nyabuga says he hopes to replicate the training he received at MKUR. At Donghua, he also published several papers in peer-reviewed journals. Such publications have a positive impact on MKUR's ranking on the global stage.

Prophecy: There are promising times ahead for MKUR

DR. JACOB NIYOYITA Mahina is a veteran player in Rwanda's education arena. A longstanding lecturer and university administrator, he has witnessed the sector's development from a vantage point.

When he comments on the sector's transformation within the last decade, he draws from his vast experience and knowledge.

"Rwanda's education sector," he says, "has many opportunities." Dr. Jacob makes this bold claim while viewing Rwanda's education landscape from both students' and investors' perspectives.

He witnessed MKU enter the market to satisfy a huge demand for undergraduate training. He has seen the market for postgraduate training swell as more Rwandans acquire first degrees and aspire to advance academically.



Dr. Jacob Niyoyita Mahina

Now, he is seeing demand for doctoral training rise. "Rwanda still has a few PhDs," notes Dr. Jacob. He sees this as a gap for educationists to bridge.

Dr. Jacob is a senior lecturer at the University of Tourism Technology and Business Studies (UTB). He has been teaching at the university since its early days as RTUC and served as an administrator then.

As the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of finance at RTUC, he was involved in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MKU.

"It is through that small window that MKU Rwanda has been contributing to the development of the country's human capital," notes Dr. Jacob, who was in charge of partnerships at RTUC at that time.

The UTB senior lecturer says he has watched MKUR's growth with keen interest. MKUR, the don notes, is among high-ranking universities in Rwanda that have contributed heavily towards increasing the number of graduates in the country. Dr. Jacob appreciates MKU's role in UTB's development. "Before the MoU with MKU, UTB, as RTUC, offered courses in hospitality and tourism only. Thanks to MKU, we have more courses."

"To us, this is an unmatched labour of love"



Mashyimi Yamana Annonciata
Support Staff

SHE WAS employed as a support staff in February 2011. She says her job has enabled her to raise her two children who are aged below 15. She remembers that when she arrived at the campus, the student population was small but grew over time through aggressive marketing and providing quality education.

MKUR is the outcome an extraordinary effort by an exemplary team, she adds.



Providence Mukundwa
Revenue Officer

I STARTED working at MKUR in November 2010 in the department of Finance as a revenue officer. The institution was well placed. It was located in town where different people had easy access. Many people had finished Bachelor degree studies and wanted to do their Masters. MKUR participated in developing education sector by providing knowledge to different Rwandans.



Muhamad Nshimyu Muremyi (Olivier)
Driver

MUHAMAD NSHIMYU Muremyi has literally driven many to their success. "I've encouraged many people to join MKUR," he says. They include students in Nursing, Pharmacy, Education and Medical Laboratory Technology. Now the transport director, Olivier, treasures certificate of recognition he was awarded by MKU chairman after six years of service. "MKU has treated me well," he says.



Francis Mwangi
Director-Quality Assurance

THE WORDS 'quality' and 'transformation' are always on Francis' mind. The Director of Quality Assurance is focused on these two key issues. It is not only the premises that embody the quality and transformation; it is also how the institution runs. He started off on attachment at MKU Main Campus in Kenya and was later appointed a part-time lecturer. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.



Purity Wairimu
Former Associate Dean of Students

I JOINED MKUR in January 2012. I was a part-timer in the School of Business and later I developed an interest in student activities. I became Associate Dean of Students and was instrumental in organising many student activities such as Mr. and Miss MKUR. I am very proud of the achievements of my past students. They always mention the impact MKU made on their lives.



Dr. Maria Wambui
Former faculty member

I JOINED as an associate faculty member in February 2011. I served until 2013 when I was transferred to Kenya. I saw the Rwanda campus grow from the opening of its doors to becoming an amazing, busy, tight-schedule campus. I remember with nostalgia the team spirit that pervaded the campus especially in the postgraduate MBA groups. It was evident quality educa-

tion had been needed in Rwanda and MKU was filling that gap. MKUR taught me most of what I know today. The first day I entered a class to lecture, there were 135 students. We were following Rwanda's module system and I was in class every day for two weeks from 8am to 2pm; that is, six hours.

The next class I was assigned was in a hall. Most memorable were the many microphones for myself and for students to use when answering questions. After going through that, I had gained valuable experience.

MKU gave me an opportunity to unlock many possibilities. I have learnt that it is always possible. Thank you.

I thank God most sincerely for the beautiful road I have passed, especially through service to different campuses of MKU. God bless MKU. Long live MKU.



Zachary Thiga
Deputy Director -Admissions

"I CAME to Rwanda on 24 July, 2010 as a graduate assistant. I was present in Kigali in August 2010, during the first intake. The flagship programme was a Masters in Business Administration (MBA). Gradually, we also introduced other programmes. Career wise, I am now Deputy Director, Admissions and Registration. MKUR's transformation has been great, thanks to the support from Rwandan people.

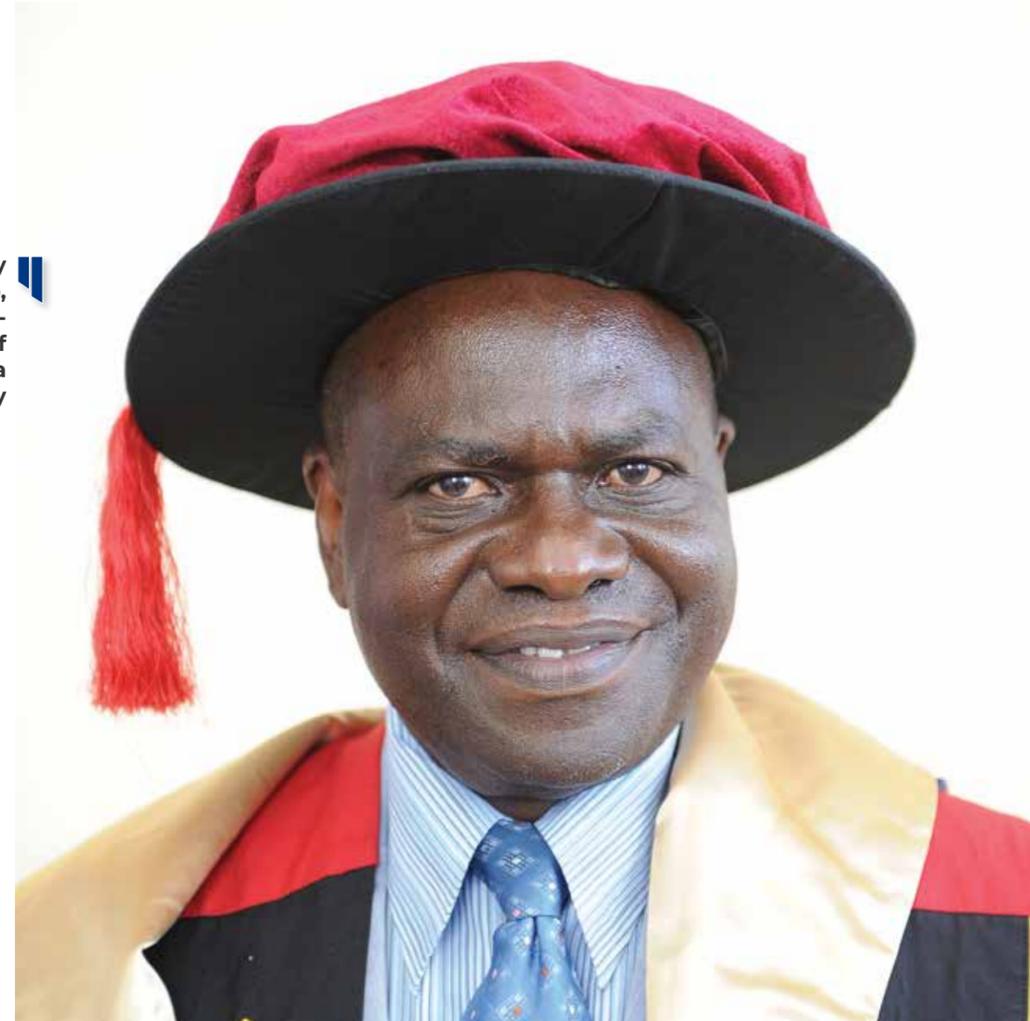


Brigitte Gihozo
Information Centre

On a typical day at MKUR, scores of young people – and a few elderly ones – stop at the information desk. These visitors meet a young lady who welcomes them warmly. Brigitte has been serving here since 2013. Besides her office work, the ambitious lady has also undertaken a Masters in Hospitality at MKUR. She is a former student at UTB, which initially partnered with MKUR as RTUC.

Building MKUR: What a journey it has been!

Prof. Stanley Waudu, first Vice-Chancellor of Mount Kenya University



BUILDING MOUNT Kenya University Rwanda from scratch has been a stupendous journey. It's been an exhilarating decade to all who've been associated with the institution.

Why?

Because in one moment we were dealing with adverts to bring students to our Thika main campus, then in the next one, we were setting up teaching centres in Rwanda.

I liken MKUR's development to the mix of agony and ecstasy a parent endures as a child attempts to walk. A parent watches with bated breath as the baby crawls and later struggles to be steady when standing to make those first steps. The parent remains hopeful that the baby will not hurt itself each time it stumbles, and that it will gather courage to rise up and attempt the same move before it gains

confidence that it can go forward without falling.

That has been our lot at MKU. We have agonised each time we saw the nascent campus falter. At the same time, we have been ecstatic each time it jumped over a new hurdle.

Our experience has been especially unique because other universities that attempted cross-border education about the same time as us fell by the wayside. That was quite unfortunate. We were dealing with the unique situation of being governed by the standards and regulations of the education sectors of two countries. The guidelines were well-intentioned, and we never shirked from following them strictly to the letter. Today, we are proud of what we have been able to achieve in the last twelve years. There is a high likelihood that our baby in Rwanda was given little chance



First MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudu addresses Rwandan students studying in Kenya.

by doubters to develop into the ultra-modern campus it is now. We persevered, all the time believing that doing the right things the right way will finally vindicate us. It has.

We knew that we had a responsibility to our students to give quality education they could be proud of, and that would help harness their latent talents. We were not ready to let them down. We never did, and never will.

Today, if you whispered the name 'MKU' in Rwanda, many ears will easily pick up that acronym. MKU has been part and parcel of the efforts to build the society in Rwanda.

Our alumni proudly associate themselves with the university. More importantly, they value it for imparting the knowledge, skills and attitudes that make them preferred by employers across public, private and non-profit sectors.

We are honoured that they believed in us. We thank them and their parents and guardians for giving us the chance to serve them. Their bet has paid off.

At the same time, we wish to appreciate our brave and passionate staff for giving their best. They can confidently say that they are contributing to making the world a better place by empowering generations through education.

WHAT NEXT? Bold future for MKUR as fully accredited



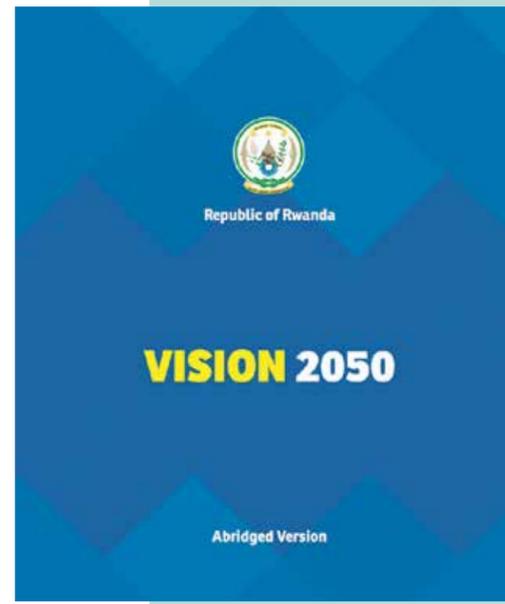
MKUR will play a pivotal role in the realization of the Republic of Rwanda's development blueprint, the 'Vision 2050.'

ONE OF THE core pillars of Rwanda's Vision 2050 is Human Development.

By the year 2050, the share of the working age population is expected to grow from around 61% of the country's population (as at 2017) to 65.7%.

"Reaping economic benefits from this 'demographic dividend' will be realized only through an integrated approach that ensures that decline in fertility is backed up by essential investments in human capital development and economic reforms so that the country has a healthy, well educated, and highly skilled labour force that is gainfully employed," notes the Vision 2050.

"Higher education is expected to play a critical role in enabling Rwanda to realize her ambitions of attaining a sustainable develop-

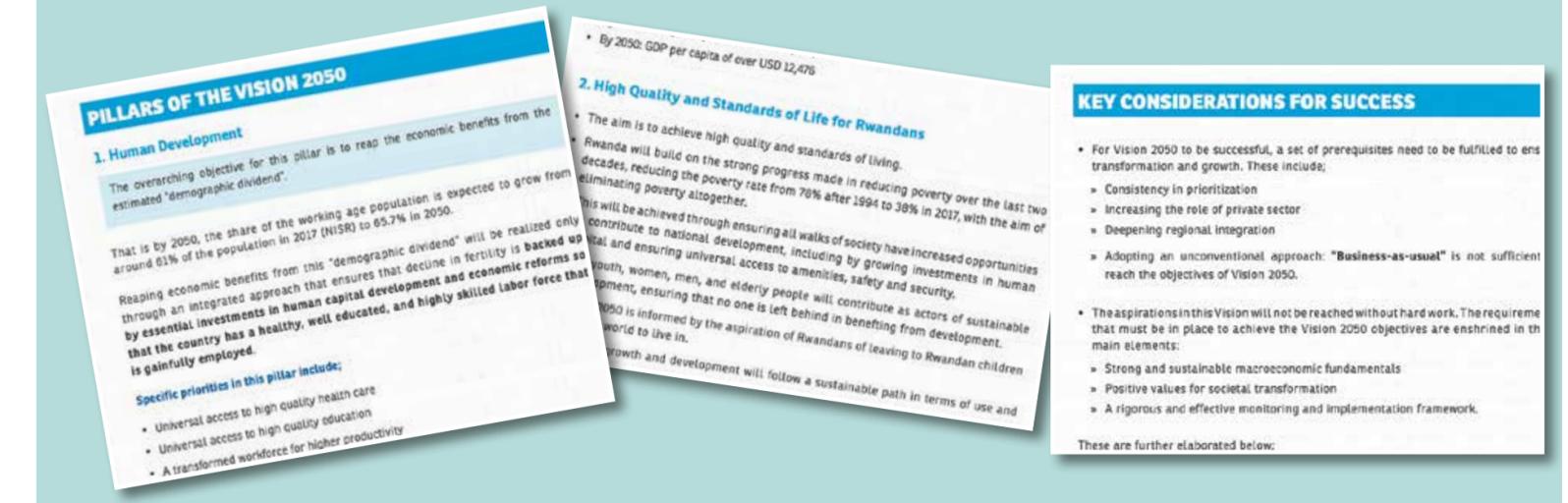


ment and economic growth as well as building knowledge-based economy," adds the blueprint.

To this end, the country envisions universal access to high quality education ("The education system will be market-led to match Rwandans' skills with the modern industries

by the Government of Rwanda, and role in 'Vision 2050'

Vision 2050's 'Human Development' pillar and MKUR's five pillars of growth into the future



and services that drive the economy"), and building these objectives upon a foundation of strong macroeconomic fundamentals and effective institutions supported by positive values and leveraging on home grown solutions."

MKUR is one of the institutions of higher

learning that will be at the forefront in ensuring this bold Vision 2050 is achieved. Its commitment to continuously train highly qualified graduates who will contribute to Rwanda's social-economic development continues to become stronger by the day.

The university is also committed to continue

providing an unparalleled learning environment and state-of-the-art infrastructure for both teaching and research. This commitment is being propelled by FIVE CORE PILLARS that define MKUR's future. (See overleaf)

1

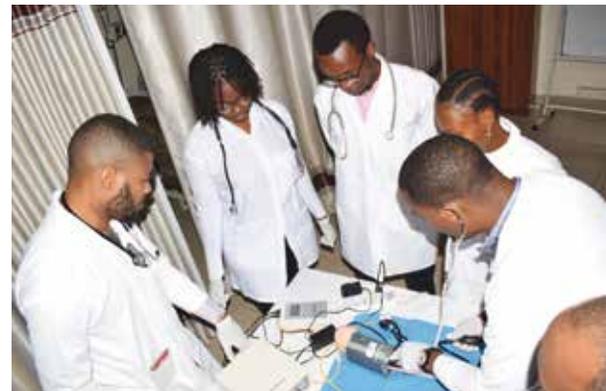
Transform university into a Centre of Excellence in Hospitality and Tourism training

16 gas cookers and demonstration tops. A Chips maker, Meat grinder, Potato peeler, Pizza oven, Industrial grade mixer, Coffee maker, Salamander food warmer, Grilling machine, Doughnut maker, and Towel warmer are just but a few of the cutting-edge equipment at this training centre. And with a new hotel coming up- Kigali Paramount Hotel- (See page 76), MKUR students will get further hands-on training.



2

Turn the School of Nursing into a Centre of Excellence



Nursing is one of the most marketable professions in the world. It's not just in Africa where there is a shortage of qualified nurses, but in Western countries too. The shortage is in the US, Canada, UK and other countries. According to the report *Sustain and Retain in 2022 and Beyond* by the International Council of Nurses, there is a global shortage of 5.9 million nurses. Another 4 million nurses are expected to retire in the next 10 years, making an already bad situation worse. MKUR will prepare young Rwandans for such job opportunities locally and internationally, through the best quality training. To achieve this, the university management will continue investing heavily in top-of-the-range equipment for nurses' training. The School will continue benchmarking against Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in the USA. (See page 77).

3 Inculcate innovations and entrepreneurship on all programmes offered by the university to graduate job creators

The university will work tirelessly to ensure its graduates are globally competitive. This will also include areas of entrepreneurship and ICT innovations. The university will establish linkages and partnerships with local and international organizations to ensure competitiveness in all matters research and training. These linkages will also ensure that the university students gain relevant exposure in the course of their studies.



4 Enhance Corporate Social Responsibility programmes



Every year, MKUR staff and students get actively engaged in a variety of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes. This is a way of giving back to the community. The university is, in itself, a CSR programme with a commercial engine. The programmes will continuously be designed to benefit not just the host community in Kagarama but Rwanda at large. They will include more scholarships, more support to 'Girinka' and more sponsorships of sporting activities.

5 Continuous improvement of resources: Physical and human resources

Continuous improvement will focus on day-by-day re-assessing of available facilities and ensuring they match up to the demands for teaching and instruction. The university will also focus on staff development to ensure they deliver the best services to the students.



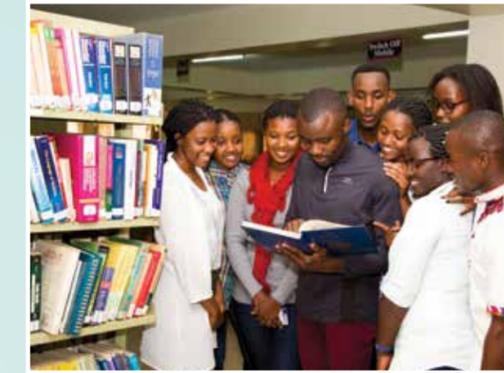
Adequate infrastructure for learning and co-curricular



A globe at MKUR forecourt, symbolising the university's international education. TOP RIGHT: MKUR main building in Kagarama. RIGHT: Royal House, the home of MKUR's Royal FM 94.3



activities is at the core of MKUR



FROM TOP, LEFT: The well-stocked MKUR library; the Hospitality & Tourism Management Centre; Student hostels; Swimming pool and a pool table. The sporting facilities are free to use for all MKUR students.

A place for students of all religious faiths



MKUR students who are members of the Christian Union converge in one of the rooms for their weekly praise and worship sessions. The university has provided them with a variety of musical equipment.



Muslim prayer mats (*sajjadat aş-şalat*) at one of the dedicated prayer rooms set aside for Muslim students at MKUR.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

“Rwanda Nziza”

I
Rwanda, our beautiful and dear country
Adorned of hills, lakes and volcanoes
Motherland, would be always filled of happiness
Us all your children: Abanyarwanda
Let us sing your glare and proclaim your high facts
You, maternal bosom of us all
Would be admired forever, prosperous and cover
of praises.

II
Invaluable heritage, that God protects to you
You filled us priceless goods
Our common culture identifies us
Our single language unifies us
That our intelligence, our conscience and our
forces
Fill you with varied riches
For an unceasingly renewed development.

III
Our valorous ancestors
Gave themselves bodies and souls
As far as making you a big nation
You overcame the colonial-imperialistic yoke
That has devastated Africa entirely
And has your joy of your sovereign independence
Acquired that constantly we will defend.

IV
Maintain this cape, beloved Rwanda,
Standing, we commit for you
So that peace reigns countrywide
That you are free of all hindrance
That your determination hires progress
That you have excellent relations with all countries
And that finally your pride is worth your esteem.

I
Rwanda nziza Gihugu cyacu
Wuje imisozi, ibiyaga n'ibirunga
Ngobyi iduhetse gahorane ishya.
Reka tukurate tukuvuge ibigwi
Wowe utubumbiye hamwe twese
Abanyarwanda uko watubyaye
Berwa, sugira, singizwa iteka.

II
Horana Imana, murage mwiza
Ibyo tugukeshya ntibishyikirwa;
Umuco dusangiye uraturanga
Ururimi rwacu rukaduhaza
Ubwenge, umutima, amaboko yacu
Nibigukungahaze bikwiye
Nuko utere imbere ubutitsa.

III
Abakurambere b'intwari
Bitanze batizigama
Baraguhanga uvamo ubukombe
Utsinda ubukoroni na mpatsibihugu
Byayogoje Afurika yose
None uraganje mu bwigenge
Tubukomeyeho uko turi twese.

IV
Komeza imihigo Rwanda dukunda
Duhagurukiye kukwitangira
Ngo amahoro asabe mu bagutuye
Wishyire wizane muri byose
Urangwe n'ishyaka, utere imbere
Uhamye umubano n'amahanga yose
Maze ijabo ryawe riguhe ijambo.

I
Rwanda, nchi yetu nzuri na yenye
kupendwa na milima, maziwa na volkano
Nchi ya Mama, ingejazwa furaha kila wakati
Sisi watoto wako wote: Abanyarwanda
Wacha tuimbe mng'ao wako na tutangaze ukweli
wako wa hali ya juu
Wewe, kifua cha mama yetu sisi sote
Ungeweza kupendwa milele, mafanikio na funika
sifa.

II
Urithi wenye thamani, kwamba Mungu analinda
kwako
Ulijaza sisi bidhaa zenye bei kubwa
Tamaduni yetu ya kawaida hututambulisha
Lugha yetu moja inatuunganisha Kwamba akili
zetu,
dhamiri zetu na vikosi vyetu Kujukaza utajiri anu-
wai
Kwa maendeleo yasiyokoma tena.

III
Wazee wetu wenye nguvu
Walijitolea miili na roho
mbali na kukufanya wewe kuwa taifa kubwa
Ulishinda nira ya ukoloni-ubeberu ambayo ime-
haribu
Afrika kabisa na furaha yako ya uhuru wako
huru imepatikana ambayo kila mara tutatetea.

IV
Kudumisha hii Cape, Mpendwa Rwanda,
Kudumu, tunajitolea kwa ajili yako Ili amani itawale
nchi nzima
Kwamba uko huru na kizuizi chochote
Kwamba uamuzi wako unakodisha maendeleo
Kwamba una uhusiano mzuri na nchi zote
Na kwamba hatimaye kiburi chako kinastahili
heshima yako.



royal fm 94.3

“The Heartbeat of Kigali”

The research and publication of this book was made possible through support by 94.3 Royal FM & the MKUR School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Training | Internship | Mentorship



Mount Kenya University

RWANDA

“Empowering generations through Education”



This book captures the story of how the university started a campus in Rwanda upon receiving approval, its initial operations, challenges experienced, and how it surmounted these challenges by establishing its own infrastructure. The story is told through the prism of university founders, senior management, graduates/alumni, and beneficiaries of university's community service. It also celebrates the natural beauty of Rwanda, and acknowledges the guidance by the Government of Rwanda and the Higher Education Council among other bodies in the fulfilment of its Mission and Vision.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"

.....Nelson Mandela