



The Convenor

NEWSLETTER OF MOI UNIVERSITY '88 WELFARE ORGANIZATION

Members Hold Inaugural AGM

On Saturday, 6th April 2019, the membership of MU'88 Welfare Organization held the inaugural Annual General Meeting (AGM). The meeting provided an opportunity for the members to reflect on achievements and chart the future of the Organization with resolutions that had far-reaching implications.

The AGM was convened a year after the Organization was registered in January 2018. Its registration was one of the mandates handed to the Committee when the MU'88 alumni met at Ashaki Grill on 1 July 2017. There were outstanding issues surrounding this registration, which included the envisaged vision and mission of the Organization, the Constitution used to register, and the Bylaws that were formulated to operationalise the constitution.

Early during the meeting, the Constitution was adopted albeit with some concerns. Key among these concerns was the inclusion of a provision to accommodate members' aspirations to support charitable cases especially needy university students.

The Committee was charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the amendments were carried out before the final version was circulated.

Details of the Bylaws were examined in the plenary discussion where some changes were proposed. Some of the changes included the criteria for membership, members' meetings and disciplinary sanctions. Ultimately, the set of the Bylaws was also adopted with amendments.

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Chairman's Message



Dear Comrades,

This issue of *The Convenor* marks one year since Moi University '88 Welfare Association was registered. It therefore marks a perfect time for us to reflect on the progress made during that time and to chart our way forward. This is exactly what the AGM achieved.

Before registering the Organization, we had carried out many activities that served to define who we are – a united people driven by shared experiences. Coming together in July 2017 was indeed proof that we needed each other and yearned for a forum through which we could interact and support one another. It is on this basis that we generously contributed to support the families of our two colleagues, Martha Kinyua and Phyllis Watwana, when they left us in September and October 2017 respectively.

Our coming together again in a mini-reunion in February 2018 reaffirmed our resolve to form a strong organisation. Welfare activities have continued to take a large proportion of our activities mainly caused by the unfortunate departure of colleagues. Since registration, ten colleagues have departed and in all instances we have come out generously to support their final send off. While we wish them a peaceful rest, I do urge all of us to continue with the same spirit.

We also managed to convene a most memorable re-union at our alma mater – Moi University. This 'Grand Reunion' stunned not just the university administration, but also other alumni across the country, most of whom never dreamt that such an event could be organised with such outstanding success. Our organization continues to be a source of inspiration to many alumni groups.

As we forge ahead after our inaugural Annual General Meeting, I would like to congratulate each one of us for coming this far. I urge us to rededicate our efforts and commitment towards improving our organization. We still have many challenges as we chart the waters to the future.

For those who have not joined us, I appeal to you to register and be part of our ever-growing fraternity. There is always strength in numbers.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the cooperation and support that I have received from you. Similarly, I acknowledge the dedicated team that is the Committee without whom we would not have achieved our goals.

Thanks you.

Dulo Nyaoro

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The preliminary phase of the meeting consisted of remarks by the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer. In his address, the Chairman, Dulo Nyaoro, reviewed the accomplishments of the Organization since inception. Among the highlights was the successful convening of the Grand Reunion in November 2018. He enumerated the challenges faced in the review period while outlining future plans. Overall, the members felt encouraged by the prospects of a bright future.

While presenting her remarks, the Secretary, Jill Ondigo, mentioned the strides that the Organization had made citing the impact on the social front. The numerous support that the members had made, especially to bereaved families, had been felt far and wide. It was also not lost that crucial links had been opened with the main Alumni Association and the university administration both of which had proved very beneficial to the Organization.

A key project that the Secretary promoted in her presentation was the Adopt-a-Student initiative, which had received enthusiasm during the Reunion. To emphasise the need and workability of the initiative, she invited Ms PISOI SAITA, a living example of someone who had grown up as an orphan and had



PISOI SAITA narrating her sponsorship experience

been supported by benefactors up to and through her university education. She was now supporting numerous disadvantaged children from her salary. Her moving account was visibly a motivation to the members.

To facilitate “adoption” of the students, Jill presented the list of needy cases as compiled by the Dean of Students. The Committee was tasked to spearhead the implementation of the initiative.

Jacob Otsyula, the Treasurer, mentioned that over Kshs 2.2 million had been collected from the alumni

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since the group was formed. The cash had been used to finance ad hoc projects (mainly bereavement support and reunions) and operations of the Organizations. A substantial proportion had been collected as membership fee and had not been expended. He also mentioned the long-term project that members had to have in mind – the arboretum.

The Committee made a suggestion for a more inclusive and accountable structure to oversee the Organization's funds. Based on this suggestion, there was a proposal to constitute three subcommittees (audit, budget and finance, and projects) to complement the work of the Committee. The proposal was unanimously supported.

One major concern that had built up in the run-up to the AGM was the issue of elections in tandem with



A section of members engaging during plenary

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Dr Lagat recognised that the MU'88 group had roused alumni in other years and inspired formation of new groupings. Specifically, school-based cohorts had started to emerge notable of which were the Schools of Engineering and Medicine. However, they had had reported connectivity challenges, with which they were grappling.

Regarding the role, Dr Lagat clarified that it was complimentary with the MU'88 regarded as part of the larger family. He pledged support whenever required and invited MU'88 to engage the Alumni Office. On their part, the team conveyed the gratitude of the MU'88 group for the enormous support and welcome that the Alumni Office accorded them during the Reunion.

At the time of the visit, the Alumni Office was planning its AGM dinner for Friday, 22 March 2019. Dr Lagat handed the team an invitation to the event

the incumbent office bearers. The issue was amicably resolved when members unanimously agreed to hand a fresh mandate to the incumbent team. It was to run a full term of two years.

At the conclusion of the meeting, members voiced their unreserved appreciation for the work the Committee had done over the period. It was even more appreciated when it was noted the voluntary services that had been offered by each member of the committee.

As a wrap-up, a number of issues were agreed upon and resolutions passed. Among the issues agreed upon was the strategic statement comprising the vision and mission. This was expected to provide the collective psyche and a common direction to the members.

Three resolutions were passed in the meeting. One, that members would henceforth not provide official assistance and support to non-members; anyone outside the membership would be supported based on individual discretion. Two, the paid-up members would form an exclusive forum for communication, networking and exchange of ideas. All non-members would be expunged. Finally, as mentioned earlier, three subcommittees would be constituted to complement the work of Committee.

The AGM ended on a high note with a sense of accomplishment. A new spirit of commitment was evident as members interacted late into the evening. There was no doubt that the Organization was there to stay and to grow from strength to strength. □

for MU'88 group to be represented. It was agreed that other areas of cooperation and complementarity could be discussed during the event.

Finally, Dr Lagat suggested that a way should be devised to formulate a unified support programme for needy students, which could involve setting up an endowment fund. He also touched on the issue of mentorship programmes, where he said that his office was currently coordinating and he intimated that a schedule could be drawn to involve the MU'88 alumni in the coming days. Participation could be in the areas of career development, as had previously been done with engineering, political science and information studies students. There was also a possibility of exploring other areas, such as drug abuse.

The team met and interviewed some of the needy students as per the list provided by the Dean of Students. The interview took place in Chairman Dulo's

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Membership News

Grand Reunion yields more members

Since the Grand Reunion in November 2018, the MU'88 Welfare Organization membership has grown tremendously. From 148 members during the Reunion, total membership now stands at 219, a 48 per cent increase within five months. With a potential to recruit about 1,000 members, the numbers are expected to continue the growth trend.

The growth is no doubt a reflection of the increasing confidence in the MU'88 solidarity. As the Organization now turns its focus on paid-up members, it is imperative that those who are not registered do so as soon as possible to reap the benefits of being part of the Group.

MU'88 members gear up for economic take-off

A group of members eager to leverage on the MU'88 camaraderie have formed themselves into an investment group. Using the vehicle Fifty Plus Enterprises (FPE), the group intends to pursue economic interests that are not accommodated in the MU'88 Welfare Organization's structure.

To facilitate initial operations and planning, the group created a networking forum on social media called "Networking Forum MU'88". Already this forum has attracted a lot of commodity exchanges, but it has also provided a notice board for crucial opportunities. It will be interesting to keep tabs on the developments as the potential of MU'88 members unfolds.

Congratulations

DAVID MAKALI for his appointment as Chairman of the 19-member Taskforce for Improvement of Government Information and Public Communications Functions to Align them with Emerging Public Sector Dynamics and Expectations. The appointment by the Cabinet Secretary, Information, Communication and Technology took effect from 21st December, 2018, and was to operate for an extendable duration of three (3) months.



David Makali

office, and was intended not only to familiarise the team with the faces behind the list, but also to establish the extent of need. Ultimately, a priority list was generated upon which decision for support would be made.

The final port of call was the arboretum, which had been established prior to the Reunion. Other than the commemorative trees that had been planted and a memorial plaque installed during the Reunion not much was visible.

The team found that all the trees that had been planted on the day of Reunion were alive and growing. The Committee had put in place a watering schedule up to the rainy season. No activity was noticed around the monument; even the burnt candles were still at its feet. Though the plaque was still intact, some fading was evident, perhaps from exposure to sunlight. It was clear that some maintenance work needed to be done on both items.



The tree planted by the Chief Guest during the Reunion in November 2018

While on the way to the arboretum, the team passed by the Publicity Office to request additional footage of the Reunion as captured by the university. The staff was kind enough to make some material available, which will be merged with the footage from Chamsmedia. It was however noted that still no footage was available from the evening activities.

In all, the Committee's visit was not only fruitful, but the team was also impressed by the positive developments taking place at the University. It is imperative that the alumni provide supportive direction, especially during the AGM. □

Pictorial



Renovated Hostel H, which was renamed after Prof. Keya upon reopening on 17 January 2019. It marks a deliberate effort to improve accommodation facilities in Moi University. Dulo Nyaoro, Jill Ondigo and Ragu Njenga sitting on one of the benches that had been made for the arboretum.



Dulo Nyaoro and Jeremy Ng'ang'a during the meeting with Prof. Nathan Ogechi. Committee meeting with Dr Charles Lagat of the Alumni office.

Scenes of reunion at the AGM – Treasure Gardens



Peter Makura and James Maraga

Pictorial

Off-grid Reunions



Ireneus Gichana and Nick Bore in Nairobi



James Kebasso and Lucy Njeru in Eldoret



Alex Nyakwemba and Anne Gachoya in Kapsabet



Fr Fred Njoroge and Stephen Barongo in Nakuru



Dorcas Rukunga and Adan Duale in Kuala Lumpur



Robert Mounde, G. Nyaata, J. Kebaso and Richard Ariemba in Eldoret



David Kenyakang, Ann Wanunda (Mrs Mwangemi also MU'88 alumni) and Laban Mwangemi at Voi



Jill Ondigo and Asaka Nyangara at Kisumu Airport

Welfare Matters



MU'88 members who visited the family of the late Martha Kabura to present the Group's contribution – Hezekiel Waweru, Monica Kimemia, Jane Wachira and Jane Meme.



Some of the MU'88 alumni who attended the funeral service for the late Juliet Murundu Otieno at CITAM Valley Road



Jill Ondigo addressing mourners and wellvisbers at the funeral of the late Ben Mogoi. She is flanked by other MU'88 colleagues among them Richard Ariemba, Ireneus Gichana and Godfrey Nyaata.



Transition

The MU'88 fraternity has once again been devastated by the loss of their colleagues. Since December 2018, four comrades passed on under various circumstances. As has been the tradition, members came out selflessly to support the deceased's families both emotionally and financially.



On Sunday, 6 December 2018, **Ben G. Mogoi** passed on at Nyangena Hospital in Kisii, while undergoing treatment. At the time of his demise, Mogoi was teaching at Amasago Secondary School in Kisii County. He was buried

on Friday, 28 December 2018 at his home in Mochenwa Kitutu, Nyamira County.

Shortly afterwards on 10 January 2019, another comrade, **Martha Kabura Mungai**, passed on at the Avenue Hospital following an illness bravely borne. She was buried on 18 January 2019 at the family home in Gatunguru Village, Gatura, Gatanga, in Murang'a County. At the time of her demise, Kabura was in private consultancy having retired from formal employment in 2008.



In one of the most tragic events to affect the country this year, the MU'88 fraternity lost one of their own, **Juliet Murundu Otieno**. Juliet lost her life when Ethiopian Airlines Flight ET302 crashed near the



town of Bishoftu, southeast of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, while en route from Addis Ababa to Nairobi. The aircraft, a Boeing 737 MAX 8, disintegrated completely and no survivors were reported. No bodies were retrieved either for burial.

In effect, a traditional symbolic burial was conducted at Dudi, Siaya County, on Saturday, 23 March 2019. At the time of the tragedy, Juliet was Acting General Manager, Human Resource Development, at the Kenya Airports Authority. She was looking forward to joining the MU'88 alumni during the AGM on 6th April 2019.

On Saturday, 16 March 2019, **Joel Metobo Manoti** passed on. Until his death, Manoti was Deputy Principal, Matongo Boys High School in Nyamira County. He was buried at his home in Bonyachani Village, Bigege Location in Nyamira County on 5 April 2019.



May their souls rest in eternal peace.

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A few years after we graduated, I bumped into Juliet at the junction of Harambee Avenue and Moi Avenue, where we chatted for a while. She told me she'd just left Kenya Posts and Telecommunications (later Telkom Kenya), which she had joined almost immediately after graduation and where she had gone into HR. She was then looking around. She was also married (which shattered my Yeats-like Maude Gaunne dreams).

That meeting lingered in me for a long time. Juliet is the kind of person that gave one cheer. A joy to be around. You see, she had this nice, coy smile, almost child-like, and an almost naughty twinkle in that eye that said she could catch you in that mischief. Like a good mother.

It's a pity I didn't meet Juliet again. I came to learn that she'd been to Merica Hotel as HR boss before landing at Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) where she'd risen to acting GM. Juliet had gone places! She'd

become the success that we, the founders of a reunion group of former Moi University students of 1988-91, celebrate. We still celebrate, at least that she makes us brag at being achievers!

That's the kind of person that died but one whose body was not buried. Her remains, and those of another 156 people, are scatted in a faraway Ethiopian farmland. They may never be found.

We mourn Juliet because she left in a most painful way. Her departure is all the more painful because she didn't have a chance to live her dreams, and to see her grandchildren grow. To see them become parents.

Like a good flower, Juliet will be planted and blossom in the hereafter.

She will live and she will thrive.

Go well Juliet Murundu Otieno, Go well.

Maneno Mwikwabe

TRIBUTE TO JULIET MURUNDU OTIENO

TOM MANENO MWIKWABE

On March 23rd 2019, a man, painfully holding back tears, led his family in a symbolic burial of a beautiful woman in his village in Dudi, Siaya County. The man's name is Francis Otieno and the woman is Juliet Murundu Otieno.

The burial at Dudi was symbolic because Juliet's body was not there to be buried. She had gone too far, far away. Beyond us. The symbolic ritual was the best that could be done.

Most of what went through the minds of those attending the burial ceremony can only be imagined. They were praying for a soul, and a body, a body they couldn't see or have.

Juliet was my classmate. She and I were part of a pioneering class of Moi University in a newly created faculty named the School of Social Cultural and Development Studies, SCDS.

With Moi University main campus situated 34 kilometres from Eldoret, even the most introverted student was compelled to make friends with fellow students. There was no self-sufficiency. We all depended on each other. It was both too lonely and too far.

As there were not enough hostels for all of us at the campus, some of us ended up being temporarily accommodated in partly completed staff quarters in an area named Matopeni because the road leading there became muddy during the rainy season. The road originated from the old campus we called Ngeria, our version of Muthaiga or Runda, a sharp contrast of Matopeni. The architecture at Ngeria was different, probably inspired by the Chinese who encouraged Moi to think up the university. My house was at the edge of Matopeni estate.

Directly opposite my house, in what could as well be the first house, lived girls. From my house some of my lively housemates and I could not help stealing glances at a group of beautiful girls emerging from their house. From my acquaintance with the group later, it included (now Dr) Nyaki Adeya, (now Dr) Cheptoo Ruto, Ascar Mebur, Edith Ngugi, Phyllis Thama, Phyllis Iraya and Juliet Murundu.



Most remarkably, I found the group's courage inspiring. None of the girls was in the faculty of Education. They were studying courses that we perceived could keep one on the 'tarmac' for a long time. For ladies to shun education courses at the time, which had assured employment immediately after graduation, was itself an act of courage.

We called this group the 'Kamneis', a corruption of 'Company' as acquired from our stint at the National Youth Service. It was indeed a group of alluringly beautiful girls. Eye candy. And lively, although a little snobbish. Or so some of us thought. Juliet Murundu was a member of the 'Kamneis', and it was under these circumstances that I first noticed her.

She was a very beautiful lass. I learnt that she had attended Moi Girls Eldoret, one of the better schools those days and today. She looked every inch the urban type, the kind we called "Us Guys." (I'd come from a school that's not very well known nationally and sometimes felt intimidated by the urban types.) But Juliet was such a nice person and I had an eye on her. Unfortunately that eye never amounted to much, as my hands got entangled in a knot while pursuing a hard-to-crack Christian girl who took all my time.

Then I got into student politics, when my comrades (God bless them) elected me resoundingly as the MUSO Secretary General. I am sure Juliet voted for me because those votes were just too many!

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Share your experiences: The Committee welcomes short articles (max. 500 words), describing/narrating how life at Moi University (academic, extra-curricular, etc) played a role in your current career. Please send the article to the following email address: MU88group@gmail.com or contact the Committee on +254 725 283822

Committee Makes a Follow-up Visit to Moi University

Representatives of MU'88 Committee made a visit to Moi University at the end of February 2019. The purpose of the visit was to follow up on various issues raised by the alumni after the Reunion in November 2018.

Among the key issues for follow-up was the status of a memorandum sent to the university administration on observations by the alumni during a tour of the campus. Others were the status of the arboretum project, modalities involved in the proposed 'Adopt-a-Student' initiative, and linkage with the main Alumni Association.

The visit took place from 28 February up to 1 March 2019, and consisted of a team of four Committee members, namely Njenga Ragu (as chef de mission), Dulo Nyaoro (as host), Jill Ondigo (Secretary) and Jeremy Ng'ang'a. The team held meetings with the DVC Student Affairs (Prof. Nathan Ogechi), Dean Students (Dr John Ayieko) and Director of International Programmes, Linkages and Alumni (Dr Charles Lagat).



Interviewing one of the potential beneficiaries of Adopt-a-Student initiative

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Contact **Jacob Otsyula** on **0722 787043**

Discussions with the DVC were held in his office at the Administrative and Senate Building. The team assured him that the memorandum had been written in good faith and should not be misconstrued as an onslaught on the university administration. It also clarified that the wider circulation in government agencies was intended to solicit support on issues that were beyond the administration such as HELB (Higher Education Loans Board) and increased National Government support.

On the part of the administration, Prof. Ogechi acknowledged that the university had received the memorandum and that it held no hard feelings. On the contrary, it was considering holding a management workshop to deliberate on the issues raised. In the meantime, the university was implementing some changes that required immediate action or those that had been in the pipeline. He intimated that more reforms would be made to improve the welfare of students as well as recapture the glory of the university.

In a meeting with the Dean of Students at the Student Centre offices, the team discussed the modalities of supporting needy students and a general sponsorship programme. He welcomed the idea of a standard application form developed by the Committee and adopted it for use. The application and fund disbursement procedure were also agreed on and were to be shared with the alumni.

At the end of discussion, the Dean provided a current list of needy cases. It was suggested that the alumni would immediately take up this list for consideration.

While on the way out of the Students Centre, the team went into the room where the benches had been transferred for safekeeping. These three benches had been acquired as part of seating facilities for the arboretum once the landscaping had been completed. Unfortunately, they were not displayed during the Reunion as planned because the ground at the arboretum was not yet ready for their installation.

The last in the series of meetings was with Dr Lagat at his office in the Administrative Building. Discussions took place regarding the place and role of MU'88 within the larger Alumni Association as there had been a perception that MU'88 was overshadowing the Alumni Association.

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