



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

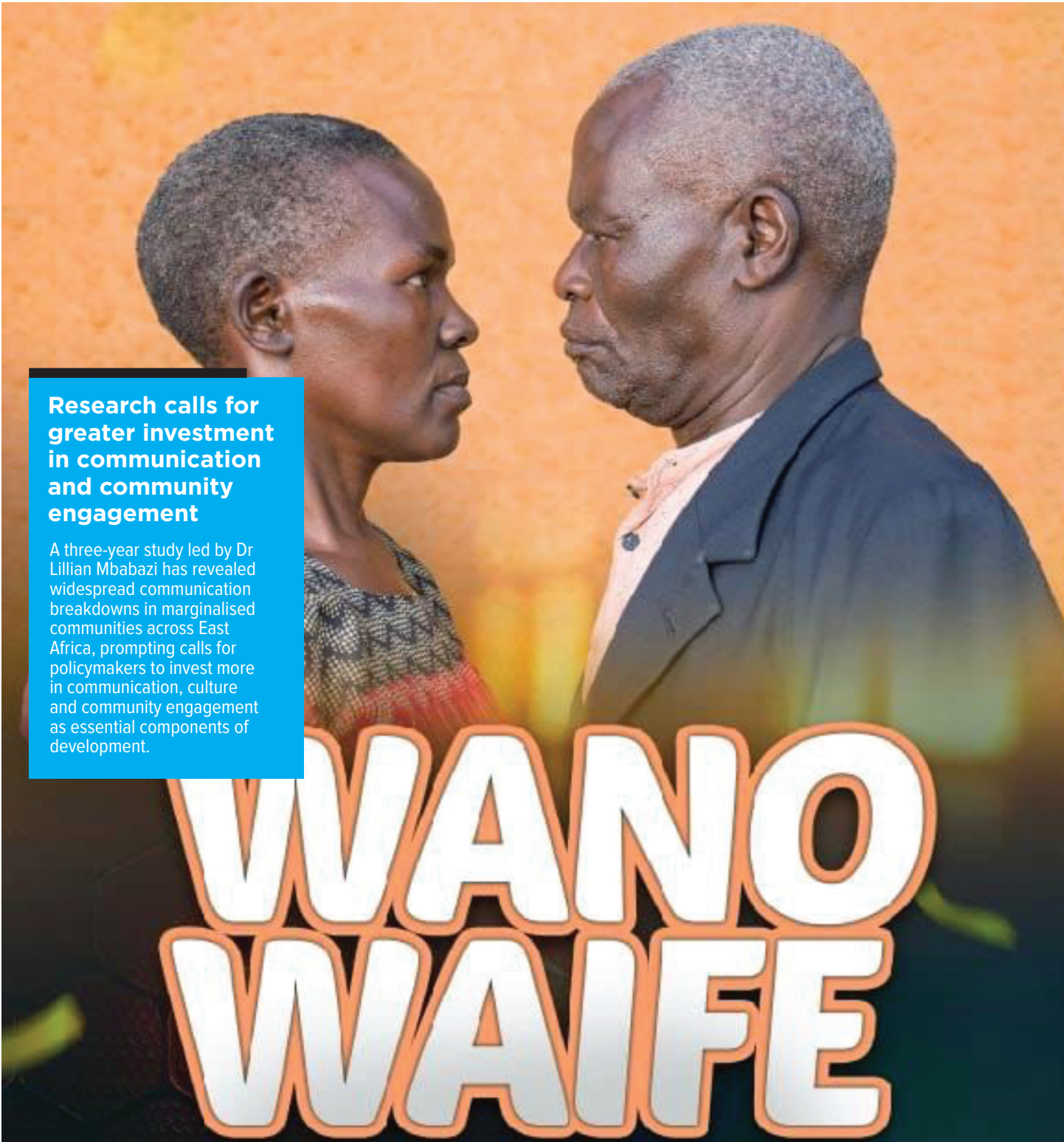
NEWSLETTER

CHUSS

April- June 2026: Issue: 2

Research calls for greater investment in communication and community engagement

A three-year study led by Dr Lillian Mbabazi has revealed widespread communication breakdowns in marginalised communities across East Africa, prompting calls for policymakers to invest more in communication, culture and community engagement as essential components of development.



WANO WAIIFE

Word from the Principal



Our Graduate Training Unit continues to strengthen research capacity through targeted training in scholarly writing and research methodology. These initiatives, alongside improvements in research systems and mentorship structures, are enhancing the quality and timeliness of graduate research output.

It is with great pleasure that I present this second Issue of the CHUSS Newsletter for April to June 2026, which captures a vibrant period of scholarship, creativity, research impact, and academic excellence within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

This issue showcases the continued relevance of the humanities and social sciences in addressing contemporary societal challenges. Our researchers are producing knowledge that speaks directly to issues of social transformation, communication gaps, gender dynamics, youth empowerment, cultural expression, and sustainable development. From studies on breakdance culture in Kampala to investigations into communication breakdowns in East African communities, the College continues to affirm the importance of “soft infrastructure” -communication, culture, and social relations - as key drivers of development.

We are also proud to show off the outstanding achievements of our academic staff and students. The recognition of Dr Jimmy Spire Ssentongo with the Kofi Annan Courage in Cartooning Award highlights the power of artistic expression in promoting accountability, freedom of expression, and democratic engagement. Similarly, the success of our students, including Atim Priscilla Ariance’s poetry award and leadership in the Uganda Poetry Society, echoes the creativity and leadership

nurtured within CHUSS.

The College also hosted and participated in significant intellectual engagements, including the Inter-University Symposium on Pan-Africanism and Reparatory Justice and the international conference on Green and Digital Futures. These platforms reinforced our commitment to Pan-African thought, inclusive development, and interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing global and continental challenges.

Our Graduate Training Unit continues to strengthen research capacity through targeted training in scholarly writing and research methodology. These initiatives, alongside improvements in research systems and mentorship structures, are enhancing the quality and timeliness of graduate research output.

As a College, we remain committed to academic excellence, impactful research, and community engagement. We also recognise the importance of partnerships and collaboration in advancing knowledge and contributing to societal transformation.

I extend my sincere appreciation to staff, students, partners and stakeholders for their continued support and dedication.

Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala (PhD)
Principal

EDITORIAL TEAM >>

Prof. Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala, College Principal.
Jane Anyango, Principal Communication Officer. Issa Agabo Mugabo, Branding & Marketing Officer.
Ms. Eunice Rukundo, Deputy Chief - PRO.

CULTURE.

The Inter University Symposium on Pan Africanism calls for reparations, unity in Pan African struggle. The symposium also marked the start of Africa Liberation Week, with Organizing Committee Chair, Dr. Sarah Hasaba, urging participants to build strategic partnerships and commit to the Pan African vision.

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HIGHLIGHTS >>

- The College conducted a post-fieldwork workshop for the 2024 Gerda Henkel PhD Cohort, equipping doctoral candidates with practical skills in data analysis, organization and academic writing to support timely completion of their doctoral studies.
- The 2025 Gerda Henkel Foundation PhD fellows were equipped with critical field research skills ahead of their data collection phase through a pre-fieldwork workshop held on June 18.
- Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University issued a directive to academic units to admit all qualifying PhD candidates, arguing that scaling up doctoral training is the only way to move the African continent out of poverty.

FACT FILE >>Staffing: **287****Staff distribution by rank**

	Rank	Female	Male	Total
1	Professor	2	8	10
2	Associate Professor	6	9	15
3	Senior Lecturer	6	33	39
4	Lecturer	20	61	81
5	Assistant Lecturers	31	45	76
6	Administrative and support staff	43	23	66
	TOTAL	108	179	287

Student population: **3720****Student Number Distribution 2025/2026**

	Female	Male	Total
Diploma	9	42	51
Undergraduate	1668	1135	2803
Postgraduate Diploma	28	29	57
Masters	436	306	742
Doctorate	35	32	67
TOTAL	2176	1544	3720

Courses outline: **10** Bachelors, **24** Masters, **2** Undergraduate Diplomas, **3** PGD and **4** PhD programs

Research calls for greater investment in communication and community engagement

Researchers found persistent communication gaps between generations that undermine dialogue, social inclusion, and community well-being.

A three-year study led by Dr Lillian Mbabazi has revealed widespread communication breakdowns in marginalised communities across East Africa, prompting calls for policymakers to invest more in communication, culture and community engagement as essential components of development.

Conducted by Makerere University and the University of Leeds between 2023 and 2026, the Communication and Creativity Project examined communities in Walukuba, Jinja, Western Kenya and the United Kingdom. Researchers found persistent communication gaps between generations, unequal gender relations, domestic violence and punitive school environments that undermine dialogue, social inclusion and community wellbeing.

The study identified communication challenges in families, schools and communities as key drivers of social tensions. Young people reported that their views were often dismissed by adults, while girls frequently received less

Drawing on these findings, the researchers called for greater recognition of what they describe as “soft infrastructure” communication, culture, creativity, and social relationships alongside investments in physical infrastructure.

attention and authority than boys.

In schools, corporal punishment discouraged learners from openly discussing academic and personal challenges, creating barriers to effective communication. Researchers also found that domestic violence and confrontational conflict-resolution practices in Walukuba weakened family and community relationships. Beyond these concerns, land insecurity emerged as the issue most strongly affecting residents, with many fearing eviction as wealthier individuals acquire land and displace long-term occupants.

Drawing on these findings, the researchers called for greater recognition of what they describe as “soft infrastructure” - communication, culture, creativity and social relationships — alongside investments in physical infrastructure.

The project used community theatre, poetry, music and storytelling to engage participants and disseminate findings through a production titled WanoWaife. Dr. Mbabazi explains that





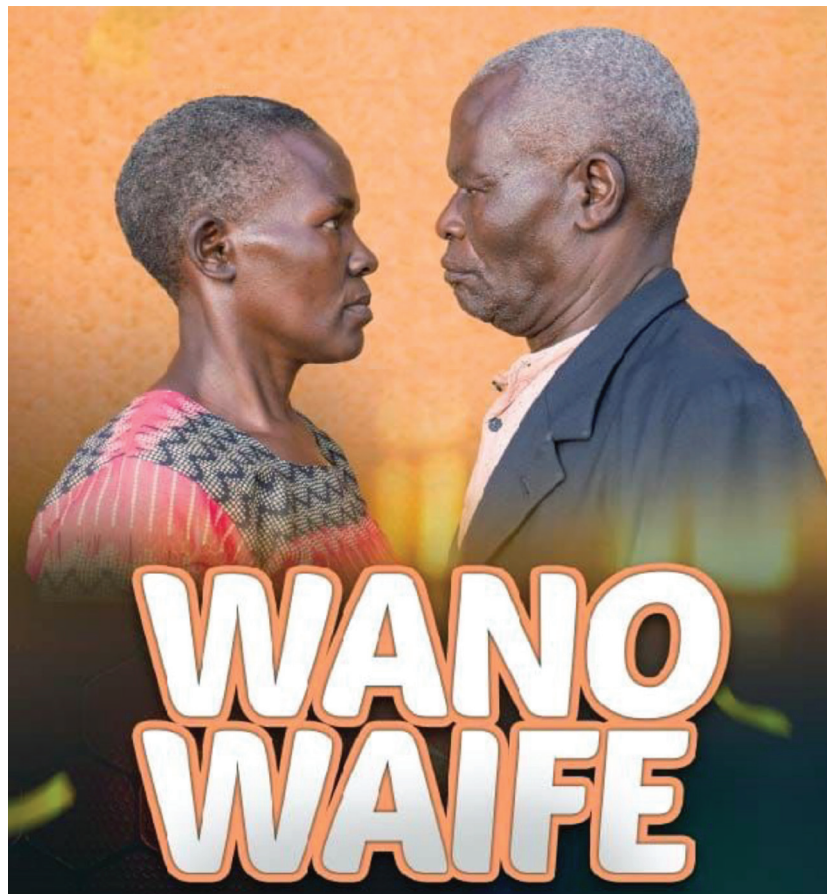
At the National Theatre in Kampala. Research findings are being disseminated through community theatre in a production titled WanoWaife.

accessible approaches such as community theatre enable research to generate meaningful social impact by directly engaging the people it seeks to serve.

The study urges governments, educators and development practitioners to strengthen communication systems, promote inclusive dialogue and incorporate community voices into development planning to foster social cohesion and sustainable development across East Africa.



A flier that advertised the community theater



Research: Female Breakdancers Challenging Gender Stereotypes

Kampala's Girls in Breakdance calls for stronger Arts support and policy inclusion.

A study by Mabingo Afladaniels has called for stronger support and policy inclusion for the arts after finding that female breakdancers are playing a transformative role in Uganda's hip-hop movement. The research, titled *Shifting Marginalities, Decentering Breakdance Masculinities: B-Girls in Breakdance Scenes in Kampala City*, examined the experiences of girls and young women in Kampala's breakdance scene and their contribution to a culture traditionally perceived as male-dominated.

The study found that female breakdancers have successfully challenged gender stereotypes surrounding the physically demanding dance form, establishing themselves as skilled and legitimate practitioners. Participants reported that breakdance had enhanced their confidence,



creativity, and leadership abilities. The research also highlighted the importance of the Nsambya Youth Sharing Center and Breakdance Project Uganda in nurturing young talent, particularly among disadvantaged

youth. Beyond performance, many female dancers were found to be contributing to social development through work with prisons, orphanages, vulnerable youth, and post-conflict communities.

Based on these findings, Dr. Mabingo urged policymakers and educators to give greater recognition to the arts as a driver of youth empowerment, employment, and social transformation. He warned that the growing focus on STEM disciplines should not come at the expense of creative arts, which play a vital role in shaping identity, culture, and social cohesion. The study also called for more research on the links between arts, urbanisation, and social change, as well as greater involvement of artists and cultural practitioners in policy formulation and development planning.

Spire wins Kofi Annan Courage in Cartooning Award

Dr. Jimmy Spire Ssentongo has been named co-winner of the 2026 Kofi Annan Courage in Cartooning Award, an international honour that recognises editorial cartoonists who demonstrate exceptional courage in promoting freedom of expression. Presented by the Freedom Cartoonists Foundation in partnership with the City of Geneva, the award acknowledges Dr. Ssentongo's use of satire to challenge power, promote accountability, and defend democratic values. He shares the award with Palestinian cartoonist, Safaa Odah.

The award organisers praised both artists for addressing complex social and political issues through powerful



visual storytelling and for amplifying human rights concerns. According to foundation president Patrick Chappatte, the two laureates embody the struggle for freedom of expression in different contexts. Dr. Ssentongo, widely known as "Spire," has built a reputation through

cartoons, newspaper columns, and public commentary that tackle governance, corruption, social justice, and public accountability in Uganda.

The recognition is being celebrated as a major achievement for Uganda's creative arts and academic communities. The award highlights the importance of political cartooning as a tool for civic engagement, public debate, and democratic participation. It also shines a spotlight on the role of African artists in using satire to question authority, challenge injustice, and promote human rights, reaffirming the power of art to inspire dialogue and defend fundamental freedoms.



Atim takes top poetry prize, elected society president

Atim Priscilla Ariance, a second-year Bachelor of Arts in Education student majoring in Literature and English, won the inaugural Dr. Ivan Edwards Poetry Award for Spoken Word, earning recognition as one of Uganda's emerging literary talents. The award was presented during a ceremony in Bugolobi on March 28, 2026, at which Uganda's literary community launched the national award. . Atim received the top Spoken Word prize and a cash award of US\$500 for her winning performance.

Her award-winning poem celebrated African unity and Pan-Africanism, drawing inspiration from influential leaders, and Apollo Milton Obote. Through the poem, Atim highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and shared African identity. She



described the recognition as a major milestone that has strengthened her confidence as a writer and performer while providing support for future literary projects and publication efforts.

The award has also elevated Atim's profile within Uganda's literary community. Shortly after her victory, she was elected president of the Uganda Poetry Society, succeeding Philip Matogo. She views poetry as a powerful tool for inspiration, social critique, and change, and has encouraged young people to pursue their creative talents with dedication. Her achievement marks a significant moment for Uganda's growing literary sector. It reflects the Uganda Poetry Society's broader mission of nurturing emerging writers, preserving literary heritage, and creating opportunities for young poets across the country.

EVENTS

Inter University Symposium on Pan Africanism Discusses Unity, Dignity and Decolonisation of Systems



The Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Prof. Henry Alinaitwe (Center) with royals and dignitaries at the Symposium on 21st May 2026.

Calls for reparations and unity in the Pan African struggle.

Keynote speaker, Mr Eric Phillips, (Chief Siphosenzulu) and Chairman Reparatory Commission emphasized the urgency of Pan African solidarity, warning that division remains Africa's greatest weakness. "Pan Africanism is about survival, dignity, and power. Unity is our strongest weapon," he told participants, urging nations to demand reparations for slavery,

colonialism, and other injustices.

Representing Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Acting Vice Chancellor Prof. Henry Alinaitwe described the gathering as a "historic convergence of global African identity." He emphasised that liberation must extend beyond political independence into economic and intellectual sovereignty, noting Africa's

redefinition of its place in a multipolar world.

Dr. Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala, Principal of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, highlighted the role of scholarship in transformation. "Humanities and Social Sciences are vital for social change because without those disciplines, there can never be societal



Her Highness, Dr. Queen Grace Eganda addressing participants.

change,” she said. Deputy Principal Prof. Eric Awich Ochen echoed calls for reparations, recalling strong appeals made at the African Diaspora Summit in Ghana in 2025.

The symposium also marked the start of Africa Liberation Week, with Organizing Committee Chair, Dr. Sarah Hasaba, urging participants to build strategic partnerships and commit to the Pan African vision. “May this symposium be an opportunity for practical solutions, strong collaboration, and renewed commitment,” she said.

Youth participation was a recurring theme. Queen Grace Eganda, General Secretary of AIDO Network International, stressed that the future of Pan Africanism depends on young people. “Any space where there’s no youth is a dying moment. We are passing the baton, the future is bright,” she said.

Her Highness Dr Queen Grace Eganda, was delighted to return to Makerere University, where her academic and leadership potential was nurtured in the 1990s. During that time, she was privileged to have served as the

“Pan Africanism is about survival, dignity, and power. Unity is our strongest weapon,”
Chief Eric Phillips.

Chairlady of Mary Stuart Hall, and happy to return to Makerere University, in the capacity of a global leader, and General Secretary of AIDO Network International.

Speakers consistently called for reparatory justice that goes beyond financial compensation to include restoration of dignity, identity, and cultural heritage. They urged reforms in education, including African-centered curricula, support for indigenous languages, and stronger diaspora collaborations. The symposium concluded with renewed calls for unity between Africa and its diaspora, positioning Makerere University as a leading intellectual hub for Pan African thought

and action.

About the symposium

Uganda hosted the five-day 8th AIDO Pan-African Summit, bringing together African diaspora leaders, traditional monarchs, government officials, diplomats, investors, and Pan-African organisations to advance African unity, diaspora engagement, reparatory justice, and sustainable development.

The summit was organised by AIDO Network International, in partnership with the Global Pan African Movement and the CARICOM Reparations Commission. AIDO Network International is a London-based international non-profit organisation with chapters and affiliated traditional leaders and kingdoms across Africa. It promotes peace, cultural preservation, and sustainable development by using culture as a foundation for unity.

The programme featured high-level policy dialogues, business forums, and investment exhibitions focusing on commercial agriculture, real estate, fashion, and fintech. More than 60 African kings and traditional rulers participated, highlighting the growing role of traditional institutions in cultural diplomacy, peacebuilding, economic development, and strengthening ties between Africa and its global diaspora.

The summit preceded the annual Africa Liberation Day celebrations held on 25 May 2026 at Kololo Independence Grounds. Organised by the Uganda Pan African Fraternity, the event commemorates the founding of the Organisation of African Unity and honours Africa’s struggle for freedom, unity, and self-determination

Princess Filda Lolem Lolem – Director of Culture and Heritage AIDO Eganda





A section of participants during the group discussions

Africa's Twin Transition:

Conference calls for Inclusive Green and Digital Futures

On 18-22 May 2026, CHUSS in collaboration with the University of Erfurt hosted a five-day international conference on Green and Digital Futures, which brought together more than 40 researchers and practitioners from Africa, Europe, and North America. The Conference discussed how Africa can leverage digital and green technologies to address challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Participants emphasised that digital and green transitions are interconnected and should be pursued simultaneously to promote sustainable development and resilience across the continent.

Conference convener, Dr. Evans Awumi, highlighted the need for inclusive policies that ensure the benefits of technological and environmental transformations are shared broadly. He noted that while Africa contributes little to global carbon emissions, it faces significant climate change impacts, and that emerging technologies such as AI have environmental implications through their energy demands. Discussions focused on preventing exclusion and ensuring that disadvantaged groups, including young people, are equipped to take advantage of the opportunities created by these transitions.

The conference concluded with calls for governments to invest in infrastructure, skills development, and regulatory frameworks, and for universities to expand research on both green and digital transformations. Participants also stressed the importance of African-led innovation, stronger collaboration among institutions, and the development of local digital infrastructure. Planned outcomes include a special publication on Africa's twin transitions and the establishment of a research network to continue advancing dialogue and policy engagement on inclusive green and digital futures.

Graduate students retooled in scholarly writing

The Graduate Training Unit of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences trained more than 42 PhD and Master's students in scholarly writing to strengthen research quality and support timely completion of graduate studies. The workshop covered key aspects of academic research, including proposal writing, literature reviews, research methodology, data collection tools, and research execution. Addressing participants, Assoc. Prof. Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala emphasised the importance of institutional support, noting that graduate education should not be a lonely journey and that students benefit from collaborative learning and mentorship.

Management System (RIMS), which will document interactions between students and supervisors and monitor research progress. She also announced plans to expand graduate workspaces and improve research facilities to create a more conducive learning environment.

Assoc. Prof. Nkabala highlighted ongoing efforts to improve graduate training and accountability through the introduction of the Research Information Management System (RIMS), which will document interactions between students and supervisors and monitor research progress. She also announced plans to expand graduate workspaces

and improve research facilities to create a more conducive learning environment. Encouraging students to seek support, she reaffirmed the College's commitment to fostering a culture of mentorship, collaboration, and academic excellence.

Dr. Isaac Tibasiima encouraged students to remain resilient throughout the research process, emphasizing that setbacks and uncertainty are normal parts of graduate study. Faculty members led sessions on research methodology, theory application, literature review, and academic writing. At the same time, students participated in interactive discussions and breakout sessions where they received feedback on their research ideas. The workshop concluded with a renewed commitment from CHUSS leadership to strengthen research capacity, support publication efforts, and provide structured mentorship to graduate students throughout their academic journey.



Staff and students in a workshop in CHUSS Smartroom



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

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