



SPECIAL EDITION

VOLUME 7

Bienvenue! MUST-PHARMBIOTRAC delegation welcomed in Buea, Cameroon



A delegation from Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) visited the University of Buea in Cameroon from July 1st to 15th 2023. The delegation was led by the Vice Chancellor of MUST, Prof Celestino Obua, accompanied by the University Secretary, Mr. Melchoir Byaruhanga, the Dean Faculty of Medicine, Assoc. Prof. Joseph Ngonzi, and the University Public Relations Officer. In addition to these dignities were the Stewards of the PHARMBIOTRAC project that included Dr. Casim Umba Tolo, Director & Center Leader, Assoc. Prof. Robert Tamukong (Coordinator, Postgraduate Research & Training), and Eng. Anke Weisheit, Chair, Innovation and Business Management.

The purpose of the visit was to showcase and enhance collaboration between the two partner universities. The specific objectives included:

- To establish an official in-person contact between top officials of both institutions.
- To formalize and showcase the collaboration between the two institutions.
- To provide students and staff of both institutions with a platform for networking.
- To provide opportunities for students and staff for learning and exchange on ongoing research projects.
- To foster exposure to diverse cultural and academic backgrounds and with an opportunity of exchange of ideas.
- To consolidate and finalize the joint research projects initiated during the first exchange visit.



L-R Prof Chichom Mefire, Prof. Celestino Obua and Prof. Gregory Halle Ekane

The exchange program between MUST and UB started when MUST hosted 34 students and 6 Staff of the Faculty of Health Sciences of UB between February 19 and March 6, 2023 within the framework of a students and staff exchange program. During this visit, which was much appreciated by all those who participated, a number of training and research activities were conducted.

In the spirit of reciprocity, some officials and academic staff of MUST and PHARMBIOTRAC leadership were invited by the University of Buea, Cameroon for the officialization of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two institutions.

During the visit, the MUST and UB staff and students were engaged in various activities which included:

- An official ceremony of signature (or public presentation) of the MOU between the two institutions.
- A workshop on drug development processes with a focus on phytomedicines with participation of experts from both institution
- A series of working session to operationalize the clinical demonstration rooms of the Faculty of Health sciences of UB. s.



Assoc. Prof. Joseph Ngonzi, Dr. Casim Umba Tolo and Assoc. Prof. Robert Tamukong

- The conduct of Masters pre-defense process for Pharmacology and Toxicology programs in the Department of Biomedical Sciences with participation of experts from both institutions.
- The conduct of end of year clinical examination of level 600 (5th year) medical students with participation of experts from both institutions.
- The conduct of end of year post-graduate clinical examination for first and second-year residents in Obstetrics and Gynaecology with participation of experts from both institutions.
- A number of social and entertainment events such as: visits to the Paramount Chief's Palace, the Limbe municipal stadium, Limbe Downtown Beach, a road trip to the Limbe Oil Refinery Plant, and site-seeing of the coastal towns of Limbe and mount Cameroon in Buea.



The Deputy Dean in charge of research and cooperation of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UB, Prof Chichom Mefire welcomed and gave the MUST delegations a security. This mainly focused on the crisis currently plaguing the Anglophone regions of Cameroon - the North West and South West regions respectively. The delegation was also taken through security issues that included the areas to avoid and the taxis to take and the ones not to take in case one needed to use. General guidelines were provided on how to avoid incidents of insecurity during the period of stay.

Day one of activities to mark the official visit to Buea was punctuated with a symposium organized by the FHS, UB under the theme “Drug development processes - a focus on phytomedicines”. The different sessions were chaired by Prof. Celestino Obua, Assoc. Prof. Joseph Ngonzi, Dr. Casim Umba Tolo, and Prof. Emmanuel Asongalem. The entire was moderated by Dr. Kouam Fondjo Arnaud, lecturer FHS, UB and Prof. Chichom Mefire.



Dr. Kouam Fondjo moderating

Prof. Gregory Halle Ekane

Prof. Gregory Halle Ekane (Dean, FHS, UB) officially opened the symposium by welcoming the MUST delegation and provided an overview of the Faculty of Health Sciences, with all the departments therein. Presentations reflecting the theme of the day were made by staff from both MUST and UB as follows:



Prof Robert Tamukong (Coordinator, Postgraduate Research & Training, PHARMBIOTRAC) made 3 presentations on the following topics: “Getting started: Key stages of drug discovery, generation and refinement”, “The protective role of validator bodies and ethical issues in drug development”, “Quality assurance and standardization of herbal products - Final steps towards commercialization” respectively.



L-R: Angella Nakato Musingo and Prof. Emmanuel Asongalem. Professor Making a presentation

Prof. Emmanuel Asongalem (Director of Administrative Affairs, UB) made two presentations on “Preliminary Toxicology and Teratogenicity studies; the use of animals in drug development research” and “Drug development from phytomedicines: Identification, collection, preparation and preservation” respectively.



Dr. Woquan Sama, Senior Lecturer, Pharmacognosist - Drug Development from Natural products, FHS, UB presented on “In-vitro drug research activities: Identifying active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), pharmacodynamics, potential benefits, dosage, route of administration, drug interactions”.

Prof Chichom Mefire (Deputy Dean in charge of research and cooperation, FHS, UB) presented on “Clinical Trials, phases 1-3”. His presentation focused on the type of research that studies new tests and treatments and evaluates their effects on human health outcomes.



Eng. Anke Weisheit (Chair Innovation & Business Management, PHARMBIOTRAC) made a presentation on “The Role of phytomedicines in the African Health System”. Her presentation focused on the value of African medicinal plants vis-à-vis conventional medicines which are associated with many side effects.



Ms. Angella Nakato Musingo (MUST PRO) made a presentation on “Branding, marketing and promotion of products”. This was in line with promoting production and giving insights tips on marketing new pharmaceutical products, a background which is not very familiar across the medical fraternity.

SIGNING OF THE MOU at UB



Day two of the visit was marked by the official signing and officialization of the MOU between UB and MUST. A courtesy visit to the office of the Vice-Chancellor, UB preceded the official signing ceremony. The signing ceremony was moderated by the PRO of UB, Madame Gwendolin Messinge.



Professor Ngomo Horace Manga Vice Chancellor, UB



Ms. Gwendolin Messinge PRO- UB

In his opening remarks, the Vice chancellor of UB, Professor Ngomo Horace Manga took the singular honour and privilege to welcome everyone to the momentous ceremony and pledged to keep the MOU alive



Prof Celestino Obua, Vice Chancellor, MUST addressing the gathering



Professor Obua, VC of MUST on his turn appreciated the warm reception accorded by the Buea team right from the airport. He was also delighted by the union of the two universities and pledged his full support on the operationalization of the MOU.

The angelic voices of the UB Choir thrilled the audience classical pieces, including the Uganda National Anthem. This could not have gone unnoticed by the vice chancellor of MUST who cherished the choir for its extraordinary and elegant performance. He then challenged the PRO, MUST to do the same at MUST.

Guided by Prof Robert Tamukong, and facilitated by the PRO, MUST, Ms. Angella Nakato Muyingo, some souvenirs depicting the beauty of the “Pearl of Africa”, the cultural emblem of the Ankole region, were handed over to the Buea team through Prof.Celistno Obua, and Mr. Melchoir Byaruhanga, MUST University secretary. The gifts to the VC, UB depicted the beauty of Uganda, Ankole and MUST.



Prof. Robert Tamukong, Ms. Angella Nakato Muyingo, Prof. Celestino Obua, and Prof. Ngomo Horace Manga



The ceremony was crowned by a sumptuous lunch provided by UB, and punctuated with thrilling voices and rhythmic drums of the University of Buea Choir.

Pictorial memories of the official signing of the MOU



Guard of honour for the MUST Vice Chancellor led by the host Vice chancellor



The UB choir with beautiful harmony

Souvenir and Gifts exchange



Ms. Mary Chiara Tendong Presenting a gift to Prof. Celestino Obua in appreciation for the hospitality accorded the UB team during the exchange visit in MUST-Uganda in March 2023.



Prof. Eneke Tambe Bechem Registrar of UB receives a souvenir



Prof. Celestino Obua appreciates Prof. Emmanuel Asongalem



Prof. Celestino Obua appreciates Prof Chichom Mefire



Prof. Celestino Obua hands over a souvenir to Gwendolin Messing PRO- UB



Prof. Celestino Obua and Mr. Melchoir Byaruhanga hand over souvenirs to the VC of UB Prof. Ngomo Horace Manga



Tour of the UB campus



Au revoir



(L) Prof. Celestino Obua, Vice Chancellor, MUST and Prof. Ngange Lyonge Kingsley, Deputy Vice-Chancellor in Charge of Research, Cooperation and Relations with the Business World, UB (R) Prof. Ngoma Harace Manga Vice Chancellor UB with Prof. Celestino Obua



L-Prof. Ngoma Harace Manga, Vice Chancellor UB with Ms. Angella M. Nakato MUST PRO; Prof Thomas Eku Njock, Vice-Dean, Programmes and Academic Affairs with Prof. Celestino Obua, Vice Chancellor, MUST

The following days were characterized by activities such as clinical examination of medical students, follow-up mentorship and grant writing projects started in Mbarara in March 2023

Clinical Examination of Medical Students

Prof Tamukong and Prof Ngonzi, both of MUST, took part in the clinical examination of level 600 (5th year) medical students and second-year post-graduate residents clinical examination in Obstetrics/Gynaecology and Surgery, respectively. The examinations were conducted over a period of three days at the Buea Regional Referral hospital, and the Limbe Provincial hospital respectively, both being placement and training sites for students from the Faculty of Health Sciences, UB.

The Limbe Regional Hospital is a 200-bed hospital is the principal referral hospital for the region operated by the Cameroon Ministry of Health. The hospital is located in in the coastal town of Limbe in the Southwest Region of Cameroon, one of the two An-

glophone regions in Cameroon. It was built in 1940 and serves as the main teaching hospital for medical students of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UB, and other of the nearby educational institutions in the Southwest Region of Cameroon.

The Buea Regional Hospital is an Intermediate Level, category 3 Health Facility that serves as one of the main referral hospitals in the South West Region of Cameroon. With its staff strength of 279 staff, this facility has 20 departments, with 16 specialists and 30 general practitioners, 180 nurses and 20 laboratory staff. Strategic in its Health Care provision in the region, the Hospital provides 24-hour services to patients and also serves as a teaching hospital for many institutions of higher learning, including the Faculty of health Sciences, University of Buea. The institution played a pivotal role in the fight against Covid-19 with the 1st and largest Covid-19 Treatment Centre in the South West Region, with very excellent recovery rates.





THE DEFENSE SESSION

Fully clad in academic regalia of UB colours, Prof Tamukong and Dr. Tolo chaired the different Jury panels that conducted vivas of Master students' research dissertations/thesis in Toxicology and Pharmacology respectively. The defence sessions were also heavily attended by members of family of the candidates. Successful candidates were congratulated with bouquets of flowers and clad in graduation gowns.



Congratulations! Panellists, students and their family members after the defence



Dr. Tolo Chairing a defence



Mentorship

In March 2023, during the UB staff and students' exchange visit to MUST, a series of research, mentoring and grant-writing exercises were started which needed follow-up. From this perspective therefore, Eng. Anke Weisheit, Dr. Casim Tolo and Ms. Angella Nakato Muyingo met with the UB students and staff respectively to evaluate the progress of the various assignments. Thus students were guided on the best ways on formulating grants that will have a potential in attracting funding.



Social interaction

Royal Treat by the Paramount Chief of Buea at his Mokunda Palace



Through the connections of Prof Tamukong, the MUST and UB teams visited the Royal Palace of the Paramount Ruler of the Kingdom of Buea, His Royal Majesty Dr. Robert Esuka Mbella Endeley. During, the MUST and UB teams share with the Chief the objectives of the MOU

between MUST and UB. The Chief, in soft, but authoritative voice identified with the need of creating linkages between academic institutions and traditional heritages of Africa, in order to promote indigenous knowledge.



With his strong and unshakable background in Information Technology and Data Science, His Royal Majesty Dr. Robert Endeley, PHD, with a strong background in cyber security, identified the gap of appreciating ICT in Africa as an instrument in promoting socio-economic development of the mother continent. He challenged the two universities to address the matter with urgency.





The two-week visit to the University of Buea culminated in a farewell reception dinner at the Chariot hotel, Buea that hosted the Mbarara delegation throughout their stay. During dinner was offered by the Faculty of Health Sciences, UB, gifts of souvenirs were dished out to members of the Mbarara team as a perfect way of remembering the Buea experience.

Members of the MUST team receiving gifts and souvenirs from students and staff of UB



Departure Day



A group photo of the UB and MUST staff marking the departure to the Douala International Airport, Cameroon.

Brief about the Cameroon and University of Buea



Main Entrance of the Principal campus of the University of Buea, Cameroon

General Description of the Site

Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon is a country in west-central Africa located along the Atlantic Ocean, with an area of 475,650 km² and a population of over 25 million (2018). It is a lower-middle-income country with two official languages, French and English. Cameroon is often known as "Africa in miniature" because of its geographical and cultural diversity. Its ethnically diverse population is among the most urban in western Africa. The cities with largest populations are Douala, its economic capital and main seaport; and Yaoundé, its political capital.

The educational system in Cameroon is a mixture of British and French precedents, and is divided into primary (six years, compulsive), secondary (five years), high school (two years), and tertiary (University). According to a 2020 UNESCO report, Cameroon's adult literacy rate is 77.07% [82.63% male and 71.59% females]. In comparison with neighbouring countries, Cameroon's higher education system has largely been a success since independence in the 1960's and thousands of graduates go onto work in the national public service and abroad.

Buea

Buea is the capital of the Southwest Region of Camer-

oon, one of the two English speaking regions in Cameroon, out of ten regions. The city is located on the eastern slopes of Mount Cameroon, about 70 kilometres by road from the economic capital Douala, and has a population of 300,000. Buea hosts the University of Buea, Cameroon's first Anglophone University. It is the site of several other higher institutes of learning, including St Francis Schools of Nursing and Midwifery presently known as Biaka University Institute of Buea (BUIB) and one of Cameroon's three Catholic universities.

The University of Buea

The University of Buea, Cameroon was founded as a University Centre in 1985 and became a full-fledged university in 1992. UB is one of two English speaking universities in Cameroon which follow the British system of education. It serves citizens from Cameroon and from neighbouring countries such as Nigeria, Chad and Equatorial Guinea and is often regarded as the best university in Cameroon. UB offers a rich portfolio of over eighty degree programmes at the Bachelor's, Master's and PhD levels, all of them designed to comply with the European Bologna BMP-System. Degree programmes in various fields including Medicine, Nursing, Accountancy, Translation/Interpretation, Gender Studies, Biochemistry, Microbiology continue to attract numerous applications from within and abroad.¹

1

The University of Buea is one of the seven public universities in Cameroon, and has a long-standing tradition of fostering research and cooperation with over 40 universities in Africa, Europe and North America. It constitutes five faculties (Arts; Education; Health Sciences; Science; and Social and Management Sciences) and one professional school, the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters, (ASTI).

The student population is over 12,000, including over fifty who are physically and visually disabled.

The Faculty of Health Sciences

The Faculty of Health Sciences is dedicated to achieving excellence and advancing health through leadership in education, discovery, innovation, research and exemplary health delivery services.

The Faculty offers a multitude of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Medicine, Nursing, Public Health and Hygiene, Medical Laboratory Sciences, and Biomedical Sciences.



Broad view of the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Buea, Cameroon

The Faculty of Health Sciences started in 1993 with Bachelor Degree programmes in Nursing and Medical Laboratory Sciences. It has developed since and now offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes from Bachelor to PhD in Nursing, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Medicine, Biomedical Sciences and Public Health and Epidemiology.

