

End Year Party: Universities Fund Celebrates Year in Style, Honours Staff



Universities Fund Board member Diana Mutisya (right) presents a certificate of recognition to staff member Mercy Gikonyo.

with student outcry over the New Funding Model.

The model was launched in 2023 by President William Ruto to boost access to quality education by all students, especially those from vulnerable and extremely vulnerable households.

However, university students and other stakeholders protested against its implementation, alleging discrimination.

The Universities Fund wrapped up the year in style with a luncheon at Park Inn by Radisson Hotel in Westlands, Nairobi.

The event was organised to celebrate the Fund's achievements throughout the year. Among those present were Universities Fund Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari and Universities Fund Board member Diana Mutisya.

Board Chairperson Prof Karuti Kanyinga, who was represented by Ms Mutisya, applauded the staff members for their dedication in enabling the agency better serve the higher education sector.

Employees who had performed exemplary well in their various departments received the Employee of the Year Award. They included Emmanuel Abook, Dennis Omare and Maxwell Mudavadi.

Mercy Gikonyo (Grants Management), Charles Matu (Supply Chain Management), Titus Macharia and Caroline Mbaka, both from Finance Management department, received Long Service Award certificates.

Mr Monari applauded the team for upholding the organisation's values in a year wrought

The model was later suspended in October after a court declared it illegal, leaving thousands of students in public universities and colleges stranded.

Nevertheless, the Fund organised a bevy of stakeholder engagements to boost innovation and entrepreneurship and encourage the uptake of digital technology among young people.



UF CEO Geoffrey Monari (right) honours Dennis Omare with Employee of the Year Award during the end-of-year party.

Taking Stock of the Year: UF Holds Stakeholder Events to Foster Partnerships

As 2024 comes to an end, Universities Fund (UF) has a reason to celebrate the efforts made in bolstering stakeholder relations and encouraging digital transformation in universities.

The Fund organised a bevy of engagements to boost innovation, entrepreneurship and uptake of digital technology among young people.

The event that stood out was Forum for the Alliance of Entrepreneurial Universities in Africa (AEUA) held in October at Dedan Kimathi University of Science and Technology.

The event attracted students, local and international entrepreneurs who showcased their inventions and led discussions around streamlining regulatory frameworks, enhancing financial resources, and bolstering development of skills to catalyse growth.

UF Chief Executive Officer Monari, who is also (AEUA) Chairman, said the summit aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial capacity

across African universities and accelerating sustainable economic development through partnerships, innovation, and applied research.

“There is urgent need for our universities to be self-sustaining, and public-private partnerships are key to this,” he said during the event.

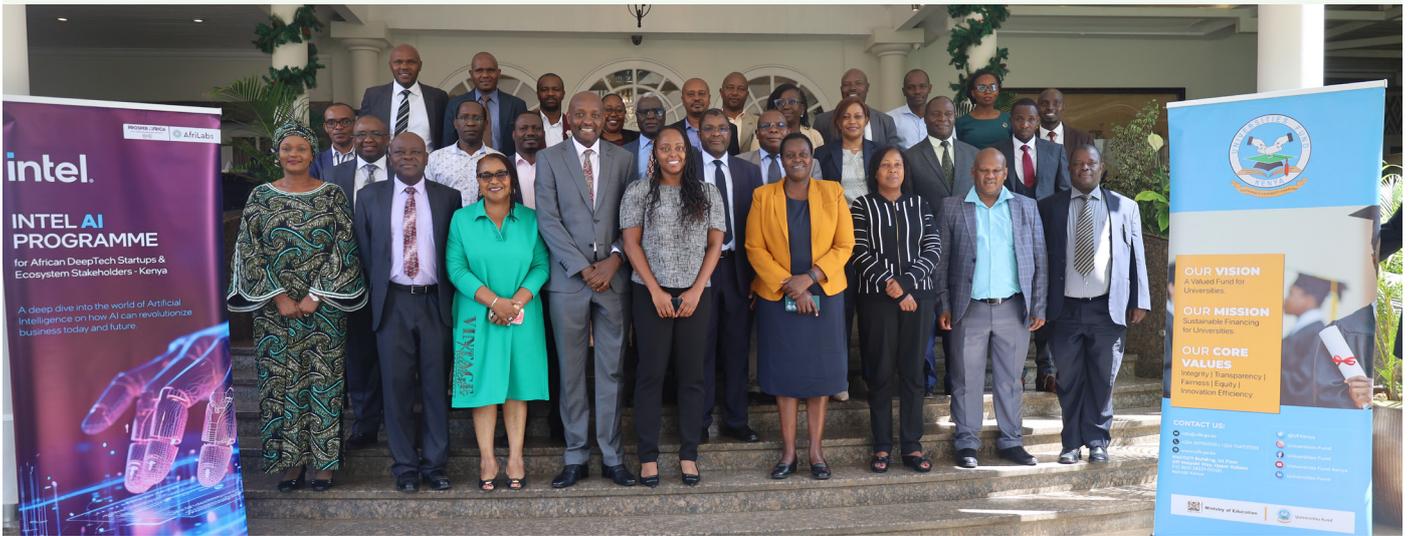
A major highlight in promotion of stakeholder relations was when Mr Monari participated in the Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship Institutions Leaders (CEIL) Summit, where he outlined the significance of innovation-driven progress and the place of universities in spurring economic opportunities for the youth.

Strengthening of internal structures to enhance service delivery was another highlight following staff training on Quality Management System. During the exercise that took place in Machakos, the staff were trained on compliance with ISO 9001: 2015.

On environmental conservation, UF planted 5,000 trees in different parts of the country.



Public Varsities Weigh Benefits of AI in Improving Financial Management



Universities Fund staff, university vice chancellors and other industry players during a workshop on Artificial Intelligence in Nairobi on December 9, 2024.

The Universities Fund (UF) and Intel Corporation teamed up to organise a training on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to promote financial prudence in the higher education sector.

The workshop explored the potential of AI in strengthening financial management in public universities and how it can be utilised to improve operational efficiency, optimise financial resources and promote sustainability.

The event took place at Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi on December 9, drawing vice chancellors and other stakeholders.

UF Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari emphasised the need for collaborative AI training within public universities institutions and the importance of integrating AI in resource optimisation strategies.

Intel Corporation - East Africa - Country Manager Susan Mbogo said AI can play a key role in transforming higher education by tailoring content to suit student's needs and provide real-time feedback and support.

Ms Mbogo said through AI-based virtual teaching assistants, students can personalise their learning, while lecturers can use it to process data to generate insights that help in improving decision-making and promoting better learning outcomes.

The participants outlined the actionable approaches to integrating AI in the financial framework of the higher learning institutions.

The experts also highlighted the challenges encumbering adoption of AI, with the leading ones being lack of adequate infrastructure and funding, scarcity of skilled personnel, ethical and privacy concerns, and overreliance on AI.

Public Universities were urged to integrate AI-focussed courses into their curricula in order to equip students with skills needed to thrive in AI driven jobs.

In addition, they were implored to train faculties on how to use AI tools, develop guidelines on the ethical use of (AI), Establish (AI) labs and research centres, strengthen industry partnerships and invest in AI-Ready infrastructure.

Public Universities were assured that by embracing (AI), they would enhance resource management, boost financial independence and take leadership in shaping technological future for higher education.



Agency Leads Tree Planting Initiative in Embu

The Universities Fund (UF), in partnership with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Trees for Kenya, held a successful tree planting exercise on December 12, 2024, at Njukiini Forest in Embu County.

The initiative brought together stakeholders from UF, KFS, Trees for Kenya, and the Njukiini Community Forest Association (CFA) in response to President William Ruto's call for tree planting to combat climate change, increase forest cover and promote sustainable environmental practices.

The event began with a registration session at the Kenya Forest Service station manager's office. Participants were then assigned roles before engaging in an insightful discussion led by the KFS station manager. The session emphasized the critical role of community involvement in forest conservation and highlighted the importance of tree planting for environmental sustainability.

Working collectively, participants planted and watered 5,000 seedlings across the designated area in Njukiini Forest. This exercise not only made a significant contribution to forest restoration efforts but also strengthened community bonds through the active participation of the Njukiini CFA.



UF staff Emmanuel Abbok and Presley Maina participate in tree planting exercise.

The Universities Fund reaffirmed its commitment to monitoring the growth and survival of the seedlings in collaboration with all stakeholders. Through this effort, UF aims to deepen its partnerships with KFS, Trees for Kenya, and the local community while fostering long-term relationships that ensure the success of reforestation initiatives.

UF remains focused on enhancing community engagement and promoting a sense of ownership among local stakeholders to secure sustainable environmental outcomes.

