



# Building a Civilization of Love

VOL. 1, ISSUE 2, MARCH 2025

## UNIMAK NEWSLETTER

INSIDE UNIMAK

Official Newsletter of the University of Makeni, Sierra Leone

### Vice-Chancellor's Message

REV. FR. PROF JOSEPH A TURAY

Dear Readers,

It is with great pride and gratitude that I address you in this edition of our University of Makeni newsletter. As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of our students, faculty, and staff, who continue to uphold our academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement mission.

The year 2025 marks a significant milestone for our institution as we continue to expand our academic programs, strengthen partnerships, and contribute to the sustainable development of Sierra Leone and beyond. Our commitment to promoting a culture of research, inclusivity, and leadership remains firm.

In this newsletter, you will find inspiring stories of our students' accomplishments, updates on groundbreaking research initiatives, and highlights of our community outreach programs. The accomplishments are proof of the tireless efforts and commitment of the entire University of Makeni family.

As we look to the future, we remain focused on empowering the next generation of leaders and change-makers. I encourage you to stay connected with us and support our efforts to create a brighter, more equitable world through education.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership. Together, we can achieve even greater heights.

Warm Regards,  
Proff. Joseph A Turay

VICE-CHANCELLOR  
UNIVERSITY OF MAKENI



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## University of Makeni Public Health Department Launches Centre of Excellence for Maternal and Child Health Education

The University of Makeni (UNIMAK) has taken a significant step in improving maternal and child health in Sierra Leone with the launch of the Centre of Excellence for Maternal and Child Health Education. Funded entirely by alumni, the Centre aims to improve healthcare through education, research, and advocacy, addressing the country's high maternal and infant mortality rates.

Makeni, Sierra Leone—March 1, 2025

On March 1, 2025, the University of Makeni (UNIMAK) Public Health Department launched the Centre of Excellence for Maternal and Child Health Education at the Yoni Campus. Funded entirely by alumni, the Centre aims to improve maternal and child health through education, research, and advocacy.

Sr. Magdalene Umoh, Head of the Public Health Department, expressed gratitude for the alumni's support. "They will someday give back in a positive way. Let's encourage them to support the institution that nurtured them," she said.

Sierra Leone continues to face high maternal and infant mortality rates, with 443 deaths per 100,000 live births and 75 per 1,000 births in 2019 (Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024-2030). The Centre was established to address these challenges and help bridge gaps in healthcare accessibility.

Doctor Patrick Turay, Director of Holy Spirit Hospital, emphasized the Centre's role in promoting healthcare. "Healthy mothers nurture healthy children, who in turn shape a prosperous society," he noted. Dr. Rebecca Esliker, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, called the Centre a crucial step in reducing preventable maternal and child deaths. "This Centre is ready to support the government and the Ministry of Health in capacity building and research," she said.

Dr. Brima Osia-Kamara, Director of Primary Health at the Ministry of Health, praised UNIMAK's commitment to healthcare. "Maternal and child health is a priority, and this Centre marks a significant step forward," he said, urging stakeholders to collaborate for lasting impact.

UNIMAK's Public Health Department, established in 2009, continues to grow. It offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs, including a Master's in Public Health. The launch of this Centre strengthens efforts to improve healthcare and reduce maternal and infant mortality in Sierra Leone and the wider West African region.

*"Healthy mothers nurture healthy children, who in turn shape a prosperous society."*

DOCTOR PATRICK TURAY



**Doctor Patrick Turay,  
Director of Holy Spirit Hospital**



**Dignitaries, organizers, faculty, and attendees at the launch of the Centre of Excellence for Maternal and Child Health Education at UNIMAK's Yoni Campus, celebrating a milestone in promoting maternal and child healthcare in Sierra Leone.**



**L-R: Rev. Sister Magdalene Umoh, HOD Public Health and Sia Koroma, Public Health Department Staff**



# University of Makeni Kicks Off First Semester Exams for 2024/2025 Academic Year

Makeni, Sierra Leone—March 16, 2025

The University of Makeni (UNIMAK) has commenced its first semester examinations for the 2024/2025 academic year. Students across various faculties are being assessed under strict academic regulations, emphasizing integrity and discipline.

Vice Chancellor Rev. Fr. Prof Joseph A Turay reaffirmed the university’s commitment to high academic standards, wishing students success. “Our students have worked diligently, and we are confident in their preparedness,” he stated.

The exams will run for several weeks, covering diverse courses. UNIMAK continues to uphold academic excellence, ensuring a smooth and fair examination process.



**UNIMAK students diligently sit for their first semester examinations in the university auditorium under the supervision of the Chief Examiner, ensuring a smooth and fair assessment process.**



*"We are committed to maintaining high academic standards and ensuring a smooth examination process. Our students have worked diligently, and we wish them the best of luck as they take this important step in their academic journey"*

REV. FR. PROF JOSEPH A TURAY

# SUCCEED Sierra Leone holds a lecture series across secondary schools to inspire Future leaders

Recognizing the critical role of mental well-being in shaping future leaders, SUCCEED Sierra Leone has launched an engaging lecture series aimed at inspiring secondary school students across the country.

Makeni, Sierra Leone—March 16, 2025

SUCCEED Sierra Leone, a leading non-profit research initiative at the University of Makeni, has launched the "SUCCEED Lecture Series: Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders" to promote mental health awareness among secondary school students.

The series kicked off last week in Port Loko, engaging students on the importance of mental well-being while encouraging them to overcome challenges and strive for excellence.

“The SUCCEED model is built on co-production with lived experience,” said peer researcher Amanda Nancy Steven, emphasizing the organization’s commitment to empowering young minds.

The initiative will continue across the country, reinforcing SUCCEED Sierra Leone’s mission to encourage and promote resilience and leadership among the nation’s youth.



# MBA Entrepreneurship Program at Unimak Equips Students for Business Success

As Sierra Leone continues to embrace innovation and economic development, the MBA Entrepreneurship program at the University of Makeni stands at the forefront of equipping aspiring business leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to drive change. Through expert-led training and mentorship, the program is shaping the next generation of entrepreneurs poised to make a lasting impact.



Staff and first-year students of the MBA Entrepreneurship program gather for a group photo during the program's bootcamp.

Makeni, Sierra Leone—February 18, 2025

The MBA Entrepreneurship program at the University of Makeni continues to empower students with the skills and knowledge needed to improve their businesses or launch new ventures, driving job creation and economic growth.

As part of its commitment to providing hands-on learning, the program recently hosted a bootcamp for its tenth cohort, facilitated by Dr. Andrew Ayiku from Ghana. His knowledge and experience offered students valuable real-world advice on entrepreneurship, enhancing the program's emphasis on mentorship and career counseling.

Mr. Francis Egujiana, an MBA Entrepreneurship program staff member, plays a key role in supporting students and ensuring the program runs smoothly, contributing to their academic and professional success.

The MBA Entrepreneurship program at Unimak promotes innovation and prepares students to make a meaningful impact on their communities and beyond by equipping aspiring entrepreneurs with essential skills.



## The University of Makeni Mass Communication Students Mark CNN's 'My Freedom Day'

Makeni, Sierra Leone—March 11, 2025  
The final-year Mass Communication students at the University of Makeni successfully marked the 9th edition of CNN's 'My Freedom Day' on March 11, 2025. Held in the department's virtual classroom, the event aimed to raise awareness about modern-day slavery and human trafficking, aligning with CNN's global campaign.



**UNIMAK Mass Communication staff, invited guests, and final-year students gather for a group photo after the 'My Freedom Day' event.**

Key speakers included Lawyer CMB Jalloh, Deputy Director of Academic Affairs at UNIMAK, and Abubakar Kanu, North East Regional Coordinator of the Sierra Leone Police Family Support Unit. Their presentations explored legal and social efforts to combat human trafficking and promote freedom.

Matthew Abdul Kanu, a department lecturer, welcomed attendees, setting the stage for an engaging discussion. Students actively participated, asking insightful questions and contributing to a dynamic conversation on the role of media in addressing global issues. The event served as an eye-opening experience, reinforcing the importance of communication in advocating for justice and human rights.

## UNIMAK Participates in the Launch of the BRAVE Project

The University of Makeni (UNIMAK) has reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality and violence prevention by actively participating in the launch of the BRAVE Project. This initiative, aimed at promoting respect and anti-violence education for women and girls in tertiary institutions across Sierra Leone, brought together universities dedicated to providing safer academic environments.

Freetown, Sierra Leone—March 21, 2025

The University of Makeni (UNIMAK) joined other institutions in Sierra Leone to officially launch the BRAVE Project, an initiative to promote respect and anti-violence education for women and girls in tertiary institutions. The event, held in Freetown, brought together universities committed to providing safer and more inclusive learning environments.

Representing UNIMAK, lecturer Madam Jalikatu Jalloh emphasized the university's dedication to gender equality and violence prevention. "We are not just representing UNIMAK; we are upholding its values and commitment to ensuring safer spaces for women and girls in academia," she stated.

Director of the UNIMAK Gender Desk Office, Mrs. Mary Hawa Turay, highlighted the importance of collaboration among universities. "This initiative allows us to network, share best practices, and learn from others. Engaging in discussions and workshops will help drive meaningful change across institutions," she noted.

The BRAVE Project seeks to address critical challenges affecting women in educational settings by advocating for sustainable solutions and policies. To ensure its long-term impact, universities, including UNIMAK, are exploring initiatives such as setting up committees, organizing awareness campaigns, and hosting workshops.

UNIMAK's participation in the BRAVE Project reaffirms its commitment to promoting a culture of respect, safety, and empowerment within its academic community and beyond.



**The UNIMAK team poses for a group photo with the organizers of the BRAVE Project launch.**

## UniMak Debating Team Triumphs at ECOWAS University Debate Championship

Freetown, Sierra Leone—March 2025  
The University of Makeni (UniMak) has emerged victorious at the prestigious ECOWAS University Debate Championship, reaffirming its dominance in intellectual discourse. The competition, held at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development Conference Hall in Freetown, brought together top universities, including Fourah Bay College (FBC), the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), and Milton Margai Technical University (MMTU).

Abdulai Barrie and Lamarana Samualla Gibateh from UniMak performed exceptionally well and clinched the top spot with an outstanding average score of 83 points. Their eloquence, critical thinking, and debating prowess outshone other participants, solidifying UniMak's reputation as a leader in public speaking. "This victory highlights our commitment to academic excellence and the power of meaningful dialogue," said a UniMak spokesperson. "We are immensely proud of our students for upholding the university's legacy." The UniMak Debating Council continues to inspire future debaters and promote a culture of intellectual engagement. This recent accomplishment solidifies UniMak's position not only in Sierra Leone but also throughout the West African region.



**UniMak representatives Abdulai Barrie (Centre), Lamarana Samualla Gibateh (right), and Desmond Fama (left) proudly display their championship trophy after winning the ECOWAS University Debate Championship in Freetown.**



## UNIMAK Launches Centre of Excellence for Human Capital Development

The University of Makeni (UniMak) has officially launched its Centre of Excellence for Human Capital Development, marking a significant step towards promoting education and skills development in Sierra Leone. The event, held on March 26, 2025, brought together key dignitaries, academics, and development leaders to celebrate this milestone.



**The Director of the Centre of Excellence for Human Capital Development, Mr. Musa Sesay, presents the Centre's vision and mission to an engaged audience at the launch event in the university auditorium.**

Makeni, Sierra Leone—March 26, 2025

The University of Makeni (UniMak) officially launched its Centre of Excellence for Human Capital Development today in a ceremony at the university auditorium. The gathering brought together dignitaries, academics, and development leaders, signaling an important milestone in promoting education and skills enhancement in Sierra Leone.

In his address, UniMak's Vice Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Prof. Joseph A. Turay, highlighted the Centre's role in promoting leadership and sustainable development through targeted human capital investment.

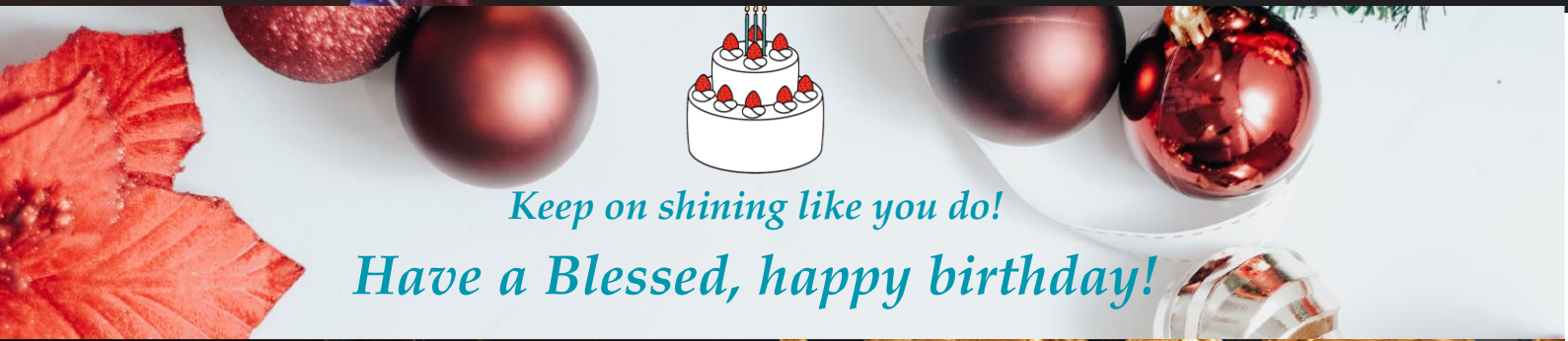
The ceremony featured remarks from key figures, including the Paramount Chief of Gbanti Chiefdom, the former Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission, and Resident Minister of the North-East Region, Ibrahim Jalloh, who delivered the keynote address. Minister Jalloh emphasized that investing in human capital is crucial to ending extreme poverty and creating inclusive societies in Sierra Leone. Mr. Musa Sesay, Head of the Development Studies Department at UniMak and the Director of the Centre of Excellence for Human Capital Development, presented the Centre's vision, emphasizing its potential to contribute to national development by building local capacity.

The launch concluded with strong optimism for the Centre's ability to equip students and professionals to meet Africa's developmental challenges.



*Dearest friends born in April,*

**YOU ARE PRECIOUS GEMS, AND WE APPRECIATE YOUR SACRIFICE AND COMMITMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY!**



*Keep on shining like you do!*

*Have a Blessed, happy birthday!*

## April Highlights

### Did you know?

April is a month filled with vibrant energy, signaling the start of the rainy season, making it a wonderful time to celebrate birthdays.

- **April's Name:** The name "April" comes from the Latin word *aperire*, meaning "to open," symbolizing the blooming of flowers and plants.
- **Seasonal Transition:** In Sierra Leone, April marks the shift toward the rainy season, bringing relief after the dry Harmattan period.
- **Independence Day:** Sierra Leone gained independence from British rule on April 27, 1961, making this a historic and celebrated month.
- **Zodiac Signs:** April-born individuals fall under Aries (March 21 - April 19), known for confidence and leadership, or Taurus (April 20 - May 20), recognized for determination and reliability.
- **Easter Monday:** Falling on April 21, it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and is a day for rest and family gatherings.

## STAFF BIRTHDAYS

**APRIL 2.**

**Agnes Sesay - Agric and Food Sciences**

**APRIL 5.**

**Jalikatu Jalloh - MA Sustainable Development**

**APRIL 6.**

**Paul Kamara - Mass Comm/Law**