



# NJALA UNIVERSITY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## EDITORIAL TEAM

- **Philip Foday Yamba Thulla, PhD:**  
*Editor-in-Chief*
- **Ralph Sesay**  
*Editor/Head of Production*
- **Ayuba Koroma**  
*Sub Editor*
- **Sidie Jusu**  
*Graphic/Layout*

## THE ISSUES

- Njala University Alumni set to Payback to their Alma mater
- Calls to Sustain Sierra Leone's only Surviving Plant Museum
- Njala University Welcomes Hundreds of Matriculants into its Fold
- Institute of Languages and Cultural Studies (INSLACS) Revives Its 'INSLACS Week'
- Njala University Complements Government Radical Inclusion Policy
- Obituary

## Njala University Alumni set to Payback to their Alma mater

**A**s part of its role to support and contribute to its alma mater, the Njala University Alumni is set to provide crucial help, enriching students' experiences, by undertaking several infrastructural projects within the University's various campuses.

That assurance was given to the University Administration during a courtesy call by the executive members led by the acting president of the association, Appeal Court Judge, Madam Musu Dabah Kamara. The Executive further briefed the Administration on the various contributions of the alumni to the University. These included the clearing of one thousand six hundred (1, 600) chairs donated by the Chinese and the current rehabilitation of the student dining hostels.



**Alumni Executive in a Group Photo with members of the Administration**

The outgoing President of the associations, Dr Richard Conteh, intimated the Administration of their plans to rehabilitate the burnt Maturie Block D, the Clubhouse and ASA canteen on Njala Campus amongst several others.

The executive assured the Vice-Chancellor and his team of the association's commitment to galvanise the necessary support to give back to its alma mater, especially as the institution is grappling with the challenge of providing essential social services for staff and students. It further expressed the desire to have representation in key statutory organs of the University so as to add their voice to the discussions around the development of the institution.

## PUBLISHED BY

The Public Relations Unit  
Njala University

Email: [rsesay@njala.edu.sl](mailto:rsesay@njala.edu.sl)

+23276336213/+23230317197





**The Alumni Executive on a conducted tour of ongoing projects at Njala Campus**

Professor Andrew Baimba highlighted the successes gained since his appointed as Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal. He called on the Alumni to support the Administration to create an enabling environment for staff and students and improve quality of educational services. He further emphasised that the substantive Vice-Chancellor and Principal would need the unflinching support of the Alumni to manage the numerous challenges confronting the University.

The meeting climaxed with a tour of several areas, including the burnt Maturie Block, the students' dining hall and several other areas requiring infrastructural development support.

## Calls to Sustain Sierra Leone's only Surviving Plant Museum

There have been persistent calls from the authorities of Njala University, biologists and environmentalists for attention to be paid to the country's only plant museum- the National Herbarium- housed at the Department of Biological Sciences, School of Environmental Sciences, Njala University.

According to Prof. Aiah Lebbie, head of the Biological Sciences Department, 'the facility is fighting several survival battles.' He further described the National Herbarium as 'an asset of scientific, cultural and historical significance, with its founding dating back to the early 1900s, long before the Sierra Leone Museum was founded in 1957.'

Professor Lebbie disclosed that a good number of energetic plant collectors, resident in the country during the colonial period, contributed to the humble beginning of the herbarium by collecting plant specimens across the country and archiving them for scientific purposes. He further affirmed that the most prolific collector was a British Plant Pathologist/Mycologist by the name of Frederick C. Deighton; he resided in Sierra Leone between 1926-1955, made thousands of collections of plants and fungal specimens and published a vernacular botanical vocabulary for Sierra Leone.

The Professor narrated further that 'The herbarium suffered due to the country's long period of civil conflict as rebels invaded it, threw open the doors of cabinets archiving specimens and, upon realising nothing of 'significance', left them exposed to the elements.' He lamented the entire loss of carpological specimens (seeds, fruits, wood and fungi) and the destruction of the cabinets where the specimens were housed.



**Professor Andrew Baimba Acting VC & P, Njala University**

The deplorable condition of the herbarium remains unaddressed because of the challenging economic situation of Njala University. With no operating cost and support for archival materials and resources to make field collections of plant specimens, the herbarium, Prof. Lebbie said, 'is at a crossroads.'

The Professor explained that Staff turnover had been high, and the entire staff complement needed to make the facility function 'no longer exists.'



As it is now, the space for processing field specimens and archiving the thousands of plant specimens is barely more than 900 square feet, resulting in non-fumigated or untreated plant materials laden with insects and fungi, causing damage to invaluable plant specimens. Insects have damaged some specimens, and there is no freezer to treat plants from the field before archiving, resulting in shortening of shelf life. Currently, only Professor Lebbie and a technician run the herbarium. An undergraduate female intern from Njala University and a postgraduate student have been assigned to assist in sustaining activities in the herbarium.

Until actions are taken, Sierra Leone's flora habitats are increasingly threatened. Without the support system in place, the University might not learn about and catalogue them for development purposes and discover novel uses from already documented and undocumented plant species. Most recently, Professor Lebbie was credited with discovering a near-extinct plant species named after him; *Lebbiea grandiflora*, a plant that belongs to the family *Podostemaceae*, the first African genus (*Lebbiea*) to be published in 30 years.

Material support, however, had been poured in, especially field equipment and archiving materials, which were hitherto impossible to acquire in the country. Above all, joint collections led to discovering new plant species, and, apart from its relevance to the field of Medicine, students of Botany, Agriculture, Food Science, Natural Resources, and Forestry had benefitted from the wealth of plant materials housed in the National Herbarium of Sierra Leone.

# Njala University Welcomes Hundreds of Matriculants into its Fold



**Professor Andrew Baimba,**  
Acting VC & P, Njala University

The Njala University Administration has welcomed hundreds of undergraduate and postgraduate students into its fold for the 2021/2022 Academic year.

The various ceremonies, held under the Grand Chief Patronage of the Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Andrew Baimba, took place on the 28th February and 3rd March, 2022 at Njala Campus and Bo Campus respectively.



**Dr Muneer Jalloh**  
Registrar, Njala University

The Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal explained the rich history of the University, stating, among other things, its contribution to the training of professionals in various fields of endeavours since its establishment in 1964.

He assured the matriculants of his Administration's commitment to delivering efficient and effective services to students and improving accommodation and other essential services across the campuses.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellors of the two campuses welcomed and congratulated the matriculants on their admission into Njala University. The DVCs warned the matriculants against illegal groups such as Frats, Sororities and other clubs known for committing hazing to their members. He, however, encouraged them to associate with those functioning under the auspices of the University.

After the matriculants had taken the oath to abide by the rules and regulations of the University, the Registrar, Dr Muneer Jalloh, presented them to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, who formally admitted them as students of Njala University.



**2021/2022 Matriculants at the Ceremony**





**Members of the Administrative and Academic Staff,  
Njala University**



**2021/2022 Matriculants at the Ceremony**

# Institute of Languages and Cultural Studies (INSLACS) Revives Its 'INSLACS Week'



**Mr A.J Sandy addressing the various debaters**

The Institute of Languages and Cultural Studies, School of Education, Njala University, Bo Campus has revived its popular week-long academic activity dubbed 'INSLACS Week'.

This year's event was organised from Wednesday 16th to Friday 18th February 2022, with essay, poetry, quiz, and debate competitions.

The week-long event, supported by the School of Education and the Institute, was geared towards building students' capacity in public speaking and generally improving their communication skills.

Competitors were drawn from the School of Education, Social Sciences and Law and the School of Community Health Sciences.

Daniel Sheriff (B.A Political Science Year Two) emerged as the best debater in the British Parliamentary Debate, Ibrahim Lappia (B.A Linguistics/Literature Year Four), best debater for the Presidential Debate, James Arnold Mansaray (B.A (Edu) Linguistics/Literature), winner of the Essay Competition. Amara Momoh (Bsc Public Health Year Two) and Ezekiel I. Sannoh (B.A Political Science Year Three) won the poetry and quiz competitions respectively.





# Njala University Complements Government Radical Inclusion Policy

Njala University has introduced a pre-service Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) at the undergraduate level in the Teacher Education Department to complement the Government's radical inclusion policy.

Early Childhood Education (ECE), variously referred to as a Pre-primary, Nursery school, Preschool and Early Childhood Development (ECD), is becoming a bedrock to the Government of Sierra Leone's sustainable human capital development.

Early Childhood Education, initially viewed as a traditional daycare, has now become an established University programme, geared towards equipping professionals with the knowledge and skills needed for the child's holistic development.

This sector of education has gained recognition from many private entities by adopting the Child Rights Act, the government white paper of the Gbamanja Commission Report, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, there is a recognised body for ECE which is the Nursery School Association (NSA).

Giving the importance of the ECCE programme to early childhood learning, the unit head, Mrs Yewah E. Minah, stated that 'the ECCE acts as a stepping stone for the development of good citizenry, lessens the risk of school dropout, boosts children's academic success up to higher learning, helps children acquire social skills such as independence, self-confidence, sharing, good eating habits, cooperation and teamwork. It also helps develop children's language skills.'



**Prof Adyln Johnson**

**Dean School of Education, Njala University**

Mrs Yewah E. Minah further stated that the job opportunities in ECCE were diverse across ministries and non-governmental organisations. Such job opportunities include Educator/Teacher/Lecturer, Community Development worker, Play therapist, Special education needs coordinator/teacher, Social worker, Child psychotherapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Children's Nurse, Health play specialist, Education mental health practitioner, Public policy coordinator, Child and family advocate, Child development facilitator, Child care administrator and Child protection officer.

If given adequate support, the ECCE Centre will stand to be a beacon for the education of minors across the country.

## Obituary

### Late Dr. Sam Augustine Laggao Honoured

The Njala University Academic and Administration staff have honoured a fallen academic, Dr Sam Laggao. The interment took place on Saturday, 27th February 2022 at Bauya, Moyamba District. The late Dr Laggao, who was an accomplished academic, retired from active service as a senior lecturer and former head of the Human Kinetics Department, School of Education, Bo Campus.

The University Administration, led by the Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal, staff and students, attended the befitting laying-out ceremony, where tributes were paid to the deceased.

While appreciating his long and honest service to Njala University, the Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal recounted fond memories of their time together; he described him as a reliable and hardworking individual who had motivated many.





**Dr Sam Laggao carried to his final resting place.**

Professor Adyln Johnson, Dean, School of Education, told mourners that the late man was a revered educationist whose love for his department was unmatched. At the same time, the former Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University, Professor Abdullah Mansaray, recounted the significant memories he shared with the late man noting that he had left an indelible mark on earth.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Bo Campus, Professor Mohamed Syed Fofanah, expressed that he had personal admiration for Dr Laggao as a sports icon, adding that he had been a great pillar for the resounding successes on Bo Campus.

The President of Academic Staff Association, Njala University, Mr Claude Dimoh, described the late man as an exemplary academic and a father to many that his constituent-the Academic staff-would miss, especially for his mentoring.

The late man was also Dean of students, member of Senate and former member of the University Court.



**Staff of Njala University, students and others mourners at the Laying-Out Ceremony at the Great Hall, Bo Campus.**



**Dr Sam Laggao carried to his final resting place.**

