



## Our October 2020 UDSM Alumnus

This is a “light corner” on the UDSM portal intended to feature for one month in turns two among many of the University’s graduates—alumni—since its foundation in 1961. The corner is designed to inform the public and the University itself, without prejudice in terms of historical precedence but guided only by professional information search, on the past graduates of the University, their whereabouts, their current position or engagement, what is remembered of them as past ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ of their time and, finally, on what is reckoned about their contribution to their Alma Mater, their nation, the Africa region and/or the wider world.

### Idris Suleiman KIKULA



**Year of matriculation: 1973**

**Year of graduation: 1976**

**Award: BSc (Hons), The University of Dar es Salaam**

**More info:**

- **M.Sc. (1979), University of Dar es Salaam;**
- **PhD (1986), Griffith University, Australia**

The University’s ‘Alumnus of the Month’ this October 2020 is none other than Idris Kikula, a well-known environmental scientist and ‘environmental crusader’ of many years’ standing belonging, of the graduating class of 1976.

He was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1951 in Idofi-Makambako, Njombe region (which was, until 2012, among districts that formed Iringa Region). He was admitted first at Idofi ‘Bush School for two years (1956-1957), proceeding thereafter to Makambako Primary School (1959-1962) and then moving to Mtwango Middle School (1963-1966). He entered Tosamaganga Secondary School for ‘O-level’ education (1967-1970), from where he joined Tosamaganga High School for advanced secondary education (the ‘A-levels’) in the years 1971-1972. Following a brilliant record of performance in the higher school-certificate examinations, he got admission to the University of Dar es Salaam in 1973 for a three-year degree programme in science, which he successfully completed in 1976. He was among some of the best graduates of the year, being retained by the University for a ‘staff-development programme’ as a Tutorial Assistant at the Institute of Resource Assessment (IRA). Thus, he was facilitated in the same year to undertake a one-year practical training programme in remote-sensing at the Laurentian University in Ontario, Canada (1976-1977). With this this practical back-up from Laurentian, combining with a strong undergraduate foundation, Idris was placed on a happy intellectual route to deeper study and research within the mission of the IRA. He did his M.Sc. programme at the University of Dar es Salaam in the two years of 1977-1979 and had to practise in the field for another two years before embarking on a doctoral programme at Griffith University in Queensland, Australia from 1982 to 1986.

Within the University of Dar es Salaam, Dr. Kikula distinguished himself, particularly for his service with the Institute of Resource Assessment (IRA), rising through the ranks from a tutorial assistant to an assistant research fellow (1978-81), to a research fellow (1981-87), to senior research fellow (1987-91), to associate research professor (1991-96) and finally to the full research-professorial position as from 1996. He also served in a managerial capacity as Associate Director of the Institute (1987-1988) and Director for six years from 1990 to 1996. Given a vast research- knowledge base and experience in resource estimations and environmental impact assessments, Professor Kikula has made wide contributions to many organizations—national and international. He received and accepted a variety of appointments, as chairperson, member, advisor or coordinator to their governing boards, councils, executive or advisory committees that kept his diary well-kept on ‘his side-table’. A few out of the long list include: the National Environmental Management Council, NEMC (1990-1996), COSTECH Advisory Committee on Natural Resources (1990-1996), SAREC’s Man-Land Relationship Project in Semi-arid, Tanzania (1990-1996), Tanzania Ministry of Agriculture Research Fund Committee (1992-1996), National Agricultural Research Council (1992-1996), World Bank-supported Forest Management Project Coordination Committee (1993-1996), and Tanzania National Land-use Planning Commission (1994-2000). Others are Serengeti Wildlife Research Institute (1994-2002), UNDP Capacity 21

Programme (1997-2004), International Institute of Environment and Development, IIED, London (2000-2006), Research for Poverty Alleviation, REPOA (2000-2014), and College of African Wildlife Management, Mweka (2004-2007).

From 2001-2006, Professor Kikula, as one of senior academic members within University, served as Principal for the University College of Lands and Architectural Studies [UCLAS] (after it had been transformed into a constituent college of UDSM). In 2007, he was appointed to yet another position – that of a founding Vice-Chancellor for the University of Dodoma, where he served for a total of eleven years until 2018 when he retired. As a founding vice-chancellor, he will remember the initiatives he had to ‘call to work’ and the troubles and travails he and his management team actually incurred in the search for personnel to staff the institution. It was not an easy ride! In fact—and in hindsight, his own university (UDSM) shared in a traumatic but surely unintended process of losing a sizeable stature of her staff to the other side! But the exercise extended to places even beyond!

Idris Kikula is credited with numerous publications, as many as 126 written works—single- or co-authored—in research journals, books, monographs, edited books and periodicals. This is, undeniably, something of a feat. These publications are in addition to other contributions in terms of government-sponsored draft plan assignments, seminar papers and rallying policy briefs.

Upon formal retirement in 2018, Professor Kikula was appointed by President John Magufuli as Chairman of a newly formed Mining Commission, along with eight Commissioners to work with him in order “to regulate and monitor the mining industry and mining operations in Tanzania.”



*Land degradation: a process resulting frequently from a combination natural and human-induced actions, with consequent destruction and deformation of the biophysical environment and the productive value of the land, soil erosion and desertification. [Photo credit: Ghaamid Abdulbasat Hatibu, 24/01/2019]*



*Prof. Kikula on a tour of the mining fields in Morogoro region (February 2020), following upon others in Geita (October 2018) and Morogoro (October/November 2019) emphasising, among other things, the need for environmental education to miners and their corporate social responsibility (CSR) to the community in their respective areas of mining operations.*

**Idris Suleiman KIKULA is Our October 2020 Alumnus,  
and his great stories begin here!**

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