



# University of Dar es Salaam

## Our December 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.

### Juma A. NGASONGWA



**Year of Matriculation: 1976/7**

**Year of Graduation: 1981;**

**Degree: M.A. (Development Studies), University of Dar es Salaam**

**More info:**

- **B.Sc. (1967, University of Suchdol (in Prague, Czechoslovakia));**
- **PhD (1988, Agriculture, University of East Anglia, UK.**

Juma Alifa Ngasongwa, ‘Alumnus of the Month’ for December 2020, is both a former academic staff member in the Institute of Development Studies in the 1970s and a postgraduate student of the University of Dar es Salaam (within IDS) in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He hails from Ngombo village in Ulanga district, Morogoro. He was born on 13 August 1941 in Ngombo, going to Biro primary school in Malinyi before enrolling for secondary education in the 1950s and ’60s. At independence in 1961 and in the years that followed, a number of achieving young boys and girls in Tanganyika were lucky to obtain higher education scholarships offered by a number of overseas governments in their support of the newly independent government. Juma was among those youths. He went to Czechoslovakia (today’s Czech Republic) in the early 1960s and enrolled at the Czech-Slovenian college of Suchdol in Prague and, as for all other foreign students, had first to learn the country’s language of instruction before participating fully in the subjects of one’s academic specialisation. In Czechoslovakia, as in other countries of the eastern bloc, the student’s academic subjects of choice had necessarily to be enriched within an overarching mastery of the world political economy of development. Mr. Ngasongwa came out and proved well-trained and articulate in this requirement, as well as in the scientific disciplines within his B.Sc. degree programme, which he successfully completed in 1967.

Against this background and upon his return from overseas, Ngasongwa was sooner or later to be attracted to and recruited into the University’s Institute of Development Studies (IDS) that was established, in 1973, as a mega-unit to offer common courses [‘East African Society and Environment’ and ‘Development Studies’] designed to expose all students, regardless of their subject specialisation and career choice, to an understanding of Tanzanian history, socialist ideology and political economy in equipping them as future stewards, development administrators and actors for tackling complex development challenges in society.

He served at the University as a lecturer in development studies from 1976 to 1984, with stints for field research and dissertation writing, which he completed in 1980. The title of his master’s thesis was ‘A study of agricultural development in Morogoro region: An historical perspective.’ From 1984, when the then Faculty of Agriculture was hived off from the University of Dar es Salaam to become the base of an autonomous Sokoine of Agriculture in Morogoro, he moved to join the staff at the newly founded second public university in Morogoro. He served there as a senior lecturer from 1984 to 1993, a period during which he was able to enrol at the University of East Anglia for a doctoral programme centring on agricultural development with particular focus on Tanzania’s rural development projects. His doctoral degree thesis (1988) was on the theme ‘Evaluation of externally-funded regional integrated development programmes (RIDEPs) in Tanzania: Case studies of Kigoma, Tanga and Iringa regions.’ He later produced a conference paper titled ‘Foreign-assisted regional integrated development projects in Tanzania, 1972-1987’ (University of Bradford, 1991).

In 1993, Dr. Ngasongwa was appointed by President Ali Hassan Mwinyi as his economic advisor, a position he served for three years until 1995 when he ran for and won a parliamentary seat for Ulanga West constituency and became a

Member of Parliament for the years 1995–2010. It was during this period that he was at the same time appointed by President Mkapa as Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism (1995–1996); subsequently as Minister for Industry and Trade by President Kikwete (2001–2005) and thereafter as Minister for Planning, Economy and Empowerment (2006–2008). In the period between 2001 and 2006, Ngasongwa’s stewardship in the Ministry of Industry and Trade was clearly marked with a search for Tanzania’s strategy towards industrialisation and national income-generation. Efforts were directed to policy formulation for development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in a crucial role of employment-creation and income-generation in the country. His over-riding argument was that SMEs, all over the world and in Tanzania in particular, could and should be established since their requirements in terms of capital, technology, management and even utilities were [are] not as demanding as it was the case for large enterprises. In addition, he argued, these enterprises could, and should, be established in rural settings to add value to the agro-based products as well as to facilitate an appropriate dispersal system of enterprises across the national breadth.

With a happy past training and teaching experience, galvanised by subsequent political appointments, he would press for SMEs now more than ever before as a practical tool for a more equitable distribution of income and an eventual poverty-alleviation strategy. It has remained his wish and dream not only at the level of a nation but also at the level of decentralised collaborative systems within a region, such as the Malinyi-Ulanga-Kilombero network he helped to stimulate within Morogoro region, through such agents as the ‘Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania (MVIWATA)’. Today, MVIWATA in Morogoro has as many as 600 members, incorporating institutional members as well, such as TAFORI [Tanzania Forestry Research Institute], who train them on cultivating, harvesting, processing and harnessing forest products, such as honey, for commercialisation and export. UDSM wishes him all the best.



*Awareness campaign by MVIWATA August 2013: Al-Haj Dr Juma Ngasongwa [Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania] at work in Ulanga and other districts in Morogoro region.*

*August 2013: Al-Haj Dr Juma Ngasongwa in exchange with the-then Hon. Prime Minister of Tanzania (Mizengo Kayanza Peter Pinda) in Malinyi, Ulanga, Morogoro region (Malinyi Leo, August 2013)*

**Juma A. NGASONGWA is Our December 2020 Alumnus,  
and his great stories begin here!**