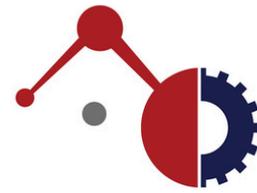


MKRI MONTHLY

Nov - Dec 2025 Issue



**Moses Kotane
Research Institute**

Research · Innovation · Excellence



MKRI receiving an award from the BRICS Students Commission in recognition of its outstanding contribution to student research and development, innovation support, and the promotion of an entrepreneurial mindset...
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"The knowledge hub for economic growth in KZN"

This newsletter highlights the key events and strategic engagements undertaken by the Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI) during November & December 2025. The activities align with the institute's mission of advancing research-driven solutions, skills development, digital innovation, and socio-economic empowerment in KwaZulu-Natal. Branded promotional materials and equipment were distributed to attendees as part of MKRI's visibility and stakeholder engagement efforts.

Top News

- MKRI Stakeholder Engagement & Gala Dinner
- Integrated Entrepreneurial Outreach & Senior Citizens' Festive Celebration
- The Intellectual Property Dialogue
- The Learn-to-Swim and Water Safety Programme
- Artisan Career Workshop and Expo



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BRICS Students Commission Gala Dinner

The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI) was recognised by the BRICS Students Commission for its outstanding contribution to student research and development, receiving an award for its impactful work in innovation support and entrepreneurial mindset development. Presented on 25 November 2025 at the Radisson Hotel in Durban, this honour highlighted MKRI's commitment to nurturing research-driven learning, empowering young innovators, and strengthening knowledge-based development across the province. Congratulations to MKRI on this well-deserved achievement.

MKRI Stakeholder Engagement & Gala Dinner



MKRI hosted its Annual Stakeholder Awards Dinner, celebrating the achievements of its employees, partners, innovators, researchers, and community champions who continue to drive economic development, digital inclusion, and evidence-based transformation across KwaZulu-Natal. The event was highlighted by a keynote address from EDTEA MEC Rev. Musa Zondi, who applauded MKRI's steadfast commitment to using research and knowledge to inform policy, empower communities, and foster sustainable growth. MEC Rev. Musa Zondi emphasised the critical role of evidence-based initiatives in advancing the province's developmental priorities and commended MKRI for its innovative approaches that bridge academic research, industry, and community impact. The evening not only recognised outstanding contributions but also reinforced MKRI's vision of leveraging research, collaboration, and innovation to create meaningful, long-term socio-economic impact in KwaZulu-Natal.

Integrated Entrepreneurial Outreach & Senior Citizens' Festive Celebration



MKRI participated in the Integrated Entrepreneurial Outreach and Senior Citizens' Festive Celebration at Jabavu Sports Field in the Nkandla Local Municipality. This outreach initiative formed part of EDTEA's ongoing efforts to bring government services closer to communities, strengthen local economies, and support small businesses to become active participants in the provincial economy. MKRI also showcased its services to the community, including research initiatives that assist the government in identifying areas requiring development, the provision of bursaries, and the establishment of digital centres that equip communities with essential digital skills for participation in the modern digital economy.



MEC's Integrated Service Delivery Outreach Programme

MKRI) exhibited at the KZN EDTEA MEC's Integrated Service Delivery Outreach Programme at Freedom Park in the Endumeni Local Municipality. This initiative promotes collaboration among government departments, the private sector, and traditional leaders to drive growth and development. It also seeks to follow up on government applications to identify challenges and assess the impact of the Mnotho Fund within the Endumeni Local Municipality. MKRI educated the public about its available opportunities and initiatives that support youth and academically driven individuals, such as research, skills programs, bursaries and internship programs

The 3rd Project Steering Committee – Phase 2 Status Quo Report



MKRI continues to play a central role in driving the KZN Tourism Master Plan Review through evidence-based research and strategic analysis. MKRI, together with KZN EDTEA, convened the 3rd Project Steering Committee meeting to present and deliberate on the Phase 2 Status Quo Report. This comprehensive research output unpacks district tourism profiles, identifies niche products, analyses cross-cutting opportunities, and highlights areas requiring an integrated provincial approach.

Through rigorous research and stakeholder engagement, MKRI is ensuring that the updated Tourism Master Plan is grounded in current realities, aligned to emerging trends, and responsive to the growth potential across KwaZulu-Natal's tourism landscape

The RoboGirl#2025



The RoboGirl#2025 initiative was officially launched at MKRI today. The program aims to reintegrate fundamental knowledge into the education system through applied learning in coding and robotics. By providing structured mentorship and hands-on experience, the initiative fosters research-driven learning, knowledge creation, and skills development among young female learners. The program is a collaborative effort between MKRI, DUT, Lenovo, and Toyota South Africa, reflecting a shared commitment to promoting research, advancing knowledge dissemination, and supporting community-cantered innovation.

The MKRI Wellness Day

MKRI hosted an Employee Wellness Day at our Durban office, reaffirming our commitment to employee well-being and a healthy, productive work environment.

The programme covered key focus areas including health screening, financial planning, estate planning, change management, and wellness activities, with valuable contributions from our partners and experts. Through initiatives like these, MKRI continues to promote holistic well-being, reduce workplace stress, and foster a positive organisational culture.



The Intellectual Property Dialogue



MKRI hosted a hybrid Intellectual Property Dialogue themed “What does it mean to own Intellectual Property for your invention or solution?”

The session brought together innovators, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders both in person and online for a masterclass, presentations, and a guided dialogue on IP ownership, protection, and its impact on innovation. As the knowledge and research hub of KwaZulu-Natal, MKRI continued to drive evidence-based development by equipping innovators and entrepreneurs with critical insights that strengthen the province’s innovation ecosystem. The programme featured contributions from EDTEA representatives, IP attorneys, and industry specialists, creating a valuable learning platform for participants seeking to better understand, protect, and commercialise their ideas through an informed, research-based approach.

The Pass-Out and Graduation Ceremony



The MKRI attended the Pass-Out and Graduation Ceremony of the Youth Development Academies hosted by the KZN Department of Social Development at the Vuma Youth Development Academy. This event celebrated young people who have completed Skills Development Programmes aimed at reducing unemployment and improving youth empowerment in KwaZulu-Natal. MKRI was honoured to participate and to support initiatives that strengthen youth development and social upliftment in the province.

MTN Digital Skills for Digital Jobs 2025 programme graduation



MKRI was honoured to have played a central role in the MTN Digital Skills for Digital Jobs 2025 programme, proudly hosting the Graduation Ceremony and Excellence Awards. As a key implementing partner, MKRI continues to drive digital capacity-building initiatives that empower young people with market-ready skills and support inclusive economic participation. MKRI extends its congratulations to our valued stakeholder, the EBL Institute of Business and Technology, for their successful delivery of this important initiative. MKRI remains committed to strengthening digital skills development across South Africa through evidence-based interventions, strategic partnerships, and programmes that advance youth empowerment and digital inclusion.

66th Annual Conference of the South African Statistical Association (SASA)



MKRI participated in the 66th Annual Conference of the South African Statistical Association (SASA), held at the Riverside Sun Hotel in Vanderbijlpark, Gauteng. The conference brought together statisticians and data specialists from across South Africa and abroad to discuss the latest developments in statistics and data analytics. MKRI's participation enabled the Institute to stay connected with academic research and industry leaders, keeping abreast of emerging trends and cutting-edge tools and techniques, including AI, which is increasingly recognised as a transformative force in both statistical analysis and the broader research landscape.

MKRI Skippers Training – Category C



Ten beneficiaries from municipalities across KwaZulu-Natal began the MKRI Category C Skippers Training, a research-informed skills development initiative designed to strengthen maritime knowledge, expand coastal capabilities, and open opportunities within the growing blue economy. Selected through a needs-driven, community-focused process, the cohort represents emerging skippers, small-scale fishers, and youth committed to transforming their local marine sectors. The programme equips them with essential navigation, safety, environmental, and compliance skills—empowering participants to operate confidently in coastal waters while contributing to sustainable coastal livelihoods, tourism, and economic growth across KZN.

KZN Growth Fund MasterClass

MKRI successfully participated in a panel discussion during the Funding Masterclass held at the MKRI conference venue, in partnership with the KZN Growth Fund Agency (KZNGFA). During the session, the MKRI team contributed insights on how research, knowledge generation, and evidence-based analysis strengthen funding readiness and enhance an organisation's ability to secure sustainable investment opportunities. The dialogue highlighted the importance of data-driven planning and reinforced our commitment to advancing research-led development across the province. The programme was aired on Gagasi FM, extending the conversation to a broader audience and further emphasising the critical role of research in driving meaningful growth and impact.



Tributes Excellence Awards & Expo

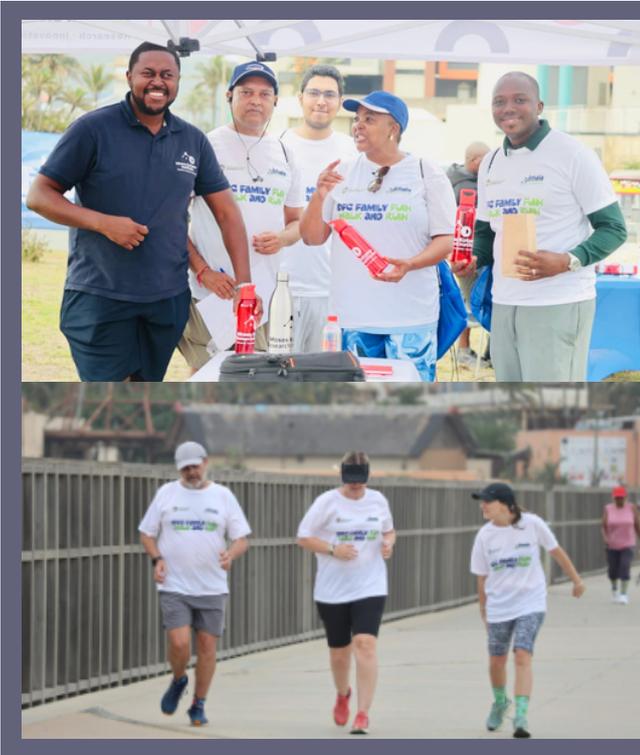


In recognition of Disability Rights Awareness Month (03 November - 03 December), the MKRI actively participated in key initiatives that champion inclusion and empowerment across KwaZulu-Natal. MKRI attended the 2025 Tributes Excellence Awards Breakfast at the Coastlands Hotel in Durban, a powerful platform hosted in partnership with Valhalla Arts that celebrates women with disabilities who are driving transformation, excellence, and social change. Further strengthening this commitment, MKRI also exhibited at the 2025 Tributes Disability Expo in Richards Bay, alongside partners and changemakers dedicated to advancing opportunities for people with disabilities. These engagements reflect MKRI's strong alignment with values of inclusion, visibility, and equal opportunity, as well as its mission to promote evidence-based development and meaningful societal upliftment, ensuring that everyone is part of the journey toward a more inclusive future.

The Learn-to-Swim and Water Safety Programme



MKRI advanced its Learn-to-Swim and Water Safety Programme at the Verulam Swimming Pool as part of our commitment to skills development. The initiative equipped the public with free essential swimming and water-safety skills, while supporting community-based safety efforts and raising awareness about drowning prevention during the festive season.



2025 IDFC Family 10km/5km Fun Run & Walk

MKRI was pleased to have participated in the 2025 IDFC Family 10km/5km Fun Run & Walk, held in Durban. The event successfully promoted workplace wellness, strengthened inter-entity relationships, and encouraged collaboration across EDTEA entities and key stakeholders. MKRI contributed by supporting the initiative and actively engaging in the Gazebo Park activities, where participating entities showcased their programmes, research-driven initiatives, and services to attendees, further reinforcing our commitment to knowledge sharing, community engagement, and partnership-building.

Honorable Mentions



Congratulations to MKRI on being a finalist in the Skills Development category and the MKRI CEO, Dr. Thandeka Ellenson, on winning the Standard Bank Top Woman Leader in Public Sector Award 2025.

MKRI was honoured at the prestigious Cleveland Media Awards 2025, receiving international recognition for its outstanding contribution to economic development research.



UPCOMING

5 & 6 Feb 2026: Innovation & Knowledge Summit

Artisan Career Workshop and Expo



APASA and MKRI hosted an Artisan Career Workshop and Expo, empowering learners with knowledge on artisan development and skills advancement. Companies exhibited, offering info on training, apprenticeships, learnerships, and career pathways.