

HEDSA and CUT national capacity building workshop on disability inclusion and assistive technology in Higher Education

The Central University of Technology (CUT), in partnership with the Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA), hosted a National Capacity-Building Seminar and Workshop on Disability Inclusion and Assistive Technology in Higher Education on 17 and 18 September 2026. The objective of the seminar is to work together to ensure that higher education institutions not only increase the enrolment of students with disabilities but also create inclusive environments where they feel welcomed, supported, valued, and empowered to succeed.

HEDSA President, Dr Nosiphiwo Delubom, said the seminar is not only about technology. It is about dignity, belonging, participation and creating opportunities for every student to succeed. "Let us challenge ourselves to move beyond plans and policies towards meaningful transformation. Let us explore practical strategies, strengthen collaboration across institutions and leave this seminar with actionable ideas that can enhance accessibility and improve student success," she said.

CUT Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Prof Mogomme Masoga, emphasised that disability inclusion must extend far beyond opening the doors of higher education institutions.

He said that while access remains essential, it cannot be regarded as the final measure of progress. "Opening the doors of our universities and TVET colleges to students with disabilities is an important achievement, but access is not where our responsibility ends. Our responsibility extends to creating conditions that enable students to participate meaningfully in teaching and learning, progress academically and ultimately graduate," said Prof. Masoga.



Pictured above: Leadership, collaboration and a shared commitment to disability inclusion. A special moment bringing together current HEDSA President, Dr. Nosiphiwo Delubom and former HEDSA Chairperson, Ms. Martie Miranda, alongside Ms. Ielhaam Tafari, NSFAS Disability Official, and the HEDSA Eastern Cape Regional Chairperson, Dr. Zanele Nomatshila.



Pictured above: Mr. Manyarela Mohau, Deputy Director: CUT Disability Unit and HEDSA Free State Regional Chairperson, shares his insights on advancing disability inclusion in higher education.

Director of the Association for and of People with Disabilities, Ms Nthabiseng Molongoana, drew on her lived experience as a person with a disability to challenge institutions to rethink what access truly means. “Access is not the same as inclusion. Admission to university is only the beginning. We must move from access to belonging,” she said.

Ms Molongoana stressed that disability inclusion should not be treated as the sole responsibility of disability units. Instead, it must be integrated across the entire institution, from teaching and learning to infrastructure, technology, student support and institutional decision-making. “Technology can provide access, but technology alone cannot create belonging. A policy can recognise a need, but a policy sitting on a shelf cannot create change.”

She further highlighted the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities are directly involved in decisions that affect their lives and education. “Nothing about us without us,” she said.



Pictured Above: A special moment captured with our HEDSA & CUT National Capacity Building Workshop attendees and the CLILT Senior Director, Dr. Champion-Ntamo, bringing together colleagues, students, and leaders united by a shared commitment to advancing the inclusion of students with disabilities.

The human impact of inclusive support was brought into sharp focus by Mr Yandisa Dlamini, a second-year marketing student at CUT who is visually impaired. Dlamini shared his experiences as a student and mentioned that it has not been easy, but with the support received from the university, he was able to overcome many obstacles. “My journey as a student has not been easy, but with the support I received, including assistive devices and assistance from the university, my dream became possible.”

He said being supported had strengthened his confidence and challenged assumptions about what students with disabilities can achieve. “It has shown me that disability should not determine what I can achieve. Disability is not inability. Do not allow obstacles or challenges to define your story. You are beyond what you think you are,” he said.

Addressing fellow students and the wider community, Dlamini encouraged people to remain curious, ask questions and challenge the barriers created by limited understanding.



Pictured Above: Yandisa Dlamini, a second-year Marketing student at CUT who is a student with a visual disability, is testing one of the technological devices. He is holding the WeWALK Cane, the most advanced smart cane to date, packed with groundbreaking safety, navigation, and AI features. It features custom-designed detection technology that alerts the user to overhead obstacles through haptic and audible feedback, while still maintaining the ground-level feedback of a standard white cane.



Pictures Above: A look at some of the wonderful attendees participating in the HEDSA & CUT National Capacity Building Workshop on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities and Assistive Technology