



LUANAR MONTHLY

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Newsletter



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Editor's Note

Celebrating Achievements and Fostering Growth in Academia and Beyond

Dear Our esteemed Readers,

We are delighted to present the latest edition of our newsletter, filled with inspiring stories that highlight the excellence and innovation within the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) community.

One of the remarkable events featured in this edition is the launch of the Agri-Innovations Challenge at the 2023 Vice Chancellor's Excellence Awards ceremony. This prestigious event celebrated the outstanding achievements of individuals and departments at LUANAR, recognizing their dedication to excellence in various fields. The Innovations Challenge, sponsored by CDH Investment Bank, showcased the creative thinking and problem-solving capabilities of LUANAR's talented minds, aimed at fostering innovation in agriculture and natural resources.

Additionally, we take you on a captivating journey where students from Athens Private Primary School immersed themselves in agriculture education during their visit to LUANAR. Engaging in hands-on experiences at LUANAR's main farm and aquaculture and fisheries science department, these young minds gained a deeper understanding of the vital agricultural industry. This immersive learning experience has ignited a passion for sustainable farming practices and instilled a sense of responsibility for the future of agriculture.

Moreover, we are thrilled to share the positive impact of the partnership between LUANAR and NICO Group. Through their generous contribution and collaboration, the Mkungudza Hostel received a much-needed renovation, raising the living conditions of students to new heights. This significant investment not only improved the hostel facilities but also fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among the LUANAR community.

As we celebrate achievements and growth within the LUANAR community, we extend our gratitude to the dedicated faculty, staff, and students who continue to inspire us with their dedication to excellence, innovation, and social responsibility. Their efforts exemplify the power of education and research in driving positive change in our society.

We hope that the stories shared in this newsletter resonate with you and ignite your own passion for excellence and positive impact. Together, we look forward to a future where knowledge, innovation, and education continue to shape a brighter and more sustainable world.

LUANAR Launches Inaugural Agri - Innovations Challenge at 2023 Vice Chancellor's Excellence Awards

BY ISAAC SONGOLA



Awardees poses for a group photo

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources –(LUANAR) on 3rd July 2023 launched the Agri - Innovations Challenge award alongside the highly anticipated 2023 Vice Chancellor's Excellence Awards ceremony. This prestigious event celebrates and recognizes outstanding achievements of individuals and departments within the university community who have excelled in various categories.

In his remarks, LUANAR Vice Chancellor, Professor Emmanuel Kaunda, said that the awards aimed at acknowledging and motivating staff who have demonstrated exceptional performance in their respective fields saying by honouring excellence, LUANAR aims at encouraging a culture of continuous improvement and dedication to academic and research endeavors.

"In any culture or an organization, one of the tenets that help it grow is when you start recognizing individuals that are outstandingly doing well. Once they are recognized here, the staff and students get motivated hence contribute to the growth of the institution," he said. "

This year's Vice Chancellor's Excellence Awards ceremony celebrated the achievements of numerous staff members and students across diverse categories.

Notable distinctions were awarded to those who showcased outstanding performance in their roles, those who published in esteemed white-listed journals, students in the LUANAR for More Impact essay writing competition, and those with outstanding innovations. The Innovations Challenge, sponsored by CDH Investment Bank, was a momentous addition to the event.

The Innovations Challenge highlighted and rewarded the exceptional creative thinking and problem-solving capabilities of LUANAR's talented individuals. This initiative aimed to foster innovation in agriculture and natural resources, providing a platform for students and staff to present groundbreaking ideas with practical applications.

Jennie Madinga, the Account Relationship Manager for the CDH Investment Bank responsible for the Corporate and Private Sector, expressed the bank's pride in being part of LUANAR's history and supporting innovations that can benefit Malawi.

We are committed to supporting innovation which is instrumental to adapting and thriving in all aspects in life," she said, adding that an investment in innovation will develop the nation as the initiatives contribute positively to the overall growth.

"These innovations will assist to address societal agriculture related challenges identified so that solutions are made to scaling up and investment. This will support exceptional innovations that will help the nation grow," added Madinga

The partnership between LUANAR and CDH Investment Bank has played a pivotal role in making this event possible, showcasing their shared commitment to empowering the next generation of agricultural innovators.

Speaking on behalf of fellow awardees in the agri - Innovation challenge, Dr. Tinna Manani, who is also the Dean of Faculty of Food and Human Sciences, said they are motivated by the two institutions as they have considered their achievements to be celebrated. "We will continue doing better since the institutions have started recognizing our works, they have challenged us to do more," she said.

The event was graced by the esteemed presence of Mr. Solomon Dindi, the Chief Executive Officer of Malawi Research & Education Network (MAREN), who served as the guest of honor. His speech was both insightful and motivational, inspiring all attendees to strive for greatness and contribute meaningfully to society through their academic pursuits.



NICO group's Generous Contribution Enhances Student Living at Bunda Campus

NICO GROUP hands over renovated Mkungudza Hostel to LUANAR

BY TIMOTHY GONDWE

Nico Group on 17th July 2023 handed over Mkungudza hostel to LUANAR, a hostel which was renovated by the group's financial support which falls under an Memorandum of Understanding between LUANAR and NICO.

The renovation of Mkungudza hostel was a major investment with a total cost of an impressive 105 million kwacha. This renovation breathed new life into spaces that had been

neglected for too long after their original construction. LUANAR was excited about the great improvements made, which promised to raise the living conditions of the students to a whole new level.

Part of the much – needed improvements included the installation of the two large 5,000 – liter water tanks, a crucial addition that solved the long – standing water problems of the hostel residents.

Thanks to improved water supply, hostel residents can enjoy better access to essential natural resources, making their daily life on the campus easier.

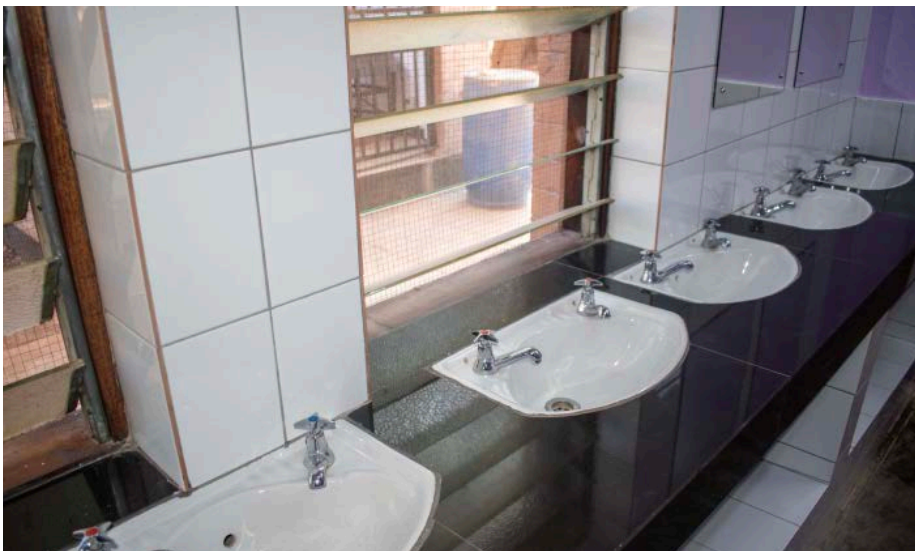
Speaking at the handover ceremony the Chairperson of LUANAR Council, Prof. Zachary Kasomekera, I, emphasized the importance of responsibility in maintaining the newly refurbished facility. He urged the students to take ownership and preserve the hostel for future generations, so that those who followed could benefit from it.

Furthermore, Prof. Kasomekera extended an earnest appeal to LUANAR's alumni and encouraged them to consider participating in similar development projects in the future.

"The idea was to create a sense of continuity and shared responsibility among the LUANAR community so that the institution would succeed and grow together as a unified force," In his remarks, Nico Holdings plc Managing Director, Vizenge Kumwenda stressed the significance of creating a conducive environment for students, ensuring they have the ideal space for learning, studying, and resting.

Kumwenda further urged both the students and the college management to embrace ownership and responsibility in safeguarding the recently renovated building. Cultivating a strong sense of ownership would empower them to work together, ensuring the preservation of the hostel and creating a pleasant living environment for all students.

The decision to renovate the hostel originated from a strategic session conducted in May 2022. During this session, there was a dedicated effort to enhance the relationship between Nico Holdings and LUANAR, leading to the commitment to renovate the hostel demonstrating NICO's commitment to supporting education in Malawi.



LUANAR inspires Athens Private Primary School students

BY TIMOTHY GONDWE

Athen's Private Primary School students visited Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) on 7th July 2023 to expand their understanding of the vital agricultural industry.

Accompanied by their teachers, the students eagerly explored LUANAR's main farm and aquaculture and fisheries science department, immersing themselves in various aspects of agriculture.

The students arrived at LUANAR filled with curiosity and enthusiasm, ready to embrace this hands-on learning experience. The visit commenced at the main farm, where the students were exposed to a wide range of agricultural practices, witnessing first hand the intricate processes involved in food production.

During their time at the main farm, the students learned about diverse farming techniques, including crop cultivation and livestock management. They observed the different stages of plant growth, from seed sowing to harvest, and gained insights into pest and weed control methods. The knowledgeable experts patiently answered the students' questions, sharing valuable tips and techniques for successful farming.

Afterward, the group proceeded to the aquaculture and fisheries science department, an exciting opportunity for the students to explore the world of fish farming. Guided by aquaculture specialists, the students discovered the intricacies of aqua fish farming, including fish breeding, feeding, and tank maintenance. The experts emphasized the importance of sustainability in fish farming and explained how aquaculture can contribute to food security.

The visit to LUANAR aimed to broaden the students' knowledge of agriculture and inspire them to



Athens primary school students cultivating knowledge at LUANAR

consider careers in the industry. By engaging in practical activities and learning from experienced professionals, the students gained a deeper appreciation for the significance of agriculture in our society.

Mr. Boniface Kumwenda, a teacher from Athen's Private Primary School, shared his thoughts on the visit, saying, "The trip to LUANAR was an incredible learning opportunity for our students. They were exposed to various aspects of agriculture, from traditional farming techniques to innovative practices. Witnessing the hard work and dedication involved in sustainable agriculture motivated our students to consider the importance of the industry in our daily lives."

The visit to LUANAR's main farm and aquaculture and fisheries science department left a lasting impact on the students. They developed a stronger understanding of the challenges faced by farmers and how smart agricultural practices can make a difference. The experience also instilled a sense of responsibility in the students, encouraging them to

contribute to the future of agriculture in Malawi.

By engaging with LUANAR's experts and witnessing real-world applications of agricultural principles, Athen's Private Primary School students left LUANAR with a newfound passion for agriculture and a desire to make positive changes within the sector. These practical experiences and insights gained from the visit will undoubtedly shape the students' perception of agriculture, enabling them to be advocates for sustainable farming practices in the future.

The primary school visiting LUANAR serves as a testament to the significance of experiential learning in molding the minds of future generations. Initiatives like these contribute to the development of a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector, ensuring food security and fostering an appreciation for agriculture's immense contributions to society.

LUANAR Enrolls 854 students in the Cohort 15 ODeL Programme

BY ESTHER MHONE



Newly enrolled ODeL students during the orientation at LUANAR Bunda College

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) held a comprehensive orientation program for its recently 854 students enrolled in their various Open Distant e-Learning (ODEL) programmes. The orientations which took place from July 24th to 25th, aimed to familiarize students with ODeL program and provide them with important information to ensure a successful academic journey in their studies. Speaking during the official opening of the orientation, Bunda College Director, Dr Judith Kamoto, emphasized on the significance of ODeL program saying that 99 percent of the coursework is conducted online through various e-learning platforms, creating room for those working.

"The program also includes two weeks of face-to-face learning to offer students an opportunity for direct engagement. This blended approach ensures a flexible and balanced learning experience that caters to the diverse needs of the students," she said.

Further more, Dr Kamoto encouraged students to familiarize with the academic rules and regulations saying this would enable them to understand

the expectations, procedures and support available to them throughout their academic journey.

"By adhering to these guidelines and regulations, students could maximize their learning experience and ensure a smooth progression through their coursework," she said.

One of the students, Iness Saikonde, expressed her excitement about the flexibility of ODeL, allowing them to pursue higher education while managing her current work commitments.

Saikonde further acknowledged the importance of e-learning platforms in facilitating her academic journey and expressed gratitude to LUANAR for providing an accessible and high quality education to a broader range of students.

Throughout the orientation, students were guided on how to effectively utilize e-learning platforms, access technical support services, and engage with interactive tools that would be integral to their learning experience. The students were equipped with comprehensive information about their respective programs' course structures, academic expectations and

assessment methodologies.

According to ODeL Administrator, Beatrice Bwanali, the orientation served as a platform to introduce students to the wide range of campus resources and available support.

"LUANAR ensured ODeL students felt connected and informed about the various opportunities offered by the university, such as access to the extensive library resources," she said

She further added that the ODeL program at LUANAR underscores the university's ongoing dedication to providing inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students saying whether attending classes on campus or remotely, LUANAR remains steadfast in its mission to deliver a comprehensive educational experience that meets the diverse needs of the students' body.

As higher education continues to evolve in Malawi, LUANAR's ODL program stands as testament to the University's proactive approach in meeting the ever-changing demands of students. With advancements in technology and evolving student demographics, LUANAR's ODL program is poised to redefine accessibility across the country.

Pictorial Focus: LUANAR Alumni at Illovo Sugar Malawi



The Vice Chancellor, Professor Emmanuel Kaunda, and University Registrar, Dr. Phillip Kaonda, had the privilege of attending the Illovo Sugar Malawi plc Annual Managers In Training (MIT) Conference at Sunbird Mount Soche in Blantyre. This conference serves as a platform for fostering professional development, knowledge sharing, and networking opportunities for aspiring managers within the organization.

Among the trainees were four distinguished alumni from LUANAR who are currently participating in the MIT program. One of them, Dustan Penama, has just started the program, while the other three presented their projects during the conference. The other Alumnus include Blessings Julaye, a proud BSc. Agricultural Extension graduate and his project is about "Drip Irrigation Optimization and Management Improvement" which focuses on enhancing the efficiency of drip irrigation systems and overall management practices. Eunice Unique Dette the other alumna who holds a BSc. in Agronomy is doing a project titled "Optimization of Ripener and Pest Control Effectiveness when Using Drones at Nchalo Estate." Eunice's research explores the application of drone technology to enhance the effectiveness of ripening processes and pest control measures. The final alumnus is Andrew Chapata, a bachelor's degree in Agriculture holder and is currently engaged in the "Cane Yield Forecast Project." His research aims to develop accurate forecasting models for cane yield, contributing to more efficient planning and management practices.

These projects undertaken by LUANAR alumni at Illovo Sugar Malawi demonstrate the versatility and capability instilled by the university's educational programs. LUANAR takes immense pride in the accomplishments of these Alumni as they exemplify the diverse skills and expertise obtained through their degrees. LUANAR wishes to extend its appreciation to Illovo Sugar Malawi for their continued commitment to this initiative over the years. Their support and dedication have contributed significantly to the training and development of numerous LUANAR alumni.

Alumni of the Month – July 2023



Henry Mwangomba

Henry Mwangomba is a highly skilled professional with expertise in the field of agriculture and crop protection. He has a Diploma in Irrigation Technology from the Natural Resources College, which he completed in 2014, as well as a BSc in Marketing.

With a diverse background in agriculture, Henry has established himself as a reputable tomato farmer and crop protection specialist. He possesses a certificate in pest and disease control from the Cropaia Institute in Israel. For the past seven years, Henry has dedicated himself to tomato farming, making it his primary crop. He does, however, grow watermelons, okra, leaf vegetables, cucumbers, peppers, and butternut.

Lynda Ndovie Jere

Lynda is a highly qualified Economist, holding a BSc degree in Agricultural Economics from Bunda College of Agriculture, where she graduated with a credit in March 2001. She pursued further education and earned an MSc in Economic Policy for Developing Countries from Bradford University in the United Kingdom in 2003.



Rose Sakala

Rose Sakala is an exceptional young woman who has made a significant impact in the fields of education, health, gender, and domestic violence in Malawi. Through her advocacy and initiatives, she has helped thousands of youths and women across the country. Rose is a Research and Policy Associate at the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), she contributes to the USAID-funded project called BUILD. This project aims to enhance integrated family planning, reproductive health, and population, environment, and development action.

Dr. Arthertone Jere

Dr. Arthertone Jere is a citizen of the Republic of Zambia. He began his primary education at Jacaranda Primary School in Lusaka and completed his high school studies at Kalonga Secondary School in Kabwe, Zambia. He pursued further education in his home country, earning his diploma, undergraduate degree, and later his Masters of Science degree from The Copperbelt University.



Students of the Month

July 2023



Evelyn Kaliati

Evelyn Kaliati is a fourth-year student studying Bachelor of Science degree in Gender and Development at the LUANAR City Campus. Evelyn is very passionate about making a difference and is actively involved in student governance. Currently, she is the LUANAR City campus speaker in the students' Union, where she speaks up for the rights and well-being of her fellow students. In this role, she works to create a cooperative atmosphere where student voices are heard, and their concerns are taken seriously. In 2022, Evelyn was crowned Miss LUANAR, a prestigious title that highlighted her charm, intelligence, and charisma. Her reign as Miss LUANAR provided her with a platform to raise awareness about various social issues, especially those affecting women and girls in Malawi.

Elisa Chuzu

Elisa Chuzu Chafika is a dedicated and ambitious 5th year veterinary medicine student at LUANAR.

Passionate about his program, he recently volunteered at the Blantyre Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (BSPCA) to further enhance his clinical skills. In the 2022/2023 academic year, he served as the president of LUANAR Veterinary Medicine Students (LUVESA), showcasing his leadership abilities. Furthermore, Elisa has a flair for writing and actively engages in matters of public interest. He has published an article titled "Make Agriculture Training Practical" in the Nation Newspaper and has contributed his experiences at LUANAR to inspire young children through the career of the week feature. Currently, Elisa is a proud member of the Malawi Union of Academic and Non-Fiction Authors (MUANA) and the co-founder of the Bunda Academic Writers Union (BAWU). His firm belief in Nelson Mandela's quote, "A winner is a dreamer who never gives up," serves as a constant source of inspiration and motivation for his pursuits.



Staff of the Month

July 2023



Chrissie Mkhwimba

Chrissie Mkhwimba, the only female Automobile Mechanic at LUANAR, stands as a remarkable example of breaking gender barriers in her field. With a strong passion for automobiles since her early years, Chrissie pursued her interest and achieved great accomplishments. Holding a Diploma in Automobile Mechanics from Lilongwe Technical College, earned through the TEVETA system, she also possesses a Grade 2 certificate from the prestigious Malawi Trade Test Center.

Chrissie embarked on her journey at LUANAR in 2009, defying societal norms that perceived the field of automobile mechanics as exclusively male-oriented. She firmly believes that technical education and vocational training are not limited to men but are equally accessible and enriching for women. Her unwavering determination to excel in her chosen career path has solidified her sense of belonging within this predominantly male-dominated industry.

Motivated by her lifelong fascination with vehicles, Chrissie's dedication and relentless pursuit of knowledge have propelled her forward. Her philosophy is rooted in the notion that when one possesses genuine interest in any endeavor, wholehearted commitment is the key to success. Chrissie has confidently embraced her role in the male-dominated profession, never allowing herself to feel out of place or inferior.

With her remarkable achievements and dedication to her craft, Chrissie continues to inspire and pave the way for aspiring female automobile mechanics, demonstrating that gender should never limit one's capabilities or aspirations.

Staff of the Month

July 2023



Principal Mdolo

Principal Mdolo is a lecturer and researcher specializing in Waste Management, Sanitation and Hygiene. He is completing a PhD in Chemical Engineering at the University of KwaZulu Natal. He holds an MSc in Sustainable Engineering Management and BSc in Environmental Science and Technology from the University of Malawi. Throughout his career, Mr Mdolo has held several roles at the University.

His research interest is understanding the Waste Management and Sanitation value chains and their opportunities to contribute to the urban and national economy. His research demonstrated how microwave treatment of human biowaste would improve anaerobic digestion, reduce handling costs, and sanitize it for safe management during emergencies.

He believes in finding alternative, innovative, and inclusive solutions to urban sanitation and hygiene challenges. He has thus researched several innovative faecal sludge-based sanitation technologies and low-cost centralized wastewater treatment systems in Malawi, South Africa and the Netherlands. He has presented his research at several National and International Workshops and Conferences.

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