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OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL
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Knowledge | Innovation | Excellence



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LUANAR has urged young people to take the lead in research and innovation, emphasizing their role in driving progress. This call was made during the Vice Chancellor's Excellence Awards ceremony, held on February 28 at LUANAR's Bunda Campus in Lilongwe.

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Farmers in Mchinji and Mzimba districts are reaping the benefits of a beekeeping initiative under the Trees for Better Nutrition and Health (T4BNH) project.

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Talent Spotlight

Beyond academics, Partson is an R&B and Pop musician known by the stage name DRANCHII. He writes and performs songs centered on love, relationships, and personal growth.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to another exciting edition of LUANAR's impactful initiatives, where we celebrate the remarkable strides the university continues to make in various sectors, from agriculture to innovation and gender equality. This issue is packed with stories that showcase LUANAR's ongoing commitment to fostering sustainable development, nurturing talent, and addressing critical challenges facing Malawi and the wider region.

We kick off with the success of the Trees for Better Nutrition and Health (T4BNH) project, where the introduction of beekeeping has proven to be a game-changer for farmers in Mchinji and Mzimba districts. The project not only enhances nutrition but also contributes to environmental sustainability and increases household incomes offering a practical model for achieving broader socio-economic goals.

The Africa Centres of Excellence (ACE II) Project continues to make strides in the country with its 5th National Steering Committee meeting, where key decisions were made to ensure the long-term sustainability of six centres across Malawi. These centres foster excellence in agricultural policy, aquaculture, entrepreneurship, and more, contributing significantly to Malawi's development goals.

We also spotlight LUANAR's role in environmental conservation with the launch of the 2025 Tree Planting Campaign, aimed at restoring ecosystems and promoting food security. This initiative, backed by the local communities and stakeholders, reflects LUANAR's dedication to making a tangible impact in the surrounding areas.

In a move to empower the next generation, LUANAR hosted an inspiring

Public Lecture on Mindset Shift, challenging students to take charge of their futures. This lecture provided young people with practical tools and motivational insights, encouraging them to embrace resilience, self-awareness, and dedication in pursuing their goals. LUANAR is committed to shaping the future leaders and changemakers of Malawi.

Additionally, LUANAR continues to lead the way in championing innovation and research, urging youth to take the lead in driving solutions to national and global challenges. The Vice Chancellor's Innovation Awards recognized young students who are already contributing ideas that can make a difference in the agricultural and business sectors.

Finally, we highlight LUANAR's efforts to inspire young girls to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Through its Open Day and school visits, LUANAR is providing girls with valuable role models and hands-on exposure to STEM fields, ensuring they are equipped with the tools to become the next generation of innovators and leaders.

This edition of our newsletter is a testament to LUANAR's unwavering dedication to advancing education, research, and sustainability, all while fostering an inclusive and empowering environment for students, researchers, and communities. As we continue to nurture the next generation of leaders, LUANAR remains at the forefront of driving positive change in Malawi and beyond.

We hope these stories inspire you as much as they inspire us. Together, we are building a brighter, more sustainable future for all.

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A Beehive planted in the forest through the T4BNH project

BEEKEEPING BOOSTS LIVELIHOODS UNDER TREES FOR BETTER NUTRITION AND HEALTH PROJECT By Kondwani Kapaula

Farmers in Mchinji and Mzimba districts are reaping the benefits of a beekeeping initiative under the Trees for Better Nutrition and Health (T4BNH) project. The initiative, implemented through the LUANAR FOODMA programme, is enhancing nutrition, environmental sustainability, and household incomes, showcasing promising results.

beehives distributed across the project sites were successfully mounted, with colonization taking off in key areas. Notably, Chiwoko Section in Chiosya EPA recorded a 50% colonization rate, while beekeeping groups in Ligerio Village and Tikondane Club celebrated full hive colonization, demonstrating the project's potential.

Recent monitoring visits confirmed that all 48

Dr Robertson Khataza, the Project Principal

Investigator, highlighted the initiative's impact.

"This project is more than just beekeeping; it is about improving livelihoods and strengthening agricultural sustainability. The successes we are seeing, particularly in Mchinji, prove that with the right management practices, beekeeping can thrive," he said.

Farmers who embraced best practices are already witnessing positive change. Ireen Mavuto, from Kamangilira section in Chiosya EPA, Mchinji, expressed optimism about the project's future.

"Beekeeping has given us hope. We have learned how to position our hives correctly, and we are already seeing results. This will help us generate income and improve our nutrition," she said.

Despite initial challenges such as improper hive placement and environmental factors affecting colonization, the project team has taken proactive steps. Farmers have been trained on optimal hive locations, pest management, and improved coordination among beekeeping groups to maximize success rates. Relocating hives to noise-free areas with abundant flowering plants has already yielded improvements.

Dr Khataza remains confident in the project's long-term impact. "We are learning from every stage and improving our approach.

Beekeeping has the potential to transform lives by providing sustainable income, improving nutrition, and supporting environmental conservation. The success stories we are seeing are just the beginning." The T4BNH project is aligned with Malawi's push for climate-smart agriculture and agro-biodiversity conservation. Looking ahead, the project team plans to expand extension services, provide refresher training, and enhance farmer collaboration to scale up beekeeping success.

APA HOSTS 5TH NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE AFRICA CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE (ACE II) PROJECT

By **Daniso Mkweu**

The Africa Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Policy Analysis (APA) at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) recently hosted the 5th National Steering Committee meeting of the Africa Centres of Excellence (ACE II) Project. The meeting, held at Sunbird Livingstonia Beach in

Salima on 12th February 2025, focused on reviewing and approving the 2025/2026 Annual Work Plans and Budgets for the six Africa Centres of Excellence in Malawi. In addition, participants discussed key achievements, identified challenges in project implementation, and made recommendations to ensure the achievement of the Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs).

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Deputy Director of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education, Dr Valentino Zimpita, highlighted the importance of the meeting in tracking the progress of the centres and ensuring their sustainability as the ACE II project nears completion. "It is crucial that all centres establish sustainability mechanisms. As the ACE II project comes close to an end, we have urged the centres to intensify resource mobilisation to ensure their continued



Members pose for a group photo during the meeting in Salima



Dr. Ruth Magreta-Jambo, APA Deputy Director presenting about APA during the meeting

success beyond World Bank funding,” said Dr Zimpita.

On behalf of the Vice Chancellors, LUANAR Vice Chancellor, Professor Emmanuel Kaunda stressed the importance of infrastructure investments tailored to the specific needs of each centre as a key part of their sustainability strategies.

“I have urged the centres to invest in infrastructure based on their unique needs. This approach is essential to support their long-term sustainability,” explained Professor Kaunda.

Dr Ruth Magreta Jambo, Deputy Director of LUANAR- APA, shared that her team is actively seeking external funding through project proposals to secure the centre’s future.

“At LUANAR- APA, we have already begun securing funding through the proposals we recently submitted. We are committed to maintaining this momentum to mobilise sufficient resources for the

centre’s sustainability,” said Dr Magreta Jambo.

The workshop brought together a diverse group of participants from across the education sector, including officials from the Ministry of Education and representatives from various Centres of Excellence hosted by public universities in the country. These centres include the Africa Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Policy Analysis (APA), the Africa Centre of Excellence in Transformative Agricultural Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship (TACE), and the Africa Centre of Excellence in Aquaculture and Fisheries (AQUAFISH) from LUANAR; the Africa Centre of Excellence in Neglected and Underutilised Biodiversity (ACENUB) from Mzuzu University; the Africa Centre of Excellence in Resilient Agri-food Systems (CRAFS) from the University of Malawi; and the Africa Centre of Excellence in Public Health and Herbal Medicine (ACEPHM) from Kamuzu University of Health Sciences.



Tree planting by LUANAR-NRC team at Nguluwe Masiyane village

LUANAR NRC LAUNCHES SUCCESSFUL 2025 TREE PLANTING CAMPAIGN

By Jeanie Luhanga

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), NRC Campus, launched its tree-planting campaign for the 2025 planting season in January, reinforcing its strong commitment to environmental conservation and community engagement.

The event which took place at Nguluwe Masiyane, T.A. Maliri, and was attended

by several distinguished figures, including the Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare Hon. Jean Sendeza, who also serves as the Member of Parliament for the area. LUANAR's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Emmanuel Kaunda, and senior NRC management staff were also present, emphasizing the importance of this initiative.

As part of the campaign, NRC distributed 20,400 agroforestry seedlings to surrounding communities, aiming to promote sustainable land management practices. This initiative aligns with LUANAR's broader mission of enhancing environmental stewardship under the theme "LUANAR for More Impact." In her remarks Hon. Jean Sendeza commended LUANAR NRC for the initiative and urged the communities to take full advantage of the tree-planting

opportunity to restore the environment emphasising on the significance of local ownership to ensure the survival and success of the seedlings.

Professor Emmanuel Kaunda also highlighted the importance of such initiatives in revitalizing forests and improving food security. He announced plans to further expand LUANAR's impact by extending support to communities within a 20-kilometre radius, which will include the development of model villages.

During the event, a total of 3,000 seedlings were planted, with the Nguluwe Masiyane community receiving special recognition for their role in organizing the initiative. Of the 20,400 seedlings

prepared, 7,000 were allocated to local communities, while 10,000 were designated for NRC forest enrichment. Dr. Patsani Kumambala, NRC College Director, reassured the community that additional seedlings are readily available at the institution and encouraged nearby communities to approach NRC for further support in their reforestation efforts.

This tree-planting exercise serves as a significant milestone in LUANAR's ongoing environmental conservation efforts. With continued community involvement, this campaign is set to have a lasting impact on ecological conservation and food security throughout Malawi.



LUANAR-NRC STUDENTS CHALLENGED TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR FUTURE

By Jeanie Luhanga



Mindset Shift: Taking Charge of Your Future story

Students at LUANAR's Natural Resources College (NRC) were challenged to take control of their future during a transformative public lecture on 28 February 2025. The event, titled Mindset Shift: Taking Charge of Your Future, was hosted by the Department of Agriculture and Food Systems, represented by Deputy Head of Department Maggie Phiri. More than just a motivational talk, the session provided students with practical strategies to shift their mindset and take deliberate steps toward success.

Renowned Malawian fashion designer and entrepreneur Lilly Alfonso emphasized the importance of having passion for what you do, encouraging students to pursue their interests with dedication and resilience.

Young entrepreneur and skills trainer Leonard Mafula highlighted the importance of self-knowledge, urging students to understand themselves and their strengths, as this knowledge would guide them in making better decisions.

and achieving their goals.

Mafula also emphasized on the fact that anyone can do anything, so long as they can start small and remain consistent. Young LUANAR-NRC lecturer Stephanie Musombi urged students to harness technology to their advantage, showing them how digital tools can empower their growth and help them take proactive steps toward their goals.

At the heart of this event was Verah Otieno Maganga, a lecturer in Textile and Fashion Design, who not only conceptualized and organized the program but also delivered a powerful session on how to create the necessary mindset shift.

Drawing from her journey of transformation, Maganga broke down clear, actionable strategies with a strong

emphasis on embracing a reading culture, setting intentional goals, and taking consistent action. Her insights resonated deeply, leaving students with a renewed sense of purpose and the tools to reshape their future.

The interactive discussion saw students actively engaging, asking thought-provoking questions, and leaving empowered to take control of their success.

This initiative by the Department of Agriculture and Food Systems marks the beginning of a greater movement toward self-leadership and transformation among LUANAR-NRC students. With the right mindset, commitment to growth, and continuous learning, LUANAR-NRC students have the power to shape their futures and create lasting success.



LUANAR CALLS ON YOUTH TO CHAMPION RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

By Faith Ndunya

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) has urged young people to take the lead in research and innovation, emphasizing their role in driving progress. This call was made during the Vice Chancellor's Excellence Awards ceremony, held on February 28 at LUANAR's Bunda Campus in Lilongwe. The event, supported by CDH Investment Bank, celebrated outstanding achievements in academia and innovation.

This was said by Professor Zachary Kasomekera, LUANAR Council Chairman, who emphasized the importance of youth-led innovation in driving positive change and strengthening Malawi's agricultural economy.

"We must tap into the creativity and innovation of our young people to develop solutions for our country's challenges," Professor Kasomekera stated. The event recognized 11 outstanding first-

year students with the Vice Chancellor's Innovation Awards, LUANAR Challenge awarded the top three participants with cash prizes.

CDH Investment Bank's Chief Business Development Officer, Jamal Kamoto, pledged the bank's support for innovative ideas, aiming to bring about positive outcomes.

"We are committed to supporting initiatives that promote innovation and entrepreneurship among young people," he said.

The event highlighted the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in driving economic growth and development in Malawi. LUANAR remains committed to fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among its students, and to contributing to the country's socio-economic development.



Fostering innovation through partnership: CDH Investment Bank presents a cheque to LUANAR's top leadership in support of the Vice Chancellor's Excellence Awards



Inspiring future scientists: Our chemistry technician introduces students to the world of chemistry during LUANAR's Open Day event

LUANAR INSPIRES THE NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN IN STEM

By Faith Ndunya

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) recently hosted a successful Open Day event, welcoming girls from nine local primary and secondary schools to explore the university's state-of-the-art facilities and discover the exciting world of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

The event, held in celebration of women in STEM, provided a unique opportunity for young girls to engage with LUANAR's faculty members and students, gaining hands-on experience and insight into STEM fields. The visiting schools included

Nkhombe Primary, Bunda Primary, Chitenga Primary, Maraan Secondary School, Bwaila Secondary School, Mitundu Secondary School, Lilongwe Girls Secondary, and Mai Aisha Academy. Faith Nakanga, a Chief Technician in Chemistry at LUANAR, expressed her pride in contributing to the shaping of the future for women in STEM.

"By providing young girls with a platform to explore and discover their potential in STEM fields, and offering them role models to look up to, we aim to inspire a new generation of leaders and innovators," she said.

The Open Day event is part of LUANAR's ongoing efforts to promote STEM education and empower women and girls in Malawi. The university remains committed to providing a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters academic excellence and innovation.

LUANAR KICKS OFF A SEMINAR ON MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN VEGETABLE AND CORN FARMING

By Timothy Gondwe Jr

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) launched a three-day seminar on modern technologies in vegetable and corn farming practices and production. The seminar, which started on February 17th, 2025, was organized by the Centre for Continuing Education and Professional Development (CCEPD) in collaboration with MASHAV Aid from Israel and MASHAV's International Agricultural Training Center.

The seminar aimed to promote the adoption of modern technologies to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and productivity in vegetable and corn farming practices.



LUANAR Boosts Agri-Productivity through Innovation

Participants had the opportunity to learn from experts and share knowledge on best practices in vegetable and corn production.

The objectives of the seminar included exploring modern technologies in vegetable and corn farming practices, promoting the adoption of these technologies to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and productivity, and providing a platform for knowledge sharing and networking among stakeholders.

The expected outcomes of the seminar included increased yields and reduced costs for farmers, improved food security in Malawi, and contribution to the country's economic growth. By

embracing modern technologies, farmers and agricultural stakeholders can play a critical role in promoting agricultural development and improving food security in Malawi.

LUANAR is committed to providing the necessary training and support to ensure the success of this initiative. The university has a strong reputation for providing high-quality education and training in agriculture and natural resources. Through this seminar, LUANAR aims to strengthen its partnership with stakeholders in the agricultural sector and contribute to the development of a vibrant and sustainable agricultural industry in Malawi.

LUANAR CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE BY INSPIRING FUTURE SCIENTISTS

By Tawonga Msowoya

Female faculty members and students from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) marked the International Day of Women and Girls in Science with visits to Lilongwe Girls Secondary School, Chipasula Secondary School, and Atsikana Paulendo Secondary School. The initiative aimed to encourage young girls to consider careers in science by sharing real-life experiences, challenges, and success stories of women excelling in science-related fields.

Through motivational talks, interactive quizzes, and discussions, LUANAR representatives urged students to break barriers and explore opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The sessions provided a platform for students to ask

questions, build confidence, and gain insights into the possibilities that STEM careers offer.

The visits also showcased the ingenuity of young learners. At Lilongwe Girls Secondary School, students presented a solar-powered chicken brooder model, demonstrating their creativity and problem-solving skills in agriculture and technology.

LUANAR remains committed to promoting gender equality in STEM by fostering mentorship and knowledge-sharing opportunities. Through initiatives like this, the institution continues to inspire the next generation of female scientists, ensuring that more women play a significant role in shaping scientific advancements.



Dr. Ponyadira Corner presenting to female students at Chipasula about LUANAR.

LUANAR MARKETING TEAM SPARKS EXCITEMENT WITH INNOVATIVE 'MY LUANAR' CHALLENGE

By Isaac Songola



Chiwoko Secondary School students in Kaliyeka, Lilongwe posing for a group photo after an exciting interaction with a team of LUANAR students

LUANAR's Marketing and Communications Office has sparked excitement with the "My LUANAR" challenge, an initiative that put students at the forefront of inspiring future scholars. Between January and February 2025, LUANAR students visited secondary schools across Malawi, sharing their university experiences and conducting career talks in a unique and engaging way.

According to Acting Marketing and Communications Manager Patricia Ngwale, the idea behind the challenge was to reach more secondary schools across the country. "As a university, it is difficult to visit every school directly. We saw an opportunity to involve our students, who were on holiday, to represent LUANAR in their communities. Our goal was to raise awareness about

LUANAR, inspire prospective students, and strengthen our brand," she explained. The response was overwhelming. Over 135 LUANAR students from all campuses took part, reaching approximately 19,800 secondary school learners across the country. Ngwale expressed her gratitude, saying, "This level of participation exceeded our expectations. It showed us that our students love their university and are willing to promote it. We appreciate their hard work and dedication."

To add to the excitement, participants shared pictures and videos of their career talks on LUANAR's official Facebook page. The challenge encouraged interaction, and students showcased their creativity in the process.

The success of this initiative has proven

that student-led efforts can be a powerful way to promote the university. "We plan to continue working closely with our students to enhance outreach and engagement. This challenge has laid the foundation for future programs that will make LUANAR even more visible while instilling a sense of pride in our students," Ngwale added.

The winners of the challenge have since been announced, and their efforts celebrated. But beyond the competition, the real success lies in the thousands of secondary school students who were inspired to dream big about their future with LUANAR.

NEWS BRIEF:

LUANAR TO LAUNCH A RADIO SOON

LUANAR is in the final stages of launching its own radio station, LUANAR Radio, a platform designed to inform, educate, and engage farming communities across Malawi. The station will broadcast both on FM and online, bringing expert knowledge straight to the people who need it most.

With programs in both local languages and English, LUANAR Radio will focus on agriculture, the environment, health and nutrition, as well as issues affecting youth and women. Farmers can expect practical farming tips, market updates, and discussions on challenges they face daily.

This initiative is part of LUANAR's commitment to using media as a tool for development, ensuring that vital information reaches communities that rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. The university believes that by empowering farmers with knowledge, it can help improve productivity, food security, and overall rural development.

Final preparations are underway, and soon, LUANAR Radio will be on air, giving farmers and rural communities a voice while keeping them informed and inspired.

By Isaac Songola

Talent Spotlight

PARTSON MKANDAWIRE AKA DRANCHII


RNB & POP MUSIC ARTIST



Partson Mkandawire is a second-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Crop Science at LUANAR, Bunda College. His studies focus on crop production, management, and sustainability—key areas essential for addressing food security and environmental challenges. He is passionate about applying this knowledge to make a meaningful impact in the agricultural sector.

Beyond academics, Partson is an R&B and Pop musician known by the stage name DRANCHII. He writes and performs songs centered on love, relationships, and personal growth. Through music, he expresses emotions and connects with audiences on a deeper level that words alone cannot achieve. His goal is to create meaningful and relatable songs that resonate with listeners in their everyday lives. His passion for music stems from his love of storytelling and the unifying power of music. He aspires to collaborate with well-known artists and producers while using his platform to promote agricultural awareness and sustainability. To him, agriculture and music share common ground, as both require dedication, creativity, and a vision for growth.

Studying at LUANAR has been instrumental in helping him balance these two passions. The university fosters an environment that encourages both academic excellence and personal development. As he continues his journey in crop science and music, he is excited about the opportunities ahead to use both fields as platforms for inspiring positive change.



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