

Newsletter

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LUANAR Crowned Best Service Provider at 21st National Agriculture Fair

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) has reaffirmed its leadership in agricultural innovation and knowledge transfer by scooping the Best Exhibitor – Service Provider Award at the 21st National Agriculture Fair, held from August 28 to 30, 2025, at the Chichiri Trade Fair Grounds in Blantyre.

The fair, organized by the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI), brought together farmers, agribusinesses, policymakers, and innovators under the theme "Driving Malawi Towards Commercialization and Economic Transformation Through Smart and Sustainable Agricultural Systems."

FULL STORY ON Page 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

LUANAR Eyes Global
Partnerships in Resource
Mobilization Drive

1 LUANAR Hosts the Inaugural Falling Walls Lab Lilongwe

FoodMa Project Boosts
Access to Quality Fingerlings
for Smallholder Fish Farmers

More news & publications......

Editors Note

As we share this edition of the LUANAR Newsletter, we celebrate a season of remarkable milestones that continue to position LUANAR as Malawi's leading hub of agricultural innovation, research, and transformation.

Our recent recognition as Best Service Provider at the 21st National Agriculture Fair is not just an award, it is a reaffirmation of LUANAR's commitment to turning science into real solutions that address the everyday challenges of farmers and communities. From crop inoculants to floating fish feeds, the innovations we showcased are a testimony to the ingenuity of our staff, students, and partners.

Beyond this victory, LUANAR is boldly stepping into new frontiers. We have hosted global platforms like the Falling Walls Lab Lilongwe, inspiring young innovators to shape the future, and launched strategic resource mobilization efforts to secure sustainable partnerships that will strengthen our teaching, research, and outreach. We are also proud of initiatives such as the FoodMa fingerlings project, our new

collaboration with Save the Children, and transformative engagements in gender leadership, staff welfare, and international cooperation.

Each story in this newsletter reflects our collective journey of growth and impact. Together with our partners, staff, students, and stakeholders, we are shaping an institution that not only drives Malawi's agricultural commercialization and economic transformation but also inspires global confidence.

We thank you for walking with us on this journey. Enjoy reading, and let us continue building a future of innovation, resilience, and excellence.



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LUANAR Marketing & Communications Office

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LUANAR Crowned Best Service Provider at 21st National Agriculture Fair



The LUANAR Team and CAT Team pose for a group photo with the trophy.

Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) has reaffirmed its leadership in agricultural innovation and knowledge transfer by scooping the Best Exhibitor - Service Provider Award at the 21st National Agriculture Fair, held from August 28 to 30, 2025, at the Chichiri Trade Fair Grounds in Blantyre.

The fair, organized by the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI), brought together farmers, agribusinesses, policymakers, and

innovators under the theme "Driving Malawi Towards Commercialization and **Economic Transformation** Through Smart and Sustainable Agricultural Systems."

LUANAR's award-winning pavilion showcased a wide range of cuttingedge agricultural innovations developed by its departments at Bunda College and Natural Resources College (NRC). These included crop inoculants for improved germination, affordable organic fertilizers, and floating fish feeds, all

designed to address pressing challenges faced by Malawian farmers.

Speaking after the award presentation, Professor Kingsley Masamba, Head of Food Science and Technology at LUANAR, emphasized that the recognition highlighted the university's commitment to its three core mandates: teaching, research, and outreach.

"As LUANAR, we are very happy for this award. It shows that apart from our teaching responsibility, our research and outreach work are being recognized and

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appreciated. We showcased many innovations that can transform agriculture and improve farmer productivity," Masamba said.

LUANAR's success was further strengthened by its collaboration with the Centre for Agricultural Transformation (CAT), which brought in partners showcasing agro-food processed products. The partnership is built on demand-driven research in areas such as irrigation, seed technologies, crop nutrition, and crop protection.

MacLeod Nkhoma, Executive Director for CAT, commended LUANAR for its role in developing farmercentered solutions.

"LUANAR is our key partner in demand-led research. Together, we are finding

solutions that farmers truly need to improve productivity and transform Malawi's agriculture sector," he said.

LUANAR extended gratitude to its sponsors and partners, including CAT, the Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD), Astria Learning, the Africa Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Policy Analysis (APA), for supporting their participation and contributing to the award.

Other winners at the fair included Bayer Malawi Limited (Best Exhibitor -Input Supplier), ADMARC (Best Exhibitor - Agro-Processor), and Invegrow (Best Innovative SME Exhibitor). The event was officially opened by Minister of Agriculture Sam Kawale.

LUANAR's victory at the National Agriculture Fair not only affirms its position as Malawi's leading agricultural institution but also underscores its central role in shaping the country's journey toward sustainable commercialization and economic transformation.



As LUANAR, we are very happy for this award. It shows that apart from our teaching responsibility, our research and outreach work are being recognized and appreciated. We showcased many innovations that can transform agriculture and improve farmer productivity.

Professor K. Masamba

LUANAR Eyes Global Partnerships in Resource Mobilization Drive

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) has stepped up efforts to position itself for international funding by engaging with global experts in resource mobilization. The university hosted a two-day strategic engagement workshop, facilitated by Dr Obed Kabanda, a renowned expert in Organizational Learning and leadership based in the USA.

Held from 23rd to 24th July 2025 at LUANAR's Bunda College, the workshop focused on building capacity in resource mobilization through targeted strategies and actionable steps. The initiative is part of the university's broader drive to secure large-scale international support for its research, training, and outreach programmes.

The workshop brought together LUANAR's academic, administrative, and research leadership to explore collaborative opportunities and reflect on strategic approaches for success in a competitive global funding landscape.

Speaking during the engagement, Dr Kabanda emphasised the need for African universities to adopt a clear value proposition when seeking global partnerships.

"For LUANAR to attract sustainable international funding, it must showcase its unique strengths and articulate a compelling narrative of impact," he said. "Donors are not only investing in projects but in institutions that demonstrate leadership, accountability, and a commitment to solving

real-world problems."
LUANAR Vice Chancellor,
Professor Emmanuel
Kaunda, welcomed the
engagement, describing it as
timely and strategic for the
institution's future.

"This is a pivotal moment for LUANAR. We must move beyond traditional funding models and embrace proactive, well-structured strategies that align with global development priorities," he said. "Our ambition is to become a centre of excellence that attracts investment because of the relevance and quality of our work."

The engagement concluded with the development of priority action areas for implementation, including strengthening donor relationship management, developing bankable project proposals, and institutionalizing a culture of strategic fundraising across all LUANAR faculties and centres.



The facilitator, Dr. Obed Kabanda, poses for a group photo with LUANAR management and staff.

LUANAR Hosts the Inaugural Falling Walls Lab Lilongwe

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) hosted the inaugural Falling Walls Lab Lilongwe on 15 August 2025 at the Natural Resources College (NRC) CAT Building, bringing together some of Malawi's brightest innovators to pitch their groundbreaking ideas in just three minutes.

The competition showcased bold solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Acting College Director for NRC, Dr Patson Kumambala, said the event marked an important milestone for Malawi's innovation ecosystem.

"We are witnessing the creativity, passion, and determination of some of the country's most promising minds. Falling Walls Lab Lilongwe is not just a competition; it is a platform for trailblazers to showcase

solutions to challenges that affect us all," he said.

Ten innovators presented ideas across sectors including agriculture and health. Beatrice Ali Phiri, a third-year Agricultural Engineering student at LUANAR emerged as the winner with her pitch "Breaking the Wall of World Hunger and Pollution."

Sharing her excitement, she said, "I am very excited to have won the Falling Walls Lab in Lilongwe, and I will make sure that this innovation is brought to life to end world hunger and pollution everywhere."

Second place went to Naomi Thom, a third-year **Biomedical Engineering** student at Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences for her solution to combat cervical cancer, while a third-year midwifery student at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Micah Chagunda took third position with his idea addressing involuntary urination. The winners received K3 million, K2 million, and K1 million respectively, sponsored by CDH Bank.

Dr Daniel Chiumia, coordinator of the Lab, described the event as a success. "It was our first edition, and we had amazing pitches from the top ten innovators.



Beatrice Ali Phiri, the winner, poses with her certificates and a dummy air ticket.

The representation from

academia and the public was excellent. Next year promises even more exciting ideas," he said.

Falling Walls Labs are held worldwide, giving participants three minutes to present their ideas to panels of judges drawn from academia, industry, and development. Winners advance to the global finale in Berlin in November, competing in the Emerging Talents category. The Lilongwe Lab received 77 applications, underlining the depth of talent in

Malawi. The event was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Africa Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Policy Analysis (APA), the Centre of Excellence in Transformative Agriculture Commercialisation (TACE), the Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD), the Africa Centre of Excellence in Aquaculture and Fisheries Science (AquaFish), Synergy Malawi, CDH Bank, and the Centre for Agricultural Transformation (CAT).





Mr. Kumwenda, a fish farmer at Santhe, explains how the tank-based fish breeding system works to guests during the project handover ceremony.

FoodMa Project Boosts Access to Quality Fingerlings for Smallholder Fish Farmers

Access to quality fingerlings has long been a challenge for Malawi's fish farmers, who often rely on self-produced stock that is of poor quality and mixed sexes. To address this, the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), through the Sustainable Food Systems in Malawi (FoodMa) programme, implemented a \$100,000 project funded by the Royal Kingdom of Norway.

Running from September

2023 to July 2025, the Sustainable Fingerling Breeding Model for Smallholder Fish Farmers project focused on creating a socio-ecological production system in Mchinji and Kasungu districts. The initiative trained farmers in producing all-male tilapia fingerlings, which grow faster than females, to boost supply and reduce dependence on public hatcheries. Speaking at the handover

ceremony at Santhe EPA

in Kasungu, Professor Daud Kassam, the Project's Principal Investigator, said the goal was to give farmers reliable access to better inputs.

"The idea was to come up with quality fingerlings for the farmers. By these quality fingerlings, we also thought of just doing only males because males are the ones which grow faster than females in the species of tilapia," he explained.

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To achieve this, farmers were trained in hormone-based sex reversal during the first 28 days of fish growth and equipped with tankbreeding systems to improve Abraham, a beneficiary production. LUANAR Vice Chancellor, **Professor Emmanuel** Kaunda, commended the project as an example of science directly improving livelihoods.

"What is critical is to see the translation of science into here is scientists working with farmers to apply their knowledge in reversing fish sex and improving production. If replicated widely, this can contribute

significantly to Malawi 2063," he said.

For farmers, the results have been transformative. Annie from Lisasadzi EPA, said the project had improved her income.

"In the past, I used to collect all the fingerlings and sell to farmers without checking the sex. Now, with the modern technology, I am able to change the sex of the fish products. What we have seen to males and sell at a better price," she said.

Farmers involved in the project have reported higher profits from fingerling sales and from raising fish, as the faster growth of male tilapia shortens production cycles and reduces feed costs.

LUANAR Partners with Save the Children to Empower Youth on Climate and Agriculture

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Save the Children International on 10th July 2025 to address challenges affecting children and youth in Malawi. The partnership aims to empower young people to become responsible citizens who are knowledgeable about environmental and agricultural issues.

As part of the collaboration, LUANAR and Save the Children will jointly organise the annual Climate Summit for Children and Youth, an event that has been running for the past three years. The summit will bring primary school learners to LUANAR to expose them to emerging challenges and opportunities in agriculture and environmental stewardship.

In addition, the two institutions will introduce an Agricultural Technology Challenge designed to engage youth in developing innovative solutions to agricultural problems. This initiative seeks to foster creativity, innovation, and hands-on problem-solving among young people.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, LUANAR Vice

Chancellor Professor Emmanuel Kaunda highlighted that the collaboration addresses critical gaps in knowledge and awareness among youth regarding climate change, environmental management, and biodiversity conservation.

"Many young people in Malawi have a limited understanding of how climate change impacts agriculture and the environment. This partnership will help bridge that knowledge gap," said Professor Kaunda.

Through this collaboration, LUANAR and Save the Children aim to nurture a sense of patriotism, responsibility, and environmental consciousness among young Malawians, empowering them to actively participate in addressing the country's development challenges.



The LUANAR Vice Chancellor, Professor Emmanuel Kaunda, and Save the Children's Country Director, Bekhimpilo Khanye, pose with the MoUs during the ceremony LUANAR Management and Staff *Union leaders sign the agreement.*

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LUANAR Management and Staff Union leaders sign the agreement

LUANAR Management and Staff Unions Sign New Collective Bargaining Agreement

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) signed a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with its staff unions on 1 July 2025, in what university officials described as a "historic milestone" aimed at improving working conditions and enhancing institutional stability.

The signing ceremony, held at the university's Bunda campus, follows the expiry of the previous CBA last year. The new agreement is expected to guide future staff-management engagements, address employee concerns, and strengthen the university's service delivery to the nation. Speaking during the event, Bunda College Registrar, Mr. Maxwell M'bweza, said the agreement reflected a

joint commitment by the university and the unions to work in harmony.

"This CBA is more than symbolic. It is a strategic instrument that will help us resolve disputes, empower both unions and management, and improve staff welfare," said Mr Mbweza.

"The previous agreement enabled the university to advance key objectives, including salary negotiations and reviewing conditions of service, with progress made possible through open dialogue and mutual commitment."

Echoing these remarks, the President of the University Workers Trade Union (UWTU), Mr. Lucius Chaima-Banda, described the occasion as a defining moment in the university's journey, saying the agreement lays the foundation for future engagements between staff and management.

"This agreement addresses staff concerns and promotes collaboration in improving working conditions and the overall well-being of the university. I therefore appeal to all of us to uphold the values and commitments outlined in this document as we continue building a better LUANAR together," he said.

LUANAR Vice Chancellor Prof. Emmanuel Kaunda commended the signing of the agreement, emphasising that enhancing staff welfare is crucial to the university's ability to produce high-quality graduates and foster innovation that benefits the nation.

"We cannot bake wellrounded students or breakthrough research without happy staff," he added.

The new agreement is part of LUANAR's broader efforts to foster a stable and productive academic environment. The signing ceremony was also attended by a representative from the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions, who applauded the university and the staff unions for their commitment to dialogue and cooperation.



The Japanese Ambassador to Malawi, His Excellency Youichi Oya, and the Vice Chancellor of LUANAR, Professor Emmanuel Kaunda, view the plaque for the Bunda Fish Farm, which was funded by the Japanese Government in 1999.

Japanese Ambassador Visits LUANAR to Strengthen Bilateral Cooperation

The Japanese Ambassador to Malawi, His Excellency Youichi Oya, visited the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) on 29 July 2025 as part of a learning tour aimed at strengthening existing partnerships and exploring new areas of collaboration.

During the visit, Ambassador Oya toured the Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries, where the Government of Japan funded key infrastructure projects in 1999. He also visited the AquaFish Centre, a LUANAR's regional research hub in aquaculture and fisheries, to appreciate progress made since Japan's initial investment.

LUANAR Vice Chancellor, Professor Emmanuel Kaunda, expressed gratitude for Japan's longstanding support, highlighting contributions such as infrastructure development, scholarships, and academic exchange programmes. He further engaged Ambassador Oya in discussions on expanding support to other priority areas within the university.

Japan remains a committed partner in Malawi's education and research sectors, having provided both technical and financial assistance over the years.

AquaFish reviews progress On Carp-E Projects

The Africa Centre of Excellence in Aquaculture and Fisheries (AquaFish) has commended researchers behind the Community Action Research Projects for Enterprise Development (CARP-E) for what it described as "impressive progress" in implementing their innovations.

Held at The Fourty Four Hotel in Lilongwe on 10th July 2024, the progress review meeting brought together Principal Investigators (PIs) and project team members to showcase their achievements, reflect on challenges, and plan for the next phase of project execution.

Speaking during the event,

the AquaFish Director commended the dedication and technical strides made by the teams so far, saying the Centre was "impressed with the current progress" and encouraged all implementers to "keep up the momentum and deliver even more impact."

The day-long meeting featured a series of presentations from the project implementers, spanning the fish food, livestock feed, and aqua feed value chains.

AquaFish's Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) Coordinator, Dr. Makungwa, took participants through the World Bank's environmental safeguard policies, reminding teams of the importance of aligning their activities with international sustainability standards.

The meeting ended with a working session where teams updated their work plans and submitted reports, wrapping up what many described as a productive and energising day.

The CARP-E projects, supported through AquaFish, are central to driving research-led solutions for food security, resilience, and economic development across Malawi and the region.



Chisomo Masauli presents the progress of her team's project.

SHE Leads: Elevating Voices of Female Student Leaders



Female student union leaders from all LUANAR campuses pose for a photo at the event.

The Gender Coordinating Unit (GCU), in collaboration with the Directorate of Student Affairs (DOSA), successfully hosted the SHE Leads Program: Elevating Voices at New Dawn Lodge on 30th August 2025. This transformative workshop brought together female student union leaders from LUANAR's Bunda, City, NRC, and ODeL campuses for a day of dialogue, reflection, and strategic action.

"The workshop provided participants with a platform to define their leadership goals, set priorities, and envision their long-term impact, fostering a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities of leading as a woman within the university setting."

One of the most powerful sessions of the day focused on gender-based violence (GBV). Participants engaged in candid conversations about the barriers to reporting GBV and collaboratively brainstormed more effective, student-centered reporting mechanisms. The session underscored the urgency of building safer, more responsive systems within the university.

In a dynamic networking activity, participants explored strategies to foster unity and amplify the collective voice of female leaders across campuses. The session emphasized the importance of solidarity in increasing female representation and influence in student

leadership spaces.
The workshop concluded with participants outlining clear commitments and responsibilities, setting the stage for a follow-up leadership meeting. This roadmap reflects a shared dedication to sustaining the momentum generated during the program.

Speaking at the event, facilitator Sharon Gwedeza remarked, "Solidarity among female leaders is the foundation for sustainable change." Her words echoed the central theme of the day: unity, empowerment, and action.

As LUANAR continues to champion gender equity, the SHE Leads initiative stands as a reaffirmation of the university's commitment to empowering young women, amplifying their voices, and fostering safer, more inclusive campuses. The program not only elevated the voices of current female student leaders but also laid the groundwork for a stronger, more genderresponsive leadership culture within LUANAR.

LUANAR Bids Farewell to First Gambian Postgraduate Cohort

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) **International Students** Community held a farewell ceremony for Gambian postgraduate students who have completed their two-year Master's degree programmes from 2023 to 2025.

The students were the first cohort to study at LUANAR under a bilateral agreement between the Gambian government and the university's Africa Centres of Excellence. The agreement facilitated international academic cooperation and

postgraduate training in key development sectors. The farewell event took place on 19 July 2025 at the New Dawn Events Centre in Lilongwe.

Speaking on behalf of the group, International **Students Representative** Mballow Juldeh said, "This journey has not only shaped our academic paths but also deepened our understanding of leadership, resilience and the value of global collaboration. LUANAR has given us more than a degree; it has given us a purpose."

The students thanked

LUANAR for sponsoring the farewell event and for his continued support of international students. They also acknowledged the contributions of the Director of Students Affairs, Heads of Departments and the Africa Centres of Excellence (AquaFish, TACE and APA) for their academic and administrative support.

The ceremony featured cultural performances, music and speeches, marking the conclusion of the students' academic stay in Malawi as they prepare to return to The Gambia.

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International students pose for a photo during the farewell party.

PUBLICATIONS

Grain to waste? Not on our watch.

Millions of smallholder farmers lose up to a third of their grain after harvest. This hurts food security, incomes, and resilience. The tech to prevent these losses exists, but adoption remains low. A global team of postharvest loss (PHL) experts proposes a bold five-part strategy to break the cycle: smarter training, local tech access, flexible financing, stronger policies, and better market incentives. It's not just about saving grain. It's about transforming rural lives.

Read the full article: https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2025.1640274

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Mvumi BM, Chamboko T, Kamundi E, Thadzi A, Kachala B, Gama AP, Maonga B, Harvey J and Matumba L (2025) Increasing adoption of grain postharvest technology by

Increasing adoption of grain postharvest technology by smallholder farmers: a five-pronged strategy

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No more excuses: quality data matters

Over the years, fish stock assessment methods have evolved from simple data-poor approaches to complex data-rich methods, shifting from single-species to multispecies models and from equilibrium-based to dynamic methods. The Gordon -Schaefer model, a single-species equilibrium-based stock assessment model, remains relevant in developing nations like Malawi despite the model not being contemporary. This review examines the global applications of the GS model, with focus on its use in Malawi.

Read more: https://www.mdpi.com/2410-3888/10/9/442

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Fish Stock Assessment Models for Developing Nations with Emphasis on the Use of the Classic Gordon-Schaefer Model: A Review

by Francisco Chamera 1.2.* ☑, Mphatso Kamndaya 1 ☑ ②, Solomon Kadaleka 1 ☑, Patrick Phepa 1 ☑, Peter Mpasho Mwamtobe 3 ☐ and Alpha Soko 2 ☐ 0

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Legumes markets in Dowa, Malawi, are failing to support smallholders' pursuit of equitable livelihoods; however, implementable food systems policy reforms that address equity concerns can turn the script

A study on legume marketing by smallholders in Dowa, Malawi, reveals how market failures and power asymmetries exploit farmers. Using the theoretical lens of food systems, equity and farmer typology, the study demonstrates how resource access and policy distortions influence market participation. The study provides valuable insights for achieving an equitable food system transformation.

Read more: https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/sustainable-food-systems/ articles/10.3389/fsufs.2025.1542976/full

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Equitable food systems in practice? The case of smallholders' marketing of legumes in Malawi

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We assess how Malawian smallholder farmers engage with legume markets in Dowa district and how these markets function to either support or hinder equitable

Faith, food, and child health

In Malawi, more than one in three children under five are stunted, and many are underweight or wasted. This study, using national survey data from 4,742 children, shows that where a child lives, their birth weight, their parents' education, and even their ethnic and religious background can shape their risk of malnutrition. Urban residency and higher maternal education protect against stunting and underweight, while cultural diets and food taboos may raise risks in some groups. The findings highlight that tackling undernutrition isn't only about food, it's also about culture, education, and equity.

Read more: https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1lftp3CdHt302W

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Nutrition





Applied nutritional investigation

Exploring the determinants of undernutrition among children aged 6-59 months old in Malawi: Insights on religious affiliation, ethnicity, and nutritional status using the 2015-2016 Malawi demographic and health survey



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Crumbling foundations? Not our future

Malawi's construction industry is buckling under the weight of weak regulation, unskilled labour, and substandard materials. This is more than a technical problem; it's a national development crisis. But there is a blueprint for change. A bold, multi-stakeholder research initiative charts a way forward. Through a nationwide study involving contractors, consultants, regulators, and NGOs, this landmark effort uncovers urgent research gaps and sector priorities: sustainable materials, tech adoption, smarter bidding, and stronger policy integration. This isn't just about concrete and codes. It's about jobs, safety, growth and the future Malawi is building.

Read more: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wds.2025.100248

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What's New at LUANAR

- 1. LUANAR Radio Goes Live Our very own campus radio station has officially commenced broadcasting, providing an engaging platform for education, information, and entertainment.
- 2. Call Centre Launched A dedicated call centre is now up and running, ensuring faster responses and improved communication with students, staff, and the public.
- 3. ODeL Introduces Chatbot The Open, Distance and e-Learning Directorate has rolled out a new chatbot to enhance student support and provide instant assistance.



Developed by LUANAR Marketing & Communications Office