

Research Application Summary

## **Evolution of Bunda College of Agriculture into Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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### **Abstract**

This article presents the evolution of Bunda College of Agriculture into Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). It starts with the historical background to its establishment; acquisition of land for its permanent home; development of infrastructure to support the teaching and learning facilities including expansion of Bunda College Library; growth of its academic programmes and the growing student population; quality assurance initiatives; evolution of academic departments and faculties; evolution of research including the establishment of the Centre for Agricultural Research and Development; Staff Capacity building; institutional governance and reforms; and integration of Natural Resources College into LUANAR.

Key words: Bunda College of Agriculture, LUANAR, Malawi

### **Résumé**

Cet article présente l'évolution du Collège d'Agriculture de Bunda à l'Université d'Agriculture et de Ressources Naturelles de Lilongwe (LUANAR). Il commence par le contexte historique de son établissement; l'acquisition de terrains pour son habitation permanente; le développement d'infrastructures pour soutenir les installations d'enseignement et d'apprentissage, y compris l'expansion de la bibliothèque du Collège de Bunda; la croissance de ses programmes universitaires et la croissance de la population étudiante; les initiatives d'assurance de la qualité; l'évolution des départements et facultés universitaires; l'évolution de la recherche, y compris la création du Centre de recherche et de développement agricoles; le renforcement des capacités du personnel; la gouvernance et les réformes institutionnelles; et l'intégration des Collège des ressources naturelles à LUANAR.

Mots-clés: Collège d'Agriculture de Bunda, LUANAR, Malawi

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### **Historical Background**

The establishment of Bunda College of Agriculture was visualized in 1961 by the then Nyasaland Department of Agriculture. The college was originally intended to serve as a vocational college that would initially offer a three-year diploma level training in agriculture (Mughogho, 2016). In 1964, newly independent Malawi recognized agriculture as the backbone of the country's economy and reaffirmed the importance of the establishment

of Bunda College of Agriculture to produce the needed manpower for agricultural development (Kanyama-Phiri, 2012). Bunda College was initially managed by the National Governing Council of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. In September, 1966 the first cohort of 15 students were admitted into a diploma course in agriculture on borrowed premises of Dedza Secondary School, in the Central Region District of Dedza. In January 1967, Bunda College was formally incorporated as a constituent college of University of Malawi (UNIMA) which had been established in 1965 (Mughogho, 2016). On 10th April, 1967 the college was relocated from Dedza Secondary School to the current premises near Bunda foot Hill after the first phase of construction was completed.

**Acquisition of land for the College.** Soon after independence in 1964, the Malawi Government secured 1000 hectares of farm land at Bunda from Major General Hunt (Kanyama-Phiri, 2012). The General was using the farm for growing tobacco. There were compelling reasons for choosing Bunda as the final destination for the college. The soils were inherently fertile to support research, teaching and learning and farm practical work; the land was adequate for commercial farming; historically, the area received reliable annual rainfall which guaranteed the successful alignment of the academic calendar to the agricultural season, thereby guaranteeing the relevance of diplomates and graduates for the agricultural industry. The regularity and reliability of the rains may have been attributed to the vegetal cover of the Bunda Forest and the high elevation of the Bunda Hill. This may be true considering the fact that with the deforestation that has taken place in Bunda Forest, the regularity of the early onset of rains is no longer the norm.

**Acquisition of additional land.** In the late 1970s, the Lilongwe Land Development Programme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources allocated an additional 2,000 hectares of land to the College. The land included over 700 hectares of forest plantation from the Forest Department which was valuable for practical field training in a forestry degree programme which the College was considering to introduce at the time. The availability of this land made it possible to construct new facilities under Phase III development of the College. Most of the land acquired was customary land whose occupants were allocated new land in Mchinji and Kasungu Districts and compensated in cash for the land and fixed assets on the land acquired such as buildings and trees (Mughogho, 2016).

**Evolution of academic programmes.** The narrative below details the evolution of the academic programmes at Bunda Campus. The Diploma Programme in Agriculture was developed as a three-year course after Cambridge School Certificate (O-level) or Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) primarily to meet the human resource needs of the Ministry of Agriculture at the certificate and technician levels (Mughogho, 2016). It is understood that at that time the Ministry of Agriculture had a 95% vacancy to be filled by front line technical and extension personnel. The graduates from the college were eventually expected to replace expatriates that occupied key managerial positions in the Ministry of Agriculture. Later, the programme emphasized training for both the public and

private sectors of the agricultural industry in Malawi. The focus was on practical training which occupied about 30 percent of the curriculum. In the crop production course, for example, students worked on their own field plots and learned all the skills from land preparation to harvest. The backdrop to this acquisition of practical skills in agricultural production was the exhortation by the then Head of State and Chancellor of the University of Malawi, His Excellency Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, when he officially opened Bunda College of Agriculture in 1968, that Bunda College had no place for those who could not work in the field with their hands. The highlight of the emphasis on practical work in the Diploma Programme was the Mkwinda Village Studies Project, in which all final third year students participated. Mkwinda Village is adjacent to Bunda College campus on the southwest, in a setting somewhat typical of a Malawian rural community in the Central Region of Malawi. The Village Headman and his elders were favourably disposed to the College and they had agreed to cooperate and assist the students to study the current situation and development needs of the village. In Mkwinda Village, the students conducted baseline surveys of farmers' existing circumstances or situation. They collected data on a variety of topics, such as possessions, family food supply, time and labour allocation by gender, income and expenditures, literacy, decision making, and village industries, such as basketry and mat-making. These surveys helped students develop empathy for village/rural people with whom they would work on leaving college. It also helped students understand the need for a bottom-up, demand-driven process in development activities. The output from the village level studies was, for each student, a project report with a description of activities undertaken, analysis of the information and data collected, and conclusions or recommendations for socio-economic development of the village.

**Training of tobacco estate managers.** The Malawi agricultural scene in the 1970s was characterized by rapid expansion of the tobacco industry (Mughogho, 2016). This created a high demand for trained tobacco estate managers. Bunda College responded to this challenge by including in the diploma curriculum tobacco estate management training. Practical training in tobacco growing, harvesting, curing and grading included attachment of students during vacations to established tobacco estates. This initiative proved a great success with the tobacco industry as most of the diplomates who joined the industry after graduation performed well as estate managers.

**Bachelor of Science in Agriculture.** By 1970, the mandate for the college was expanded to include the training of BSc graduates who were intended to fill managerial positions in the public and private sectors. The first Bachelor of Science Degree Programme was offered in partnership with Chancellor College as a four-year course (Mughogho, 2016). Students spent the first two years at Chancellor College in Blantyre (later in Zomba), studying science subjects relevant to agriculture, such as mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics, and the last two years at Bunda College studying agricultural subjects. The first three groups of student intake in 1966, 1967 and 1968 spent three years at Chancellor College before moving to Bunda in 1969, 1970 and 1971 because facilities and staff at Bunda were not ready. Thus they took five years to complete the degree programme.

**Diploma/Degree Programme in Agriculture.** Between 1966 and 1974, the College operated separate diploma and degree programmes. However, a review of the Diploma and Degree Programmes in 1973 identified two challenges. The first was that there was insufficient time for practical training in the four-year degree programme; and the second was that there was not much difference in the performance of students at Malawi School Certificate of Education between the diploma and degree intake. A very innovative solution to these challenges was to replace, in 1974, the separate three-year diploma and four-year degree programmes with an integrated five-year programme with an exit option at the end of the third year. Therefore, in 1975, the two programmes were integrated into an end-on diploma/degree programme (Mughogho, 2016). Those who exited the programme, through failure to compete for places in the fourth year, were awarded a diploma, while those who completed the fifth year were awarded a Bachelor of Science degree. The integrated diploma/degree programme had three advantages. First, there was adequate time for practical work during the first three years of the programme for both diploma and degree students. Second, an opportunity was created to introduce specialized courses at degree level during the last two years of the five-year course after a comprehensive general agricultural training during the first three years of the programme. Third, opportunity was created for former students who had diplomas in agriculture and a minimum of two years working experience, to join the programme in the fourth year and earn a degree in the fifth year. This programme called Adult Entry to Degree Programme benefitted a number of former College diploma holders who joined the programme and obtained a degree in agriculture.

**Re-introduction of the four year Bachelor of Science degree programmes.** In 1996, Bunda College conducted a review of its curriculum for the diploma/degree programme. The review resolved to phase out the diploma programmes and reintroduce a four year Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree programme in agriculture with options in Agronomy, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Extension, Animal Science, Human Nutrition and Family Sciences, and Aquaculture and Fisheries Science, just to mention a few. Most of these options had eventually matured into fully fledged BSc degree programmes. The phased diploma programmes were ceded to the Natural Resources College (NRC).

By 2015, the Faculty of Agriculture had ten BSc degree programmes in Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering, Agronomy, Animal Science, Crop Protection, Irrigation Engineering, Seed Systems, Soil Science, and Veterinary Medicine. By the same year, the Faculty of Development Studies had six BSc degrees in Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness Management, Agricultural Enterprise Development, Agricultural Education, Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology; and Agricultural Development Communication. The Faculty of Food and Human Sciences had three BSc degree programmes: Human Nutrition and Food Science, Food Science and Technology and Human Sciences and Community Services. On the other hand, the Faculty of Natural Resources (formerly Faculty of Environmental Sciences) had five BSc degree

programmes namely: Forestry, Horticulture, Environmental Sciences, Natural Resources Management (Wildlife and Ecotourism) and Natural Management (Land and Water).

**Master of Science Degree Programmes.** The evolution of the Master of Science Degree programmes started in the late 1980s when SADC/GTZ introduced Regional Master of Science Programmes in selected Universities within the SADC. The aim was to strengthen these selected universities as regional centres of excellence in the areas where they had a comparative advantage. Under this arrangement, the Animal Science Department of Bunda College of Agriculture was assigned the Regional Master of Science Degree Programme in Animal Science while Universities of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Sokoine University of Agriculture were assigned Regional Masters in Economics, Crop Science and Soil Science, respectively.

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree Programmes.** Doctorate programmes at Bunda College had humble beginnings. They started with a part time PhD Programme which awarded its first PhD Degree in Soil Science to Dr Nichodemus Lungu in 1971. In the late 1990s, the Animal Science Department introduced a PhD Programme in Animal Science by research. So far the programme has graduated Dr. Willie Lipita who is the Controller of Agricultural and Technical Services (CAETS) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. By 2016, the programme had enrolled 4 students. The Faculty of Development Studies also offers a part time PhD degree in Agricultural Extension but is yet to enroll or graduate a student in this field.

Full time PhD programmes at Bunda College were approved by the University of Malawi in 2007 when the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) designated Bunda College to host two regional programmes, one in Aquaculture and Fisheries Science and the other in Agricultural Resource Economics. The Regional PhD Programme in Aquaculture and Fisheries Science was awarded to Bunda College because it had state of the art teaching and learning facilities compared to other universities which formed the consortium of regional universities in the RUFORUM Region; it had a full complement of highly qualified and experienced teaching staff and the college had a long history of coordinating regional programmes. The Regional Programme in Aquaculture and Fisheries Science enrolled its first cohort of 10 students in 2009 and these students were drawn from Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia. So far six students have graduated from the programme. Currently the programme has recruited another 8 students drawn from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Tanzania with the rest drawn from within the country.

The PhD Programme in Agricultural and Resource Economics was awarded to Bunda College on account of having a full complement of highly qualified teaching staff who were experienced in research and postgraduate supervision . The first intake of 9 students was admitted in 2009 of which 3 were Ugandans, 1 was a Kenyan, 1 was a Tanzanian and 4 were Malawians. So far 4 students have since graduated.

**Growth of the Student Population.** As indicated earlier, Bunda College started with 15 students in 1966 at Dedza Secondary School. By the mid 1990s, the student population had increased to approximately 400. By 2005 the student population had increased to 723. Of the 723 students, 250 were females, representing 34.6 % of the total student population. This student population continued to increase to such an extent that it reached 1,802 by 2011. The policy of widening access to higher education as promoted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Education (MoEST, 2008), meant that the admission of students into LUANAR would no longer depend on the availability of accommodation space. Hence, student population at Bunda Campus had increased from 1,802 in 2011 to 2,525 in 2013 despite the fact that the campus had accommodation for 600 students only. By 2016 the student population at Bunda Campus had reached 4,500 of which 40% were female students. The increase in female student representation at Bunda Campus of LUANAR is in keeping with Goal number 4 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals which aims at achieving gender equality for women and girls (UDPD, 2015).

The policy of widening access to higher education has been further strengthened by introduction of City Campus and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes. These programmes are in keeping with the principle of taking the LUANAR to the people. With this development, the student population for City Campus and ODL Programmes in 2016 reached 703 and 400, respectively. Currently the total population of students from Bunda and NRC Campuses of LUANAR stands at about 9,000.

**Evolution of Quality Assurance at Bunda College.** The importance of quality assurance has been recognized since the formative years of Bunda College. In 1970, Bunda College debated on how to ensure quality and relevance of its diplomates and graduates who would be employable and at the same time, be competitive at global level (Mughogho, 2016). Two main mechanisms were employed to guarantee quality assurance and relevance: (1) A university Consultative Committee on Agricultural Education (UCCAE) was formed. Membership of the UCCAE comprised representatives of the agricultural industry, government technocrats from the Ministry of Agriculture and Bunda College academic staff. The committee advised the college and made recommendations which assisted the college to synchronize curricula and syllabi with the needs of the agricultural Industry thereby ensuring the employability of diplomates and graduates. (2) The College introduced a system of external examiners for the final year of the diploma and degree programmes. Distinguished academics from universities in Africa and the United Kingdom (UK) served as external examiners for the final qualifying examinations for the award of the diploma or degree in agriculture. External examiners vetted draft examination questions, and reviewed the marked students' scripts. Since the college had a partnership agreement with the University of Wales at Aberystwyth in UK, most of the external examiners came from there. While the UCCAE has since been dropped the system of external examiners has been maintained and also applies to postgraduate programmes. While still under UNIMA, Bunda College had teaching and learning committees to uphold its academic standards. At college level it was called College Committee on Teaching and Learning (CCTL) while at university level it was called Committee on University Teaching and Learning (CUTL).

This instrument has been maintained under LUANAR and is used for orientation of lecturers on proper methods of teaching and learning. The graduation of Bunda into a fully fledged university has heralded the establishment of the Directorate of Quality Assurance which oversees all aspects that promote quality and relevance of academic programmes. The Directorate works hand in hand with the Malawi Bureau of Standards to achieve iso-certification of the university by 2020. LUANAR's Quality Assurance Standards are also monitored by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE, 2011).

**Evolution of the Assessment Criteria.** As indicated earlier, Bunda College was integrated into UNIMA in January, 1967. At that time, it was noted that Chancellor College and the Polytechnic (the constituent colleges of UNIMA) used a 40% as a pass mark for assessing students. Bunda College of Agriculture presented its own proposal to the University of Malawi Senate to introduce the Grade Point Average (GPA) as an instrument for assessing student performance. The compelling reason for the introduction of the GPA as an assessment instrument was that some of the teaching assistants/staff associates who were newly recruited at Bunda College were earmarked for training in the American Universities where the GPA is used. The transcripts based on the GPA made interpretation easier than the 40% pass mark which is generally interpreted as a failing grade by those American Universities. Additionally, the teaching assistants/staff associates who were admitted into the American universities would earn more transfer credits from transcripts based on the GPA than those based on the 40% pass mark. Senate approved the proposal. The GPA was used by Bunda College until the mid-1970s when it was phased out in favour of the reintroduction of the assessment based on the 101 quality rating and the retention of the 40% pass mark for all programmes in UNIMA.

In 1996 Bunda College reviewed its curriculum which saw the reintroduction of the GPA. This reintroduction took cognizance of the early justifications and globalization of the education system whereby GPA had become increasingly recognized and universally accepted as a dynamic instrument for assessment of students. Hence it became necessary for Bunda to adapt to those changes. Besides, the instrument has been regionally and internationally accepted for accreditation. Therefore, senate approved the reintroduction of the GPA in 1996. However, its implementation was delayed until 1998 in order to orientate the staff and students to the new development. In the case of students, it was a requirement that students should be given at least one year of advance notice before any new changes are implemented and this policy is in operation up to this day. Initially the pass mark was set at 50%, later adjusted to 60%. However the pass mark has recently been lowered to 50%. The GPA is currently applied in both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

**Evolution of Departments and Faculties.** There were no departmental structures during the first three years of the College. Five departments were established in September 1969 in readiness for the first intake of degree programme students from Chancellor College in October of that year. Departments were: Basic Subjects Department, Agricultural Engineering Department, Crop Production Department, Livestock Production Department

and Rural Development Department. The Basic Subjects Department was crucial for equipping students with the relevant knowledge of mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics and English language for understanding agricultural subjects. Hence, these subjects were taught in the first year to prepare students for agricultural subjects in subsequent years. The Agricultural Engineering Department taught such subjects as farm power and machinery and irrigation, whereas the Crop Production and Livestock Production Departments taught both the science and production of crops and livestock. The Rural Development Department was so named because it was designed to put the knowledge and skills acquired in production courses into the context of the farm, which, in the Malawi situation was mainly rural. Subjects taught under the Rural Development Department included agricultural economics, rural sociology and agricultural extension.

The University of Malawi as a whole was not organized into faculties until 1974 when “schools” were established and these schools were synonymous with faculties. Each school was headed by an elected Dean. At Bunda, only one School of Agriculture was established with the position of Dean being held by the Principal. In 1981, position of Dean was separated from the Principal and Professor James Kaminjoro was elected Dean.

The Faculty of Agriculture, which was originally founded as the School of Agriculture in 1974, remained a single faculty for Bunda College up to 30 June, 2001. It was not until on 2nd July, 2001, when the second faculty called the Faculty of Development Studies was established. The third Faculty, that of Environmental Sciences (now called the Faculty of Natural Resources), was established three years later in 2004. The fourth faculty, the Faculty of Food and Human Sciences, was established nine years later in 2013. On the same date and year that the LUANAR Senate approved the establishment of the Faculty of Food and Human Sciences, and the establishment of the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies whose major function is to coordinate all postgraduate (Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy) programmes across the various faculties.

By 2016, the Faculty of Agriculture had the following academic departments: Agricultural Engineering, Animal Science, Basic Sciences, Crop and Soil Sciences and Horticulture. The second academic faculty, the Faculty of Environmental Sciences (now Faculty of Natural Resources) has the following Departments: Aquaculture and Fisheries Sciences, Forestry and Environmental Science Management. The Faculty of Development Studies has the following Departments: Agribusiness Management, Agricultural and Applied Economics, Agricultural Education and Development Communication and Extension and Rural Sociology. The Faculty of Food and Human Sciences has three academic departments: Human Nutrition and Health, Food Science and Technology and Human Ecology. The Faculty of Postgraduate Studies coordinates postgraduate programmes from various departments.

**Evolution of the Infrastructure Development of Bunda College of Agriculture.** Phases I and II of the development of the physical infrastructure of the College took

place between 1965 and 1969, with funding from the United States of America (Phase 1) and the United Kingdom (Phase II), respectively. Phase 1 included construction of buildings for administration and the farm, lecture rooms, workshops, laboratories, staff offices, housing and accommodation (bed space) for 180 students. It was financed by a grant from the Government of the United States of America (USA) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The genesis of this funding is of historical interest. In 1962, soon after Nyasaland became self-governing, the then Prime Minister, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, visited the USA, and at a meeting with President J.F. Kennedy, requested, among other items, funding for the development of Bunda College of Agriculture which was in the planning stage. President Kennedy agreed to the request and the USA government provided grant funds for construction of the infrastructure and provision of four academic staff for five years from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst as contractor to USAID for implementation of the Bunda College of Agriculture project. Phase II (1967-1969) was funded by the British Government. It comprised the construction of the library, two double storey hostels for student accommodation and staff houses.

The period from 1970 to 1973 saw no development or expansion of college facilities. Teaching and accommodation facilities became increasingly inadequate to enroll the rising numbers of qualified applicants from secondary schools, while at the same time the College was unable to meet the increasing demand by the agriculture industry for the College's diplomates and graduates.

**Construction of the Health Centre.** In both Phases I and II developments of the College, there was no provision for the construction of a health centre to provide medical services to students, staff and the campus community. A room in a student hostel was used by the College nurse for treating patients. The need for a better, purpose-built medical facility was urgent. In 1975, the college secured funding from Beit Trust of the United Kingdom for the construction of the Health Centre. In the 1980s, the Health Centre was expanded using own generated funds in order to match the increasing staff and student population and the surrounding Bunda Community. In 2005, the college received funding from MacAlester College in Minnesota, USA, which saw the construction of the clinic for the under-five children. The facility was eventually named MacAlester Under-five Clinic in honour of the donor and it provides services for children of staff as well as those of the surrounding communities.

Plans for Phase III of the development of Bunda College of Agriculture started in 1973 but actual construction started in 1978 and was completed in 1979. Major areas which USAID funded under Phase III development programme were as follows: lecture theatres; laboratories and office spaces for Crop and Livestock Production Departments; offices and workshops for the Agricultural Engineering Department; extension of the library; additional hostel accommodation for 100 students; sports complex for students; staff houses including a house for the Principal; academic staff training in USA at MSc and PhD degree levels; funding for four USA academic staff positions; and construction of a

20-kilometre water pipe to Malingunde dam for a reliable supply of water to the College.

The period from 1980 to 1990 saw no tangible physical developmental phases for the college. The overarching question was whether the college will remain static in the face of the rising population of the students. Thus the period gave the management a moment for reflection and soul searching for the next course of action. The successive college leaders had to become proactive and innovative in order to sustain the momentum for development and expansion of the college and adopted the following approaches:

**“Getting to Know Bunda”.** Between 1981 and 1991, the then College Principal, Professor Brown Chimphamba introduced the “Getting to know Bunda” concept in which donors, sponsors of students, parents, guardians and alumni were invited to the college to appreciate the challenges that the college was facing and to solicit their financial support for infrastructural development, among others. This approach succeeded in maintaining the bond between the college and stakeholders.

**“Door to Door Approach.”** Between 1991 and 1992, Professor Zimani Kadzamira became the College Principal and advocated a “Door to door Approach” which among others he paid courtesy visits to stakeholders in their offices and presented the developmental needs of the College. Through this approach, the college was able to secure funds from the USAID for the construction of the 20- kilometre tarmac road from Bunda Turnoff at the M1 junction to the College. Bunda College of Agriculture is located 30 kilometres from Lilongwe City. The absence of the tarmac from the Bunda Turnoff to the college posed challenges to spouses of staff members who were working in Lilongwe City. Besides, the rural environment of the college could not provide suitable schools for children of staff members most of which belonged to expatriate staff. Hence the children had to be sent to good schools like Bishop McKenzie International School. Equally importantly, all shopping by the Bunda College community was done in Lilongwe city. A proposal was therefore submitted to the Government of the USA for the construction of the tarmac road. Luckily, funds were provided in the early 1990s through the USAID which saw the construction of the tarred road from the Bunda turn-off at the M1 road to Bunda College of Agriculture.

The Door to Door approach was maintained by Professor Zachary Kasomekera who became Principal between 1992 and 1998. The Kasomekera’s tenure secured funding from the Japanese Government for the construction of the teaching and learning facilities for the Aquaculture and Fisheries Science Department (classrooms, wet and dry laboratories), offices for staff members, a 60-bed student hostel and a guest house. Some funds were set aside for dredging of Bunda Dam and expansion of fish ponds. The initiative also succeeded in securing funding from the European Union for construction of the Forestry Department’s teaching and learning facilities, the Master of Science hostel for Social Forestry students, office space and a guest house for visiting lecturers. The Kasomekera tenure also secured funds for the construction of the Agricultural Policy Research Unit and

the Agricultural Policy Analysis Training Unit both of which are now forming part of the Centre for Agricultural Research and Development. The Kasomekera tenure also secured funds for the expansion of Bunda College Library. Professor Kamwanja acted as Principal for one year from 1998 and 1999 and during this period he oversaw the construction of the 60-bed hostel for female students with funding from the Government of Norway.

**“Bunda Awareness Week.”** The “Bunda Awareness Week” was introduced by Professor George Kanyama Phiri when he became Principal between 2000 and 2008. The initiative targeted the same stakeholders that were targeted by his predecessors. Using this approach, the college engaged one stakeholder per each day of the week from Monday to Friday. These stakeholders included donors, parents/guardians, alumni, government officials from key ministries and the private sector. In each of those allocated days, the college displayed exhibits to the stakeholders and held discussions with them afterwards to relay the challenges faced by the college. The approach successfully secured funds from Press Trust for construction of two 60-bed hostel for female students. With this additional hostel for female students, the representation of female students had increased from 15% in 1998 to 30% by 2005. The Bunda Awareness week also enabled Kanyama-Phiri to secure funding to complete construction of Chilowa Cafeteria which was started by the Kasomekera and Kamwanja administrations. Kanyama-Phiri also secured funds for the construction of the Nature Building which was started in June of 2005 and was completed in 2008. The structure has office spaces, conference and lecture rooms, a computer laboratory, atmospheric science laboratory, and pollution water science laboratory. This is also the period in which the NBS Bank provided funding for the construction of their branch at Bunda. The move was intended to reduce the cost of travel by both staff and students to and from Lilongwe city banks which are 30 kilometres away from Bunda.

**Construction of Infrastructure for Departments and Faculties.** Between the mid 1990s and mid 2000s the college embarked on the construction of infrastructure for new departments and faculties. Following the demand from the Malawi Government for forestry training, Bunda College, in partnership with the Department of Forestry, submitted a proposal to the European Union for construction of teaching and learning facilities, office accommodation, hostel for forestry MSc students and a guest house for the visiting lecturers for the Social Forestry programme, for building the capacity for teaching staff and scholarships for the first intake of five students to study for the Masters of Science degree in forestry at Bunda College of Agriculture. The European Union responded positively by providing a grant amounting to USD\$ 5 million for the above purpose. Within the same period, another proposal was submitted to the Japanese Government to fund construction of teaching, learning and accommodation facilities for Fisheries Science Department. The funds amounting to USD\$ 6 Million were secured through the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Nature Building was constructed from Nature funds supplied by the USAID and some funds from the Government of Norway. The structure was intended to support the establishment of the Natural Resources Management Department (now Environmental Science Management

Department). The Establishment of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences (now Faculty of Natural Resources) and associated Departments of Forestry, Aquaculture and Fisheries Science Department and Environmental Science Management Department gave birth to the Faculty of Natural Resources.

Construction of Additional offices as well as teaching and learning facilities for the Faculty of Agriculture was funded by MacAlester College of Minnesota in the USA. The structure included the office for the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and the office for the Head of the Animal Science Department and the lecture room for Master of Science students in Animal Science.

Construction of the new wing called “RDD Complex” for the Faculty of Development Studies was funded using the College’s own internally generated funds. The complex has a computer room for the students of the BSc degree in Agricultural Extension for Mid Career Professionals, an office space for the Dean of the Faculty of Development Studies, an office space for the Head of Agribusiness Management Department and the other office space for the Head of the Department of Extension and a computer room. The computer room was equipped with computers by the Sasakawa Fund for Agricultural Extension (SAFE).

Extension of the facilities for the Faculty of Food and Human Sciences was achieved using own internally generated funds and these included offices for the Head of the Department of Human Ecology, Head of Food Science and Technology, the Head of Department of Human Nutrition and Health and the Dean of faculty of Food and Human Sciences.

**Construction of the New (Chilowa) Cafeteria.** Construction of the New Chilowa Cafeteria with a seating capacity of 500 people was made possible with funding from JICA and the Norwegian Agency for Development and Cooperation (NORAD). This facility was necessitated by the increase in student population which had reached 723 by July 1st, 2005. Of the 723 students, 250 were females, representing 34.6% of the total student population. The new cafeteria was intended to cater for future increases in student population.

**Evolution of Research at Bunda College of Agriculture.** The importance of research at Bunda College was recognized since the early days of its existence. The staff members used to secure funds for conducting research through the University Research and Publications Committee (URPC) at UNIMA level and the College Research and Publications Committee (CRPC) at college level. The Research Bulletin of Bunda College of Agriculture was established in 1970. Its main function was to publish annually research results of ongoing and completed research by staff and students. The bulletin was widely circulated in Malawi and faculties of agriculture in Africa, thereby serving as a vehicle for advertising the College to its various stakeholders and wider scientific community in Malawi and abroad. The college staff also published articles in refereed journals while others were

published as conference or workshop proceedings.

In the mid 1990s, the college entertained the desire to give prominence to research. At the same time there was an expressed request from Government that Bunda College should do more to assist in conducting policy research. Noting that such ambition could not be realized without a viable agricultural research centre, and to honour the request from the Malawi Government for policy research, the college developed a proposal for the establishment of the Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD) which should serve as a hub for research. The USAID considered the proposal and opted to fund the construction of Agricultural Policy Research Unit (APRU) which would assist the Government in developing agricultural research policies. Within the same period the World Bank funded the construction of the Agricultural Policy Analysis Training Unit (APATU) which provides complimentary policy training. One significant research project conducted by APRU on behalf of the Malawi Government was the “Informal Cross Border Trade”, which among others revealed that there was a great deal of informal exchange of goods across the borders between Malawi and its neighbouring countries.

In the absence of a comprehensive policy however, coordination of consultancies was still a challenge. Therefore, in response to the need for well coordinated consultancies, the college established a Training and Consultancies Coordinating Unit in 2006. This unit coordinates consultancies and short term training courses in various aspects of agriculture and related fields.

Currently the Research agenda at Bunda Campus has been strengthened by the establishment of the Directorate of Research and Outreach which coordinates the disbursement of funds for research by members of staff from various departments within faculties. Furthermore, through the Directorate of Research and Outreach, the University Research Policy document has been developed and the University Research and Publications Committee, has been revived.

**Evolution of Bunda College Library.** As indicated earlier, the first structure of Bunda College Library, with a seating capacity of 96 students, was constructed during Phase II (1967-1969) of the development of Bunda College of Agriculture. By the mid 1970s the population of students had already reached more than 180. By the mid 1990s, the student population had increased to approximately 400. The college leadership therefore contacted the USAID of the USA Government to fund the expansion of the library. Fortunately this request was received sympathetically and by 1996, the new wing was constructed with funding from the USAID. The old and new wings were connected by a narrow corridor. This narrow corridor adjoining the old and new wings was expanded 2008 and 2011, by the Kwapata administration. This final adjustment created additional reading space for students. Currently the library has a seating capacity of 414 students. However, considering the fact that the five year Strategic Plan (2012-2017) projected increase student population

of approximately to 5,000 by 2017 and that by 2016, the student population had already reached 4,500, there is need for a new and bigger library than what Bunda Campus has at the moment. Indeed the university has in its master plan to construct a 4 storey state of the art library, funds permitting.

**There have been some other developments in the library.** These include installation of a wireless (WiFi) internet connectivity; creation of digital repositories for Malawiana materials; use of cards for borrowing library materials instead of use of pockets; enhancement of security of library materials through the use of a book detector system and a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system. The College Library is now connected to a fibre optic cable supplied by the Malawi Telecommunications Limited (MTL) and this has improved internet and e-mail capability, among others.

**Institutional Governance.** In its formative years, the College was organized into eight administrative centres: Principal's office, Registrar's office, Farm office, and five academic department offices. Various statutory and non-statutory committees were formed that dealt with academic and administrative matters and ensured wide participation in the decision-making process of the College. Key committees were as follows: Heads of Departments Committee comprised the heads of the five academic departments, the Principal as Chairperson and the College Registrar as Secretary. This committee met weekly. Academic and Administrative Staff meetings of all senior staff were held monthly to discuss matters affecting staff and students. Farm Advisory Committee comprised the heads of academic departments, the Farm Manager, the College Registrar and the Principal as Chairperson. It met monthly to review farm activities and finances. Staff-student Consultative Committee membership included the Principal as Chairperson, College Registrar as Secretary, two academic staff and five student union representatives. The committee dealt with matters affecting students and advised the Principal on matters dealing with students' welfare. The current governance structure has University management at the top, with campuses below it followed by faculties, departments, directorates and sections. LUANAR is the first of the four public universities in Malawi to implement the Performance Management System (PMS) as a way of assessing and promoting its staff. This instrument allows for students to participate in the assessment of staff. Apart from the PMS, the LUANAR Council has also approved the following policy documents: Policy on Regulations and Conditions of Service; Standard Operating Procedures Policy; Student Admissions Policy; Risk Management Policy; Audit Charter Policy; Human Resources Management Policy; Procurement Policy; and Policy on Academic Dress Regulations and Guidelines. The University Council has also approved the policy for transforming Bunda Farm into a limited commercial company with a board of trustees to run its operations. The Bunda Farm Limited will be critical as an income generating instrument for this young university especially at this time when the allocation of government subvention to public universities is shrinking.

**Partnerships.** In 1970 Bunda College signed a partnership agreement (memorandum of understanding) with the University of Wales at Aberystwyth aimed at strengthening teaching

and research at the College. Implementation of the agreement had three components: academic staff from Aberystwyth taught courses at Bunda when substantive staff were not available; Malawians recruited under the local staff development programme were enrolled at the University of Wales to study for MSc and PhD degrees; academic staff from the University of Wales served as external examiners for diploma and degree final examinations. The whole programme, except for local expenses at Bunda, was funded by the British Government through the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas. The most significant partnerships include the Memoranda of Understanding involving LUANAR, Cornell University and Sathguru Consultants of India; LUANAR, Michigan State University and Tamil Nadu University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (TANUVAS); and between LUANAR and the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich.

**Local academic staff development programme.** During early years Bunda College relied heavily on academic expatriate staff which occupied almost 98% of the teaching positions. Locally qualified Malawians were not available. But this was unsustainable; therefore, management had to plan on a long-term solution which was to train Malawians to fill established staff positions. Local staff training programme in the University of Malawi begun in earnest in 1970 after Dr. Felix Munthali, Lecturer in English at Chancellor College, and Professor Lewis Mughogho presented a paper to University Senate on plans for localization of academic and administrative staff positions. At Bunda, the plan was to recruit diplomates and bachelor degree holders as teaching assistants/staff associates or assistant lecturers, get them familiarized with teaching for a year, and then send them to reputable universities abroad to study for higher degrees. In the University of Malawi, Bunda College was the first College to recruit a teaching assistant from the first graduates of the University in 1969. Local staff development programme was expanded in Phase III project to include localization of all academic staff positions by 1982.

Succession of Principals at Bunda Campus. The first Principal of Bunda College of Agriculture was Mr. Bernard (Ben) Woods, while Dr. C. J. Gilgut was the first Professor. Subsequent principals included Professor Edward (Ted) Pinney, Mr. Reakes Williams, Professor Lewis K. Mughogho, Dr. Nick Lungu, Professor Brown Chimphamba, Professor Zimani Kadzamira, Professor Zachary Kasomekera, Professor Leonard Kamwanja, Professor George Kanyama-Phiri and Professor Moses Kwapata.

**The first attempt towards autonomy.** In 1995, Dr. William (Bill) Mfitilodze, Associate Professor of Veterinary Medicine, wrote a concept paper which called for the autonomy of Bunda College of Agriculture, the then constituent college of the University of Malawi. The concept was hugely endorsed by the Faculty and College of Agriculture but the UNIMA central administration did not support the idea arguing that the small student population at Bunda did not justify a separate university.

**The turning point towards autonomy.** During his swearing in ceremony on 24th May, 2004, the third President of independent Malawi, the late Professor Bingu wa Mutharika

made a declaration to establish six additional universities in Malawi in order to increase access to university education. It later became clear in 2005 that one of the six proposed universities was going to be called Lilongwe University of Science of Science and Technology (LUSTECH). It was further proposed that Bunda College of Agriculture was going to be its main campus. Taking advantage of this new development, Bunda College of Agriculture formed an ad hoc taskforce comprising Professor Vincent Saka, Late Professor James Banda and Professor George Kanyama-Phiri (Kanyama-Phiri *et al.*, 2005). Dr. Mary Shawa, a former alumnus of Bunda College was invited to join the task force. This taskforce developed and presented a complimentary proposal to the President which envisaged the establishment of Lilongwe University of Agriculture, Science and Technology (LUAST) with Bunda as the main campus. Other colleges to be included in this university were Natural Resources College (Likuni Campus in Lilongwe), Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife (Chongoni campus in Dedza) and the Malawi College of Fisheries (Mpwepwe campus in Mangochi). There were compelling arguments for this complimentary proposal: Firstly very few if any new universities in Malawi have started from the scratch. Starting the university at Bunda College was therefore considered to be cost effective; secondly, Bunda College of Agriculture had 2,000 hectares of fertile agricultural land to allow for the growth and expansion of the proposed university; thirdly, the area normally received normal and reliable rainfall to guarantee successful development of agricultural technologies and practices appropriate for smallholder agriculture; fourthly, the Bunda shrine and its role of bringing rains at critical times was appealing to the founders of the college; fifthly, Bunda College had a state of the art library with internet and e-mail capability; sixthly, the college had three faculties with a compliment of 12 academic departments; hostels with the capacity to accommodate 600 students, classrooms and laboratories; and a high caliber staff and a full complement of professors capable of conducting robust research and extension. These attributes therefore made Bunda College of Agriculture an ideal and cost-effective site for the proposed university.

Due to protracted delays in its implementation, however, LUSTECH was transferred in 2009 to its current premises of Ndata in Thyolo, where its name was changed to Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST). However, the Government maintained the idea of turning Bunda College of Agriculture into a university called Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) with Bunda as its main campus. The other institutions to make up LUANAR were Natural Resources College (NRC), Chitedze Research Station and Agricultural Research and Extension Trust (ARET).

**Operationalisation of the University.** The bill for the establishment of LUANAR (the LUANAR Act No. 22 of 2011) was passed by the Parliament on 1st July 2011. It was assented to a month later on 18th August 2011 (LUANAR, 2011). On 1st July, 2012, Bunda College of Agriculture was formerly delinked from the umbilical cord of University of Malawi (UNIMA) to become the main campus of LUANAR. The same date heralded the operationalisation of this third public university in Malawi with the following vision, mission and motto:

### **Vision Statement**

To become a world class university.

### **Mission Statement**

To advance knowledge and produce relevant graduates with entrepreneurial skills for agricultural growth, food security, wealth creation and sustainable natural resource management, through teaching, training, research, outreach, consultancy and sound management.

### **Motto**

Knowledge Innovation Excellence

The establishment of LUANAR is in line with keeping with the policy by the Malawi Government's Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) to widen access to higher education in Malawi (GOM, 2008). The establishment of LUANAR is also in keeping with Agenda number 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) whose aim is to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and to promote life-long learning (UNDP, 2015). Since its operationalisation, LUANAR has gone a long way towards increasing the chances of admission into the university by Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) school leavers. It worth noting that LUANAR is accredited by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) as a Public Higher Education Institution (NCHE, 2011).

**Integration on Natural Resources College into LUANAR.** A road map towards the integration of the Natural Resources College into LUANAR started on 14th December, 2014 following the dissolution of the NRC Trust and its Board of Trustees. It was concluded on 13th December, 2015. Following this integration, LUANAR has two campuses, namely Bunda Campus and NRC Campus. However, the integrations of Chitedze Research Station and Agricultural Research and Extension Trust (ARET) were unsuccessful. Consequently, the Malawi Parliament voted to formally delink them.

The integration of NRC into LUANAR heralded the change in nomenclature from Natural Resources College to NRC Campus of LUANAR. With this new development NRC Campus Management is reporting to LUANAR Management while retaining its mandate of training diplomates, resource mobilization and some degree of autonomy to develop and grow.

**Institutional Reforms.** In conformity with the policy of the Malawi Government on institutional reforms, LUANAR is implementing its own reforms. It has identified nine areas (Table 1) in which to implement reforms, namely, Institutional Governance, Impact of University on Society, Resource Mobilisation, Marketing and Communication, Agricultural Extension and Outreach Services, Quality Assurance, General Operations, Teaching and Learning Environment and Diversification of Energy Sources.

Institutional Governance aims at strengthening performance of the LUANAR through short term training for its leaders, implementation of the Performance Management System (PMS), Conducting exchange visits/study tours for members of staff, integrating and, strengthening ICT to improve examinations and assessments and strengthening the financial management system at NRC Campus so that it is at par with that Bunda Campus. The objective of the reform area on Impact on University on Society is to enhance entrepreneurship skills in academic programmes for increased outreach pathways to communities surrounding the Bunda and NRC Campuses. Planned activities under this area include youth empowerment, rolling out incubator programmes and promotion of different technologies within the environs of Bunda and NRC Campuses.

Table 1: Strategic reform areas in LUANAR

Intervention areas	Focus of the action
Resource mobilization	To bolster a sustainable funding mechanism for LUANAR with the ultimate aim to reduce university financial dependence on Government funding. This is being achieved through the reorganization of the Directorate of Finance to cater for the resource mobilization Unit, establishment of the endowment fund, income generation from the newly constructed filling station, revitalizing Bunda Farm Limited and charging economic fees for students at Bunda and NRC Campuses.
Marketing and communication	To make LUANAR competitive through the development of a comprehensive marketing policy, review of the LUANAR Strategic Plan, advertisement of LUANAR through newsletters and publication of articles through electronic and print media houses and other branding strategies.
Extension services	to improve extension and outreach services in the rural communities especially those within the environs of Bunda and NRC Campuses. To achieve this there are plans to review diploma curricula and syllabi at NRC Campus, review curricula and syllabi for BSc in Agricultural Extension for mid-career professionals at Bunda Campus, run TEVET type of training to improve skills of graduates, establish a Pan African Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development at Bunda Campus and to request government to support training of district-

based extension workers.

Quality Assurance	To make LUANAR iso-certified by 2020. To achieve this LUANAR has already established a Quality Assurance Directorate, resuscitated the Committee for University Teaching and Learning (CUTL), is conducting training in Quality Assurance and Iso-Certification, is strengthening the system of external examination and improving online availability of LUANAR.
ICT	For improved teaching, learning and research, increased access to higher education, reduced cost of printing and improved efficiency of conducting business. To achieve this, the university plans to introduce e-learning, City Campus, Open Distance Learning (ODL) and Weekend Programmes.
Teaching and learning	To improve teaching and learning environment for enhanced students performance and improved motivation of members of staff. To achieve this, the institution is constructing new teaching and learning facilities including the multipurpose hall.
Energy diversification and Water Sources	To address of the challenge of frequent interruption of electricity and water. The university plans to install solar panels on five hectares of land as an alternative source of electrical energy. With regard to water availability, the university will be linked to the new dam being constructed at Diamphwe River, south of Bunda Campus, while in the medium term sinking four additional boreholes on campus to increase the water volume from 600,000 to 750,000 cubic metres.

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**Teaching and accommodation challenges for LUANAR.** The birth of LUANAR in 2012 as Malawi's third public university was intended to contribute to the policy of widening access to higher education in Malawi. However, the increase in student enrolment has brought with it glaring challenges of limited offices, deficiency in teaching and accommodation spaces. In order to circumvent this challenge, the Malawi Government has provided funding for construction of the Gateway Administration to cater for office space and Teaching and Learning complex A to accommodate offices for teaching staff, two auditoriums, two lecture rooms and two laboratories at Bunda Campus. The Government of the Royal Kingdom of Norway has complemented the efforts of the Malawi Government by providing funds for the construction of the Teaching and Learning

Complex B also at Bunda Campus. Funds for the construction of a multipurpose hall have also been secured from Petroleum Investments Limited (PIL).

Like at Bunda Campus, the increased enrollment at NRC Campus has put pressure on teaching resources, including class room space and lecturers. However, the same are managed through internal procurement of desks and chairs. The construction of a three class room block under FICA relieved class room space (Gondwe, 2016). Through an Infrastructure Development Strategy, plans are put in place to initiate construction of three additional classroom blocks. To address the accommodation challenge at Bunda Campus, Government of the Royal Kingdom of Norway has provided funds for construction of a 212-bed hostel for female students. To demonstrate serious commitment on the part of the university management, a 240-bed hostel has been constructed from its own internally generated funds with the approval of LUANAR Council. At the NRC Campus, accommodation is ably handled by private stakeholders that have seen the need and are constructing good structures within 1 to 1.5 km reach from Campus.

Another opportunity for increasing student accommodation is anticipated from the public private partnership arrangement mediated by the Public Private Partnership Commission (PPPC). So far Old Mutual (a private investor) has been identified to construct additional hostels at Bunda Campus This project will eventually be extended to the NRC Campus.

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