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LSU Pro VC Dr. Thulani Dube addressing delegates during the conference

LSU holds inaugural education conference

...Aims at transforming rural learning ecologies

By Sithabisile M Sibanda

Lupane State University recently hosted a groundbreaking international education conference, bringing

together over 50 educators, researchers and policymakers with the aim of exploring innovative ways in which education systems in rural areas can be developed and sustained.

The three-day event which ran under the theme: "Transforming Rural Learning Ecologies for Sustainable Development," witnessed critical discussions from artificial intelligence (AI) and education to the importance of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and technology.

The conference featured several key takeaways; including the integration of AI in education, which Mr. Allen Ngwenya from Bulawayo Polytechnic discussed as a potential driver of sustainable development in Zimbabwe.

His presentation was titled: "Integrating AI in Education: A Pathway to Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe."

Collaborative research challenges were also explored, with Mr. Zamani Mazea from Zimbabwe Open University highlighting the complexities of supervisor-student collaboration in research.

Entrepreneurship education was another key area of focus, with Dr. Hazel Mubango from the Women's University in Africa presenting a paper titled: "Transforming Rural Learning Spaces: The Role of Entrepreneurship Education."

Additionally, Dr. Thembe Nyoni discussed the importance of tai-

lored approaches to address learning difficulties in junior primary learners, particularly in literacy skills.

Notable sessions included teacher education and curriculum development which focused on sustainable rural development. The session was chaired by Dr. Nyoni, with insights from Dr. Wilfred Mazani of the Midlands State University.

The conference also showcased technology-enhanced learning, with Mrs. Sipho Sibanda from Solusi University presenting on technology-enhanced and gender-responsive mathematics education.

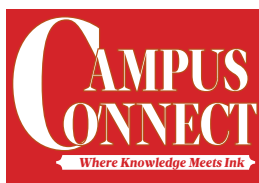
She explored the topic: "Technology-Enhanced and Gender-Responsive Mathematics Education". This session demonstrated the potential of digital tools in improving educational outcomes in rural areas.

Other presentations included titles like: "The King's Granary: A Community-Driven Approach to Education Financing", by Dr. Chris Ndlovu from LSU as well as "Harnessing Social Media Platforms for Education" by Dr. Alice Dhlwayo.

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Attendees of the conference

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The conference has also demonstrated LSU's commitment in the development of the education system in Matabeleland North and beyond.

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The session on IKS led by Precious Mkandawire and Dr. Cletus Ndlovu, highlighted the significance of reclaiming IKS for a decolonised curriculum. Their presentation: "Reclaiming Indigenous Knowledge Systems: A Pathway to a Decolonised Curriculum," also explored the relevance and importance of culture in education.

In his keynote address, Deputy Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr. Paul Damasane, emphasised the importance of integrating IKS into education, highlighting the relevance of local cultural contexts. This theme was echoed throughout the conference, which aimed to foster dialogue on AI, IKS, and sustainable practices.

By exploring these critical themes, the conference paved the way for a more equitable and resilient educational landscape in Zimbabwe.

It also positioned LSU as an international premier university in teaching, learning, community engagement, innovation and industrialisation informed by research.

The conference has also demonstrated LSU's commitment in the development of the education system in Matabeleland North and beyond.

The institution has been involved in a number of initiatives meant to improve the pass rate. Some schools reportedly recorded zero pass rates in the previous years, prompting the institution, government and other stakeholders to intervene in a bid to find a lasting solution to the problem.

Notable interventions in this regard include the donation of books to underdeveloped schools by the university's Library.

The university also established a schools' support initiative where it assists students from schools without basic equipment to visit LSU and conduct practical lessons in its laboratories.

The Dean for the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Dr. Mlamuleli Mhlanga once explained that this initiative was

LSU holds inaugural education conference



part of LSU's efforts in ending the zero pass rates problem.

"This is a brilliant relationship that we have with schools in dealing with low pass rates. We understand that schools have practical subjects and it is difficult for students to pass without the knowledge of using laboratory equipment. This initiative will effectively contribute to improving performance in STEM subjects," he said then.

Additionally, through the Department of Educational Foundations LSU did a preliminary study to establish the root causes of zero pass rates. The findings showed that there was lack of a reading culture which it strongly encouraged. It also came up remedial strategies for both teachers and learners to improve the pass rate.

"The intervention strategies which were instituted for a period of four years were based on results obtained from tests initially administered to

randomly sampled pupils. It was inferred that 70 percent of the pupils were reading below their level and have very low chances of succeeding in the public exams," Acting Dean for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Mbulisi Ndlovu said in 2023.

He added that as a way of addressing the predicament, a total of 65 teachers were trained to produce relevant reading books. This in turn helped to improve the pass rate in various schools.

"Through working on key reading challenges identified, schools that were in the zero bracket before the university's intervention gradually improved starting with recording 10 percent in 2019 to 20 percent in 2022," he added.

The insights from recent conference are an addition to the institutions' research initiatives meant to improve the rural education systems.



Deputy Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr. Paul Damasane

LSU's on-site registration drive a resounding success

By Sanelisiwe Andile B Siwela

Lupane State University recently embarked on an ambitious on-site registration drive in different places covering Hwange, Victoria Falls, Plumtree, Binga, Harare and Bulawayo; and the results have been nothing short of impressive.

In Bulawayo, the university's admissions team set up shop at various locations across the city, including Sekusile Shopping Centre, Cowdry Park Terminus and Entumbane Complex, providing prospective students with a unique opportunity to register for free for the academic year beginning this August.

According to Ms Nozipho Mpofu, from the Student Admissions Office, the initiative has been a huge success.

"We were overwhelmed by the response from prospective students," she said.

"The on-site registration process allowed us to interact with students directly, address their concerns, and guide them through the application process. It was a seamless experience, and we're thrilled with the outcome," she added.

Reaching out to prospective students

The on-site registration drive was strategically planned to reach out to prospective students in various parts of the country.

This approach ensured that students from these different places could access the registration services without having to travel long distances.

The success of the on-site registration initiative is a significant boost for LSU.

It demonstrates the university's commitment to making higher education accessible to a wider audience.

By providing free applications and on-site registration services, LSU is sending a strong message that it values the aspirations of prospective students and is willing to go the extra mile to

support them as they are building communities through knowledge.

The on-site registration drive has also made it possible for students who did not know anything about LSU as well as those who may not have had access to the university's services to register for programmes.

This is particularly significant for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have the resources to travel to the university's main campus.

Additionally, the initiative is part of LSU's broader commitment to student success.

The university is dedicated to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment that allows students to thrive.

By making the registration process more accessible, it is setting the stage for a positive student experience.

Moreover, the success of the on-site registration drive has implications for LSU's future growth and development.

As the university continues to expand its programmes and services, initiatives like this will play a critical role in attracting and retaining top talent.

This initiative also serves as a model for future initiatives aimed at promoting accessibility and student success.

By leveraging on technology and innovative approaches, LSU can continue to stay ahead of the curve and provide students with the support they need to succeed.

By taking its services to different parts, the university is demonstrating its willingness to engage with the community and provide support to prospective students.

As the university looks to the future, it is likely that on-site registration drives will become a regular feature of its recruitment strategy.





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By Michelle Moyo

Lupane State University (LSU) is taking a significant step towards fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the region and beyond.

The university is constructing an innovation hub – a state-of-the-art facility designed to bring together students, faculty and industry experts to develop new ideas and solutions.

The innovation hub, which is also a technovation centre, aims to create a vibrant ecosystem that generates new ideas, supports startups and attracts top talent.

By providing a collaborative environment and cutting-edge resources, the hub will enable individuals and teams to develop innovative projects and products that can drive economic growth and improve people's lives.

The innovation hub is expected to have a positive impact on the local community, students and faculties.

It will provide opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in innovation and entrepreneurship, while also attracting businesses and talent to the region.

With its innovative approach and collaborative spirit, the LSU innovation hub is poised to become a hub for creativity and economic growth in the region.

Senior lecturer and LSU Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Industrialisation Director, Dr F N Jomane, said that the aim of the technovation hub construction is to provide a platform to harness intellectual property generated by staff, students and community as a whole.

"It will act as a place where by there's a platform of ideas to be shaped and incubated. There will be learning, research and business development so that there is provision of goods and services," said.

He emphasised that the university envisions the technovation centre will be a platform where community challenges will be addressed.

"As an institution we have a good human resource in the form of students and lecturers who can work on these various challenges. Most of our programmes have components projects meant to do research and find solutions to problems faced by the region and across the country," Dr Jomane said.

"There's a call to collaborate with government and private sectors as we find solutions. The innovation centre will also have a system in the form of harnessing intellectual properties benefits from the commercialising those ideas," he added.

LSU lecturer in the Irrigation Engineering Department and LSU Research Extension Services Office Director, Mr Canisius Mpala stated that the major objectives of the innovation hub are to develop solutions to problems faced by the society; promote the creation of local technology with a special focus on social, economic and environmental sectors.

They also include building the capacity, collaboration and providing mentorship to innovators as well as equipping innovators, organisations and stakeholders with skills, knowledge and networks in order to evolve their practices.

"Success will be measured by services which are going to be available to the community. For example, empowerment of local farmers and schools with climate smart farming technologies and

Innovation Hub a catalyst for economic growth



the financial services provided by Lupfin Services.

"These services are assisting rural industrialisation and building an

economically self-sustaining rural economy.

"They impact the livelihoods. For instance, the goat breeding and

improving project and the indigenous grains project are of great assistance to local farmers," he added.

Mr Mpala also said that the provision of goods and services to the community creates employment opportunities.

Regional waste management initiative on cards

By Preeyish Zhou

Following successful initiatives done in partnership with Lupane State University (LSU) within the waste disposal and environmental health sector, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) is spearheading a regional initiative across five African countries to tackle hazardous chemicals in plastics, with Zimbabwe playing a key role as an implementing partner.

EMA is already working with LSU as part of the Cohesa One Health team that promotes human, animal, and environmental health.

These partners are running an innovative waste management project in Ward 19, Lupane which aims to eliminate waste through value addition.

The fronting team has already set up a biogas digester at St. Luke's Hospital, and are now establishing waste collection centres at strategic locations, including the Daluka Business Centre, St. Luke's Business Centre, and the hospital.

This initiative has inspired a regional intervention that aims at targeting persistent organic pollutants (POPs) – toxic additives in construction-sector plastics like PVC pipes, electrical conduits, and ceiling boards – which pose severe risks to public health and ecosystems.

EMA has designated Lupane as a key site for its national waste characterisation project, with officials urging the community to move beyond basic clean-up campaigns and embrace recycling as an economic opportunity.

“While collecting waste keeps our environment clean, we must now focus on creating value from it,” said Professor Farai Mapanda, emphasising that residents should not just recycle for sale, but develop local industries manufacturing products from recycled materials.

This is also the stance that LSU is taking with its One Health project.

The project plans to utilise pyrolysis to produce floor polish, paraffin, and diesel from waste. Some waste will be shredded

and sold to identified buyers from Bulawayo.

The initiative will not only reduce waste-related illnesses, but also provide a source of income for women and youth in Lupane.

As EMA eyes regional influence, it revealed that they will provide specialised training to help transform recycling into viable businesses, teaching entrepreneurs how to profit from waste recovery while mitigating health risks associated with improper handling.

This initiative positions Lupane at the forefront of Zimbabwe's sustainable development efforts, potentially creating jobs and reducing environmental hazards through innovative waste management solutions that benefit both the community and the nation.

These long-lasting plastics often end up in landfills, where they leach POPs into groundwater and soil. When burned, they release carcinogenic fumes linked to cancer, birth defects, and infertility.

“Unintentional POPs are silent killers,” an EMA official warned. “Our goal is to slash exposure through policy, industry reform, and waste management.”

Four-Pronged Strategies of the Project

1. Policy Overhaul – Amend laws to restrict POP-laden plastic imports and production.

2. Industry Shift – Pilot safer alternatives to POP additives and raw materials.

3. Recycler Training – Reduce toxic emissions from plastic melting by improving waste segregation and recovery.

4. Landfill Relief – Boost recycling to extend dump site lifespans and curb pollution.

With landfills nearing capacity, EMA emphasises recycling to protect workers and communities.

“Recovering plastics isn't just eco-friendly – it's a health imperative,” the agency stressed.

The initiative aims to finalise legal reforms and industry alternatives within two years.



The project aims at targeting persistent organic pollutants (POPs) – toxic additives in construction-sector plastics like PVC pipes, electrical conduits, and ceiling boards – which pose severe risks to public health and ecosystems.

Australian Embassy inspects LSU's solar project



Australian Embassy delegation and LSU staff during their visit

By Preeyish Zhou

Lupane State University recently hosted a delegation from the Australian Embassy, which toured the campus to assess the development of projects, including a solar initiative funded by the embassy.

The delegation inspected the university's Library, which now runs on a solar power system installed through the embassy's support.

The project aims to enhance energy efficiency and ensure uninterrupted access to learning resources.

Acting Dean for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Mbulisi Ndlovu commended the partnership and expressed gratitude alluding that the solar project ensured reliable electricity for students and researchers.

In addition to the installation of the solar system for the Library, the institution also invested in water harvesting and solar-powered drip irrigation for a range of vegetables in its farm.

The university is also planning to set up a solar plant, to generate power which can be incorporated into the country's national energy grid.

LSU is one of the leading institutions with a strong focus on research, and its academics are

championing for research and innovation in green energy.

Research outputs foreground that the adoption of environmentally-friendly renewable energy generation methods is key in addressing acute effects of climate change currently bedevilling the world.

This commitment to sustainable methods of renewable energy is in line with the country's plans to grow the solar energy sector. The government has taken advantage of the abundant sunlight that the country has to develop the sector.

Notable projects include the 100 Mega Watts Melfort solar power plant, completed by the Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC) and the Jotsholo solar plant by the Rural Electrification Agency (REA).

The country has more projects under construction and targets to generate over 1000 Mega Watts by the end of 2025.

Solar energy has been credited for being renewable and sustainable, meaning that users can depend on it as it hardly runs out. The power is also friendly to the environment because the system does not emit dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide.

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Building Communities Through Knowledge: LSU donates books to support local schools



LSU Deputy Librarian, Mrs. Hlonipang Pangeti distributes some of the books during the handover ceremony held at Simunyu Primary School.

By Buhlehenkosi Makalisa

In a move aimed at improving literacy and pass rates in Matabeleland North, Lupane State University Library in collaboration with Book Aid International, has adopted an initiative to donate books to primary schools dotted around Lupane District.

Demonstrating the commitment to “building communities through knowledge”, the entities recently donated a total of 586 books to three primary schools.

This initiative aims to enhance literacy and promote a reading culture among learners in these underserved communities. The donated books suitable for primary level learners, were distributed in Simunyu, Mqabuko and Dumisani Primary Schools. Simunyu received 197 books, Mqabuko received 194 books and Dumisani Primary School received 195 books.

The official handover ceremony was held at Simunyu Primary School, with LSU Deputy Librarian, Mrs. Hlonipang Pangeti and Assistant Librarian Ms Buhlebethu Ncube representing the institution. The Ministry was represented by Lupane District Schools Inspector and the Learner Welfare Officer.

One of the beneficiary schools, Simunyu Primary School was established in 2012 and faces significant challenges with access to textbooks.

“This donation of books is a meaningful step towards improving learning conditions and supporting foundational education in the region,” said Mrs. Pangeti.

The school’s infrastructure is limited with a single block housing two classrooms and an office while the remaining classrooms are made of mud.

Despite the challenges the school’s administration and staff are committed

to providing quality education to their learners. The school has a total enrolment of 181 pupils comprising of 95 girls and 86 boys.

As LSU makes strides in leaving no place and no one behind, the Library believes that this initiative will have a lasting impact in the region and beyond.

It envisions that these books will not only enhance literacy, but also broaden the learners’ knowledge, sparking their imagination and inspire them to become lifelong leaders.

“These textbooks will play a significant role in improving the standard of education in these schools where learners will now have access to knowledge that was previously out of reach. The donation of these textbooks is a critical step towards bridging the educational resource gap in these underserved communities,” noted Mrs. Pangeti.

The aim of these donations is far beyond the classroom, but to provide learners with access to quality educational resources and empowering them to reach their full potential and contributing to the development of their communities. The Library believes that education is the key to unlocking the potential of young people and creating a brighter future for all.

The beneficiary schools were grateful of this initiative expressing that learners will now be able to explore knowledge, gain a deeper understanding of the world around them and develop essential skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

The schools reiterated that the availability of textbooks will go a long way in improving the literacy rate in their communities. As they move forward, they remain committed to the mission of building communities through knowledge and empowering learners to reach their full potential.



Gender Forum on campus marks ZGC’s 10th anniversary celebration

By Preeyish Zhou

Lupane State University recently hosted a high-profile Gender Forum event at its main campus, as the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) celebrated its 10th anniversary.

The event brought together members of parliament, heads of tertiary institutions, and gender activists to reflect on the commission’s achievements and strategise on advancing gender equality nationwide.

The forum served as a platform to review the ZGC’s progress from its inception in 2015, including its efforts to promote equal opportunities in education, employment, and resource distribution.

Key discussions centred on strengthening policies to eliminate gender-based discrimination at both the community and national levels.

Attendees participated in surveys aimed at gathering recommendations for the commission, focusing on improving access to resources and opportunities in Lupane and nationwide.

In his keynote address, ZGC Vice-Chairperson Dr. Obert Machalaga commended the collaborative efforts between government bodies and academic institutions.

“The past ten years have laid a strong foundation, but there is still work to be done to ensure

true equality in all sectors,” he said.

ZGC has previously worked with LSU, with the institution providing insights on the Gender Policy Development.

The university’s Centre for Evaluation Science has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the ZGC under a contract from the United Nations Women wing, showcasing its expertise in gender-related research and evaluation. Through the Department of Development Studies, LSU has managed to provide relevant research and expertise to promote gender equality and development.

The institution remains committed to gender equality and development in its departments, the region and the nation at large.

On the other hand, the ZGC has made tremendous strides to promote gender equality since 2015. It has solved thousands of cases spanning workplace sexual harassment, child marriages, property disputes, and gender-based violence. It also played an instrumental role in the 2022 National Inquiry into the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Young Girls and Child Marriages.

Its core functions include monitoring issues concerning gender equality and ensures that the Constitution’s provisions on gender equality are upheld. It also investigates violations, advise institutions and recommend affirmative actions.

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Empowering Young Minds: Miss People's Choice scores big with darts initiative



By Thomas Ndemera

Minenhle Ndaba, the reigning LSU Miss People's Choice, has taken a bold step in empowering young girls at Mabhikwa High School in Lupane, Zimbabwe.

Her initiative, centered around the game of darts, aims to promote focus, mental discipline, and goal setting among the students.

By teaching them the importance of walking with purpose and aiming for targets in life, the programme encourages young girls to develop essential life skills and strive for excellence.

The training sessions, conducted with enthusiasm and dedication, provide a fun and interactive platform for the girls to build their self-confidence and overcome challenges.

By participating in the game of darts, they learn to concentrate and maintain their composure under pressure, skills that are crucial for achieving success in various aspects of life.

The programme also emphasises the value of consistency and persistence in pursuing one's goals, much like hitting the bullseye in darts.

Miss Ndaba's initiative is a testament to her commitment to empowering young girls and helping them reach their full potential.

By using a unique and engaging platform like darts, she has shown that learning can be fun and accessible.

Her efforts have undoubtedly made a positive impact on the girls of Mabhikwa High School, inspir-

ing them to strive for greatness and never give up on their dreams.

Through her initiative, she has not only taught the girls how to play darts, but has also instilled in them a sense of purpose and determination.

By empowering young girls, she is shaping the future leaders of tomorrow and helping them become confident, capable, and compassionate individuals who can make a difference in their communities.

One of the students, Winnie Mdimba's expressed gratitude as she reflected on Miss Ndaba's darts initiative.

The passion and dedication that she brought to teaching the game had not only improved Miss Mdimba's darts skills, but had also instilled in her essential life skills like focus, mental discipline, and goal setting. Miss Ndaba's patient and genuine approach to training had made a significant impact on her life.

The encouragement and support she received had boosted her confidence, and she was grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Mabhikwa High School darts team.

Under Miss Ndaba's guidance, Winnie has excelled in the Under 18 girls category in Matabeleland North. She was gifted a darts set for being one of the top players.

Miss Ndaba's commitment to empowering young girls like Winnie was truly inspiring. Her initiative had shown Winnie that with determination and hard work, she could achieve her goals and make a positive impact in her community.

“.....
The programme also emphasises the value of consistency and persistence in pursuing one's goals, much like hitting the bullseye in darts.
.....”



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*And with the difference in finger-
prints
Lies an opportunity to touch hearts,
but differently.*

*In our uniqueness,
If we are to be pieced together
We will 'find out' God.
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Luveve's Shadow steals limelight at AV Expo

Mthabisi Tshuma - Zimpapers Arts and Entertainment Hub

In a world where technology is advancing daily, Prince Ngwenya, a final-year BA Honours student from Lupane State University (LSU) stole the limelight at the AV Expo 2025 with his ground-breaking 3D animated short film, Luveve's Shadow.

The experimental film, part of Ngwenya's creative dissertation project, was a major crowd-puller at the event, which ran from July 8 to 10 at the Harare Showgrounds.

The AV Expo 2025 – Media, Broadcasting and Technology, hosted by the Audio Academy, serves as a vital national platform for academic institutions, media professionals, broadcasters and technology innovators to showcase their latest work and engage with future-facing ideas.

Ngwenya's Luveve's Shadow had significant attention for its innovative use of 3D software within the local context, with people praising its compelling storyline and bold artistic statements in the Zimbabwean film landscape.

Ngwenya said it is high time that the film sector taps more into technology advancements.

"I hope this animation will be a starting point in the Zimbabwean film sector where we strive to tell our own stories that resonate with us on our local televisions.

"Animation is still very unknown in Zimbabwe, but there's no harm in trying new things. That LSU is giving us young filmmakers a platform to experiment, is commendable for this sector. I hope that the short film will spark a lot more such projects in the future," he said.

LSU was a prominent exhibitor at the expo, proudly showcasing its LSU Campus Radio (broadcasting at 98.7FM) alongside a diverse range of other film productions by students from the Department of Languages, Media and Communication Studies.

Innocent Mwapangira, who su-



Luveve's Shadows animation



pervised Ngwenya's animated project and also exhibiting at the AV Expo, emphasised LSU's dedication to fostering practical skills and knowledge.

"LSU is deeply committed to being a forerunner in generating

knowledge and skills that can be industrialised for the economic development of the country.

"This commitment is clearly demonstrated by the success of projects like Luveve's Shadow, which exemplify the university's



Prince Ngwenya

focus on empowering students and the wider community. The overwhelming positive reception of Luveve's Shadow underscores the growing potential of 3D animation in Zimbabwe and highlights LSU's role in nurturing

the next generation of creative talent in the media and technology sectors," said Mwapangira.

The film can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19jH-V3Sfmz/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Reasons universities should champion for Open Access

From time immemorial research institutions and higher academic training centres have been pre-occupied with protecting their research outputs. As a result, a lot of books and journals are copy-right protected.

However, the trend has changed nowadays, with a number of institutions championing for Open Access (OA) and OA Publishing.

OA concerns making research outputs available for free especially via online libraries. Researchers and students become able to access books and journals without any legal and financial obstacles. They can freely read, share and download the articles.

Additionally, OA publishing refers to a practice where researchers make their work available for free via online platforms.

Recently, Lupane State University's (LSU) community had a privilege to learn more about this current change in research and publishing patterns.

The institution's Library through its research Webinar series, invited guests from the EIFL Open Access Programme to shed more light about the practice.

The guests-speakers were Iryna Kuchma who is the EIFL Open Access Programme Manager and Milica Sevkusic who is the Project Coordinator.

The EIFL Open Access Programme champions for a research practice where outputs are easily accessible. It has close links with libraries in more than 60 countries across the globe where it provides training and support to researchers.

The project has done a lot of research initiatives which include; offering research grants; assisting researchers from developing countries to publish as well as establishing partnerships with research organisations to promote OA in Africa. These organisations include the African Journals Online and the West and Central African Research and Education Network.

The EIFL Open Access Programme speakers at LSU explained what OA is and discussed a number of advantages that the practice has to researchers.

Some of the key benefits of OA include its ability to improve visibility of published work; wider reader engagement; collaboration and partnerships. The practice also enables researchers to afford publishing their work with ease since there are no financial costs they incur.

mimic legitimate publishers and exploit researchers for profit. These entities use aggressive tactics like phishing emails. They lack clear standards and deceive academics, especially those with weak scholarly communication, into paying fees without providing proper peer review or editorial services. Often called questionable, illegitimate, dark, deceptive, or scam journals, they pose serious threats to academic integrity," said Dr. Ndinde.

Researchers should check red flags in order to be sure that a journal is legitimate or not. For instance, a researcher should be shocked to see their submitted work published once they have paid the author fee, with no comments or corrections made.

Dr. Ndinde added that other red flags include the most common characteristics of predatory journals. These include deceptive practices where they "either conduct do not do peer reviews or perform superficial checks."

They also have "misleading metrics where they have invented impact factors or false indexing claims (e.g., "Indexed in Scopus" when they are not). Many now also make false claims about having impact factors or being included in prestigious academic indexes."

Other characteristics include use of titles "resembling reputable journals (e.g., Journal of Clinical Medicine vs. American Journal of Clinical Medicine)."

There is also the exploitation of the OA model where "predatory journals take fees without proper services such as providing real peer review and indexing."

Moreover, these journals have "aggressive email solicitations; spam emails with flattery ('We invite your esteemed research...'); quick acceptance guarantees (e.g., 'Publish in 2 weeks!') and poor website quality (grammar errors, lack of contact details)".

During the Webinar, other speakers expressed the same sentiments as Dr. Ndinde. They agreed that as victims, they have noticed the trend of solicitations which are sent via emails.

"If the email address used is a Gmail or Yahoo handle, already that is a red flag. Emails should be tied to either journals' websites or research institutions such as universities," said Dr. Ndlovu.

Speakers also highlighted that for transparency purposes, researchers should check the editorial board and their emails used.

Dr. Ndinde said most predatory journals have no "clear editorial board or listed experts with fake affiliations; they have hidden or exorbitant Article Processing Charges (APCs) and poor website quality (grammatical errors, broken links and no ISSN)."

According to Dr. Ndinde, a hijacked journal is a "deceptive form of academic fraud where scammers create fake websites that impersonate legitimate scholarly journals."

They "clone websites, copy the real journal's name, ISSN, and metadata to appear authentic. They are hard to detect, and have DOI links that don't match the journal's website. These cause a lot of scientific damage, contaminate databases and mislead future research."

Some of the characteristics include lack of peer review where submissions are accepted without proper editorial oversight. The journals just collect fees. They are also characterised by false indexing, rapid publishing, tinny discipline scope and no academic focus or specialisation.

Dr. Ndinde added that these journals are more "dangerous than typical predatory publishers because they hijack the reputation of trusted publications."

Speakers pointed out that unlike predatory and hijacked journals, legitimate journals are indexed in Scopus, PubMed, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and WoS; have clear editorial boards; have rigorous, transparent, and slow peer review and have clear, justified fees and often waivers.

Researchers are encouraged to rigorously check the legitimacy of journals before publishing. Young and inexperienced researchers have often fell victims mainly because of the pressure to publish for career advancement.

Dr. Ndlovu warned that: "Young researchers sometimes are desperate to publish. It's best to wait. Sometimes it takes too long to publish. Be patient and not fall victim of predatory journals. Starters must check

whether the journal has been accredited and is on the list. They should publish in journals that are affiliated to institutions like universities and not in those that are disputed by other researchers".

There are sites which researchers are encouraged to use to check journal legitimacy. These include: <https://kscien.org/> ; <https://doaj.org/search/journals> ; <http://thinkchecksubmit.org/> and <https://publons.com/journal/>.

In Zimbabwe, researchers are encouraged to publish in journals that are listed and approved by the Zimbabwe Council of Higher Education (ZIMCHE). The Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) and ZIMCHE are working towards ethical publishing frameworks and journal vetting systems.

Illegitimate journals pose a serious threat to scholarly integrity worldwide.

"As of the most recent estimates, there are over 16,100 predatory journals globally, and the number continues to rise each month. These journals publish tens of thousands of articles annually. Some even infiltrating respected databases like Scopus – where more than 300 potentially predatory journals contributed over 160,000 articles in just three years, accounting for nearly 3% of indexed studies. This has resulted to wasted research funds, loss of academic credibility and misleading scientific literature," added Dr. Ndinde.

Academics have noted that common research challenges across the globe include the pressure to publish; limited access to publishing literacy and training; exploitation of OA by fraudulent actors and limited institutional support for journal vetting.

However, interventions have been made to combat predatory and hijacked journals with academics collaborating to vet these platforms.

For instance, the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), a global consortium of over 140 academies published a comprehensive report recommending tools, awareness campaigns, and policy reforms.

Think. Check. Submit. initiative helps researchers identify trustworthy journals through a checklist-based approach.

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) provides ethical guidelines and resources for publishers and editors to uphold integrity.

DOAJ maintains a vetted list of legitimate open-access journals, helping researchers avoid predatory outlets.

In Africa there are increased awareness campaigns through university workshops and webinars. Institutions now screen and reject predatory publications; advocate for fair recognition of African scholarship and collaborate with global ethical bodies like COPE and DOAJ.

Platforms like African Journals Online (AJOL) are crucial for indexing peer-reviewed African journals.

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) leads awareness campaigns and Open Science initiatives to improve journal quality and visibility.

AfricArXiv promotes ethical publishing and collaboration among African scholars.

AuthorAID (INASP) offers mentorship and training to African researchers on ethical publishing practices.

In countries like South Africa institutions like Stellenbosch, University of Cape Town, and University of Johannesburg provide searchable databases and spreadsheets to help researchers choose reputable journals. Researchers who publish in these accredited journals often receive financial rewards, promotion points, or research funding.

"Combating predatory and hijacked journals requires a multi-tiered approach involving global standards, continental collaboration, and local action. Governments must enforce ethical publishing policies, communities must advocate for awareness, and international bodies must continue to build tools and frameworks that protect scholarly integrity," Dr. Ndinde concluded.

"Illegitimate journals pose a serious threat to scholarly integrity worldwide".

What of predatory and hijacked journals?

While OA and its publishing techniques is welcomed across various research disciplines, in this digital age it is being compromised by an influx of predatory and hijacked publishers who prey and exploit unsuspecting researchers.

These publishers are not legitimate and thrive in scamming researchers for selfish gains.

LSU has taken a positive step to protect researchers within its community, and the recently-held Predatory and Hijack Journals Webinar is a testament to its commitment to raising awareness against unscrupulous publishers.

Hosted by the university Library, the seminar witnessed a very informative presentation from Dr. S. Ndinde who is a lecturer in the Department of Library and Information Science at NUST.

Other speakers included LSU academics who were once victims of unscrupulous journals. These include Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Acting Dean Dr. M. Ndlovu, Senior lecturer in the Department of Accounting and Finance, Dr. N.C. Shereni as well as Senior lecturer in the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Professor H. Tibugari.

Dr. Ndinde's presentation was titled: Unmasking Predatory and Hijacked Journals and Publishers: Safeguarding Academic Integrity.

According to him, researchers should be aware of predatory journals, publishers and conferences because they are all about exploitation.

"Predatory journals refer to unethical open-access journals that



WHAT TO STUDY AT LUPANE STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Honours Degree in Horticulture and Landscaping
Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Honours Degree in Soil Science
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree In Applied Biotechnology
Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Honours Degree in Agricultural Economics
Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Special Honours Degree in Crop Science
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Environmental Sciences
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Irrigation Engineering
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Food and Agricultural Products Processing
Master of Science Degree in Crop Science
Diploma in Agribusiness
Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Honours Degree in Crop Science
Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Honours Degree in Animal Science and Rangeland Management
Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Honours Degree in Wildlife Resources Management
Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Special Honours Degree in Animal Science
Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences Honours Degree in Forest Resources Management
Master of Science in Animal Breeding and Biotechnology
Master of Science in Plant Breeding
Master of Science in Agronomy
Master of Science in Tropical Resources Ecology
Master of Science in One Health
Master of Science in Food Safety and Port Health
Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Science
Doctor of Philosophy in Animal Science
Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural Economics
Doctor of Philosophy in Ecological Resources Management



FACULTY OF COMMERCE

Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Accounting and Finance
Master of Science Degree in Accounting and Finance
Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Real Estate Management
Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Banking and Finance
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Hospitality and Tourism
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Economics
Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Marketing Management
Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Entrepreneurship
Master of Business Leadership
Bachelor Of Commerce Special Honours Degree In Procurement And Supply Chain Management
Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree Supply Chain Management
Master of Science Degree in Human Resource Management
Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Human Resource Management
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Industrial Psychology
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Supply Chain Management
Master of Business Leadership
Master of Science (MSc) Degree in Human Resource Management
Bachelor of Commerce Special Honours Degree in Digital Marketing (B Com SP Hons DM)
Master of Science Degree in Supply Chain Management
Master of Science Degree In Hospitality and Tourism
Doctor of Philosophy in Hospitality and Tourism
Doctor of Philosophy in Management and Leadership
Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management
Doctor of Philosophy in Accounting and Finance
Doctor of Philosophy in Human Resource Management



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Bachelor of Education Degree in Mathematics
Bachelor of Education Degree in English and Communication
Bachelor of Education Degree in Agriculture
Bachelor of Education Honours Degree in Language and Communication (IsiNdebele)
Bachelor of Education Degree in Geography
Bachelor of Education Degree in Accounting
Postgraduate Diploma in Education
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Development Studies
Diploma in Development Studies
Bachelor of Social Science Special Honours Degree in Monitoring and Evaluation
Bachelor of Science Special Honours Degree in Urban Management Studies
Master of Science Degree in Development Studies
Diploma in Youth & Community Development Studies
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Urban and Regional Planning
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Anthropology
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Sociology
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Peace, Conflict and Security Studies
Master of Social Science Degree in Monitoring and Evaluation
Master of Science in Public Policy and Development Management
Master of Science Degree in Climate Change and Sustainable Development
Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Language and Communication Studies
Diploma in Court Interpreting and Translation
Postgraduate Diploma in Media and Public Relations
Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in IsiNdebele
Diploma in Applied Language Studies
Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Applied Language Studies
Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Language and Communication Studies
Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Film, Television and Media Studies
Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Theatre, Performance and Media Technologies
Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Tonga/Nambya/Sesotho/Kalanga Language and Culture Studies
Bachelor of Social Science Honours Degree in Geography and Population Studies
Diploma in Geographic Information Science (GIS) and Remote Sensing
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Natural Resources Management
Postgraduate Diploma in Geographic Information Science and Remote Sensing
Master of Science Degree in Climate Change and Sustainable Development
Master of Science Degree in Development Studies
Master of Social Science in Monitoring and Evaluation
Doctor of Philosophy in African Languages and Culture
Doctor of Philosophy in Media Studies
Doctor of Philosophy in Performance Studies
Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies
Doctor of Philosophy in Monitoring and Evaluation



FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCES

Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Business Computing
Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Information Technology
Bachelor of Engineering Honours Degree in Production Engineering
Bachelor of Engineering Honours Degree in Mechatronics Engineering
Bachelor of Engineering Honours Degree in Fuels and Energy Engineering

From research to riches: How LSU's innovation hub is transforming rural farming in Lupane

By Rutendo Nyeve – Chronicle Reporter

In the heart of drought-prone Lupane District, an agricultural revolution is taking shape, one that's turning academic research into a real-world success story.

Lupane State University (LSU), through its Dryland Agro-Innovation and Industrial Park, is empowering local farmers with climate-smart farming technologies, improved livestock breeds and commercial crop production, which is reshaping rural livelihoods and fortifying the region against climate shocks.

At the core of this transformation is a goat breed improvement

programme, a cross-breeding initiative that combines indigenous and exotic goat breeds to produce hardier, disease-resistant animals with higher market value.

In an interview, the director of the Dryland Agro-Innovation and Industrial Park, Dr Fortune Jomane, said the programme, which boasts over 400 goats, is a partnership with farmers.

"Lupane State University is working with communities on various projects. One such project is the goat breed improvement programme. It is a breed improvement research programme run under the Dryland Agro-Innovation Industrial Park," he said.

"We've bred over 400 goats, in-



cluding Matabele, Mashona, Boer and Red Kalahari, specifically for resilience in dryland conditions."

One farmer benefitting directly from this initiative is Mr Freedom Sibanda of Daluka Ward. Just recently, he swapped one of his goats for a male Matabele buck, a breed celebrated for its resilience in heat and disease resistance.

"This buck has improved the genetics of my entire herd. It breeds well and the offspring are stronger

and more valuable. When sold for meat, one goat can fetch over \$120, which is a major boost for us farmers," said Mr Sibanda.

"I am grateful to LSU for facilitating this exchange. The Matabele goat has not only improved my herd but also my livelihood."

The improved goat genetics are creating a ripple effect across the community, with neighbours increasingly adopting the breeds and practices introduced by LSU.

Incomes are rising, herds are improving and with each success story, trust in science-led agriculture is growing.

Beyond goats, LSU is expanding its reach through diversified projects in poultry, piggery, and chilli farming.

By contracting smallholder farmers and offering technical support and market access, the university is integrating rural producers into national and international value chains.

Field days, such as the recent one held in Daluka, offer a window into this transformation.

Farmers showcase progress, exchange ideas and receive training

on best practices, directly applying university-led research to their own fields and livestock pens.

Dr Jomane said they are creating platforms for knowledge sharing with farmers able to exchange female goats for quality bucks, get seed for drought-resistant crops and gain hands-on experience in commercial farming.

"As we are witnessing on this field day at Daluka Ward to disseminate applied research output, the farmer, Mr Freedom Sibanda, showcased his improved herd and the valuable lessons he had learnt from interacting with Lupane State University," he said.

The model is aligned with the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) and the Education 5.0 philosophy, which promotes innovation, industrialisation and community impact from tertiary institutions.

By focusing on climate resilience and high-value farming, the Dryland Agro-Innovation and Industrial Park is not just mitigating the effects of drought, but building an economically vibrant and self-sustaining rural economy.



"Lupane State University is working with communities on various projects. One such project is the goat breed improvement programme. It is a breed improvement research programme run under the Dryland Agro-Innovation Industrial Park."

Images showing proceedings of the 2025 edition of the Chancellor's Games held at the Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT)





Of the 14 medals, the teams brought home eight gold, three silver and two bronze medals and the institution took position four out of thirteen participating institutions.



The ladies chess grandmasters are Portia Ncube (right), Linda Letween Mugabe (centre) and Tendai Chikava.

Chancellor's Games: Team LSU bags 14 medals

By Blessing Khanye

Lupane State University went against the odds, bagging a total of 14 medals in the recently held 2025 edition of the Chancellor's Games held at the Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT).

Of the 14 medals, the teams brought home eight gold, three silver and two bronze medals and the institution took position four out of thirteen participating institutions.

The results of the games are as follows:

Gold medals

- Duba Sibanda for the walk race.
- Fourpence Mukoko for the 100m and 200m men's race.
- Sizwile Sibanda for the shotput ladies below 45 years.
- Nokuphila Ndlovu for the ladies 100m.

- Mtunzana Mncedisi for 1500m and 800m race.
- Chess ladies also won gold.
- Silver medals
- Peter Ndlovu for the walk race.
- Duo Thenjiwe Ncube and Elector Masara for golf.
- Chitondezyo Mudenda for 1500m race.
- Jabulani Dhliwayo for draught.
- Bronze medals
- Patrick Nkiwane for shotput of people above 45 years.
- Culture Group led by Bekithemba Ndlovu aka Majazi.

This year's performance was better than that of the 2024 edition where LSU brought home six gold, three silver and one bronze medal while the university took position four.

Ladies chess team put up an impressive performance and defended their trophy which they

have been winning since 2020. The grandmasters are Portia Ncube, Linda Letween Mugabe and Tendai Chikava.

LSU Sports Association Chairperson, Mr. Bekithemba Ndlovu, praised the team's performance and congratulated those who got medals.

"We did very well, there was great improvement. The athletics team has achieved outstanding success, demonstrating great determination and positive attitude. All ladies performed very well, this year was the first time to performed better since 2012. As a way forward, we need to have play grounds for traditional games and someone to monitor the players. We need to continue practicing as well," he said.

Vice Chairperson of the LSU Sports Association, Linda.L.Mug-

abe, also expressed the same sentiments, highlighting that the performance is "a true reflection of excellence and determination".

"I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the athletes who proudly represented our university at the Chancellor's Games. Your dedication, discipline, and outstanding sportsmanship have brought immense pride to our institution.

"I commend each participant for their commitment to training, their resilience during the competition, and the unity shown throughout the event. Regardless of the final results, your performance has been a true reflection of excellence and determination. Thank you for being exemplary ambassadors of our university. Your efforts have not only inspired your peers but have also set a strong foundation

for future teams. I look forward to celebrating many more victories and achievements with you in the future" she said in a statement.

The Chancellor's Games are held on a yearly basis, bringing together sports enthusiasts from all universities across the country.

They have a number of disciplines which include athletics, basketball, chess, football, netball, table tennis, volleyball, darts, pool, tug of war, and traditional games like nhondo, tsoro, and draught.

LSU continue to partake in these games and has set aside a sports day where every staff member is allowed to participate in sports.

The university is supported by stakeholders including Nyaradzo, First Mutual, Agribank, and Calm, who have generously donated resources to enhance the university's sports programmes.