



NEWSLETTER

December, 2023

December Edition

A Message to the Readers



Prof NGAMIJE Jean - VC/UNILAK

As we step into the December edition of our newsletter, I extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each one of you.

November was a month of significant milestones and enriching experiences here at UNILAK.

I am delighted to share that UNILAK had the honor of hosting the prestigious International Conference on Environment, Energy, and Development (ICEED2023).

This momentous event brought together brilliant minds and experts from diverse backgrounds to deliberate on pressing global issues.

It was a platform that fostered insightful discussions and generated innovative solutions towards a sustainable future.

Furthermore, we are privileged to announce the establishment of the Sino Africa Joint Research Center (SAJOREC) Rwanda office at our esteemed institution.

This center represents an initiative in advancing research excellence focused on environmental studies.

It is meant to contribute significantly to enhanced understanding and proactive measures in preserving our environment for generations to come.

Our campus was graced by the presence of delegates from diverse backgrounds, offering us the incredible opportunity to explore and cultivate key areas of collaboration.

These interactions have laid the groundwork for impactful partnerships that will undoubtedly shape our collective pursuit of knowledge and progress.

As the year draws to a close, UNILAK extends warm wishes for a joyous and fulfilling festive season to each and every one of you.

May this season be filled with happiness, gratitude, and a renewed sense of purpose. Thank you for being part of our journey.

UNILAK to host Rwanda Office of Sino Africa Joint Research Center (SAJOREC)

The University of Lay Adventists of Kigali (UNILAK) is set to become the hosting institution for the Rwanda Office of the Sino Africa Joint Research Center (SAJOREC) following its inauguration on November 8, 2023.

This monumental step was taken during the 6th International Conference on Environment, Energy, and Development (ICEED2023) held in Kigali.

The establishment of the research center marks the culmination of an enduring partnership that began eleven years ago between XIEG, CAS, and UNILAK. This collaboration has progressively evolved, leading to the creation of a center aimed at fostering cutting-edge research in diverse fields related to environment and natural resources management.

One of the primary objectives of SAJOREC is to provide a conducive environment for researchers, equipped with modern facilities and cutting-edge laboratories.

These facilities boast the capacity to analyze soil composition, water quality, as well as a Geographic Information System (GIS) and remote sensing lab. This sophisticated infrastructure aims to support scientists in conducting comprehensive and impactful research in their respective fields.

The collaborative initiative between the Chinese institutions and UNILAK underscores the growing importance of international partnerships in addressing global challenges related to environmental sustainability and resource management.

By fostering a conducive research environment, SAJOREC aims to facilitate groundbreaking studies that contribute to sustainable development and resource conservation in Rwanda and beyond.

Prof. Jean Ngamije; Vice Chancellor of UNILAK, expressed his enthusiasm about the inauguration, stating, "This inauguration is a testament to the unwavering commitment of our partnering institutions towards advancing research excellence." The establishment of SAJOREC underscores our collective dedication to addressing pressing environmental challenges through innovative research and collaboration." He added.

The inauguration ceremony, held within the framework of ICEED2023, was attended by esteemed scholars, policymakers, and representatives from various international institutions. The event served as a platform to highlight the pivotal role of research in mitigating environmental challenges and fostering sustainable development.

SAJOREC's presence at UNILAK is anticipated to propel Rwanda's research capabilities in environmental studies, providing researchers with the necessary tools and infrastructure to undertake comprehensive studies crucial for the country's sustainable development agenda.

The establishment of the Rwanda Office of SAJOREC at UNILAK heralds a new era of collaborative research endeavors aimed at addressing pressing environmental concerns while advancing scientific knowledge in the pursuit of a sustainable future.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND DEVELOPMENT (ICEED2023) CONVENED EXPERTS IN ENVIRONMENT



The Lemigo Hotel played host to the annual International Conference on Environment, Energy and Development (ICEED2023) on Wednesday, November 8th.

This prestigious conference, jointly organized by the University of Lay Adventists of Kigali (UNILAK), the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography (XIEG), and the Sino-Africa Joint Research Center (SAJOREC) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), convened global experts to deliberate and address critical environmental issues.

With a primary focus on the urgency of tackling environmental challenges, the conference gathered scientists, policymakers, researchers, and industry leaders from various corners of the world.

The event provided a platform for attendees to share insights, present research findings, and discuss innovative solutions to combat climate change, biodiversity loss, energy sustainability, and other pressing concerns affecting the planet.

Prof Wang Qinfeng, a renowned environmental scientist and keynote speaker at ICEED2023, emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts in mitigating environmental degradation.

"The need for immediate action on a global scale cannot be overstated.

ICEED serves as a vital forum for interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing, fostering impactful initiatives to address our world's most pressing environmental crises," he stated during his keynote address.

The conference spanned multiple sessions, covering a wide array of topics such as sustainable development, renewable energy technologies, conservation practices, climate adaptation strategies, and policies for environmental governance.

Attendees actively engaged in panel discussions, and presentations, fostering an environment of learning and idea exchange. ICEED2023 represents a continuation of the annual tradition of gathering experts and stakeholders to chart pathways towards a more sustainable future. notably, the collaboration among UNILAK, XIEG, CAS, and SAJOREC underscored the importance of international partnerships in addressing global challenges.

Professor Jean Ngamije; the Vice Chancellor of UNILAK, one of the organizing institutions, expressed optimism about the outcomes of the conference. "ICEED remains a crucial platform for interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

The diverse expertise gathered here today is testament to our collective commitment to finding sustainable solutions for our planet's future," she remarked during the closing ceremony," he remarked.

As the conference concluded, participants departed with renewed commitments to implementing practical solutions and strengthening collaborations to safeguard the environment.

Dr. Rose Mukankomeje inspires focus on Research during ICEED 2023



The University of Lay Adventists of Kigali (UNILAK) welcomed Dr. Rose Mukankomeje, the Director General of the Higher Education Council, during the 2023 International Conference on Environment, Energy and Development (ICEED2023).

The event, which drew academics, researchers, and environmentalists from various sectors, resonated with enthusiasm as Dr. Mukankomeje delivered a compelling presentation.

Addressing the audience, she underscored the pivotal role of research in facilitating sustainable practices for managing natural resources.

During her Presentation, Dr. Mukankomeje emphasized the critical need for university lecturers and researchers to dedicate concerted efforts toward conducting meaningful studies that directly impact society.

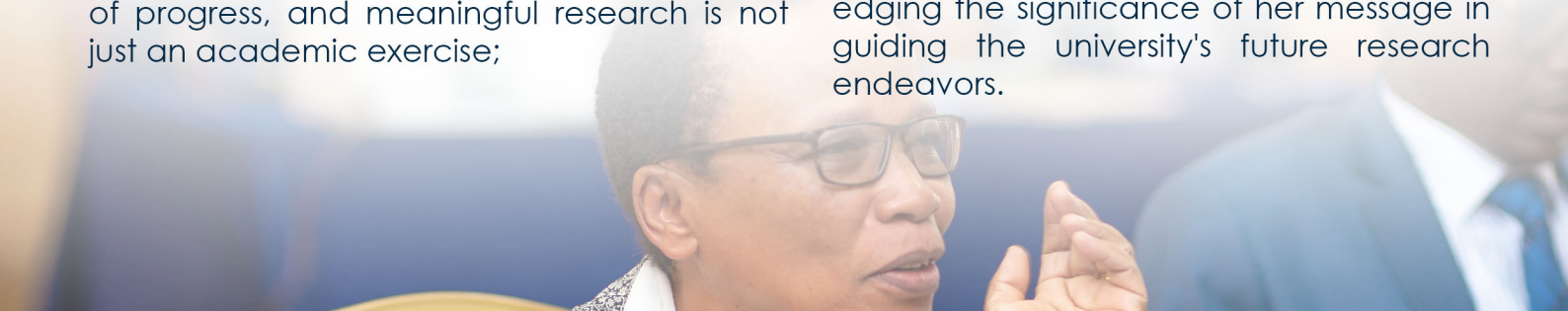
She highlighted "Research is the cornerstone of progress, and meaningful research is not just an academic exercise;

it is a catalyst for societal change," expressed Dr. Mukankomeje. "Our collective responsibility as educators and scholars is to produce research outcomes that transcend the boundaries of academia and actively contribute to the well-being of our communities."

The Director General stressed the urgency of aligning academic research with the needs of society, urging lecturers and researchers to channel their expertise towards finding practical solutions to mitigate environmental degradation and promote conservation efforts.

Dr. Mukankomeje's presentation resonated deeply with the audience, prompting discussions and a renewed commitment among attendees to steer their academic pursuits towards research that creates meaningful societal impact.

In response to her address, UNILAK officials expressed their gratitude for Dr. Mukankomeje's insightful presentation, acknowledging the significance of her message in guiding the university's future research endeavors.



UNILAK EXPLORES COLLABORATIVE TIES IN FRANCE

In a bid to foster international collaborations and enrich academic experiences, UNILAK embarked on a fruitful expedition across France this November. The department of Partnerships led by Professor Anthony Uwaya, sought to establish ties with prominent institutions for potential collaborations, culminating in significant milestones during his visit.

On the 22nd of November, Professor Uwaya was warmly received by the Mayor of Avenay Val d'Or, marking a significant milestone in UNILAK international outreach efforts. The visit culminated in the official signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNILAK and the municipality of Avenay Val d'Or. This landmark agreement primarily focuses on fostering cultural exchanges, aiming to broaden the horizons of both communities through shared experiences and collaborations.

Continuing the expedition, on Friday the 24th of November, the head of partnerships expanded the university's outreach by visiting ESSEC Business School in France. The discussions centered on potential collaborations in diverse areas, including student exchange programs, staff exchange initiatives, PhD programs, and collaborative research endeavors. This visit sought to lay the groundwork for robust partnerships that would benefit students, faculty, and researchers from both institutions.

Speaking about these initiatives, Professor Uwaya emphasized the significance of such collaborations in enriching academic experiences and promoting a global perspective among students and faculty members at UNILAK. He highlighted the value of cross-cultural interactions in fostering innovation and academic excellence.

The engagements in France signify UNILAK's commitment to fostering international partnerships and leveraging global synergies to enhance the quality of education and research opportunities for its academic community. With the MoU signed with Avenay Val d'Or and ongoing discussions with ESSEC Business School, the university looks forward to a promising future of fruitful collaborations and academic exchanges.



Polish Delegation Explores Collaboration with UNILAK for Environmental Protection



A delegation from Poland, consisting of government officials and members of the private sector led by the Ambassador Krzysztof Buzalski of Poland in Rwanda and Mr Charles Ngarambe, the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Kigali, visited the University of Lay Adventists of Kigali (UNILAK) on October 27, 2023 to explore potential collaboration opportunities in the field of environmental protection.

The visit, which marked a significant step in international cooperation, aimed to strengthen ties between Poland and Rwanda, focusing on sustainable environmental initiatives. The delegation was welcomed by UNILAK's leadership.

During the meeting, several proposals for collaborative projects in environmental protection were put forth. Among these proposals were demo projects in water treatment and biomass research. These initiatives are expected to contribute to the development of sustainable solutions to some of the environmental challenges both countries face.

The delegation and UNILAK representatives engaged in productive discussions regarding the implementation of these projects in the near future. Both parties expressed their commitment to leveraging their expertise and resources to make these initiatives a reality.

In addition to the discussions, the Polish delegation had the opportunity to visit UNILAK's ongoing water waste treatment projects. This on-site visit allowed the visitors to witness the university's dedication to practical, environmentally friendly solutions in action. The delegation was impressed with the progress made and expressed their enthusiasm for potential joint efforts in similar projects.

The collaboration between the Polish delegation and UNILAK signifies a promising step towards international cooperation in the field of environmental protection.

This partnership is expected to foster innovation, knowledge exchange, and sustainable practices in addressing pressing environmental issues.



UNILAK received a delegation from Yeungnam University



A delegation from Yeungnam University made a significant visit to UNILAK in the afternoon of the 15th of November 2023 fostering prospects for collaboration between the two esteemed institutions. The delegation, comprising faculty members and administrative personnel, engaged in discussions aimed at exploring mutual areas of interest and potential partnerships.

Led by Yeungnam University Executive Vice President, Dr. HAN Dong Geun, the delegation was received warmly by UNILAK administrative officials and faculty members.

During the engaging discussions held between the delegates from Yeungnam and their counterparts at UNILAK, various domains for collaboration were deliberated upon. Ranging from joint research initiatives to student exchange programs and academic initiatives that could benefit both universities.

An exemplary highlight of this visit was the public lecture offered by the Yeungnam University delegation on the Saemaul Undong program; known for its community-driven approach and its role in the socio-economic development of rural areas.

The Yeungnam delegation captivated the audience with their expertise and shared experiences, illustrating the program's principles and its potential applicability in various societal contexts. This lecture aimed to shed light on the historical significance and the contemporary relevance of this transformative rural development initiative pioneered in South Korea.

Dr. HAN, heading the Yeungnam University delegation, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration prospects between the two institutions. "The exchange of knowledge and collaborative efforts between Yeungnam and UNILAK can pave the way for groundbreaking initiatives that transcend geographical boundaries," Dr. HAN stated.

Dr. Emmanuel Hakizimana, the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic and Research, reciprocated the sentiment, emphasizing the importance of fostering partnerships to expand the horizons of academic excellence.

The visit concluded on a positive note, with both institutions expressing a commitment to further dialogue and exploration of potential collaboration avenues.

The exchange not only marked a step towards academic synergy but also highlighted the importance of international partnerships in fostering academic excellence and cultural understanding.



UNILAK initiates 5-days training program to enhance E-learning course structures and pedagogy

UNILAK has embarked on a comprehensive 5-days training program for its lecturers to equip them with advanced tools and methodologies essential for effective online teaching.

Participants will engage in a series of workshops, interactive sessions, and hands-on training exercises led by renowned experts in e-learning, instructional design, and educational technology.

In his opening remarks; Dr. Emanuel Hakizimana, The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research at UNILAK, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "This training marks a pivotal moment in UNILAK's commitment to delivering high-quality online education."

Our faculty members are the backbone of this transformation, and empowering them with the latest techniques in online teaching is crucial."

The commitment of UNILAK to embrace technological advancements in education through such comprehensive training programs underscores its dedication to academic excellence and student centric learning experiences.



UNILAK Law Students triumph in Inter-University Moot Court competition on Refugees and Asylum seekers



Students from the Faculty of Law at UNILAK have emerged triumphant in the inter-university moot court competition focusing on refugees and asylum seekers.

The competition saw participation from several universities, yet UNILAK team stood out, showcasing their exceptional knowledge, research, and advocacy skills.

The moment of triumph arrived when the UNILAK team was announced as the overall winner of the competition. Their meticulous preparation, in-depth research, and compelling presentation skills set them apart, securing a well-deserved victory.

As a testament to their success, the team was honored with a prestigious trophy, symbolizing their achievement in mastering the complex legal aspects of refugee and asylum laws.

Additionally, each member received individual medals recognizing their exceptional contributions to the team's success.

However, the accolades didn't end there. In a remarkable gesture, the winning team was also offered paid internships at the esteemed Legal Aid Forum, renowned for its advocacy and support for marginalized communities.

"This victory not only showcases the talent and hard work of our students but also reinforces our commitment to nurturing legal minds equipped to address critical societal issues," remarked Dr. Jacques Kabano, a lecturer at UNILAK in the Faculty of Law and a mentor to the winning team.

The Faculty of Law at UNILAK expressed immense pride in its students' accomplishments, highlighting their dedication, perseverance, and commitment to promoting justice and upholding the rights of the vulnerable.

UNILAK witnesses swearing - in ceremonies across its three campuses



In this month of November, the three campuses of UNILAK witnessed the swearing-in ceremonies of their respective Student Union Committees. The outgoing leaders were celebrated for their endless dedication and relentless service to the student body, while the new committees were urged to uphold transformative leadership and set exemplary standards for their peers.

The ceremonies, held across Nyanza, Kigali, and Rwamagana campuses, marked a significant transition in student governance. Outgoing committee members were hailed for their efforts in advocating for student welfare, initiating impactful programs, and fostering a sense of unity among the diverse student community.

Addressing the gatherings, university officials and faculty members, the director of education in Nyanza District, Mr. Edouard Mushimiyimana praised the outgoing committee in Nyanza campus for their outstanding contribution, acknowledging their efforts in enhancing student life, and collaboration with the district in promoting inclusivity, and organizing impactful events that enriched the academic and social experiences of students across the campus.

Dr. Javan Semana, The coordinator of Rwamagana campus, commended the outgoing committee, stating, "We are immensely grateful for the exemplary service rendered by the outgoing leaders. They have demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment in their roles, leaving behind a legacy of progress and unity." The baton now passes to the newly elected committees, each charged with the responsibility to lead and serve their fellow students.

Ms. Tumukunde Miriam, assuming the leadership of the Kigali Campus Student Union, expressed gratitude for the trust bestowed upon her and pledged to work tirelessly to address student concerns and aspirations.

Mr. Tony Gitego, who now leads the Rwamagana Campus Student Union Committee, emphasized the need for inclusivity and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds, vowing to create an environment where every voice is heard and valued.

Ms. Antoinette Umugwaneza, at the helm of the Nyanza Campus Student Union Committee, echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing the importance of transformative leadership and setting high standards for the betterment of the entire student community.

"Leadership is not just about holding positions; it is about the positive impact we leave behind," remarked Dr. Rulinda Ephrard, the Dean of Students. "I urge the newly sworn-in committee to uphold the values of transparency, accountability, and unity. Your actions will set the tone for the entire student community."

"Your leadership will shape the experiences and future of your peers. Strive for inclusivity, foster innovation, and be the role models that your fellow colleagues can look up to," he added.

The events were colorful with optimism and anticipation as the new committees assumed their roles, promising a continuation of dedicated service and a commitment to furthering the interests of the student body at the university. As they embark on this new chapter, the campus eagerly awaits the impact and initiatives these leaders will bring forth in the upcoming academic year.

The university administration reiterated its support for the student union and encouraged the new leaders to collaborate closely with faculty and staff for the holistic development of the university.



UNILAK witnesses swearing - in ceremonies across its three campuses



UNILAK celebrates a decade of collaborative achievement with Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Chinese Academy of Sciences

The University Of Lay Adventists Of Kigali (UNILAK) marked a significant milestone, commemorating its ten-year partnership with the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography (XIEG), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The partnership, initiated back in 2012, witnessed an impressive extension until 2026. It has flourished multiple milestones that have amplified environmental research and academic exchange.

Notable among these achievements is the establishment of the joint environmental laboratories specializing in soil, water, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). These facilities have served as hubs for groundbreaking research initiatives aimed at addressing critical environmental challenges.

Furthermore, the joint efforts of this decade-long partnership resulted in the establishment of the Rwanda office of the Sino-Africa Joint Research Center (SAJOREC), dedicated to promoting environmental research in the region.

Moreover, this alliance offered invaluable support to UNILAK Master of Sciences in Environmental and Development Studies, providing professors and resources essential for fostering academic excellence.

Additionally, both institutions have extended sponsorships to faculty members and students from UNILAK, facilitating their enrollment in master's and Ph.D. programs at XIEG, CAS.

Together, UNILAK and XIEG, CAS jointly organized annual international conferences on Environment, Energy, and Development (ICEED), serving as a platform for scientific research dissemination, idea exchange, and fostering global collaborations. This initiative played a pivotal role in advancing environmental sciences on a global scale.

In a concerted effort to support scholarly publications, both sides collaborated in offering joint support to the East African Journal of Science and Technology, nurturing a platform for the dissemination of rigorous scientific research within the region.

Expressing their gratitude for the fruitful partnership, representatives from UNILAK and XIEG, CAS highlighted the significance of mutual cooperation in advancing environmental research and academic excellence. The collaborative efforts have not only enriched the academic landscape but also fostered cultural exchange and understanding between the two institutions.

As UNILAK and XIEG, CAS look forward to continuing their alliance, the past decade stands as a testament to the impactful outcomes achievable through sustained academic collaboration and dedication to environmental research and education.







Ephrard Rulinda, Ph.D.

Summary of Qualifications

A Ph.D. holder from Walden University, US and Expert in Education Policy, Leadership, and Management. A highly experienced professional lecturer with more than 25 years in teaching and administration from pre-school to university, in different countries and cultures.

A motivating, talented and enthusiastic lecturer and effective at providing high quality teaching and fostering a positive learning environment to all students. A professional researcher who provides new trends and best practices in teaching and learning in a changing environment. Super leadership, organization, and communication skills (with 3 spoken languages: Kinyarwanda, French, and English).

Able to promote trusting and productive relationship with all students and co-workers. Able to embrace diversity in the work environment. Adaptable to all situations. Good at providing clear and concise training. Best of all known for being results oriented. Able to plan, lead, and make follow-up concerning the teaching and learning process until positive academic outcomes are reached.

Today, Dr Ephrard RULINDA is a Dean of Students and Chaplain at UNILAK and a lecturer at other different universities in Rwanda.

