

REPORT

Field Visit to RUFORUM Supported Research & Development Projects

Implementation and Backstopping Support to RUFORUM Supported Projects at Gulu University

&

Community Action Research Project: “Developing a Community-based cassava seed system for increased productivity and market linkages in Uganda”



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SUMMARY

The visit was aimed at interacting with staff and students of Gulu University and Makerere University to provide technical backstopping and oversight for on-going RUFORUM interventions as well as articulate envisaged interventions particularly through provision of guidance with the implementation of the “Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningful contribute to Africa’s Growth & Development” (TAGDev.) Programme. Below is a summary of insight on the visit:

1. Gulu University appreciated and was grateful for the collaboration with RUFORUM. RUFORUM fitted into the vision of the University of advancing the community development Agenda through social transformation. The importance of enhancing production skills and changing the mind-set and the attitude of the present generation in Northern Uganda who have been used to getting relief without working was identified as a very important area that could be addressed in this collaboration. There was concern that RUFORUM only focused on the Faculty of Agriculture and representatives of other Faculties expressed interest in engaging in RUFORUM interventions through development of joint collaborative projects between and among Faculties.
2. The PhD program in Agriculture and Applied Sciences has commenced by admitting 7 students (2 females and 5 males). All the seven students delivered presentation on their draft PhD proposals, all at early stages. There was need for thorough literature review to enable the identification of gaps and justification of the activities to be undertaken. It is important that supervisors be identified for these students at the onset to enable them assist the students from proposal development stage.
3. The Graduate Research Grant (GRG) projects on “positioning rural women Agri-entrepreneurs to address short term hunger and under-nutrition in Rural Primary Schools in Uganda” and “Enhancing commercial production and marketing of local chickens in northern Uganda through innovation platforms” are successful projects where students, rural women cassava processors have worked together and delivered quality products (Nutritionally enhanced GARI with soya added to improve the protein content). The next practical step would be to scale out to the community the results obtained in the GRGs. This will complement efforts with an on-going project supported under the African Development Bank through which Gulu University is working in collaboration with several other public universities in Uganda to build a Research Laboratory and Business Incubation Centre for Cassava. The research and development engagements under this project could be harnessed to anchor knowledge co-creation as a process for multi-stakeholder interactions with the university taking lead.
4. The presentation to share experience in the designing the CARP on “Developing Community –based Cassava seed system for increased productivity and market linkages” by Dr. Mukasa was appreciated by the Gulu University faculty. Experiences shared will provide lessons for future scaling of research products such as in future CARPs.

5. The graduate student attachment to "Paicho Farmers Association" had a positive impact on the farmers. The farmers appreciated the training and the interaction they had with the student. In future it would be better to have a number of undergraduate students depending, on the need, supervised by a graduate student. This would enhance efficiency. One student working alone through an attachment with a group of farmers becomes overloaded especially given the varied demands by farmers.
6. Two prospective research teams developing proposals in response to the CARP+ Call presented their draft proposals. These were: "Enhancing pig production and market for smallholder farmers in Northern Uganda"; and "Enhancing inclusive market linkages and agribusiness clusters in the rice value chain in Uganda." Both these proposals were structured as "GRG" and not "CARP". The proposals need to focus on community engagement and processes in scaling out instead of research to develop technologies. There is need for Gulu to form more teams to respond to the CARP call.
7. The nurturing grants from RUFORUM have been instrumental in assisting Gulu University develop BSc, MSc and PhD programmes. Such programmes include: Curriculum for BSc Agri-entrepreneurship b) MSc. Agri – Enterprise and MSc food security and community nutrition c) PhD programme in Agriculture and Applied Biosciences. These grants have assisted in strengthening the University Outreach Programme which has enhanced community engagement. In particular the collaboration between Gulu and EARTH University has helped Gulu University in refining their community outreach programme. A number of graduates from Faculty of Agriculture, Gulu University, can now employ themselves instead of being job seekers.
8. The curriculum for B.Sc. Agri-Entrepreneurship & Communication Management was accredited in June 2016 with the first cohort of 20 students enrolling in August 2016. It is important that the lessons learnt in community engagements be used to modify the curricula as implementation progresses. It is also advisable that curriculum reviews of on-going courses be limited to adjustments that will require less than 30% changes. This will bring stability in implementation of the new curriculum as well as allow the pioneering cohorts to generate lessons that could be useful for a comprehensive curriculum review and redesign as appropriate. In reviewing curriculum considerations should be made to enhance engagements with the Technical, Vocational Education Training Institutes (TVETs) since this provides a good entry point for short courses and entrepreneurship components that are of interest to both the vocational and degree programmes. There was need to fast track the skills gap analysis under the TAGDeV programme. Most staff members were not aware of the processes involved in the TAGDeV programme and there will be need to popularize program activities and secure institutional buy-in at all levels.
9. The community action research project focusing on the cassava value chain implemented by Makerere University Research Team has made excellent progress and the communities

visited appreciated the work being done. The project has demonstrated the importance of building sustainability mechanisms where the district and local leadership are involved in managing the stem multiplication sites. Potential cassava stem (seed) multipliers could be identified and trained as community seed producers. These would be trained in both clean “seed” production and also business skills so that they would produce the stems as a business as well as a service to their fellow farmers. This would also enhance sustainability so that at the end of the project; these community seed producers would continue to produce clean cassava stems for the community.

10. Areas of intervention for both RUFORUM and Gulu University were raised which may need to be analysed by RUFORUM for further action where necessary.

11. In addition to collaboration with EARTH, Gulu University has benefitted through partnerships with the Italian University of Napels Federico II, University of Reading, University of Ghent and the University of Oklahoma, among others. These partnerships are aimed at transformation of teaching and research and Gulu University has in the process acquired start-of-the art laboratory equipment and infrastructure. There is need for capacity building to ensure effective utilization of these equipment and infrastructure.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In fulfilment of its vision¹ and mission², the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) provides support to member universities to implement projects that are deemed strategic to generate strategic R&D solutions. In the case of Gulu University, there are several focus areas of interest with RUFORUM interventions but in terms of the technical backstopping visit that was undertaken at Gulu University, the following were the broad to specific focus issues:

1. Innovations to enhance participation of rural women agri-entrepreneurs in the cassava value-chain in North and North-Eastern Uganda
2. Launching M.Sc. Agri-Enterprise Development and MSc. Food Security and Community Nutrition at Gulu University
3. Strengthening University Outreach and Agri-entrepreneurship Training for Community Transformation in Northern Uganda
4. Development of a PhD Programme in the Faculty of Agriculture
5. Nurturing M.Sc. Agri-Enterprise Development and M.Sc. Food Security and Community Nutrition at Gulu University for Internationalisation
6. The MasterCard@RUFORUM programme portfolio- still at nascent stages but these build from existing efforts. The engagement under this project will run for a period of eight years and RUFORUM is currently working with Gulu University to lay ground for smooth implementation.

As part of efforts to twin member universities in-country and across borders to undertake collaborative research and training, the field visit featured the Community Action Research Project being led by Dr. S.B. Mukasa focusing on “Developing a Community-based cassava seed system for increased productivity and market linkages in Uganda” is of strategic interest to the Research Team at Gulu University that is implementing the Graduate Research Grant on “Innovations to enhance participation of rural women agri-entrepreneurs in the cassava value-chain in North and North-Eastern Uganda” and to the prospective CARP+ research teams that are developing project proposals. RUFORUM’s interest is to provide a platform for synergistic collaboration especially considering the regional importance of Cassava as a food security crop and the Research for Development thrusts needed along the cassava value chain. It is mainly for this reason that Dr. Mukasa’s Research Team participated in this field trip.

¹ **Vision:** A vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities that can produce high-performing graduates and high-quality research, responsive to the demands of Africa’s farmers for innovations, and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development

² **Mission:** To strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to the demands of smallholder farmers and value chains through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact-oriented research, and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, market actors, national agricultural research and advocacy institutions, and governments.

1.1 Purpose of the Visit

The field visit focus was to;

1. Assess the status of implementation of all RUFORUM supported projects at Gulu University;
2. Explore opportunities for linking the Gulu University Cassava GRG Project with the Makerere Cassava CARP activities and hopefully inform the design of prospective CARP+ projects;
3. Interact with communities and stakeholders at project sites for the Makerere University implemented community action research project (CARP) as well for projects at Gulu University and provide opportunity to the prospective CARP+ research teams to undertake experiential learning of CARP development and implementation;
4. Provide information to enable development of applications in response to RUFORUM CARP+ Call under MCF support;
5. Discuss process of reviewing and mainstreaming experiences from implementation of community engagement projects into curriculum;
6. Engage teams at Gulu University to respond to open Calls for proposals;
7. Provide support to PhD and MSc students

1.2 Venue and Dates of the Visit

The Field visit was implemented from the 6th to 11th March 2017, and entailed travel to meet Research teams at Gulu University as well as interactions with communities in Apac and Kole districts (annex I).

1.3 Expected deliverables

The tangible and intangible deliverables include;

- a) Enhanced collaboration between RUFORUM supported research projects at Gulu with the Cassava Community Action Research Project at Makerere University
- b) Increased comprehension of expectations of RUFORUM interventions at member universities as well as contextualization of islands of success to be scaled to landscapes;
- c) Draft documents including among others Draft Proposals to be finalized at appropriate date in preparation for submission to RUFORUM and/ or target development partners
- d) Roadmap for RUFORUM interventions, including potential gap areas that must be addressed to bring about the success desired
- e) Strengthened and streamlined graduate students theses research ideas

1.4 Participation, Approach

The visiting team to Gulu University comprised of Prof. Rubaihayo, Prof. Fina Opio, Dr. Mukasa, two graduate students from Makerere University (Mr. Opolot Deogratius and Ms. Mukebezi Rebecca), and four RUFORUM Secretariat staff (Dr. Paul Nampala, Dr. Anthony Egeru, Mr Waswa Moses and Dr. Runyararo J. Rukarwa). The team had an opportunity to interact with the senior leadership at Gulu University (DVC, Deans, and Heads of

Departments); Research Teams (both existing and potential ones), students, and end-user groups (including farmers and traders).

A multiplicity of methods were used to allow for free interaction and engagement. The methods included reflective presentations, plenary/focus sessions, roundtable discussions, brainstorming, nominal groups, flow charting, and buzz-groups and knowledge café. The different sessions were facilitator-led to provide for a structured approach to archive desired outcomes. The RUFORUM staff worked closely with the Dean (Assoc. Prof. Duncan Ogeng) to deliver the program.

2.0 PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIELD VISIT

2.1 Engaging Gulu University Leadership and Management

Pre-visit by Prof Adipala, the Executive Secretary RUFORUM was undertaken prior to the team's week long engagement. Prof. Adipala met the Vice Chancellor and articulated key issues of discussion with the other expected team from RUFORUM. The team arrived in Gulu and discussed the agenda and procedures for the next days of engagement with Gulu University faculty and students.

The team met the DVC (Prof. George Ladaah Openjuru) and discussed the objectives of the week long engagement. The DVC emphasized the fit of RUFORUM interventions in the vision of Gulu University which focuses on advancing the community development agenda through societal transformation. He echoed that such transformation was justified by the existence of relief-based generations whose production skills required upgrading, in addition to changing the mindset and attitude of such individuals to focus on production rather than selling off productive assets like land, purchasing motorcycles to use as a means of easy money and going to loiter in urban centers. The RUFORUM delegation later thanked the DVC for the opportunity to meet him.

2.2 RUFORUM Programmatic Areas and Interventions at Gulu University

RUFORUM interventions at Gulu University were presented by Dr Nampala. He gave the historical background and evolution of RUFORUM to date; programmatic areas and the various areas of engagement with the member universities. Emphasis was laid on the need for Gulu University to collaborate with the other member universities since it was noted that each university has a niche, rendering interaction vital. Additionally, the university was advised to take advantage of existing farmer groups and consider institutionalization of these groups in order to deliver successfully on projects. The Gulu University team was urged to fit into on-going initiatives such as the cassava program activities at National Crops Resources Research Institute, (NaCRRI) rather than re-inventing the wheel.

In this discussion, a key issue raised was the need for RUFORUM to support and facilitate internal collaborations between and among faculties at Gulu University. For instance, some projects could have some aspects which would need expertise from other faculties especially in student supervision. It was echoed that, the new intervention at the university (The TAGDev

project) needed to devise measures of involving other faculties through identifying the cross-linkages needed to obtain the required transformation to the communities. It was pointed out that the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment also need to incorporate relevant components from other faculties to enrich their curriculum. Envisaged collaboration efforts with faculty of agriculture and environment were identified to include:

- a) Faculty of Education and Humanities – students on School practice specializing in agriculture and environment could benefit from field supervision and modules in faculty of agriculture and environment
- b) Faculty of business and development studies hosts the department of entrepreneurship development. This department should be of strategic interest to the faculty of agriculture and environment.

With regard to curriculum review, most of the postgraduate course have only been launched recently but through curriculum maintenance experiences from field research and implementation of project can be incorporated.

2.3 Programmes and strategic thrusts

2.3.1 Faculty of Agriculture and Environment

The Dean, gave a presentation on the faculty thrusts. Emphasis was on the student-centered outreach model aimed at inculcating an entrepreneurial mindset unto the students in order for them to create jobs as well as attain self-employment status. It was emphasized that value addition technologies have high possibilities at the universities with respect to offering employment opportunities, however, the developments in this area at the university are extremely low. This could be counteracted through engaging with the private sector with the potential to extend the processors to the communities to aid value addition. The Dean pointed out that the Food Science laboratory at Gulu University is one of its kind in Uganda yet it is under-utilized and it has potential to serve the country. He reiterated that power fluctuations and the costly nature of certifying the laboratory to conduct several tests and inadequate skills staff to utilize scientific equipment, hinders functionality of the lab. As part of trying to utilize the facility an MoU with UNBS was signed to facilitate testing of produce for aflatoxin contamination, but this process is yet to be finalized.

In line with such challenges, it was recommended that Gulu University to send its staff and graduate students to the National and Regional Research and Innovation Centres for retooling purposes and also recruit technicians for each of the existing labs at the university. It was suggested that the management of the laboratories also need to be streamlined within the university system with clear leadership, including a Professor as the overseer of the laboratory, and for smooth running of operations within the laboratory. The university was urged to recruit personnel with passion for lab work in addition to developing a niche for focusing on; a niche could be mycotoxin testing. For proper community transformation, it was pointed out the students need to be prepared right from the start of the project.

It was noted that collaboration between the university and the TVETs such as Bobi polytechnic and Northern Uganda Youth Development Programme (NUYDEP), working relations have been informal. The collaboration has been more with individuals at the university and not the formal relationship with the university. It was mentioned that plans are underway to establish formal engagement in training, student centred outreach and community action research. The staff at Gulu were advised to work with the faculty at the TVETs institutions to orient them towards training students with a focus on community engagement. Collaboration between Gulu University and Earth's University was also commended as a very healthy one and from which Gulu could learn a lot from the experience from Earth's University. In addition, Gulu University has over the years benefited from collaboration with the Italian University of Naples Federico II. Through this engagement, the Gulu Nap initiative was launched and aimed at having the two institutions engage collaboratively in training, research, staff exchange and curriculum development. The faculty has the state of art equipment but there are challenges with technicians to run and maintain this equipment.

Three major areas were identified as regards strategic direction for the Faculty;

1. Linking student enterprises scheme to the community. The University provides training around these schemes.
2. Strengthening experiential learning, in this regard Gulu University is collaborating with Earth's University. This results in enhanced learning
3. Exploring areas in which the faculty can impact on the community.

PhD Agriculture and Applied Biosciences

This PhD was developed through support in form of a nurturing/institutional strengthening grant to Gulu University (RU 2015 NG 31 "Development of a PhD programme in the faculty of agriculture"). The existing postgraduate programmes were all by research. The PhD Agriculture and Applied Biosciences (PhD AAB) is a coursework and research PhD-based programme. It is in its first year of operation with seven students. The research is supported by cross-cutting taught courses that enable the student to carry out research and communicate results effectively in the targeted thematic area taught courses that address in-depth key issues in the thematic area of research the student is registered in. In this programme, the different thematic areas are linked to MSc. and BSc. programmes so that results of PhD studies provide new insights for training MSc. and undergraduate students. The thematic area-based orientation of the PhD AAB program provides opportunity for students with diverse interests to access taught PhD programme at the institution.

The objectives of the PhD programme were:

1. Prepare students to become professionals with advanced theoretical and practical knowledge for improved application of science for transformation of farming systems and thus contributing to agricultural development;
2. Prepare students to work as independent researchers grounded with advanced intellectual skills in reviewing, critiquing and conducting applied (including action-oriented) research;

3. Prepare students to become change agents to catalyze the flow and utilization of scientific and technological knowledge in the policy formulation processes;
4. Build capacity of students for enhancing food systems management, agri-entrepreneurship, and developing visionary leadership.

It was reiterated that staff should be involved in student research right from the beginning to allow time for thinking through and internalization of the PhD idea. This would provide opportunities for open and constructive discussions which set foundation and lead it to success. It was mentioned that involving key university-level departments/faculties (including the VC, DVC) in the preliminary discussions provided opportunity for confidence building on the new curriculum orientation at the institutional level. It was noted that successful development and implementation of the PhD AAB in the FAE has triggered momentum in other Faculties to develop similar taught PhD programs. Despite the successful implementation of the PhD AAB, there are facing some challenges which include; inadequate funding to support tuition and research and inadequate human resource capacity for supervision. To counteract such challenges, the key strategy suggested was to establish partnership with other institutions to attract funding.

It was also pointed out that student research topics were accepted yet the university did not have competent supervisors for the students. It was then suggested that supervisors needed to be assigned to students immediately after admission to the university to ensure that the students choose research areas where supervisors were competent and could help the students. It was also emphasized that both the supervisor and the student need to sign a contract which enables them to adhere to the terms and conditions.

The issue of credit transfer from other institutions was raised, it was reiterated that there is need for the institution to have agreed modules and standards with the partnering institutions.

With respect to examination of student theses, it was noted that there is need for at least one of the supervisors to be an examiner for the thesis since they are conversant with the research and training process.

Further, relating to the discontinuation of PhD students upon failure to defend their proposal three consecutive times, it was suggested that a clear criteria for discontinuation be developed to avoid rebuttals.

Enhancing quality of PhD training at Gulu University

The programme has already attracted candidates and a total six out of seven students registered for PhD AAB programme prepared and presented their preliminary proposals for theses research. The proposed student theses titles include;

1. Flash-flood risk reduction measures under climate and demographic changes. Evidence from the Rwenzori of Uganda by Bosco Bwambaale.

2. Variety X Environment interactions on Aflatoxin contamination and yield stability in selected maize varieties in Uganda by Dudu Fabian.
3. Enhancing urban and peri-urban agricultural production using municipal solid waste compost in different agro-ecological zones of Uganda by Kabasiita Juliet Kiiza.
4. Household food security: Mitigation strategies to the effects of climate change in northern Uganda by Francis Atube.
5. Assessment of trade-offs for adaptive capacity of agro-pastoral systems by Waiswa David.
6. Aflatoxin contamination of community-adapted complementary food formulae in Uganda by Achiro Eunice.

After the student presentation it was noted that the knowledge gap areas in all proposed research topics were not clear. A number of key issues also arose that need attention with regard to PhD student research projects which include;

1. All students need hands on training in developing conceptual framework for their research projects
2. All students need to read extensively to identify missing gaps as potential research areas
3. Research objectives and questions/ hypotheses need to be strengthened to be fit into PhD level research.
4. Supervisors need to be allocated to students at the time of admission to the university and the first supervisor must be part of the institution.
5. Faculty advised to encourage students to avoid mixed models but instead use either qualitative or quantitative methods to enable timely graduation

2.3.2 Faculty of Education and Humanities

The faculty of Education and Humanities, formally called the Faculty of Science Education, was disbanded when the Faculty of Science was formed, and became independent, with a focus to train secondary school teachers in arts, sciences and business. The faculty has Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture with education with potential for collaboration with Faculty of Agriculture and Environment and RUFORUM through a curriculum that allows the different faculties to collaborate. There was, however a challenge of synchronizing the practicals so that the students of Agriculture can undertake the community practice and at the same time participate in the teaching practice. It was recommended that the two faculties (Agriculture and Education) synchronize their practicals and this program (Agriculture with education) as an opportunity to use schools in promoting agriculture to the community. It was also pointed out that there is desire for curriculum review to consider development and entrepreneurship while at the same time allowing the teachers fulfil their assigned duties. It was revealed that teachers trained in agriculture with education have a challenge in orienting course delivery to community engagement in agriculture. Therefore there is need for students trained from the faculty of agriculture with education and those from the faculty of agriculture to have a convergence point (something in common to reach out to the community).

The challenge of 1:500 staff to student ratio in professional courses at Faculty of Education and Humanities was observed and the staff at the Faculty of Education and Humanities requested RUFORUM, to raise this through committees such as the Deans Committee and the Vice Chancellors such that it is brought to the attention of the government since such issues are beyond the control of the faculties. It was suggested that as a measure to deal with staffing issues, the university provides for staff positions in upcoming projects, who are then retained at the university after the end of the project. Suggestions were made for departments with insufficient staff, that they should be merged to counteract issues of staff inadequacy. In addition, it was indicated that the faculty faces challenges such as limited infrastructure and staffing particularly at PhD level.

2.3.3 Faculty of Business and Developmental Studies

The faculty has 13 academic programmes for the financial year 2016/2017 with the staff holding mainly masters degrees. It was indicated that the setback in obtaining staff with PhD was mainly due to institutional and individual challenges, though this has been temporarily solved through out-sourcing PhD supervisors. Various MoUs have been signed with various institutions such as MUBS and institute of public accountants for training purposes. Programmes such as MBA, MPPM and MPA are offered in collaboration with the Somaliland University, through a MoU, allowing staff from Gulu University go to Somalia to facilitate courses, upon realization of the peace in Somaliland. Marking and supervision is however done at Gulu University. It was noted that the faculty has the biggest student enrolment with over 2500 students, though the distribution of infrastructure mismatches the revenue generated under the faculty.

Due to the absence of high level academicians in this faculty, the PhD is currently on hold. The faculty indicated that inadequate training opportunities exist for PhD staff. The university was therefore advised to exploit opportunities available at other RUFORUM Member universities through the GTA arrangement, which is not limited to the faculty of Agriculture only.

2.4 Modelling desired Transformation in Research Training and Outreach at Gulu University

The discussion on what transformation was needed at Gulu University and what could be done and by whom was held through a participatory process (see picture on the right with one working group) and resulted in a number of key issues identified which require urgent attention by both RUFORUM and Gulu University. The key emerging issues were;



- i) How RUFORUM can help cascade the Kenyan higher education policy on graduate examination to other member universities?
- ii) Junior staff requested RUFORUM to provide information on training opportunities for PhDs
- iii) Graduate teaching assistantship needs to be publicized to enable students and lecturers benefit from the process
- iv) Student supervision requires a lot of attention to achieve quality students
- v) Encouraging interactions amongst faculties, especially by learning from each other
- vi) Training in writing programs that are developmental and marketable
- vii) Staggering student admission to the PhD program to allow adequate supervision
- viii) Timely completion of the PhD AAD and other graduate programs
- ix) Streamlining graduate training, e.g. assigning supervisors much earlier
- x) Need to employ more staff (improve staffing)
- xi) There is need for increased awareness of opportunities for training in non-agricultural disciplines
- xii) Publicize RUFORUM projects and interventions to ensure public awareness
- xiii) Documentation of achievements/processes of change attributed to Gulu university training
- xiv) Training and retooling of laboratory assistants/technicians
- xv) Ensuring that feedback is incorporated in community-university action research initiatives
- xvi) Seek higher education interventions in improving quality through addressing the staffing challenges
- xvii) Retooling staff in various areas such as technical and entrepreneurship
- xviii) Harmonization of the postgraduate tuition fees among RUFORUM member universities

- xix) Universities should have a monitoring and evaluation system for measuring the impacts of community engagement on the smallholder farmers. This includes the need to establish baselines for future evaluations.
- xx) Before interventions of the transformation into the community, there is need for a needs assessment to facilitate the linking of entrepreneurship activities of students to the communities
- xxi) Linking agro-enterprise development with the TVETs and the community

2.5 Enhancing Collaboration and articulating design of Community Action Research

2.5.1 The Cassava GRG project (RU 2014-GRG-098)

This graduate research grant focused on “Positioning Rural Women Agri- entrepreneurs to Address Short-Term Hunger and Under-Nutrition in Rural Primary Schools in Uganda” was presented by the principal investigator Prof. Ongeng. The project focus was on short-term hunger and under-nutrition affecting enrolment, retention and acquisition of basic academic skills by primary school learners. It was noted that child under-nutrition is long-term, irreversible and negatively affect human capital and economic development in rural communities as compared to those in urban centres.

Key actors in this project were:

1. Graduate students
2. Rural women cassava processors
3. Rural primary children.

It was noted that the study was purposively designed to ensure student- level sensitivity in delivering the project. For instance the students identified gari as the product to deliver but it was low in protein content. The students worked with the women to improve gari by adding soya to improve the protein content.

A number of outputs were obtained from this project which include;

- i) Production skills of nutritionally improved gari amongst rural women cassava processors were enhanced
- ii) A total of 7702 rural primary school children got exposed to the nutritionally improved gari product
- iii) Adoption (82.3 %) of nutritionally improved products in over 12 primary schools in six districts respectively
- iv) A total of 660 rural women clustered in six groups were involved in various cassava value addition activities such as production of chips, flour, gari and cakes
- v) The project had positive implication that demonstrated that the University is not an “ivory tower” but relevant institution that can work with and impact on the communities
- vi) The competency of the students with working with the communities was enhanced through this project.

2.5.2 The Local Chickens GRG project (RU 2015-GRG-121)

In addition to the experiences from the Cassava Graduate Research Grant, the meeting also benefited from experiences of implementation of a second GRG project on local chickens. (RU 2015 GRG 121): Enhancing Commercial Production and Marketing of Local Chickens in Northern Uganda through Innovation Platforms (ECOPROMALI Project). This is an on-going project with two graduate students and two undergraduate students whose researches is engaged with community.

1. To conduct a value chain analysis of local chickens in Northern Uganda (MSc. Student 1: Ms. Aryemo Peninah)
2. To conduct a cost benefit analysis of collective marketing compared to individual marketing of local chickens (Student 1)
3. To determine the effect of gender relations (participation, access and control of resources) among local chickens farmers (MSc. Student 2: Ms. Akite Irene)
4. To evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the farmers' call center in advisory service provision to local poultry farmers in the innovation platforms (Undergraduate students).

2.5.3 Gulu University Research lab and cassava Incubation Project

The African development Bank Cassava project entitled "Gulu University Research lab and cassava Incubation Project" was presented by Dr. Bill William Kizza. The project is in collaboration with other RUFORUM member universities namely; Makerere University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Kyambogo University, Busitema University and Muni University. The presentation focused on products and marketing; accomplishments to-date; farmer groups details and challenges encountered.

The project is addressing the following challenges;

- *Nutritional*: cassava roots are high energy food but deficient in minerals, vitamins requiring fortification using locally available sources (cassava leaves, peas, beans etc)
- *Competition*: food security crop and an industrial raw material calls for development of varieties with specific end uses
- *Environmental*: Large quantities of organic matter (cassava peel) and effluent which may contain cyanide can pollute the environment.

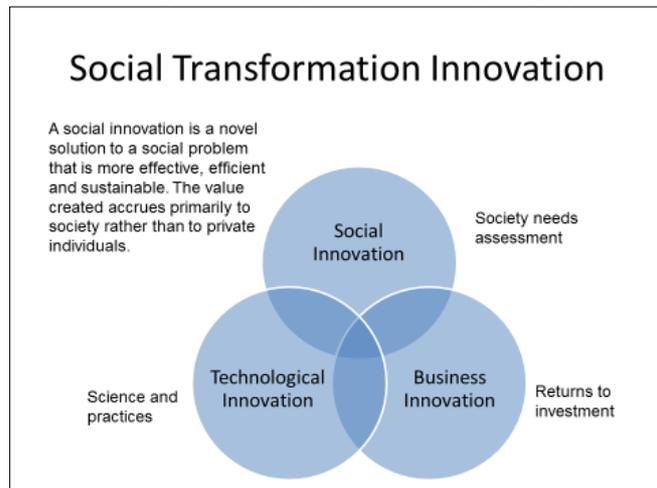
The major products envisaged from this project include; high quality cassava flour (HQCF) with market outlets including; retail shops, brewery, animal feeds and household food requirements; Instant Cassava food (gari) with market outlets including schools and other institutions like the military, prisons and households; cassava starch with market outlets such as bakeries and other food industries, textiles and pharmaceuticals. So far the Project has made several accomplishments which include: Farmer mobilization, sensitization and registration in districts such as Gulu, Amuru, Nwoya and Omoro. A total of eight farmer groups comprising of 241 members were registered. The PI was however, recommended to include students under the project to handle some aspects of the research and probably do an environmental impact assessment on the enormous cassava waste generated and the envisaged noise pollution from the equipment.

2.5.4 Experience in designing a functional community action research platform

As part of sharing experiences and orienting the prospective CARP+ applicants at Gulu University to the CARP model, Dr. Ssettumba Mukasa shared his experiences in designing and implementing a CARP project. In general, the presentation was meant to guide the potential applicants of the CARP+ projects from Gulu University. It included rationale for cassava research, production challenges, cassava CARP Theory of Change, community engagement, Graduate Student Training, challenges, demands of a PI and achievements. Among the key issues presented, were the call to prospective PIs and the university to define the kind of social transformation they need to achieve along the social innovation context (see Figure to the right) as well as the key guiding principles for farmer engagement.

These included:

- i. Problem identification, which can be achieved through interactions
- ii. Setting experiments, involving collecting data and comparing data
- iii. Participatory in nature, involving the farmers
- iv. Allowing farmers to make choices
- v. Farmers want opportunities, including new markets and better varieties
- vi. Stratification, involving replication of the learning sites
- vii. Need to work for and with farmers



The PI emphasized that the distinction between CARP activities and other non-governmental organizations such as world vision, was that students are embedded into the project/activities. The students handle a range of issues along the value chain.

2.6 Technical Backstopping to the prospective CARP+ project applicants and research teams

There were two prospective CARP+ project applicants. The 1st proposed project entitled “Enhancing Pig Production and Market for Smallholder Farmers in Northern Uganda” was presented by Dr. Elly K. Ndyomugenyi. The Overall objective of the project is to improve the livelihood of communities in northern Uganda through increased productivity and market participation in the pig value chain.

And specifically:

1. To assess the current status of production and marketing of pigs and pig products. (MSc Student 1)
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of fresh boar semen extenders from locally available resources. (MSc Student 2)

3. To formulate and evaluate diets from locally available feedstuffs for efficient live weight gain and high quality pork production. (PhD Student and MSc Student 3)
4. To establish the effectiveness of Indigenous micro-organisms in reducing foul smell from piggeries. (PhD Student and MSc Student 3)
5. To assess market participation and profitability of pigs and pig products along the value chain. (MSc Student 4 and MSc Student 5)

A number of issues were raised which included;

- i) Concrete blocks for pig housing were being proposed, but locally available materials that can easily be adopted by the communities would be better to use a cheaper approach for adoption by communities.
- ii) Extensive work has been done on each of the proposed objectives for the CARP+ project. The team needed to identify gap areas.
- iii) It was pointed out that the number of students in the project is over ambitious, given the fact that most of the work has been done elsewhere in ILRI and Makerere University.
- iv) The literature review was very old and hence the need to review current literature, to provide a better justification.
- v) Need to know how the PhD student would be related to the other students.
- vi) The team was advised to consider the approaches to be employed to engage the TVETs
- vii) It was also pointed out that knowledge is available, and needs to be packaged well so that the community could pick it up and use it
- viii) Need to elaborate more on the NGOs
- ix) The team was therefore advised to reorient their proposal to a CARP format not a “GRG” as it had been developed.

The 2nd prospective project proposal entitled “Enhancing inclusive market linkages and agribusiness clusters in the Rice value chain in northern Uganda” was also presented and the team was advised as follows:

- i) to look at the work done by IFDC under the CATALIST project
- ii) to look at the theses produced under the rice programme of NaCRRI.
- iii) to know where the rice ends up in the value chain
- iv) to encourage farmers to participate in the existing rice platform
- v) to consider the outcome and impacts and the stage of the value chain

All in all, the key concerns that were observed in these CARP+ draft proposal are;

1. They lacked a development focus as they were presented as student research projects. Recasting them to have a development angle was advised
2. The teams used old literature as such missed recent developments in the areas that they were working on.
3. The teams needed to link up with relevant partners that have implemented work in line with what they were suggesting in order to avoid duplication but increase on the quality of the proposal

Both teams were recommended to recast their proposals and have in-depth discussions with expertise in their areas of interest for instance Dr. Emily Ouma from ILRI, who has done a lot of piggery work, and some work is already in progress/planned. The teams were advised to work as fast as possible because there limited time; the deadline for the call is 27th March 2017 and test the online submission before the deadline date to avoid difficulties on the last day of submission.

2.7 Student community engagement and field attachment

2.7.1 Visit to Paicho Farmers Association in Gulu District

A visit to Paicho Farmers Association (see Picture below), a group that hosted one of the MSc. students was undertaken. The meeting commenced with self-introductions of the Gulu university team, RUFORUM team and concluded with introductions from the farmer group representatives.

Dr. Nampala briefed the group about RUFORUM's management and governance structure. The association is currently made up of a committee of 22 members with 11 farmer groups and 294 members. The association started



with six groups and later on worked with an NGO (ACTED), under the funding of World Food Programme came on board. ACTED was interested in groups trained under VSLA, and requested farmers to form groups to handle issues related to marketing. ACTED then requested for the names of trusted group members with at least two members per group, who then selected a treasurer and secretary via an election process. The current chairperson of the group has been the incumbent for a long time because he is trusted by the groups. However, the chairperson is in the process of mentoring someone to cater for the transition to a cooperative. The group has a storage facility with capacity of over 120 MT of seed of various cereals such as maize, beans, soybean and sesame. The storage facility is beefed up with plastic and metallic silos provided by world food programme.

The student (Irene Akidi) was attached to the association during her second year of study. She reviewed the farmer's business plan drafted by ACTED and helped the farmers to understand the business plan. She then helped the farmers with record keeping training using simple formats easily followed and adopted by the farmers. In areas that needed specialized personnel such as agronomy, help was obtained from the university. All these endeavors resulted into building the capability of the different groups to earn up to 70 million Ugandan shillings in a single round of sales. The farmers thanked Gulu University for sending the students to work with them in Paicho.

It was evident that there were transformations that the student had delivered to the community through farmer testimonies. Emerged lessons included:

1. Placement of a single student at the community makes the student overloaded and unable to address all farmer's needs. The approach could be improved by using a cohort of students (Masters Students working alongside with undergraduates).
2. Farmers' needs are beyond agronomic practices for productivity; the major demand is with regards to post harvest handling and marketing. It is therefore important to consider a value chain approach for the SCEP and SCO models.
3. Lessons of community engagement from Egerton University need to be identified and adapted by Gulu University.
4. For subsequent cohorts, there is need for a needs assessment to act as an entry point to the farmer groups. The approach needs to be revised.
5. The university needs to put in place a system/university policy to guide activities of the faculty of agriculture regarding community engagement with a link to the motto of the university regarding community transformation.

2.8 From research to curriculum innovation design, development and delivery

2.8.1 MSc. Agri-Enterprises Development and MSc. Food Security and Community Nutrition at Gulu University

The two MSc. programs were developed consecutively with Egerton University and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and Round Table Africa. The programmes were implemented as part of nurturing/institutional strengthening grants (RU 2014 NG 13) from RUFORUM. The MSc. Agri-Enterprises Development is designed as flagship programme focusing on entrepreneurship and provides a pipeline for students from the BSc. Agriculture that are interested in gaining business ideas in the field. The Masters level training is aimed at generating critical thinkers who are expected to design strategic solutions to emerging problems.

Emphasis was made on the need to devise sustainability mechanisms to ensure that the programs designed continue to have students without any decline in enrolment in subsequent years. It was mentioned that the completion rate of students was affected mainly because students did not have funding to do research so they opt to get jobs to fund their own research and get derailed in completion. In addition students are being snatched by various NGOs looking for staff to work with them in South Sudan. There is need to change the attitude of students regarding searching for jobs before course completion.

The Gulu team was advised to develop indicators for assessing the farmer's needs in order to facilitate and ease modifications in the curricular. This was due to the fact that before the review of curricular, there were issues raised by farmers, and hence the need to determine if these issues were addressed by the curricular, and if the same issues still arise, there was need to act accordingly.

2.8.2 Strengthening University Outreach and Agri-entrepreneurship Training for community Transformation in Northern Uganda

This programme is part of an effort of an ongoing institutional strengthening grant (RU 2014 NG 15) supported by RUFORUM. The project components include the following:

1. Developing and launching curriculum in B.Sc. Agri-Entrepreneurship & Communication Management. The curriculum was accredited in June 2016 with the first cohort of 20 students enrolling in August 2016.
2. Enhancing capacity of faculty for community engagement (Student-Centered Outreach)
3. Strengthening and operationalizing the Student Enterprise Scheme for Agribusiness innovation

The experiences and lessons were documented and disseminated in journals, during workshops and conferences, brochures and pull up banners. Three peer-reviewed articles published in African Journal of Rural Development, namely; student-centered outreach; agribusiness innovation model and tracer study. In addition; five working document series were submitted and published on repository of RUFORUM. However, operationalization of the student enterprise scheme is underway and has been delayed because of university accreditation issues.

2.9 Curriculum review

The team discussed extensively the different programmatic areas under the TAGDev programme including aspects of governance and coordination. Specific focus was given to curriculum review. This was linked to the skills gap analysis under the TAGDev programme whose terms of reference have been drafted. Six teams have been constituted for skills gap analysis; TVETs, short courses and entrepreneurship.

The discussion on curriculum review yielded the following points:

1. Curriculum alignment that considers incorporation of experiential learning
2. Harmonization and criteria for grading that prepares Gulu University for credit transfer processes
3. Design and implementation of short courses to be delivered on demand
4. Skills gap analysis in relation to design and implementation of curriculum that should entail wider engagement of stakeholders

2.10 Interactions with Stakeholders in research and training processes

A field visit to the ongoing Cassava CARP being implemented by Dr. Mukasa was undertaken. The project has established in various sites but for this visit Awenyeko farmer group in Chegere sub-county Apac district (see Photo below) and Oripcheng farmer group in Bala Sub-county, Kole district were visited. The prospective CARP+ PIs had the opportunity to learn on the CARP functions at community level and how the CARP conceptualization are undertaken.

It was observed that farmers groups under the CARP were selected through WOUGNET. The groups have benefited through enhanced availability of clean planting materials as compared to the varieties previously grown. All the varieties being planted by the farmer groups are new, except for the variety Bao. The farmers mentioned several benefits they get from cassava which

include dried cassava chips, pancakes and cassava flour (used for making local brew and plastering houses). They pointed out that their major source of income is dried cassava chips which they sell to other actors along the value chain.



During this visit a number of issues emerged which include;

- There is very high demand for clean cassava planting materials with some theft being experienced in the mother garden.
- Farmers have developed capacity to monitor cassava diseases using a set indicators. This follows a training which was provided by the Cassava CARP.
- Prospective CARP+ applicants appreciated the uniqueness of the CARP approach and promised to revise their proposals accordingly
- There is need to work out a more sustainable process and approach for continued supply of clean planting materials.
- There is need for increased working with the local administration to ensure participation of all cassava farmers
- Farmer groups need to be sensitized about the different diseases through making use of charts and pull-up stands
- There is need to map the soils in order to determine the best soils for cassava cultivation since the crop has a very high yield potential of converting solar energy into carbohydrates with minimal energy
- Record keeping training is needed for the farmers, as part of the sustainability. This is in addition to the need to develop the Training of trainers (ToT) programme for agribusiness
- There is need to consider ownership of the mother gardens by the farmers in order to counteract issues of theft.
- There is need to determine which varieties suitable for production of the different cassava products.

It was suggested that potential cassava stem (seed) multipliers could be identified and trained as community seed producers. These would be trained in both clean “seed” production and also business skills so that they would produce the stems as a business as well as a service to their fellow farmers. This would also enhance sustainability so that at the end of the project; these community seed producers would continue to produce clean cassava stems for the community. The only challenge which is there is farmers fail to uproot infected plants due to the hope of

achieving some kind of yield as the case is for cassava mosaic virus where the farmer can attain some yield even after infection.

The period for reinfection of clean cassava multiplication blocks in the community needed to be determined. Once this has been done the community seed producers would be advised how frequent they would set up new multiplication blocks using materials obtained from Makerere University or NaCCRI.

2.11 Key Follow-Up Actions

Key issues / items for follow-up	Responsible person(s)	Dates / deadlines
1. Review model and framework for student placement during community engagement	Dr. Duncan Ogeng	Immediate
2. Fast-track the process of developing MoUs with the farmer associations and TVETs	Dr. Duncan Ogeng	Immediate
3. Retool Gulu University staff in curriculum design focusing on developing modules and entrepreneurship	RUFORUM/Anthony	Immediate
4. Visit RUFORUM to fast-track the proposal development process for the CARP+ call	Dr. Basil Mugonola and Dr. Elly Ndyomugenyi/Anthony	Immediate
5. Follow up on issues raised with implementation of on-going projects	Dr. Paul Nampala/Anthony	Immediate
6. Provide e-copy of The Craft of Research to PhD Students	Dr. Paul Nampala	Immediate

2.12 Closing remarks by the Dean, Faculty of Agriculture

The Dean, Faculty of Agriculture thanked RUFORUM for the constructive engagement ever since 2008, when Prof. Baliddawa was the Dean. He acknowledged the good working relationship with RUFORUM and the commendable work of Dr. Mukasa as a reference point for lesson learning. He mentioned that the faculty is determined to meet the community engagement targets of the university through the success of graduates released to the community and the success the community derives from interactions with the university.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Programme

Time	Activity	Responsibility
Day 1: Monday 6th March 2017	Travel to Gulu	Team from Kampala
Day 2: Tuesday 7th March 2017 – Laying grounds for transformation		
09:00 – 9:30 am	Meeting with DVC and VC	Dean to arrange for delegation to meet VC and DVC
9:30 – 10:10 am	Seminar – “RUFORUM Programmatic Areas & Interventions at Member Universities”	Presentation by RUFORUM Staff open to all university staff and students
10:10 – 10:30	Plenary Discussion	
10:30 – 11:00	Health Break	
11:00 – 12:00	Programs and Strategic Thrusts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Agriculture • Faculty of Environment • Faculty of Business 	Respective Deans
12:00 – 13:00	Plenary discussion	
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
2:00 – 3:00	PhD Agriculture & Applied Biosciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key thrusts • Programmatic gaps • Strategic intervention • Model • Plans for sustainability 	Presentation and discussion
15:00 – 16:30	Modelling desired Transformation in Research Training and Outreach at Gulu University	Group Work
16:30 – 17:00	Wrap-up of Day 2	
Day 3: Wednesday 8th March 2017 – Enhancing Collaboration and Articulating design of Community Action Research		
09:00 – 09:30	Cassava GRG Project	Dr. D. Ogeng
09:30 – 10:00	Experience in designing CARP “Developing a Community-based cassava seed system for increased productivity and market linkages in Uganda”	Dr. S.B. Mukasa
10:00 – 10:30	Plenary discussion	All
10:30 – 11:00	Health Break	
11:00 – 12:30	Presentations by Prospective Research teams preparing applications in response to CARP+ Call	
12:30 – 13:00	Plenary discussion on Roadmap for CARP+ proposal Drafts	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 17:00	Site Visits for Student Community Engagement and Field Attachment	
Day 4: Thursday 9th March 2017 – From Research to Curriculum Innovation Design, Development and Delivery		
08:30 – 10:30	PhD Students presentations	
10:30 – 11:00	Health Break	
11:00 – 12:00	RUFORUM Interventions at Gulu University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.Sc. Agri-Enterprise Development and MSc. Food Security and Community Nutrition at Gulu University 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening University Outreach and Agri-entrepreneurship Training for Community Transformation in Northern Uganda • Nurturing M.Sc. Agri-Enterprise Development and M.Sc. Food Security and Community Nutrition at Gulu University for Internationalization 	
12:00 – 13:00	Plenary Discussion	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 16:00	Curriculum Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum reviews for on-going programs particularly the MSc. Entrepreneurship and Agribusiness • Community Engagement arrangements • Biosystems Engineering • Other curricula for consideration 	
16:00 – 16:30	Health Break	
Day 5: Friday 10th March 2017 – Interaction with Key Stakeholders in Research & Training Processes		
9:00 am – 5:00 pm	Field Visits to Lira, Apac, and Kole	
Day 6: Saturday 11th March 2017 – Travel Back to Kampala and Gulu, respectively		

Annex II: List of Participants

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