

RUFORUM MONTHLY

The Monthly Brief of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DOES RUFORUM PROUD Six students complete PhD in record time

On 9th September 2011, the University of Nairobi will confer PhD degree in Dryland Resource Management to the first six graduates from RUFORUM's regional PhD programmes. The students completed coursework, field research and successfully defended their theses in exactly three years!! The six graduates (below) comprise of four females from Uganda (1), Kenya (2) and Malawi (1) and two males from Ethiopia (1) and Uganda (1). The PhD Programme in Dryland Resource Management was the first of RUFORUM's five regional PhD Programmes. It was launched in 2008 with an initial class of 18 students from Eastern and Southern Africa region. The programme's goal is to improve the security of livelihoods in the drylands of Africa. It aims at building capacity for dryland management by producing graduates who are effective change agents, with skills that embrace advances in dryland science and community development practice.

The launch of the PhD training at University of Nairobi and other RUFORUM Member Universities (Makerere in Uganda, Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania and University of Malawi Bunda College of Agriculture) is part of the joint effort by 29 African Universities to ensure that the continent has the required high quality human resource to support development processes in the continent, including policy formulation. The Programmes, modeled along USA system, follow one year of intensive course work, drawing lecturers from across RUFORUM 29 Universities and abroad, and at least two years of field research. RUFORUM plans to graduate at least 150 PhD students by 2014, and already 84 are undergoing training and close to 50 will graduate by the end of 2012. The University of Nairobi has demonstrated that it is possible to offer quality PhD training at African Universities, and students supported to complete their studies on time. This is more cost effective and sustainable for the continent than sending students outside Africa. The PhD programme at University of Nairobi was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, with additional support from the International Development Research Center (IDRC).

The Dean of Faculty of Agriculture at University of Nairobi, Prof. Solomon Shibairo commented "the remaining 12 PhD students will defend their thesis by end of February 2012. That will be exactly three and a half years. The slightly extended period is due to realities of field based research dependence on rainfall and seasons. This is expected in agricultural research. The regional programme has definitely brought new thinking and approaches in the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, which continue to positively influence other training programmes at the University of Nairobi". A second cohort of 8 students has completed course work and has started field research, and University of Nairobi has advertised for the third intake. The University has established a programme office to coordinate the programme and to support resource mobilization while enhancing internationalization. **For more information visit www.ruforum.org**



Sarah Nalule,
Uganda

Mary Baaru,
Kenya

Eunice Githae,
Kenya

**Tasokwa Ka-
kota, Malawi**

**Debela F.
Hunde, Ethiopia**

**Swidiq
Mugerwa,
Uganda**

- *RUFORUM Monthly* provides information on activities of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture.
- This *Monthly Brief* is available on the last week of every month ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

E-content Writing Retreat for Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Naivasha Kenya. 12-16 September 2011

3rd RUFORUM Biennial Conference, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. 24 – 28 September 2012

Information Literacy Training Workshop, Haramaya University Ethiopia. 26–30 September 2011

Information Literacy Training for Eduardo Mondlane University & Catholic University of Mozambique. 3-7 October, 2011

10th African Crop Science Society Conference, Maputo, Mozambique. 10-13 October, 2011

More information on RUFORUM activities can be accessed on the RUFORUM BLOG at [http:// ruforum.wordpress.com](http://ruforum.wordpress.com)

For more information about the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Contact: The **Newsletter Editor**, RUFORUM Secretariat, Plot 151 Garden Hill, Makerere University Main Campus, P.O. Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda. Fax: +256 414 534153; Tel: +256 414 535939; E-mail: secretariat@ruforum.org; or visit RUFORUM Website at www.ruforum.org.



DATA MANAGEMENT & SCIENTIFIC WRITING COURSES TO ENABLE STUDENTS IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES GRADUATE ON TIME



Above: Ddamulira Gabriel

It is common phenomena that postgraduate students in African universities take long to graduate compared to their counterparts in the west. This is attributed to a number of factors among which is the long time spent on experimental data analysis and thesis writing. One would imagine that the statistical course unit that often form

part of degree programs would come in handy to solve the data analysis problem. However, such courses are theoretical in nature giving little time for students to practically apply what they learn. In fact basic statistical information taught if ever used only help students to design experiments they intend to undertake. In addition statistical packages are taught for which students never get time to have hands-on practice because by the time such courses are taught students have not collected data to use as test models.

When the right time comes for students to apply what they learnt during the early days of their course, the key concepts cannot be remembered, which makes data analysis a nightmare. For the lucky few who may be still acquainted with the appropriate statistical packages, interpreting the results becomes a problem. Although in some cases supervisors may come to students' rescue, but such help is often minimal because at postgraduate level students are expected to do much of the work by themselves. In the long run data analysis and thesis writing takes much of the stu-

dent's time, hence hindering students to finish on time. For instance, during the time I was doing my Masters at Makerere University I finished research on time. But the time I took to analyse and write my thesis was much more than the time it took me to do the research. This was due to the fact that I could not use the statistical package which was appropriate for the experiment data that I was handling. After learning the statistical package interpreting the results was also a problem. This greatly contributed to my delay to graduate.

However with the timely and appropriate courses like data management and scientific writing organised by RUFORUM there is a ray of hope that students' delay to graduate will soon be history. In the just concluded data management and scientific courses undertaken by PhD students from Makerere University, University of Nairobi, Egerton University and Bunda college students managed to analyse their data and came up manuscripts within two weeks. This was through active engagement of students in data analysis and scientific writing by a team of subject specialists from African Universities. This is a clear indication that even African specialists can drive the process of ensuring that students graduate on time through facilitating courses that make unnecessary delays to students. At this moment I would like to appreciate RUFORUM for funding this training and humbly request dons in African Universities to make statistical data management and scientific writing courses mandatory for postgraduate students.

Author: Ddamulira Gabriel, PhD student Plant Breeding & Biotechnology, Makerere University. He can be contacted at Email: ddamuliragab@yahoo.co.uk

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES FIRST COHORT UNDER PLANT BREEDING & SEED SYSTEMS



From the left: Patrick Ongom, Mayada Mamoun Beshir, Jimmy Obala, and Maurice Mogga cutting a cake at their graduation party in Makerere university

On July 22nd, 2011, when the first four students from Makerere University's Regional Programme graduated with their Master's degree in Plant Breeding and Seed Systems, the event was celebrated at the RUFORUM office with a small party that was organized by member of staff, and attended by the graduates' families, as well as by Professor Adipala, Dr. Richard Edema, Dr. Patrick Okori and Dr. Paul Gibson with his wife Pauline Gibson.

Two of the graduates Patrick Ongom and Jimmy Obala from Uganda were sponsored by Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and while the other two Maurice Mogga and Mayada Mamoun Beshir from Sudan were sponsored by Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Develop-

ment in Africa (SCARDA) which was coordinated by Regional Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). The class comprised of 16 MSc students. Several have successfully defended their thesis and have returned to their home countries and are leading development processes.

AFRICA EXPERIENCES PhD SHORTAGE

The time is near when all permanent academic teaching and research staff in universities globally will be required to have doctorates degrees in their fields of specialisation. However, the situation could be delayed in Kenya and elsewhere in academe in Sub-Saharan Africa where there is a shortage, but the writing is on the wall since worldwide there is a glut of PhD degrees. Statistics recently released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development indicate already there is competition among leading universities in Europe, United States, Singapore, Japan and Australia to hire only PhD degree holders.

The issue is that there are too many doctoral programmes, producing far too many PhDs and other doctorates for the job market. According to Dr Mark Taylor, Head of Department of Religion at Columbia University in New York, PhD crisis has been caused by refusal by universities to severely scrutinise admissions to doctorate studies. "Even after slowing of the academic job market over the years, PhD programmes in many countries still conform to models defined in the middle ages," says Dr Taylor.

Consistent growth:

According to OECD statistics, doctorates handed out in member states between 1998 and 2006 grew by 40 per cent, while in the United States, the number of PhDs rose by 22 per cent during the same period. Significant production of doctorates was also recorded in Mexico, Slovakia, Poland, China, Japan and India, among other countries globally.

In those countries, production of PhDs has outstripped demand for university academic cadres. For instance, in the United States figures of students graduating with doctorate degrees has almost hit 50,000 mark annually. "So far, there are no signs of slowing and the problem is that most PhD graduates may never get the chance of taking advantage of their qualifications," says OECD position report on the status of higher education. But while the developed countries are worried about what to do with all the PhDs they produce each year, Sub-Saharan Africa is concerned about massive deficits in doctorates.

According to the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, the continent's largest factory for PhDs is Egypt, where last year over 35,000 students were enrolled in doctoral programmes. But pursuing a doctoral programme in Egypt is almost worthless, except for those already working in universities and research centres.

Critics of the Egyptian trained PhD graduates say many of them find it hard to transfer their skills into the job-market.

The PhD student in Egypt suffers from shortage of highly qualified teaching staff, equipment and poor compensation for researchers, says Prof Mounir Hana, a leading food scientist at Minia University, Egypt. Subsequently, most PhDs awarded are of poor quality and most graduates lack skills in proposal writing and project management.

But elsewhere in Africa, it is absence of PhDs in universities that is most worrying. "Leaders of African universities acknowledge the devastating impact of lack of qualified lecturers at doctoral level and warn that if something is not done very soon, African academy will collapse or lose its ability to produce the countries' personnel needs," says Dr Wisdom Tettey of University of Calgary and a researcher with PHEA.

In a study on doctoral deficits in African universities, Dr Tettey says low graduation and completion rates in most post-graduate programmes are discouraging bright students from registering for master's and PhD degrees.

High dropout rates:

"There are high drop-out rates in most postgraduate programmes and the trend does not bode well for developing an adequate pool of high quality future academics in Sub-Saharan Africa," says Tettey.

Such sentiments were recently graphically explained by the Commission of Higher Education in a report that showed the number of professors in each of Kenya's public universities. By the time the report was released in November last year, Kenya had only 352 professors in Kenya's public and private universities.

University of Nairobi had 110 professors, Moi University 49, Kenyatta University 29 and Maseno University 17. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Egerton University and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology had 11 professors each, while the KCA University had 15 and the United States International University had 14.

Basically the number of professors in a university is significant as it reflects the ability of the institution to offer high quality education and leadership in research.

Although CHE's report did not provide the number of lecturers holding PhDs or equivalent doctorates teaching in Kenya's universities, statistics gleaned elsewhere indicate the number is too small in comparison to 181,000 students registered in universities last year. Furthermore, the heavy enrolments recorded in the local universities can be deceptive because when students are grouped by type of degree

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VICE PRESIDENT OF THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION VISITS THE RUFORUM SECRETARIAT

On the 5th of July 2011 the RUFORUM Secretariat Staff were honored to host Ms Heather Grady, the Vice President of Rockefeller Foundation Initiatives (VPFI). She was accompanied to Uganda by Dr James Nyoro (RF Managing Director for Africa based in Nairobi, Kenya) and Ms Betty Kibaara (RF Research Associate based in Nairobi, Kenya). Ms Grady also visited the Government of Uganda where she



In the front row starting from the left: Dr. Moses Osiru (RUFORUM), Dr James Nyoro (Rockefeller), Prof. Adipala Ekwamu (RUFORUM), Ms Heather Grady, (Rockefeller), Ms Betty Kibaara (Rockefeller) and Dr. Wellington Ekaya (RUFORUM) Second and third row RUFORUM Secretariat staff and Rockefeller grantees.

met H.E the Vice President of Uganda (Rt. Hon. Edward Ssekandi), the Minister of Water and Environment (Hon. Maria Mutagamba) and Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (Hon. Tress Buchanayande).

She also visited Makerere University where she gave a public lecture on bridging resilient agenda to climate change in Africa. The purpose of her visit was to famil-

iarize with Rockefeller Foundation funded projects and initiatives in Uganda. RUFORUM is one of the success stories of the Rockefeller Foundation – having been initiated by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1992 as FORUM. The Rockefeller Foundation fosters innovative solutions to many of the world's most pressing challenges, affirming its mission, since 1913, to “promote the well-being” of humanity.

Africa experiences PhD shortage Continued...

(Continued from page 3)

programmes, the emerging picture is that on average only a small fraction of students are in doctoral programmes.

Low graduation rate:

For instance, at the University of Nairobi, only 26 PhDs were awarded out of 4,473 students who were awarded degrees and diplomas in September last year. Similarly, a year before, only 13 PhDs were awarded out of a cohort of 3,947 graduands.

The situation is replicated at Kenyatta University where only 22 students were awarded PhDs last year. Taking into account that Nairobi and Kenyatta universities are among the oldest universities in the country and possibly with some of the advanced facilities, it is evident the situation might be at par or worse in the rest of the local universities

Besides, a comparative analysis of academic staff in various African universities carried by Dr. Tettey showed only one third of lecturers had PhD degrees. But the situation was heavily skewed because in the university's schools of business and economics, an overwhelming 90 per cent and 80 per cent of lecturers respectively had no PhDs.

However, as the local universities try to deal with the issue of low academic qualifications among lecturers and researchers, there is needed to take into account the issue of the aging professors.

Available evidence show that most of professors in the local universities will be retiring in the next ten years, a factor that calls for aggressive staff development, not merely by the universities themselves but also by the Government.

This article has been reproduced from The Standard article of 15/06/2011 by Wachira Kigotho.

EAST AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES PROPOSE EVEN FEES STRUCTURE, UNIFORM COURSES

Students in all East African universities may soon pay uniform tuition fees. The universities will also have similar minimum standards of requirements to handle particular courses. The policy follows a new plan to harmonize East African university education. Education minister Jessica Alupo yesterday said the harmonization process is in its initial stages. She said students would have the liberty to move from one university to another and continue with their education, as it is done in secondary schools. The minister explained that performance grades of a student can be transferred from one mother university to the one he or she is moving to. For instance, if a second-year student was pursuing Medicine at Makerere University, he or she can join Dar-es-Salaam University as a continuing student as her partial results will be passed on by Makerere for official consideration.

Alupo added that universities would be expected to charge relatively uniform tuition fees for given core courses in accredited and equivalent universities. "Private and public universities will be expected to follow the new policy when it takes effect. We want to make sure that studying in East Africa's higher institutions of learning is open to all, flexible and accessible," she explained. Alupo said that once the harmonization process is done, all the East African universities would be expected to have a uniform academic calendar. This will ease the process in cases where a student may decide to transfer to another institution in the region. She also said particular universities in East Africa will be supported to major in particular courses.

In case Kyambogo University is the best in education, it will be supported by the Inter-University Council for East Africa to be the leading in teaching that particular course. The five East African Community countries; Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda plan to harmonise their higher education as they integrate into one trading bloc. The Inter University Council for East Africa is a regional body under the EAC with over 70 public and private university members across the five East African partner States. But the countries have widely varying higher education systems that must be standardized. For example, it takes five years for a student to complete an engineering degree in Kenya, compared to four years in Uganda. To pursue a degree in Medicine at a Kenyan University takes five years, a year less than in Tanzania and Uganda.

The planned harmonization process will require major changes in education systems, some of which countries seem uncomfortable with. Makerere University's vice chancellor, Prof. Venansius Baryamureeba, said he would support the idea of having minimum standards of requirements for handling a particular course. He, however,

added that harmonizing tuition fees is not practical. "We can alternatively have minimum tuition fees set for courses. But we cannot have maximum fees for universities' courses because we are in different economies," Baryamureeba explained.

The chairman of the vice-chancellors' forum, Prof. Badru Kateregga, said the new policy would be instrumental and easier for core courses. The core courses include law, medicine, engineering, information technology, computer science and education. Kateregga, who is the vice chancellor of Kampala University, said there would be hurdles related to setting uniform tuition fees.

Kyambogo University vice chancellor Prof. Isaiah Ndiege said the best move was to set minimum standards for each programme, since every university is independent. "Unless some laws are changed, this will be tricky. The council should allow diversity and competition," he added.

There will also be a regional accreditation committee to grant regional accreditation status to member universities or foreign universities.

Until the late 1960s, education in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya served as a unifying force across the three states of the East African community. Curricula and examinations were the same at almost all levels of education, as determined by the examination council of East Africa.

This article has been reproduced from The New Vision article of Tuesday 10th August 2011 By Conan Businge and Pauline Nabumba.

DAAD awards 9 PhD scholarships

The German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD) has awarded 9 scholarships to African students to conduct PhD studies at RUFORUM member Universities. The three students, namely Musvosvi Cousin from University of Zimbabwe, Mayada Mamoun Beshir Mohamed from Agricultural Research Cooperation from Sudan and Berhanu Tadesse Ertiro from Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute will commence their PhD study under the PhD program in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology at Makerere university. The second group will commence their PhD program in Aquaculture and Fisheries at Bunda in 2012 while the third cohort will start in 2013 at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) under the PhD program food science and nutrition in 2013. The training will be coordinated by the RUFORUM Secretariat. RUFORUM thanks DAAD and the German people for this generous support.

TOP 100 RANKED AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

MAKERERE MAINTAINS REGIONAL LEAD

Makerere University has maintained its 10th position among Africa's best ranked 100 universities, according to the webometrics survey. South African – based institutions topped the continental ranking with University of Cape Town taking the lead.

Other universities in the region are University of Khartoum-Sudan(24th), University of Botswana (26th)University of Nairobi-Kenya(27th), University of Zimbabwe (31st), University of Namibia (37th) and the National University of Rwanda at (44th)

The rankings are based on web publications, the visibility of a university on the internet, the volume of publications, and the general impact of information published on its web pages.

TOP 10 UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA

1. University of Cape Town (South Africa)
2. University of Pretoria (South Africa)
3. Stellenbosch University (South Africa)
4. University of Witwatersrand (South Africa)
5. University of Kwazulu Natal (South Africa)
6. Rhodes University(South Africa)
7. University of the Western Cape (South Africa)
8. Cairo University (Egypt)
9. University of South Africa (South Africa)
10. Makerere University (Uganda)

Continent Rank	University	Country	World Rank
1	University of Cape Town	South Africa	317
2	University of Pretoria	South Africa	474
3	Stellenbosch University	South Africa	517
4	University of the Witwatersrand	South Africa	640
5	Rhodes University	South Africa	700
6	University of Kwazulu Natal	South Africa	1,051
7	University of the Western Cape	South Africa	1,078
8	University of South Africa	South Africa	1,115
9	University of Johannesburg	South Africa	1,277
10	Makerere University	Uganda	1,402
11	Cairo University	Egypt	1,405
12	American University in Cairo	Egypt	1,626
13	Ain Shams University	Egypt	1,998

Continent Rank	University	Country	World Rank
14	Mansoura University	Egypt	2,102
15	University of the Free State	South Africa	2,141
16	North West University	South Africa	2,232
17	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	South Africa	2,444
18	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology	Ghana	2,564
19	Université Mentouri de Constantine	Algeria	2,664
20	University of Ilorin	Nigeria	2,668
21	Al Akhawayn University Ifrane	Morocco	2,668
22	Polytechnic of Namibia	Namibia	2,675
23	Durban University of Technology	South Africa	2,710
24	University of Khartoum	Sudan	2,816
25	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	South Africa	2,894
26	University of Botswana	Botswana	2,970
27	University of Nairobi	Kenya	3,136
28	Assiut University	Egypt	3,151
29	Faculté des Sciences Rabat	Morocco	3,166
30	Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar	Senegal	3,247
31	University of Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	3,267
32	Tshwane University of Technology	South Africa	3,289
33	Université Abou Bekr Belkaid Tlemcen	Algeria	3,393
34	University of Dar Es Salaam	Tanzania	3,415
35	University of Mauritius	Mauritius	3,431
36	Sudan University of Science & Technology	Sudan	3,534
37	University of Namibia	Namibia	3,552
38	Strathmore University Nairobi	Kenya	3,704
39	Université Cadi Ayyad	Morocco	3,807
40	University of Zululand	South Africa	3,869
41	German University in Cairo	Egypt	4,049
42	University of Jos	Nigeria	4,087
43	Helwan University	Egypt	4,378
44	National University of Rwanda	Rwanda	4,596
45	Université des Sciences et de la Technologie Houari Boumediene	Algeria	4,596
46	Zagazig University	Egypt	4,749
47	École Mohammadia d'Ingénieurs	Morocco	4,876

TOP 100 RANKED AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Continent Rank	University	Country	World Rank	Continent Rank	University	Country	World Rank
48	Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia	4,911	77	Université Mohammed V Souissi	Morocco	6,766
49	University of Ghana	Ghana	4,940	78	United States International University	Kenya	6,786
50	University of Garyounis	Libya	5,060	79	Alexandria University	Egypt	6,809
51	Kenyatta University	Kenya	5,129	80	Universidade Jean Piaget de Cabo Verde	Cape Verde	6,809
52	British University in Egypt	Egypt	5,129	81	Université Mohammed V Agdal	Morocco	6,902
53	Université Mohammed Premier Oujda	Morocco	5,152	82	Université Saad Dahlab Blida	Algeria	7,072
54	University of Nigeria Nsukka	Nigeria	5,176	83	University of Fort Hare	South Africa	7,136
55	Université de Batna	Algeria	5,197	84	Université d'Antananarivo	Madagascar	7,209
56	Université Virtuelle de Tunis	Tunisia	5,202	85	Université Hassan II Faculté des Sciences Ain Chock Casablanca	Morocco	7,233
57	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane	Mozambique	5,249	86	National Open University of Nigeria	Nigeria	7,246
58	University of Lagos	Nigeria	5,253	87	Mauritius Institute of Education	Mauritius	7,256
59	College of Medicine University of Malawi	Malawi	5,470	88	University of Technology Mauritius	Mauritius	7,256
60	South Valley University	Egypt	5,621	89	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	Kenya	7,303
61	Université Abdelmalek Essaadi	Morocco	5,682	90	Moi University	Kenya	7,324
62	Fayoum University	Egypt	5,699	91	Mekelle University	Ethiopia	7,358
63	Obafemi Awolowo University	Nigeria	5,883	92	Université Hassiba Ben Bouali	Algeria	7,411
64	Université de Ouagadougou	Burkina Faso	6,008	93	Jimma University	Ethiopia	7,464
65	Université d'Alger	Algeria	6,132	94	Université des Sciences et de la Technologie d'Oran Mohamed Boudiaf	Algeria	7,576
66	Vaal University of Technology	South Africa	6,216	95	University of Agriculture Abeokuta	Nigeria	7,619
67	Université M'Hamed Bougara de Boumerdes	Algeria	6,240	96	Minia University	Ethiopia	7,745
68	University of Tanta	Egypt	6,270	97	Université Abdelhamid Ibn Badis Mostaganem		7,777
69	Ahmadu Bello University	Nigeria	6,270	98	Central University of Technology	South Africa	7,815
70	University of Zambia	Zambia	6,291	99	École Nationale Supérieure de l'Informatique (ex-INI)	Algeria	7,842
71	Arab Academy for Science & Technology and Maritime Transport	Egypt	6,302	100	University of Malawi	Malawi	7,893
72	Université Ferhat Abbas Setif	Algeria	6,326				
73	Université Djillali Liabes	Algeria	6,340				
74	Pharos University in Alexandria	Egypt	6,507				
75	Université Ibn Tofail Kenitra	Morocco	6,664				
76	École Supérieure des Communications de Tunis	Tunisia	6,758				

A total of 13 RUFORUM member universities have been ranked in the 2011 top 100 African universities. RUFORUM congratulates the universities for their initiatives and increasing visibility of their research outputs online.

WHY THE KITCHEN IN OUR SCHOOLS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN CLASSROOMS

According to a report on the state of education in East Africa released last week, Kenyan pupils are tops in the region.

Though the report by the Dar es Salaam-based East African education think-tank Uwezo found that, by global standards, the quality of education in the region is alarmingly low, Kenya, to use the old expression, was the one-eyed man in the kingdom of the blind (no offence intended to people with seeing disabilities).

Kenyan children were not only better in adding numbers and reading letters but, surprise of surprises, they even outscored their Tanzanian counterparts in Kiswahili. That is like a sheikh beating a cardinal at a Bible exam.

The devil, however, was in the details. The performance of children from poorer Kenyan families was awful, particularly compared to that of those from the middle and rich classes.

On the whole, the poorer children had a miserable time with the tests in all the three countries. This raises the question whether it makes sense to send poor children to school to learn.

Or, put another way, we should send poor children to school, but the primary reason should not be for them to learn. Learning should be incidental.

My mother (bless her soul) worked in health before she retired early to look after her troublesome brood of sons. But she had some interesting views about education (as most mothers do).

Those were the days when the cane was the favoured tool of discipline in schools. The teachers would collect the names of all the sinning pupils from the previous day and in the next morning's assembly, they would be called up on the stage and caned on the bottom as the other pupils watched.

My mother was against teachers beating school children. First, for selfish reasons. Like all parents, she took the view that only she had the right to use the cane on her children. Secondly, she thought caning children made school unattractive.

That was critical because, in her view, the best schools were the ones where children looked forward every morning to go to as they were fun. Children should go to school to grow up, not to study, she maintained to her

last days decades later.

Her point was that if school was fun, then pupils would learn effortlessly and not want to dodge class because it gave them access to what they liked most — a good time.

For that reason, I think focusing on getting poor children to go to school primarily to learn is not a successful strategy.

First, it means that most of the free education funds will go into things like classrooms, hiring as many teachers as possible, maybe building a house for the headmaster, and such things. There is no fun in all that. Small wonder there are high school dropout rates.

It might be better to offer poor children things they don't have, or don't have enough of, at home. One, which authorities have tried, is food.

Governments should not spend the money for free education paying fees. They should make poor parents pay a little fees, but give children a hearty tea break and a filling late lunch. For this reason, the best building should be the school kitchen, not the classrooms.

I believe a school with a good kitchen, where children are well fed, but study under a tree, will attract more learners than one with nice classrooms, a lousy kitchen, and only a small helping of *uji* at break.

The well-fed pupils studying under a tree will be more attentive in class and do better in test scores than the half-hungry ones studying in beautiful classrooms.

Then they should buy each poor child two shirts, two shorts (or skirts), a sweater, and inexpensive shoes and raincoats. What will happen in some of the very poor cases is that all children in the house will wear the shirts, shorts, and shoes.

A poor father is more likely to find school fees to pay for one son to go to school if he is going to bring back clothes for the rest to share than just for him to study.

And he will also insist that the fellow remain in school and get the grades that keep him there for that reason. In the process, though, his son will get an education too.

This story has been reproduced from The Nation Media and was posted on Wednesday 6 July, 2011 by Charles Onyango-Obbo. He can be contacted at cobbo@ke.nationmedia.com

TRANSFORMING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RUFORUM MEMBER UNIVERSITIES

In May 2010 the Association of African Universities approved a £100,000 grant to RUFORUM under the Mobilizing Regional Capacity Initiative – funded by DFID. Funds were also pooled from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support the project activities. A total of 12 academic faculty (5 from Bunda College of Agriculture and 7 from Egerton University) have participated in developing e-learning content for 5 PhD Aquaculture & Fisheries Science courses and 7 MSc Agricultural Information & Communication Management courses.

A total of six writing retreats have been held resulting in content for the 12 courses being fully developed and reviewed by subject matter reviewers. This content is now being reviewed by pedagogy experts before it is uploaded on learning management systems by instructional designers. A parallel process will involve the professional editing of the content for publication as booklets and as online resources in adobe acrobat format. This pilot project is a first for the RUFORUM Network and its completion will result in valuable content being available to support the teaching of the two regional post-graduate programs. This content will also be freely available for use and adaptation by anyone else. A sustainable framework for developing e-content in the RUFORUM Network has emerged and it will be shared as an open resource for the benefit of the global community.

INFORMATION LITERACY TRAINING WORKSHOP HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA



Above: Some of the participants during the Information Literacy training in University of Zambia

RUFORUM, ITOCA (Information Training & Outreach Centre for Africa) and the Albert R. Mann Library at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York teamed up to deliver a 2-day Information Literacy Workshop at the University of Zambia (UNZA) from the 8th to the 9th August 2011. This activity was funded under the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Project and is part of a series of other similar trainings planned for Ethiopia and Mozambique.

A total of 15 participants spanning various academic and administrative areas at UNZA attended the training. UNZA is emerging as a champion in terms of developing an Information Literacy Strategy and Policy. The development of this Information Literacy Strategy and Policy by UNZA means that the implementation of Information Literacy programmes will be structured, prioritized and fully supported by the university.

As part of the extended activity ITOCA ran an E-Resources Train the Trainer national workshop at UNZA from the 10th to the 12th of August 2011 and this was attended by faculty, librarians, administrators and ICT persons.

Feedback from our Readers and Stakeholders

Dear Prof. Adipala, I will be glad to hear that you are fine. I just want to inform you that I have successfully defended my thesis today. I would like to thank you for your support and encouragement that has made me to finish this PhD in three years. I still remember your words "the best appreciation you can show me is your degrees". Those words meant a lot in my life considering how much you have done to make me the person I am today. No words can explain my gratitude and appreciation. From PhD Student Tasokwa Kakota, University of Nairobi.

Congratulations to Adipala and all at RUFORUM for your great work. Don't forget that you are doing some of the most important work for the future of the African people and the Continent. God knows we need educated, dynamic young Africans to have more influence on policy and development - and it is your work that contributes to this. You are all doing a great job with dedication. Well done. From Anne Conroy, Irish Aid, Malawi.

Prof. Adipala, First let me congratulate you and your team for the very productive and successful meeting of the RUFORUM Board of Directors held in Addis Ababa on 28 & 29 April. I found the discussions most engaging, enlightening and rich. You and your Team worked hard to prepare for the meeting and to make it the success it was.

You will be happy to know that today I spoke about RUFORUM at a meeting hosted by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) at the University of Pretoria to review the G20 proposed plan for Development Assistance. Part of the discussion focused on food security and I took advantage to talk about the critical role that RUFORUM is already playing in this area and the central role that RUFORUM is posed to play in the implementation of Pillar IV of CAADP.

Thank you for sending me the final Business Plan as approved by the Board. The challenge is now clearly before us, namely to ensure the faithful and effective implementation of the Plan. Wishing you the best. Prof. Rukudzo Murapa

NEW VICE CHANCELLOR APPOINTED—UNIVERSITY OF KORDOFAN



Above: Prof. Meshaal Abdelgadir Salih

Prof. Meshaal Abdelgadir Salih is the new Vice Chancellor of the University of Kordofan. He replaced Prof. Ahmed El Tigani El Mardi, the former Vice Chancellor. Professor Salih is Sudanese who graduated with B.Sc. in Geology in 1979 from the University of Khartoum. He had started his working carrier as a geologist in GRAS (the Geological Research Authority of Sudan). Salih obtained his M.Sc. in 1985 from Lyon University (France) and his PhD. in 1987 from University of Nancy (France), both were in Petrology and Mineralogy. His main field of interest is geochemistry and contact metamorphism. After eleven years of work at GRAS, he joined the University of Kordofan as a lecturer of geology. He served in several senior positions in the university, such as the Dean of the Students Affairs and the Principal of the university. He founded the Faculty of Science and was its Dean two times. In March 2011 he was appointed as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Kordofan. He is an expert in research methodology and has supervised many M.Sc. students. He is a member of the Sudanese Union of Geologists.

REGIONAL FISH NODE MSc IN RESEARCH METHODOLOGY INTERN— JKUAT

Msc in Research methodology program is an initiative of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). The program which is offered at Jomo Kenyatta university of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) was introduced in 2009 to train young and practical research methodology specialists who will support research and extension in the region in order to build, sustain and strengthen regional capacity for teaching, learning and practice of impact oriented research for development and scientific progress.

The focus of the course moves away from traditional areas of statistics and biometry that emphasize on mathematical statistics with little on the ground design and emerging

development issues which require complementary competencies to fill the gap between theoretical rigor and practical needs. As part of the program dissertation, students are attached to a research or education/tertiary institution for a period of 8- 10months to practice and consolidate technical and professional skills learned during course work.

Chimwemwe Gloria Salima, Msc in Research Methodology student from JKUAT, is attached to the Regional Fish Node at Bunda College of Agriculture in Malawi from November 2010 to August 2011. She is involved in evaluating Dowa fish farming project which started in 2008 and is in its third phase.

The aim of this project is to help fish farmers find a low cost technique that increases temperature to boost tilapia production by assessing whether covering a pond with a plastic sheet can improve fish growth and production. In addition, she is involved in assisting other node activities to improve her working skills and etiquette.

During an interview with Dr. Moses Osiru of RUFORUM Secretariat in May, 2011, Chimwemwe said that the attachment is better than “traditional research thesis” done in most MSc course because it provides relevant experience to students and complement theoretical and methodological knowledge acquired during course work.

The attachment provides opportunities for students to continue learning relevant skills rather than emphasis on the theoretical issues as it is the case in most MSc Programs he added. At the beginning, the aims of attachment were unclear and it seemed difficult but after a while they became understandable, thanks to the continued guidance from the Regional Fish Node Technical coordinator, Prof. Emmanuel Kaunda and advice from the JKUAT supervisor, Dr. J Kihoro, he concluded.



Above: Chimwemwe Salima, the intern during one of her field visits at the project area

INVITATIONS TO SUBMIT ABSTRACTS FROM FORMER FORUM-RUFORUM GRADUATES

We are inviting all former FORUM-RUFORUM students to submit to the RUFORUM Secretariat abstracts of their theses and updates of what they have been doing after graduation. Please kindly refer to the sample below. More abstracts and future ones have been posted onto the RUFORUM website.

Name: Jeninah Karungi	
	<p>Gender: Female Nationality: Ugandan Email address: jkaungi@agric.mak.ac.ug University: Makerere University Program: Crop Science Funding Agency: Rockefeller Foundation Year of Graduation: 2000</p>
	<p>MSc Thesis Title: Combining some cultural practices with minimum insecticide application in the management of major field insect pests of cowpea in Uganda</p> <p>Key Words: Integrated pest management; marginal returns; planting date; planting density</p>
<p>MSc Thesis abstract:</p> <p>Insect pests are the main constraint to cowpea (<i>Vigna unguiculata</i> (L.) Walp) production in eastern Uganda, sometimes causing total crop failure. The focus of this study was to formulate a cost-effective pest management strategy for cowpea growers in Uganda. Initially, the study investigated the influence of different times of planting and plant densities on field insect pests' infestations on cowpea. On-farm trials were established in eastern Uganda at 3 sites for 3 consecutive seasons: during the first and second rains of 1997 and again during the first rains of 1998. A randomised complete block split-plot experiment with three replications was used. Planting time was in the main plots whereas plant density was in the sub-plots. Three planting dates at on-set of rains, 3 weeks, and 6 weeks after on set of rains were tested. The cowpea plant densities studied were 30 cm x 20 cm, 60 cm x 20 cm, 90 cm x 20 cm and 120 cm x 20 cm. Data was collected on population dynamics of the cowpea aphid (<i>Aphis craccivora</i>), flower thrips (<i>Megalurothrips sjostedti</i>), legume pod borer (<i>Maruca vitrata</i>), and a complex of pod sucking bugs; cowpea damage, and grain yield. Results showed that early planting reduced infestation of aphids, thrips and pod bugs but not of Maruca. High plant density also lowered aphid population. A combination of early planting and high plant density gave the best yields. The results indicated that aphids are amenable to cultural control and that complementary management strategies are needed to control other pests of cowpeas.</p> <p>In a subsequent trial, the effect of time and frequency of insecticide application on the field pests' infestations was studied for two consecutive seasons. A randomized complete block design with three replications was used where four insecticide spray schedules and a control were studied. The spray schedules included spraying weekly in the vegetative stage; spraying once in the vegetative, flowering and podding stages; spraying once in the budding, flowering and podding stages; and spraying weekly throughout cowpea's growing season. In the control, no chemical was applied. Data was collected as in the first trial. Results showed that a single spray at budding, flowering and podding had the highest marginal returns (3.12) in comparison to spraying throughout the season (1.77), and at seedling, flowering and podding stages (2.18).</p> <p>After assessing results from the two trials, the best treatments were combined into packages and compared to the single control measures and the untreated in two sites for two consecutive seasons to determine their effect on pest incidence and grain yield. Results indicated that cowpea grain yields and marginal returns from plots receiving combined control measures were higher than those from plots receiving only cultural or chemical control measures. These results established the fact that though cultural practices alone can not prevent cowpea grain yield loss, they can be used to supplement and hence reduce insecticide use. Also, that flower buds/flower and pod pests are of greater importance than vegetative pests and therefore spraying should be done accordingly. The study helped to formulate a cost-effective pest management strategy utilizing a few well-timed sprays in combination with cultural practices.</p>	
<p>Describe what you are doing/ have done after the MSc study?</p> <p>By the time I graduated from the MSc study I was already recruited into the Makerere University Service as an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Crop Science, a position which I held until I completed my PhD in 2007 after which I was promoted to full Lecturer. The appointment gave me the mandate to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in Entomology and Pest Management. Currently my courses include: CRS 1202 Introduction to Entomology and Nematology, CRS 3105 Economic Entomology and Nematology and CRS 4106 Integrated Pest Management Systems at the undergraduate level; CRS 7207 Crop pest physiology and Ecology and CRS 7217 Pesticide application and Toxicology at the graduate level. The appointment also mandates me to do research and outreach activities in Crop Science including supervision of graduate students. I have supervised 2 MSc students to completion and have One PhD and 6 MSc students in the pipeline. In addition, I have also worked on several research projects as shown below:</p> <p>Distinguished awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holder of the International IPM excellence Award by the 6th International IPM symposium 2009 • Awarded the TWAS (Academy of Sciences for the Developing World) Young Affiliate Fellow by TWAS and the TWAS Regional Office for Sub-Saharan Africa (TWAS-ROSSA) for the period 2010–2014. 	
<p>What are your current and future interests and how you do you plan to pursue this path?</p> <p>Future interest is to continue growing in my career as an academician/researcher. I now have the necessary requirements to apply for the position of Senior Lecturer and will pursue that this year. I plan to write more proposals to attract research funds to further promote crop production in Uganda and increase the reputation of Makerere University. I plan to increase my networking with scientists and academia regionally and internationally.</p>	

AFRICA HOME TO ONLY 2.3 PER CENT WORLD'S RESEARCHERS

A leading East African political scientist, Prof Mahmood Mamdani, who is the director of Makerere University's Institute of Social Research has put universities in Sub-Saharan Africa in the dock by accusing them of not creating researchers but churning out native informers to national and international non-governmental organisations.

Addressing academics and students recently at Makerere, Mamdani said academic research and higher education in most African universities is controlled and dominated by a corrosive culture of consultancy. "Today, intellectual life in universities has been reduced to bare-bones classroom activity while academic extra-curricular seminars and workshops have migrated to hotels," said Mamdani.

But whereas some academics might disagree with Mamdani, statistics from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) indicates all is not well with the African academe, as the entire African continent is home to only 2.3 per cent of world's researchers. UNESCO defines researchers as professionals who are engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems.

UNESCO estimates on average, Africa has only 169 researchers per one million inhabitants. Apart from having the lowest density of researchers in the world, investment in research and development in Africa stands at 0.9 per cent. Excluding South Africa, intensity in research and development in Sub-Saharan Africa is merely 0.3 per cent. Unfortunately, whereas the percentage of Gross Domestic Product devoted to research and development has significantly increased in other regions, it has dropped or stagnated in almost all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa besides South Africa. But according to Mamdani, the little research capacity that exists in Africa, especially in universities, is driven by culture of consultancy and global market trends. His general thesis is that researchers in African universities are being used to provide raw material – in form of data – to foreign academics who process it and then re-export it back to Africa. He told his audience that research proposals from African universities are increasingly descriptive accounts of data collection and the methods used to collate data.

Financial aid

Mamdani told his audience collaboration has been reduced to assistance, and now there is an emerging theory that African academics cannot do research without outside financial aid. He said consultancy culture is being institutionalised in African universities through basic courses in research methodology, courses that teach students a set of tools to gather and process quantitative information from which to cull answers.

"Proliferation of short courses on methodology that aim to teach students and academic staff quantitative methods necessary to gathering and processing empirical data are ushering a new generation of native informers," said Mamdani. However, the Ugandan scholar believes researchers should be involved in formulating their own research problems with-

out influence from non governmental organisations or intellectual property raiders. He noted the pervasive culture of consultancy is deeply rooted and has created an attitude of dependency to a point that most African academics cannot even write scholarly papers without outside funding. "Academic papers have turned into corporate-style power point presentations and academics read less and less," he said.

Consultancy driven

The culture of consultancy has radically changed postgraduate education and research as consultants presume that research is all about finding answers to problems defined by a client. Mamdani says consultancy driven postgraduate education requires immediate answers to research problems. "It has almost become a matter of policy in most African universities for PhD students to provide a set of recommendations from their thesis for use by the funding external non-governmental organisations," says Mamdani.

The issue is that in most universities across Sub-Saharan African, postgraduate programmes at PhD level have almost collapsed and what is left has been hijacked by external non-governmental organisations. Unesco says such pitfalls prevail in African universities because state funded PhD programmes have almost collapsed. For instance, in Kenya, as in so many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is no national funding mechanism for research. "Even public universities have no funding for increasing PhDs and no longer measure their performance based on PhD output, journal articles or patents registered each year," says Prof Anthony Rodrigues of the School of Computing and Informatics at the University of Nairobi.

The emerging scenario is that funding scarcities in African universities have led scholars to market driven research where quality control is almost absent. "Moonlighting for donor agencies has endangered the quality of teaching and research in Kenya's universities," says the current Unesco World Social Science Report. Even then, internal brain drain is less talked about, or its impact on quality in higher education properly understood.

The Ugandan professor is re-stating the obvious. The problem of low funding of national research by African governments has been with us for so long-both in the universities and national research institutes. Where national research institutes are seen working, funding from some donor is what is fueling it. It is this that determines the national priority for research. The African scientists is only being rational for now. But something must be done to reverse the trend in poor funding of research by African leaders. A friend once suggested for more scientists to go into politics but there is something in the training of scientists that does not make this path attractive. Whatever it is, it should be addressed to make more African scientists have a greater say in how national budgets are shared out for development. Prof. Walter S. Alhassan, Coordinator, Project on Strengthening Capacity for Safe Biotechnology Management in sub-Sahara Africa (SABIMA)

THE RUFORUM FIELD ATTACHMENT PROGRAM AWARD (FAPA)

Call for 2011 Field Attachment Awards

These grants are intended to provide support for more effective research into use by RUFORUM GRG students. The Award will be valid for use after handing in the completed M.Sc thesis for examination and while waiting for results. It is anticipated that the grantees will use the Award 1 October-31 December 2011.

Deadline Date: 30 November, 2011

A summary of the key requirements is given below but all prospective applicants are referred to the Competitive Grants System (CGS) Grants Manual General Information and Guidelines which are available in the web site for full details visit www.ruforum.org.

Purpose:

- To provide an opportunity to continue the work of the Project with communities in finalising implementation or scaling up of some of the accepted findings from the research;
 - To provide a local implementing agency (local government, farmers group, NGO, government department, research agency, private company etc) with the specialised knowledge of the student for better institutionalisation of new approaches and to enable them to assess the employability of the student/s; and,
- To provide the student with an opportunity to obtain working experience within an organisation and to make contacts for employment in the future.

Description:

- Students will make contact with an organisation and arrange for an attachment for the three months after they have completed their thesis;
- Students will continue with the work they have been doing and should describe this clearly in their application;
- Winning applicants may be expected to provide a short presentation or poster paper at the Biennial Meeting in September on what they will be doing during the field attachment – this could be linked to the presentation of the project;
- Grantees will normally be paid the stipend as an advance each month with the balance to be paid at the end of the attachment when all reports have been received;
- The agency the student works with will be required to provide a brief verbal or written confirmation to the Supervisor at the end of each month that the student attachment is progressing as expected. They are then requested to submit a written report on the work carried out (by the middle of the last month of attachment) to the student's supervisor and at the end of the attachment to provide the student with a reference (unless the work was not satisfactory). RUFORUM may request to receive a copy of this confirmation;
- The student will be expected to provide the editor of the RUFORUM Newsletter with a short insert (1/4 page) on their work with the community at the end of months one and two;
- The student will be expected to provide a one page write-up of their experience for the RUFORUM alumni association newsletter at the end of month two;
- A report by the student on their experiences and on potential areas for further research and action should be submitted to the RUFORUM Secretariat through the supervisor, at the end of the attachment;

The University, through the Dean, will submit a brief financial report showing confirmation of receipt of the monthly stipend by the student together with the report from the host agency and the student's final report.

Qualification

- The attachment must be for work directly related to implementing or scaling out part of the work carried out during the RUFORUM Graduate Research Grant project;
- The grantees must be RUFORUM graduates;
- The University, through the Dean, must provide a letter of support to the application
- There must be proof of acceptance of the attachment by the host organisation; Evidence of demand for this from the local community will be an added advantage

Application Process

1. Students make contact with the communities and organisations and establish the feasibility of such an arrangement;
2. The Student must prepare a brief proposal as outlined in the Guidelines for the FAPA;
3. No financial breakdown is required. This will be a monthly stipend of US\$200 paid to the student. An advance of approximately \$400 per month will then be provided to the student to cover all their transport, living, meeting and incidental expenses to achieve their objective, including all costs that are not covered by their host agency. Project proposals should not be developed in a way that requires significant co-funding in order for the work to be successful unless there is commitment in writing of the co-funding by the host agency;
4. Applications should be forwarded, together with the support evidence, to the RUFORUM Secretariat by 1st August 2011;
5. The applications will be reviewed by the Secretariat for compliance and the winning grants will be selected by the RUFORUM Technical Committee.

SUCCESSFUL FIELD ATTACHMENT PROGRAM AWARD (FAPA) APPLICANTS

The Field Attachment Program Awards (FAPA) are designed to encourage students to follow through with continued dissemination of their research and to enable them to link more closely with the agencies working in the area where their research was carried out. FAPA is designed to link the student closely with a service provider in the area to give them work exposure. This is the second round of the FAPA call and here below is the list of the successful applications.

No.	Name	Institution & Contact Email	Title of Proposal	Country of Internship
1	Jimmy Obala	Makerere University Email: jimmyobala@gmail.com	Selection for resistance to Fusarium root rot and large seed size in early generation of multiple-parent populations of common bean	Uganda
2	Jacob Kaingo	Sokoine University of Agriculture Email: jakekain@yahoo.co.uk	Proposal for field attachment with the Africa soil information services-afsis (Arusha, Tanzania)	Tanzania
3	Kwemoi Daniel Bomet	Makerere University Email: kwemoi2000@yahoo.co.uk	Establishing a Platform for Developing <i>Aspergillus flavus</i> resistant maize for Uganda	Uganda.
4.	Mayada Mamoun Beshir	Makerere University, E-mail: mayadama-moun@yahoo.com	Strengthening Breeding for Resistance to Turicum leaf blight in Sorghum: Mapping of Resistance Quantitative Trait Loci	Kenya & Uganda
5.	Osaliya Richard	Makerere University Email: osaliya@yahoo.com	Promoting corporate and community involvement in natural resource management through dissemination of research findings and participation in field investigations of mine pollution in Kasese, western Uganda	Uganda
6.	Ms. Habonayo Gloriose	Sokoine University of Agriculture Email: habonayoglo@yahoo.fr	Comparative effect of <i>Tithonia diversifolia</i> , farmyard manure and NPK fertilizer on maize grain yield improvement at Moso, southeastern region of Burundi.	Tanzania
7.	Mr. Lema Daniel Ndwasinde	Sokoine University of Agriculture	<i>Response of lowland rice (Oryza sativa L.) varieties to moisture regime at different levels of potassium.</i>	Tanzania
8.	Mr. Mbonihankuye Cyrille	Sokoine University of Agriculture Email: mbonicyrille@yahoo.fr	Evaluation of the performance of introduced watermelons genotypes under field conditions of Burundi.	Burundi
9.	Mr. Egeru Anthony	Makerere University	Enhancing efficient energy coping mechanisms	Uganda
10.	Yazan Ahmed Mohamed Elhadi	University of Nairobi Email: yazan498@yahoo.com	Links between Seasonal Climatic Variability and Poverty: A case Study of Pastoral and Agro-pastoral Communities in Baringo District, Kenya	Kenya/ Sudan

RUFORUM GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANTS – 4th CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Call ID: [RU/CGS/GRG/30/9/11](#)
PROPOSAL DEADLINE: **30 September 2011**
For selection in: **February 2012**

BACKGROUND

This is to announce the **Fourth Call for Proposals** of the RUFORUM Graduate Research Grants (GRG). The purpose of the Call is to support capacity building at graduate level and to link universities more closely with rural communities and with research, extension and development agencies. Please refer to the Competitive Grants Manual (visit <http://www.ruforum.org/sites/default/files/file/Grants/RUFORUM%20CGS%20Manual.pdf>) for further information and guide on the Graduate Research Grants. The Manual provides guidelines and other details on how to respond to the Call for Proposals.

This is an open call for participatory action research proposals that meet identified demand. The lead applicant must be from a RUFORUM Member University (except where a member university is not eligible). Other Universities not eligible for the award of grants are encouraged to participate by twinning with eligible member institutions.

TIME FRAME for Call ID [RU/CGS/GRG/30/9/11](#)

Deadline for Proposal submission to RUFORUM Secretariat by **30th September, 2011**

Compliance Review and send to External Reviewers by **20th October, 2011**

External Reviewers to return proposals with comments to Secretariat by latest **1st December 2011**

Secretariat to compile proposals for review by Technical Committee by **28th February 2012**

Results from the selection will be communicated to PIs by **Mid March, 2012**.

Proposal Submission

A soft copy of the complete application package must be submitted by email (all supporting documents, including from collaborators must be included in the same email from the PI). Where an applicant submits more than one proposal, each must be sent separately. Applications should be addressed to:

The Grants Manager

RUFORUM Secretariat,

[Call ID: *specify*]

Plot 151 Garden Hill, Makerere University

P.O. Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda.

Tel.: +256-414-535939; Fax: +256-414-543153

Email: cgs@ruforum.org; with copies to secretariat@ruforum.org

ANNOUNCEMENT**3RD RUFORUM BIENNIAL CONFERENCE, 24 – 28 SEPTEMBER 2012**

We are pleased to inform you that the Third RUFORUM Biennial Conference will be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in conjunction with the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting. Please note these dates and block them to schedule your attendance to this important event. The 3rd Biennial conference will be hosted by Sokoine University of Agriculture in partnership with RUFORUM

IMPORTANT DATES: DEADLINES

Extended Abstracts – 30th April 2012 (earlier submission invited)
 Registration – 30th July 2012

BACKGROUND

The RUFORUM Biennial Conference provides an opportunity for young and seasoned scientists to network and learn lessons towards increasing problem solving on the African continent.

CONFERENCE SUB-THEMES

1. Risk and vulnerability in agriculture
2. Value chains and innovation platforms
3. Innovations in agricultural information, communication & knowledge management
4. Natural resource management
5. Animal and plant breeding and biotechnology
6. Partnerships and networking
7. Strengthening innovation capacity
8. Agricultural Marketing, trade and policy
9. Monitoring and impact assessment
10. Plant and animal health management

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**Conference Coordinator:**

Ms Nodumo Dhlamini: n.dhlamini@ruforum.org, Tel: +256414535939

Team Members:

Dr. Wellington Ekaya: w.ekaya@ruforum.org; Mrs. Sylvia Mkandawire: s.chindime@ruforum.org

Mrs. Claire Akun-Ntwali: c.ntwali@ruforum.org; Prof. B. Tiisekwa: btiisekwa@yahoo.co.uk or tiisekwa@suanet.ac.tz ;

Tel: +255232604649/ +255232603511/ +255754476410

Blog: <http://ruforum.wordpress.com/>

OBITUARY: PROFESSOR JAMES WINFORD CHILEKWA BANDA

The RUFORUM Secretariat with deep sorrow regrets to announce the death of one its most dedicated champions, Professor James Winford Chilekwa Banda of Bunda College of Agriculture, Malawi. James was born on 25th May 1957 at Mzimba Boma, He was married to Beatrice NyaKaunda, and left behind three sons: Rumbani, Wanangwa and Themba and a daughter named Tamenji.

James studied at Bunda College of the University of Malawi where he obtained a Diploma in Agriculture in 1979 with Distinction and BSc in Agriculture with a strong credit in 1981. He studied for his MSc in Animal Production at the University of Aberdeen from 1982 to 1984. He secured a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Scholarship to pursue PhD studies at the University of Giessen in Germany, where he obtained the PhD in February 1992.

Professor Banda made rapid professional advancement in his career. In 1981, he was recruited by the University of Malawi as a Staff Associate in Animal Production, rising to level of Professor in 2001. He has been instrumental in developing Bunda to what it is today, being especially passionate on outreach activities and networking. He was the main contact in Malawi for RUFORUM over the last 6 years and coordinated the extremely successful Malawi National Forum, which links Bunda faculty to other value chain actors in Malawi. We miss you greatly James and may your soul rest in eternal peace.

