

## **Training in Gender for University Principals and Deans**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2017**

**Venue: Bingu International Conference Centre, Lilongwe, Malawi**  
**Hosted by: RUFORUM member Universities in Malawi and the Malawi Government**

### **Concept Note**

#### **Background**

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a network of 66 Universities in 26 African countries. RUFORUM's work focuses on strengthening the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to the demands of smallholder farmers in Africa and agribusinesses. Core to RUFORUM's mission is the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact oriented research and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions, governments, and regional and continental higher education stakeholders. RUFORUM fosters inclusion of women in the knowledge space through promoting their voice and participation in education, training, research, and production and marketing of knowledge. RUFORUM recognises that to achieve gender agenda in agricultural higher education requires cultivating functional partnerships with specialized agencies and entities with a focused mandate- both at scale and scope of promoting gender and women empowerment. RUFORUM partner of choice in this regard is the Africa Women and Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD). AWARD aims to significantly expand and strengthen the capacity of African women scientists, recognizing their vital contribution to science and research. AWARD recognizes that Africa's green revolution will be accelerated if we stop the wastage of human talent and bring women's experiences to the field and the laboratories. AWARD understands gender responsive agricultural research as research that responds to the needs and priorities of a diversity of women and men across Africa's agricultural value chains. Evidence indicates that gender responsive research is more efficient<sup>1</sup>; it results in more inclusive, better targeted, more relevant innovations with higher rates of adoption.

Both RUFORUM and AWARD envision a robust, resilient, and gender responsive agricultural innovation system working to drive prosperity and food and nutrition security for Africa. Contributing towards this vision AWARD is investing in African scientists, research

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<sup>1</sup> Gendered Innovations harness the creative power of sex and gender analysis for innovation and discovery. Considering gender may add a valuable dimension to research. <https://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu>

institutions and agribusinesses to deliver innovative, sustainable, gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation.

African agricultural research is in danger of missing the critical range of diverse perspectives necessary to develop appropriate technologies. The science, technology, and innovation capacity of Africa would be strengthened through greater participation of its women. The United Nations (UN) sustainable development goal (SDG) on gender stipulates achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls by 2030. According to Quinlan and VanderBrug (2016<sup>2</sup>) achieving the SDG on gender (SDG 5) has multiplier effects of catalysing the achievement of the targets of most SDGs including food security and nutrition (SDG 2), education (SDG 4) and health services and care (SDG 3). Therefore, achievement of a single SDG 5 by 2030 has a multiplier effect to significantly reduce instances of hunger and poverty and is essential for unlocking the potential of women to build a more just and prosperous future. The Africa Union's Agenda 2063-the Africa we want, also makes this bold recognition requiring the reduction of gender parity in education through revolutionizing education and skills in addition to actively promoting science, technology, research and innovation, to build human capital for the transformation of the African continent.

In response to these global gender imperatives, RUFORUM has a gender focused strategic goal; “*Increased participation and voices of women in education/ training, research and production and marketing of knowledge*”. To achieve this objective RUFORUM supports several gender responsive interventions at individual-graduate (knowledge and skills) and university (Internal policies, arrangements, procedures) levels. RUFORUM firmly believe that to institutionalise gender responsiveness in African universities will require the change in mindset of university leaders to recognise that exclusive approach to agricultural training and research serves no developmental purpose.

Therefore the effective entry point to universities is through the Deans and Principals. RUFORUM periodically conducts focussed training sessions for Deans, Principals and other members of faculty to enhance their awareness of gender issues, initiate and promote strategies that promote gender equality in African Universities as part of the efforts to increase participation and voice of Women in higher education, research and development. In 2014, RUFORUM partnered with AWARD to implement gender-responsive research and training in the universities of Nairobi, Sokoine University of Agriculture and Haramaya University. Similar follow on trainings were conducted and facilitated by AWARD- in 2016, in Cape

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<sup>2</sup> Quinlan, J & VanderBrug, J. (2016). *Gender Lens Investing: Uncovering Opportunities for Growth, Returns, and Impact*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Town South Africa and 2017 a gender and leadership training of 20 mid-level managers in Malawi from Ministries, Parastatal bodies and public universities.

### **Rationale and Objective of the Training**

During Gender Training for the Deans and Principals held on the sidelines of the RUFORUM Biennial Conference held in Cape Town in October 2016, several recommendations and observations were which included;

- Misunderstanding and misuse of gender terms resulting in some of the observed current gender biases among Deans and Principals
- Wide spread appreciation of the differences between males and females, and the need to have both on decision making tables, and to reconsider curricula design and delivery to ensure appropriate training
- Twenty two different reasons for students dropping out of agriculture were identified. Top on the list was pregnancy/ maternity issue that affected all universities present, followed by fees; academic performance; domestic responsibility; money/glamour; lack of motivation/ job opportunities; demand from work; criminality; health reasons; substance abuse and early marriages. The order was the same for male students, except pregnancy and early marriage.
- Initiatives to recruit and retain female students were mostly scholarships for females, loan schemes, career guidance/ counselling, and affirmative action for female enrolment recorded by three of the 6 groups. Unique initiatives included pocket money to women with children/ and the married, girls Science camp in Malawi and High School Outreach to attract students by West Africa.
- The end of session evaluation revealed that a lot of learning emerged around the reasons for females dropping out, the definitions and concepts used in gender, the video on how the differences in brain “wiring” influenced how female and males relate with the environment around them.
- Challenges to implementing the initiatives were mostly to do with availability of resources, social-cultural influences, gender misconceptions especially by university decision makers, expertise and political will of university management
- A long list of support needed to implement lessons was generated and the proposed sources included, universities, governments, RUFORUM, AWARD, Development partners, communities, the female students themselves and civil society.

Therefore the purpose of the pre-AGM event is a refresh of the commitments made in the 12th AGM, make a follow-up on the progress made in implementing the agreed upon resolutions and collectively learn from the process.

### **Participation, Venue, Date and Agenda of the Training**

Over 60 Deans and Principals from RUFORUM member Universities will participate in a one-day event scheduled on 25th October 2017 at Bingu International Conference Centre, Lilongwe, Malawi. The training will be preceded by a statement from Executive Director of AWARD Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg.

### **Key Outputs of the training**

An all-inclusive report on the gender training as well as recommendations for future trainings on gender.

### **Convenor and Contact Persons for the Training**

AWARD will facilitate the one-day training as part of the side-events at the 13th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Principal hosts of the 13th AGM will be the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), University of Mzuzu, University of Malawi (UNIMA) and Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) in collaboration with the Malawi Government. The contact persons for the gender training are Ms. Pauline Bomett (AWARD) ([P.BOMETT@cgiar.org](mailto:P.BOMETT@cgiar.org)); Mr. Charles Owuor ([c.owuor@ruforum.org](mailto:c.owuor@ruforum.org)) and Mr. Moses Waswa ([m.waswa@ruforum.org](mailto:m.waswa@ruforum.org));