

● Empowering Africa's Universities to  
Educate it's People and Generate  
Development Solutions



# Annual Report

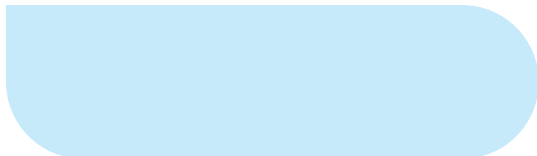
July 2022 - June 2023

Abridged Version

# RUFORUM Annual Report

July 2022 - June 2023

Abridged Version



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Message from the Board Chair	04
Message from the Executive Secretary	08
Introduction	12
Key Achievements	14
Training	14
Improving Access: Digital Platforms for Online Teaching and Learning	17
Research for Development	20
Outreach and Integrating Youth Back into Rural Communities	28
RUFORUM's Knowledge Management Platform	31
Policy Advocacy, Networking and Partnerships	33
Ministerial Dialogue on Higher Education	34
The RUFORUM 18 <sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting	38

# Message from the Board Chair

This year, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture marks 18 years of existence as an African grown and led institution. The age of 18 years, is also the point at which adolescents become young adults. In the case of RUFORUM, the 18 years of growth have been remarkable, expanding from 5 countries and 10 member universities to 40 countries in all regions of Africa with a membership of 163 universities.

At the helm of that tremendous growth and progress has been Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, also the founding Executive Secretary of this organisation. Under his stellar leadership, RUFORUM expanded its then-single portfolio of responsibilities from managing competitive grants to support graduate education to becoming a catalyst for change and growth in African University management and education systems; policy and advocacy for higher agricultural education, engagement of Africa Universities in national innovation systems and the transition to wealth and job creation by Africa's youth among others.



You may all recall Prof. Adipala Ekwamu was one of the 100 United Nations Food Systems Champions, a task he performed so well that it elevated the voice of African universities to the highest levels of policy advocacy. We therefore thank him for a job well done as well as for his sacrifices and service to humanity and Africa. We wish him well. I also take this opportunity to welcome our Executive Secretary Prof. Patrick Okori who started his assignment in January this year. While Prof. Patrick Okori is no stranger to RUFORUM, the organisation has grown and certainly needs all of us to work with him and the team at our Secretariat to steer this ship forward. So on behalf of the RUFORUM Board, I wish him a productive tenure at RUFORUM.

The year ending has had many positive events that produce a breath of fresh air against some of the challenges we face as institutions, nations, continent and world. Due to the transformation of education systems, we now produce graduates who are change agents. Indeed, the nomination and award to Mr Aaron Nanok, an Egerton University alumnus, as the UN in Kenya Person of the Year 2022 is testimony of the changes we are all embracing as a team of educators in RUFORUM. Aaron was recognized for his commitment to sustainable agriculture in Turkana, Kenya.

The continual growth of our doctoral and post-doctoral programmes further attest to our collective effort to transform to science-led universities. Makerere University, one of our founding members, just celebrated its 100th anniversary, and we salute this University for “building for the future.” At the end of 2022 we held our annual general meeting that brought together generations of our network to celebrate, learn and plan for the next year. I thank the people of Zimbabwe and our network members for making it a success. The next annual general meeting will take place in Yaoundé Cameroon and we look forward to receiving you all.

This year ending was also committed to updating the RUFORUM Vision 2030's second operational plan (2024-2028). Vision 2030 is our collective vision and action plan for establishing “vibrant, transformative universities that catalyse sustainable and inclusive agricultural development to feed and prosper Africa.” The now-completed Operational Plan for the period 2018-2022 established that universities were generating relevant innovations, goods, and services that had a beneficial impact on the quality of teaching, learning, research, and development in society. Under the new revised Operational Plan, we will continue to strengthen the different levels of capacity and competences existing in order to achieve our united goal of 2030.

It is important to note that we as African Universities must play a significant role in skilling our young people, jobs creation, science technology and innovation, capacity building for mission fulfilment and science leadership among others. The refreshed Operational Plan provides us with the chance to assess and draw significant lessons for moving forward.

I therefore invite you all to engage through various forums that will become available in the coming days and months.

In this Annual Report, I urge you to read about how Your Network, RUFORUM is addressing contemporary development challenges. The endeavour to realign Africa's human resource pyramid programming to generate scientists, technicians, practitioners, and entrepreneurs is highlighted in this document. You will also read about our research for development work, advocacy and resourcing, and voices from the field. I hope the report inspires you to engage further and to take bold actions with us to establish dynamic, transformative universities that catalyze sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and prosper Africa in partnership with different stakeholders. I am optimistic that together we can create dynamic, transformative universities that enhance the agenda of feeding and creating prosperity. Thank you.

**Professor Theresia Nkuo- Akenji**  
Vice Chancellor, University of Bamenda  
and RUFORUM Board Chair



Feeding Africa while also creating wealth and jobs for its people necessitates the use of science to boost production and the creation of goods and services. That is possible when farmers have access to innovations that tackle production issues, as proven by the Potato CARP. That is the promise made by the RUFORUM Network to Africa's smallholder farmers.

# Message from the Executive Secretary

It is my singular honour and privilege to present the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) Annual Report to you our leaders, members, and our partners for the program year 2022/2023. This is my first year of service to and naturally I am humbled to share the collective work of your Secretariat and Member Universities. Over the last year, the RUFORUM Network has continued to recover from the challenges that the COVID 19 outbreak posed to the higher education sector and the economy as a whole.

Despite the challenges that have affected both the global, continental and national economic out-look, a number of opportunities continue to emerge in support of the transformation of the higher agricultural education sector in general. RUFORUM, as a membership-based organization, works to increase universities' capacity to train high-quality human capital, conduct and promote impact-oriented research, and foster partnerships among its diverse stakeholders.





During the year ending, the RUFORUM Network made significant strides in:

- Transformation of teaching, learning, research and work preparedness to improve capacity of Universities to conduct research for development and equip graduates with abilities to use innovation, science, and technology to address development concerns while also preparing them for work in the private sector. This also includes strengthening member universities' ability to nurture students into change leaders capable of catalysing transformative change in communities via social innovation, entrepreneurship, and corporate social responsibility;
- Increasing staff capacity at member universities through the Graduate Teaching Assistantship programme, cross-cutting skills improvement training, and capacity building in relevant thematic areas including climate change and artificial intelligence;
- Strengthening digital platforms for online learning, which has accelerated the institutionalization of online learning among member universities;
- Strengthening the overall higher education ecosystem by stimulating university- Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions collaboration and by engaging TVET students and out-of-school youth in entrepreneurship and other non-agricultural value chains;
- Engaging member universities in policy advocacy and networking in order to secure commitment and support for the enhancement of higher agricultural education, science, technology, and innovation in Africa; and,

- Strengthening the coordination and networking functions of RUFORUM to assure quality of RUFORUM interventions and their relevance to Africa's development needs and aspirations.

Within this year, Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, the former Executive Secretary of RUFORUM retired after 18 years of service. Under his leadership, RUFORUM grew from a network of 10 Universities in 5 countries to 163 universities in 40 countries. We thank Prof. Adipala Ekwamu for his service to Africa and humanity. RUFORUM under my administration will build on the solid foundation and work of the past administration. Together, we will still pursue that noble goal of contributing significantly to human capital development, rural transformation, and agricultural research for development, as well as jobs creation and entrepreneurship to boost Africa's economic growth and development.

This vision of success requires that we regularly review and learn from our past, integrate with other education ecosystem actors, boost member capacity for mission fulfilment, and resource adequately for mission implementation.

Our current Operation Plan (2018-2022), ends this year and during the course of the year, we will be refreshing it for the period 2024-2028. We will rely on your guidance and critical review to sharpen the document and ready it for implementation.

Finally, I would like to thank the RUFORUM Board of Directors, our Member Universities, Governments, Development Partners, the Young - People of Africa and Stakeholders in the Agriculture sector for their continuous encouragement and support. Together in the days and years to come we will join efforts to build dynamic and innovative institutions that catalyse sustainable, inclusive agricultural growth needed to feed and prosper Africa. We appreciate your unwavering trust in us.

**Professor Patrick Okori**  
Executive Secretary



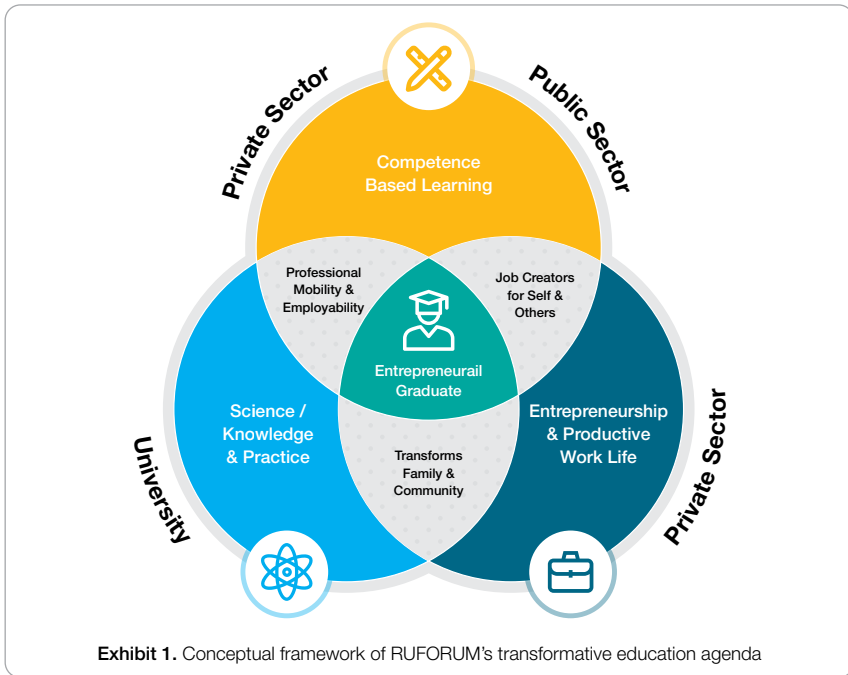
Universities can play a role growing Africa's agriculture. University-led research by Egerton University, has unlocked opportunity for potato smallholder farmers in Central Kenya by strengthening local potato seed systems. This has enhanced food and nutrition security as well as the local economy.



# Introduction

Africa's young population is predicted to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, up from 1.4 billion today, and by 2035, more young Africans will be joining the labour market annually compared to the rest of the world combined. Equipped with knowledge, skills and jobs, Africa's youth stand to be the most important driver of economic growth in their countries.

Building the skills of youth to drive growth of the agricultural sector can address youth unemployment and at the same time increase productivity of agriculture and related sectors. Although technical skills of youth are valuable, soft skills are equally important in ensuring that graduates are prepared to continually adapt and master complex technologies manifesting in changing development ecosystems. These ecosystems that include civil society, the public and private sector, national to regional and global actors and markets necessitate collaboration between universities other stakeholders to guarantee that appropriate knowledge is generated and that current and relevant skills are maintained. Addressing these combined issues of skilling youth for the present and emerging “future of work” opportunities is key to RUFORUM’s mission. The RUFORUM Agricultural Higher Education Science Technology and Innovation (AHESTI) - Vision 2030 envisions vibrant, transformative universities catalysing sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa. RUFORUM is implementing seven commitments to realise this vision.



The commitments relate to transformative student education and learning, research excellence and impact, community engagement, enhancing innovation and creating opportunities, knowledge generation and sharing, providing support to policy dialogue and reform, and supporting the involvement of women in agriculture (Exhibit 1). RUFORUM achievements in the year ending have been clustered into four major areas in relation to these commitments:

1. Capacity building of university, research and development practice.
2. Research for development

(R4D) to address contemporary development challenges.

3. Improving outcomes and reach of teaching, learning and R4D.
4. Policy advocacy, partnerships and networking.

In this synopsis of the 2022/2023 annual report you will find the above results presented in summary under four topical areas that encompass our mission of strengthening the capacities of universities to foster innovations that are responsive to the demands of smallholder farmers and further key stakeholders across the evolving agricultural value chain.



## Key Achievements

### Training

RUFORUM's training agenda aims to balance the human resource pyramid in Africa with appropriate numbers of scientists, technicians, practitioners and entrepreneurs. This year ending, RUFORUM has and continues to engage 51 member universities, (with scaling out opportunity to all its member universities), who collectively implemented the following activities:

1. Post-Doctoral Training: This is a new training area of RUFORUM and in the year ending, 39 Post-doctoral fellowships are ongoing in ten thematic areas. These include agricultural extension; aquaculture; climate change; crop improvement; environmental conservation; health; information and communication technology; integrated agriculture; livestock improvement; and, soil improvement.

2. RUFORUM has been implementing regional training programmes at its member universities for over a decade (Exhibit 2). This approach aims to pool resources for training students at selected centres of leadership. It provides for cost-leverage on the capacities of the network to train at undergraduate and post graduate education. Collectively, these programmes have trained 915 graduate students (PhD 420 PhDs and Masters (495). In the year 2022- 2023 RUFORUM has awarded 36 new PhD and 17 MSc scholarships across the region.

## Regional Training Programmes Deliver

Programme	Centre of Leadership	Graduates Trained		
		M	F	Total
<b>PhD Programmes</b>				
Dryland Resource Management (DRM)	Nairobi	47	25	72
Plant Breeding and Biotechnology (PBB)	Makerere	70	39	109
Aquaculture and Fisheries Science (AFS)	LUANAR	21	3	24
Agricultural and Resource Economics (ARE)	LUANAR	33	14	47
Soil and Water Management (SWM)	Sokoine	21	5	26
Agricultural and Rural Innovations (ARI)	Makerere	64	27	91
	Egerton	10	17	27
	Sokoine	4	1	5
Food Science and Nutrition (FSN)	Jomo Kenyatta	13	6	19
<b>MSc. Programmes</b>				
Plant Breeding and Seed Systems (PBS)	Makerere	118	74	192
Research Methods (RM)	Jomo Kenyatta	71	45	116
Agricultural Information and Communication Management (AICM)	Egerton	43	2	45
	Nairobi	29	20	49
	Haramaya	71	22	93
<b>Total</b>		<b>615</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>915</b>

Exhibit 2. Graduate students trained at RUFORUM Regional Centres of leadership



3. Graduate Assistantship.  
Through this programme African universities build capacity for each other using their own resources. This year, 39 placements were made across 14 disciplines. Upon graduation these will return to boost teaching staff in their universities.
4. RUFORUM recognizes the need to re-balance the human resource pyramid especially within the agriculture sector where, the conversion of many technical institutions into universities has degraded national ability to train last mile delivery agents. Twenty Technical Vocational Education and Training Institutions (TVET) across Africa have been engaged with the number expected to more than double over the next 2-3 years. They are (Benin 6, Zimbabwe 1, Kenya 6, Botswana 1, Namibia, Uganda 3, Ghana, 3, South Africa 2). TVET training covers agricultural extension, food processing, agroforestry, among others focusing on trainers and young people.
5. Transformation of teaching, learning, research and work preparedness. Its goal was to improve capacity of universities to conduct R4D and equip graduates' with abilities to use innovation, science, and technology to address development concerns while also preparing them for work in the private sector.



## Improving Access: Digital Platforms for Online Teaching and Learning

During the year ending, the RUFORUM African Digital Agriculture Programme (AfriDAP), with support from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and Common Wealth of Learning (COL) enhanced digital learning infrastructure for online content generation and delivery in 13 universities in Uganda and Malawi. Universities were supported to provide relevant and practical training by using RUFORUM's Regional E-learning platform. Eighteen courses delivered

through the platform focused on project management; natural resource management; climate smart agriculture; fertilizer science and technology; plant breeding; agricultural marketing and strategic management amongst several others (Exhibit 3).

RUFORUM also supported training of university personnel in online graduate student supervision, artificial intelligence for online teaching and learning, climate-smart agriculture and climate information systems, and general curriculum development.

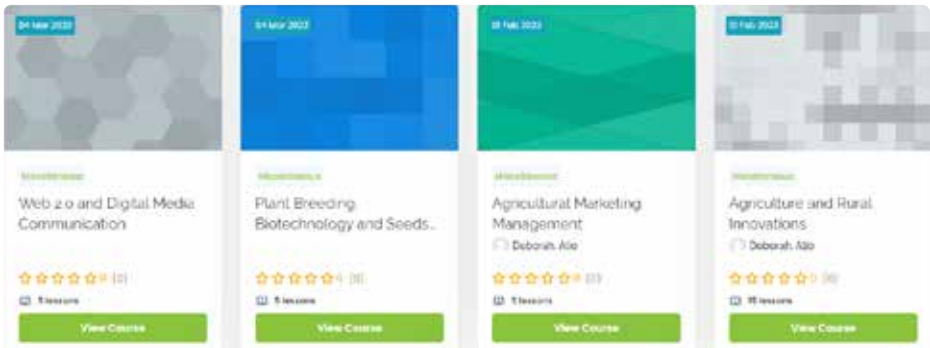


Exhibit 3. Selected courses delivered through the RUFORUM Regional E-Learning platform during the year



Racheal Kobusinge works at her enterprise called Scoops and Chills. Photo Credit RUFORUM

RUFORUM is using the Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa's growth and development (TAGDev Programme) to improve teaching, learning, research and work preparedness of young people by universities and other agricultural education ecosystem actors (Exhibit 4).

The TAGDev model aims to address the challenges that African universities face in producing graduates with the requisite knowledge and skills to satisfy the demands of the agricultural sector. The key components of the model include curriculum review and development, staff development, university-private

sector partnership, student internship and experiential learning, skilling of out-of-school youth, outreach and community engagement, as well as university transformative leadership development. In the year ending TAGDev has been implemented in 19 universities following successful piloting at Egerton University in Kenya and Gulu University in Uganda. TAGDev has graduated 258 students with 309 continuing students. Skilling Youth. To prepare youth for work readiness, entrepreneurship, RUFORUM and its partners in the year ending have trained 1089 young people. Young people created 14 new businesses.

Business incubation initiatives with member universities will be strengthened in the new RUFORUM programme year and reported on. Affordably priced, delicious, ice cream and fruits venture owned by Racheal Kobusinge an agri-preneur, and former Gulu University student, and TAGDev alumnus, processes raw milk and fruits into ice cream and fresh juice products, selling them through her “Scoop and Chill” business.

Racheal has partnered with a local farmer in Unyama county, Gulu district, northern Uganda, from whom she purchases at least 15 litres of milk daily. Kobusinge believes that adding value to the milk and selling it as the ice cream is more profitable than selling a cup of raw milk for 1,000 Uganda shillings as she did before her transformative

education under TAGDev at Gulu University. Clearly, RUFORUM and its member universities through the pilot transformative education programme implemented under TAGDev has demonstrated that education can produce young people who are ready to work as leaders and entrepreneurs in society creating jobs for themselves and others.

The TAGDev approach will be called out in the coming years to more countries, enabling our universities to respond to a call made to the Network by the former AUC Chairperson-Dr. Nkosazana Dhlamini-Zuma who urged universities to make agriculture and its related enterprises “cool” for young people. By doing so, Africa will be able to re-energize the critical agri-food system sector with young talent.

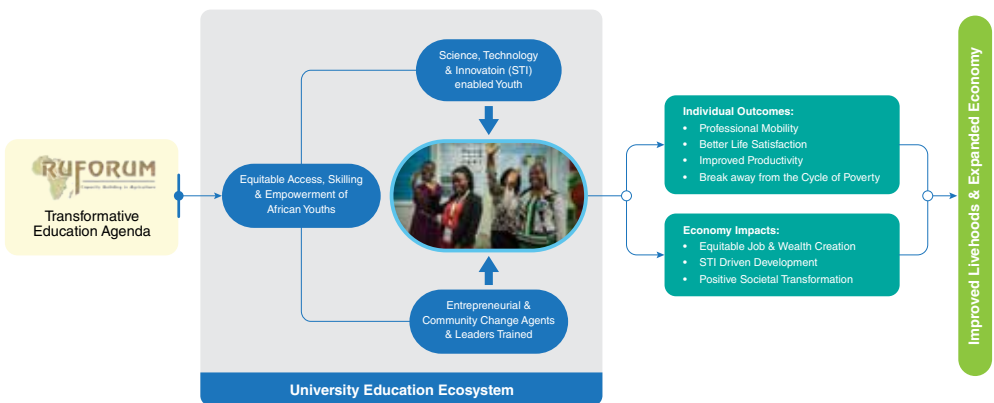


Exhibit 4. The TAGDev model of RUFORUM for training students into transformative change agents

# Research for Development

In the year ending, RUFORUM and its member universities have continued to conduct research at various levels to generate science solutions for addressing development challenges, improving service delivery, strengthening production to market value chains, value addition and climate science among others. The results are summarised below:

## **Strategic Research:**

---

Climate science and artificial intelligence research grants have been initiated through 20 sub-grants to science teams within the network, generate baseline data on carbon emission and modelling for Africa where this data is mostly lacking. Artificial Intelligence has emerged as one of the most promising techniques to generate meaningful information to study complex phenomena and systems such as climate change and weather variability. RUFORUM in partnership with AKADEMIYA2063 and West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL) developed a Research and Services Hub for Responsible Artificial Intelligence for Climate Action Innovation in Africa (RAINCA).

The hub has 11 research teams from nine African countries who will undertake research to inform climate action in Africa. The research uses artificial intelligence under eight thematic areas (Exhibit 5) to predict the impacts of climate change on agriculture systems and provides decision-support tools to allow policymakers to formulate appropriate

policy and investment decisions and actions as appropriate to climate change. RAINCA is funded by the Artificial Intelligence for Development-Africa programme, a joint initiative funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre and the Swedish International Development Agency.

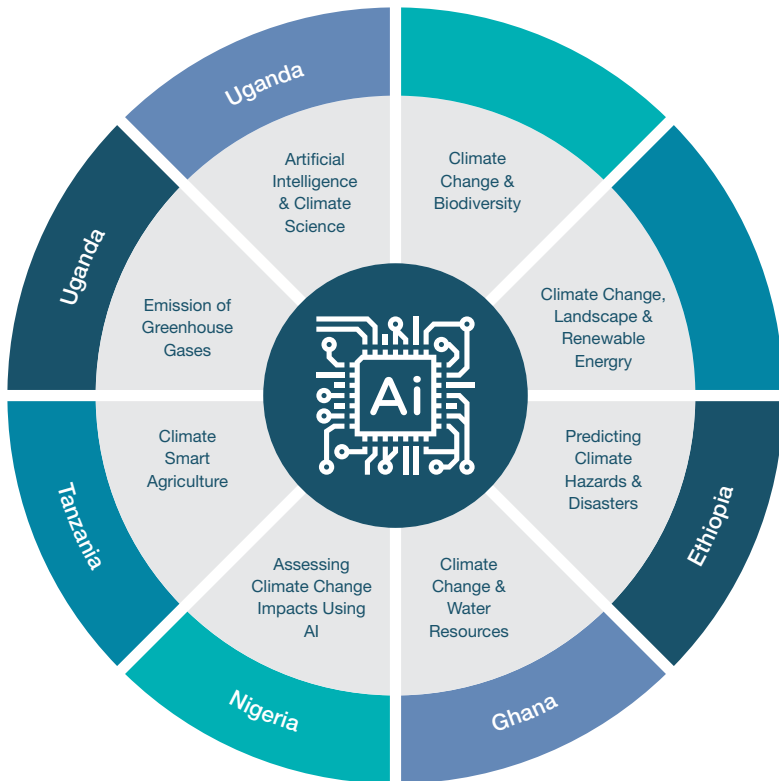


Exhibit 4. Research themes of research teams supported to undertake research on deploying artificial intelligence for climate action in Africa

## Applied Research

The Community Action Research Programme (CARP), approach has been designed by RUFORUM and the scientific community in its member universities to engage farming and other value chain actors in the design to adoption of science processes, knowledge and agri-technologies. Currently 16 CARPs are being implemented in 9 countries across Africa (Exhibit 6).

The RUFORUM CARP approach is a collaborative research effort that involves university senior researchers, post-graduate and undergraduate students, as well as technical and vocational college students to undertake research with rural farming communities. The CARPs enable universities to provide inclusive and relevant development solutions that address smallholder farmer needs.

Using CARPs, RUFORUM has contributed to enhanced food security by increasing access to improved seed, promoting

yield-enhancing technologies, and management practices of major and opportunity crops i.e., potato, baobab, pineapple, encroacher bushes, safflower and wool. Sixteen university-led CARPs continue to benefit value chain actors (Exhibit 6).

These efforts highlight the role that universities can play in social change by fighting hunger and malnutrition and increasing rural household income (Exhibit 7).

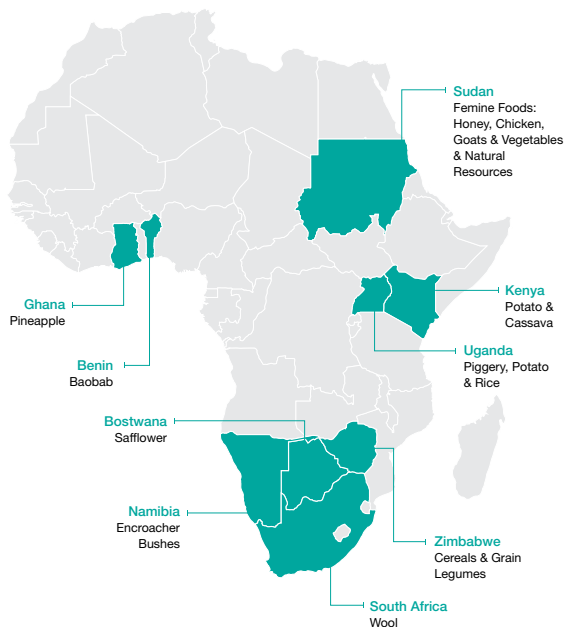


Exhibit 6. Value chains of collaborative research amongst universities, communities and other value chain actors in different countries in Africa

## Famine Foods CARP in University of Khartoum in Sudan

To address the question of food and nutrition security facing the people of Darfur, Sudan, research teams at the University of Khartoum have leveraged on local knowledge and advanced biotechnologies to develop food products with enhanced nutritional quality and long shelf life. The foods are based on local grains, legumes, vegetables, and other plant

food products some of which are traditionally processed and known as famine foods. The team through food chemistry and processing as well as understanding the socio-economic settings and dynamics have developed six food products for the people of Darfur and the wider Sudan and region (Exhibit 7). This has provided opportunity for rural farming households and their local agri-food systems to be linked to market/cash economy in Sudan



Exhibit 7. Potential famine foods identified by research teams at the University of Khartoum in Sudan

## Safflower CARP Project at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Botswana

The Safflower CARP at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources aimed to improve its production and development by strengthening capacity along the value chain using a multi-sector approach. The team identified adapted safflower genotypes suited for Botswana, product development training for value

chain participants, and safflower value addition (Exhibit 8). As a result the Government of Botswana has designated safflower as a priority crop within the Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agriculture Development (ISPAAD). The ISPAAD components include provision of draught power, portable water, improved seed, fertilizers, and herbicides, financing facilitation, fencing, and creation of agricultural service centres.

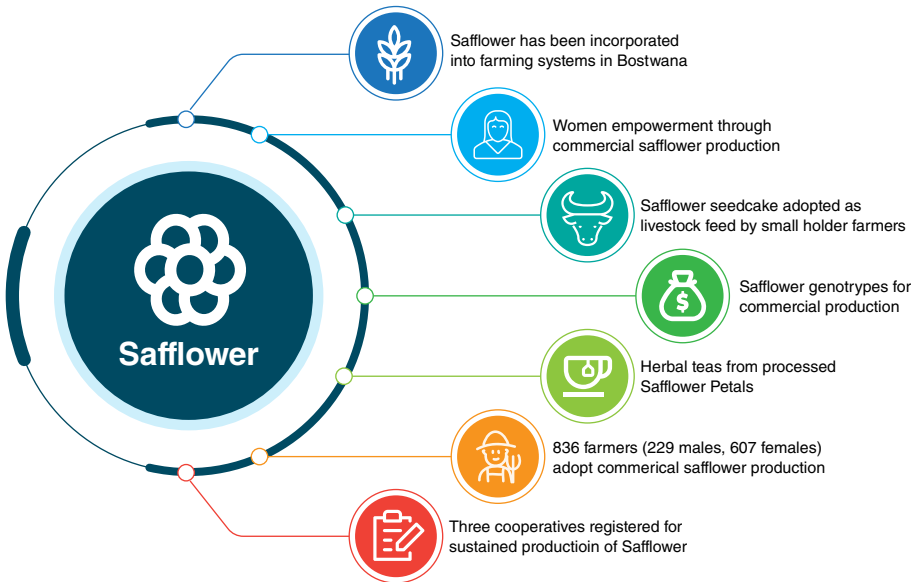


Exhibit 8: Innovations and management practices generated under the Safflower project at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural resources



## Safflower Innovations Unlock Livelihood and Economic Opportunity in Botswana

A total of 836 farmers (229 males, 607 females) currently grow safflower and engage in various segments of its value chain, the exception being, extraction of cooking oil.

Additionally, the CARP addressed gender and diversity challenges among rural farming communities especially women, who were subjected to gender-based violence during the COVID 19 economic lockdown.

The project empowered 168 women with skills for safflower production, integrating them into local markets in Rakop's, Botswana, the project pilot site. By integrating them into the markets, the women were able to generate income to meet their personal and family needs, and through the group created a pressure team for protection against gender-based violence. Currently, a Rakop's women group called Green Diamonds Co- operative Society a project partner has benefitted from the training and access to technology and are selling safflower vegetables, seed,

herbal tea (petals), green tea (leaves), and animal feed to the community.

The cooperative also have a tender to supply safflower vegetables weekly to a primary school of 3,500 students. In the scaling-out phase the cooperative plans to producing virgin oil on a commercial scale, the process having been piloted at the university. Due to the success of the project, the government of Botswana is providing financial support for safflower production in the country.



Safflower cooking oil manufactured by Research teams at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Research for development is a core mandate of universities and in case of Africa, the urgency remains high because most university full time staff equivalent is not well integrated into national innovation systems and therefore play limited roles in national innovation. The RUFORUM science for development approach aims to harness the existing capacities of African universities working with the

broader development ecosystem to generate and deliver science solutions that create opportunity especially for smallholder farmers. In this report you find two examples of how this has been done through the CARPs. Universities and their partners must intensify these islands of success bringing them to scale across landscapes of Africa. This is a vision RUFORUM and its member universities would like to grow into.



Fish from aquaculture and marine ecosystems offer alternatives to increase access protein by Africa. The centre of excellence at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, in Malawi and other centres in the RUFORUM Network are developing solutions to increase productivity.



# Outreach and Integrating Youth Back into Rural Communities

RUFORUM has piloted innovative approaches of enhancing access to knowledge and knowledge products to unlock agricultural production and productivity. In the past year, two systems have been used: youth-led give-back to community engagements and internship. Four new give back initiatives in crop farming, agroforestry, sanitation and entrepreneurship among others have been implemented.

This approach on average involves over 700 rural people per engagement, enabling them to gain quick and steady access to technologies and knowledge, while online give-back actions reach 10,000 value chain actors per intervention. For instance, Gordon Agriculture (<https://vc4a.com/ventures/gordons-agricultural-organisation-ugandagao-ug/>) created by a RUFORUM alumnus from Gulu University has reached over 5000 farmers in northern Uganda and is offering production to business mentorship services to rural farmers. Lillian Onyango another alumnus in Western Kenya, through her youth-for-green action (<https://ke.linkedin.com/company/youths-action-kenya>), is promoting climate change mitigation and has planted over 100,000 trees in Western Kenya. This effort and model is now being scaled-out to other regions of Kenya. In this section, you will find more examples of how RUFORUM alumni are changing livelihoods in their communities through youth-led initiatives



## Student-Led Community Engagement

### **Give-Back to Communities**

Student community engagement aim to harness the strength, resolve and talent among young people for rural transformation of Africa. The TAGDev approach is a main vehicle that RUFORUM is using to make this happen. Examples of the initiatives include the 4-Pillar Give Back Project; Inuka Agrisolutions; youths for green action, elegance agro-support and rosalin farm (Exhibit 9). Young people attached to universities identify communities they would

like to support and usually these are their places of origin. Together with the communities they identify major challenges they would like to collectively solve. The students then receive support from the programme to design and implement the actions needed to address the challenges. This way, students have been able to implement number of activities that have led to improvements in livelihoods such as access to clean water, improved seed, entrepreneurial training, and leadership among others

## Internships

Preparing young people for the workplace requires that they be skilled usually at the workplace. RUFORUM and its member universities are implementing actions that equip students with workplace skills such as communication, problem

solving, compassion, self-initiative, organization, and self-management among others to prepare them for the future of work. This is being done through internships and apprenticeship training, with 387 students attached under a pilot initiative. The approach will now be scaled-out in over 20 countries this coming year.



Exhibit 9. Student-led community-based giveback initiatives established by students as part of corporate social responsibility

# RUFORUM's Knowledge Management Platform

Africa in general contributes relatively less intellectual capital to the global pool of knowledge. A major challenge has been the archiving, curation and digitization of knowledge generated from the continent. RUFORUM aims to enhance access and utilisation of knowledge products generated by African universities and their partners in the global south and north to underpin science, technology, innovation and policy on the continent and globally.

RUFORUM through the open-access principle increased the visibility of research undertaken by member universities by supporting students and staff publish research outputs. Highlights from our knowledge management team on the performance of the different media, are highlighted.

1. RUFORUM Institutional Repository. The repository continues to provide access to intellectual output. Major users across Africa include: Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Outside of Africa other users are from: China, France, Germany, India, and the United States (Exhibit 10).



2. African Journal for Rural Development continues to disseminate information on all areas of sustainable rural development. Papers may be submitted all year round at this link, that may be published in either of the four issues of each volume. The following topics were highlighted in published volumes:
  - i. Building Africa's Science Capacity (<https://afjrd.org/index.php/jos/issue/view/27>)
  - ii. Strengthening Extension service delivery, entrepreneurship, and agricultural intensification in African farming Systems (<https://afjrd.org/index.php/jos/issue/view/26>)
  - iii. Improving crop and livestock productivity and human nutrition (<https://afjrd.org/index.php/jos/issue/view/24>)
  - iv. Addressing multi-disciplinary challenges along diversified agricultural values chains in sub-Saharan Africa (<https://afjrd.org/index.php/jos/issue/view/21>)

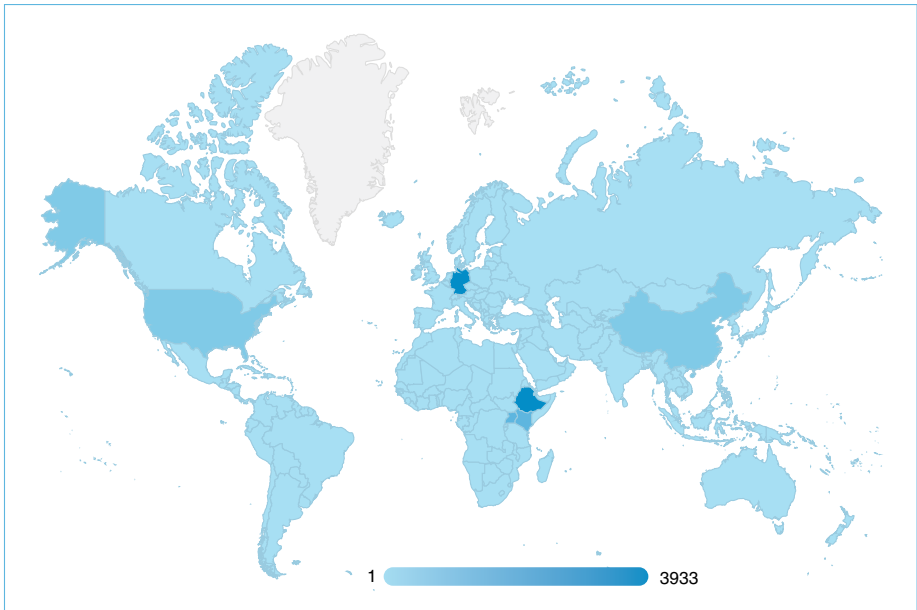


Exhibit 10: Countries that accessed information from the RUFORUM Institutional Repository during the year



# Policy Advocacy, Networking and Partnerships

The RUFORUM Secretariat continues to perform its advocacy and networking functions from national to continental level. It does so at national level through its member universities and national forums, and at continental level, through strategic engagement with apex organisations and Governments of Africa. Selected achievements are presented below:

**Continental leadership.** RUFORUM continues to lead STISA implementation. In the year ending, RUFORUM has continued to advocate for increased resourcing for higher agricultural education research and development through its partners and universities; strategic dialogues have been held leading to strategic investments for increasing agricultural productivity and value addition in sub-Saharan Africa.

Pilot initiatives are under discussions in Benin and Gambia for West Africa; Zimbabwe and Malawi for Southern Africa with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA).

# Ministerial Dialogue on Higher Education

Activities at the 18th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (AGM) included Senior Government leaders meeting (Permanent Secretaries, Directors, Commissioners and Secretary Generals), and a Ministerial dialogue involving Ministers responsible for Agriculture, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation were held. The meetings explored pathways to promote Africa-wide cooperation in the field of Agriculture, Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

The meetings also reviewed progress since the Benin 2021 Triennial conference and the Ghana Ministerial Meeting and explored avenues for strengthening cross- country collaboration in the field of higher agricultural education and agricultural development. Countries represented at the meeting included Angola, Benin, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe (Exhibit 11).



Exhibit 11. Government Ministers from nine African countries, the African Union Commission, Food and Agriculture Organisation, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and AGRINATURA engaged during the Ministerial Round Table held in Harare, Zimbabwe.

- New Partnerships include engagements with Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institution (APAARI) and Advanced Technology Higher Education Network Alliance (ATHENA). RUFORUM continues to maintain its large portfolio of partnership engagements to address climate change and climate smart agriculture, entrepreneurship, skilling of out-of-school youth, and commercialization of research.
- The RUFORUM network recognizes the role it must continue to play in influencing policy by generating the evidence that will inform its development, investment planning, implementation and measurement of success. In the year ending, RUFORUM has continued to engage policy through its high-level convenings and partnerships from national to continental and global levels.

It will continue to do so to intensify conversation around investment in higher agricultural and tertiary education. Additionally, through its knowledge hub, RUFORUM will continue to become the go-to reference center for information on Africa's agricultural higher and tertiary education as well as research for development literature. Indeed, the plan to strengthen e-content access and delivery under the knowledge hub will be reported on in the next programme year

- National dialogues. Member universities are increasingly receiving support from their governments. The Kenya National Forum held its meeting in July 2023 drawing 174 participants involving senior central and local government, research, extension,

academia, public and private sector to discuss employment and entrepreneurship of young people. Uganda, the host country of RUFORUM has signed the charter, a product of advocacy emphasizing its support for RUFORUM and its initiatives in Uganda.

- New Partnerships include engagements with Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institution (APAARI) and Advanced Technology Higher Education Network Alliance (ATHENA). RUFORUM continues to maintain its large portfolio of partnership engagements to address climate change and climate smart agriculture, entrepreneurship, skilling of out of school youth, and commercialization of research.



The duty of securing his generation's and other young Africans' future, is one that society owes to them. RUFORUM Universities are dedicated to making sure that occurs, but it requires collective efforts.

# The RUFORUM 18<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting



The RUFORUM 18<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held from 12-16 December 2022 at Harare International Conference Centre, Zimbabwe. The theme of the conference was, “Strengthening Africa’s Agri-food Systems in the Post COVID-19 Era - Opportunities and Challenges.”

The meeting comprised of pre-AGM and scientific events RUFORUM Statutory meetings as well as policy, advocacy and various side events. The AGM was officially opened by H.E. Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and hosted by the Government and people’s of Zimbabwe and the 8 RUFORUM member universities (Africa University, Bindura University of Science Education, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Great Zimbabwe University, Lupane State University, Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Midlands State University and University of Zimbabwe)

## Key Messages

---

President Mnangagwa emphasized the importance of a mind-set shift among young people in order for them to perceive agriculture as a profitable venture. He stated that the existing predicament of Africa being a net importer of food needed to be reversed, especially given that agriculture employs the bulk of the continent's population. Other messages coming from the AGM were:

- Agriculture must be made an appealing and profitable career for young people
- Boosting agricultural productivity and profitability while emphasizing value addition will make the sector competitive and economically rewarding
- Strong marketing strategies and linkages for agricultural produce is necessary to create wealth and distribute food and food products
- Scientific knowledge must be harnessed and exploited to unlock productivity and create value
- Encourage transdisciplinary and international research to broker knowledge and science for Africa

- Harness nutritional value of agricultural products to promote the health and wellbeing of African people

## RUFORUM Transitions to a New Executive Secretary

---

After 18 years of serving as the Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, Prof. Adipala Ekwamu passed on the leadership baton to Prof. Patrick Okori. Prof. Adipala is the Founding Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, under whose leadership the network grew from 10 universities in 5 countries, to 163 universities in 40 countries in Africa. RUFORUM broadened its scope of operation beyond graduate training and research, to become a key player and convener of higher agricultural education, science, technology and innovation actions, as well as promotion of agri-food systems, to feed and create prosperity for Africa.

In his farewell message, the outgoing RUFORUM Executive Secretary, Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, urged RUFORUM to strategically reposition itself to emerging contemporary opportunities and challenges, including strengthening Africa's agri-food system, climate change adaptability and related shocks,



**Left:** Prof. Adipala Ekwamu the former Executive Secretary handing over the leadership baton to Prof. Patrick Okori **(Right)** the new Executive Secretary of RUFORUM.

globalisation and harnessing Africa's young demography. He also urged the Network to manage growth in a manner that will enable it to serve efficiently and effectively. He encouraged the incoming Executive Secretary to demonstrate relevance, effectiveness, impact and increasing visibility of RUFORUM and its universities.

Prof. Okori joins the Secretariat from The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi- Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) where he was Interim Deputy Director of ICRISAT's Global Research Programme on Accelerated Crop Improvement and a long time Country Representative for ICRISAT in Malawi and Mozambique.

In his acceptance speech the new Executive Secretary promised to build on the solid foundation laid over the years, noting the need to intensify utilization of ST&Is to drive Africa's development; strengthen the fundamentals for advancing Africa's Higher Agricultural and Tertiary Education agenda. Achieving the above requires reinvigorating our education system to harness the improving strength among agriculture, education, research and development ecosystem actors to produce graduates fit for purpose and the emerging future of work in Africa and globally. Prof. Okori pledged his commitment to work with the entire RUFORUM network to grow and move into a jointly created future.





Inclusion, diversity and safeguards must be key ingredients of our training programs much ensure that everyone has access to quality education as this young lady has had the opportunity under RUFORUM and Member Universities led initiatives.

# Pictorial







Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)  
Plot 151/155 Garden Hill, Makerere University Main Campus  
P.O. Box 16811 Kampala, Uganda  
Tel: +256 417 713300 (Office) Fax: +256 414 534153  
Email: [secretariat@ruforum.org](mailto:secretariat@ruforum.org) • Website: [www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)  
Knowledge Repository: [www.respository.ruforum.org](http://www.respository.ruforum.org)

