

Press Release



For immediate release | 3 July, 2021

A tragic loss in the advancement of Africa's Agricultural and Food Systems



Prof Noble Ephraim Banadda receives a medal from Pope Pius XVI. Photo | Courtesy

On Thursday 1st July, 2020 Africa saw one of her youngest innovator and researcher, Professor Noble Banadda Ephraim succumb to Covid-19. Professor Banadda, an Agricultural & Biosystems engineer, researcher and academician will be remembered for his prodigious contribution in building capacity of young scientists, increasing investment in the area of Research and Innovation during his service at Makerere University.

His passion to increase knowledge and share best practices in the area of Food Processing Engineering, Waste Engineering and Renewable Energy will be greatly missed. RUFORUM will miss his focused attention to addressing the quality of food from production to consumption. His attention on food contamination associated with plastic bags wrapping during thermal processing, a practice common in Uganda was eye opening especially to urban and peri-urban residents. Prof. Banadda was equally committed to realizing the full value of agricultural production through conversion of biowaste into energy. These two research interventions received funding from the RUFORUM competitive grants scheme. He was also concerned with addressing the longstanding problems of drudgery in smallholder agriculture. This led to his MV Muliimi tractor innovation, a solar powered irrigation pump, building capacity for quality graduate training in Agricultural Engineering in African Universities, Improving resource-efficient processing techniques and new markets for surplus fruits and vegetables for rural development in Sub-Saharan Africa, among others.

This continental loss comes at a time when African universities are lobbying for government support to increase investment in the area of Science, Technology and Innovation through strategic engagements during [the UN Food Systems Summit 2021](#). African universities over the years have been working with development partners to invest in critical areas that can accelerate productivity and development in the agricultural sector through building capacity of young scientists, creating opportunities for collaborative research and cross learning among universities in Africa and with other global actors.

Professor Banadda was the first African to receive the Pontifical Academy of Sciences Pius XI Award in 2018. At the age of 37, he was one of the youngest persons in the history of Makerere University to attain full professorship and was honored by the World Economic Forum as a Young Scientist at an Annual Meeting of New Champions in 2014. Professor Banadda was favorably cited with published research findings in over 240 peer-reviewed journal scientific publications. He (co)-supervised 12 PhD and 31 MSc students to completion. He was a gifted fund raiser in agricultural research, human capital development and innovation. He had recently been awarded the Oiliver Tambo Research Chair with an annual budget of US\$250,000 and complementary funding of Euro 100,000 for the next 15 years to support graduate research in agricultural waste management and the training of 15 PhDs, 09 Post-Doctoral fellows and 27 MSc. Wageningen University & Research the Netherlands was in final stages of appointing him special professor.

The RUFORUM Network stands together with his family, the Makerere University fraternity as we celebrate a life well lived though taken too soon. A virtual Prayer and commemoration service of Professor Noble Ephriam Banadda was held today 02 July 2021 at 14:00 Kampala Time under the theme “Celebrating the life of Prof. Nobel Ephraim Banadda”. A link of the service is available at <https://youtu.be/xGbMbWQHdBE>.

Some reactions from social media

Barnabas Nawangwe @ProfNawangwe · 19h
A very sad day for @Makerere following the loss of one of our most prolific researchers to COVID 19. Rest In Peace, **Prof. Noble Banadda**.

Makerere University CAES @MakCAES · 20h
On a sad note @MakCAES announces the death of **Prof. Noble Banadda** which occurred this evening. He was the HoD Agric and Biosystems Engineering, young, talented, well published Professor with many innovations on his name. May you rest in peace **Prof. Banadda**.

Ramathan Ggobi @rggobi
A genius is gone. Prof. Noble Banadda of @Makerere. Another terrible day. Noble was not only a genius but also a very generous human being. We were doing a project destined to change lives. I will deeply miss him. Uganda has lost top, top brains.

Samson Kasumba-Mulun @SamsonKasumba · 12h
Brains like the late **Prof. Noble Banadda** come around once in 500 years. The things he had done and achieved at such a young age and phenomenal. The things he was working on are even more astounding and yet he was a humble, committed man to his SDA faith. Gone too soon **Prof**.

Next Einstein Forum @NextEinsteinFor · 4h
With great sadness, we have learned the passing away of our Fellow, **Prof. Noble Banadda**. He was a prominent member of the scientific community whose work and professional career will inspire many young African researchers. We express our deepest condolences to his family.

Note to Editors

About RUFORUM:

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of 129 African universities operating in 38 countries on the continent with a mission to ‘strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to demands of smallholder farmers through 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’. RUFORUM was established by Vice Chancellors in 2004 with a Secretariat hosted at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. In 2014 RUFORUM signed a MoU with the African Union Commission to support implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) Priority One on reducing poverty and ensuring food and nutrition security. RUFORUM has supported the training of 1958 MSc and 536 PhD graduates, of whom 98% work in their countries or region, the generation of over 300 agricultural technologies and mobilized over US\$214.9 million for strengthening postgraduate education in Africa. Please visit www.ruforum.org for more information.

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