



The Seventh African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Triennial Conference 2021

Community Action Research Programmes Learning and Sustainability Dialogue

Principal Investigators Meeting

Venue: Palais des Congres, Date: 6th -7th December, Cotonou, Benin

Background

Societies have increasingly come out strong demanding for the relevance of universities in contributing to the improvement of economic and social living conditions of communities. This increased demand for the relevance of universities is now redefining how universities approach their space in national and regional discourse. Increasingly, universities are paying attention to the third role of outreach with a strong articulation for engagement such universities are seen as engaged institutions connecting with communities to address their everyday challenges and development aspiration.

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building (RUFORUM) has been focused on strengthening engaged universities as part of catalysing the role of universities in contributing to rural development. Over the years, RUFORUM has done this through a unique sub-granting mechanism of the Community Action Research Programs (CARPs). The CARPs are designed as innovation platforms that represent spaces for learning and change, bringing diverse actors together to co-design, co-innovate, co-produce and co-implement innovations and solutions responsive to challenges faced by the actors in the agricultural system. Within the context of RUFORUM, the CARPs are implemented along commodity value chains with the aim enhancing production and productivity, value addition and commercialisation.

1

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RUFORUM initiated the CARPs in 2009 as a mechanism for taking to scale the several pilot innovations generated from the Graduate Research Grants (GRGs). The GRGs had generated several technologies, innovations and management practices but were too scattered at pilot level and not significantly engaging communities. It was time to reduce researching on the community to researching with the community and playing an active role in transforming agricultural practice among the smallholder farmers in Africa. But, this required a platform for universities to play this role and this platform was provided by the CARPs.

The initial CARPs; fish (Malawi), Cassava (Uganda), Dairy (Tanzania), and Wheat (Ethiopia) were implemented with funding support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The success realised from these initial CARP projects laid the foundation for an expanded approach to utilisation of the CARPs in the RUFORUM programming as 'scaling laboratories'. With the support from the Mastercard Foundation through the Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa's growth and development (TAGDev) program, RUFORUM has extended this model to more countries and value chains. These include: two Cassava projects (Kenya) two Potato projects (Kenya and Kenya), Baobab (Benin), Pineapple (Ghana), Safflower (Botswana), Sheep and wool (South Africa), Rice (Uganda), Piggery (Uganda), cereals, legumes and water harvesting (Zimbabwe), encroacher bushes (Namibia), famine crops (Sudan), vegetables (Sudan), apiary (Sudan) and natural resources management (Sudan). These CARPs seek to:

- i) Support collaborative action research led by universities with participation of graduate students that addresses critical agricultural production and marketing constraints facing smallholder farmers in Africa;
- ii) Provide opportunity for creation of multi-stakeholder 'platforms' that support value chain development for the benefit of small-holder farmers and to enhance the impact of university activities;
- iii) Provide action research platforms and opportunities for greater student engagement and experiential learning in supporting smallholder farm development through

2

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agribusiness and ensure that lessons are used to facilitate university reflection and learning;

- iv) Support strengthening of TVET institutions through engagement and joint action between universities and TVET institutions to enhance the impact of knowledge on small-holder farms;

Purpose of the dialogue

As the international development community strives to ensure that interventions go beyond fragmented and one-off projects to scaling of successful innovations and pilots for maximising impact at scale, the CARPs provide a unique and illustrative platform to serve as ‘scaling laboratories’. The CARPs as ‘scaling laboratories’ provide for a platform for co-creation with a practical orientation in demonstration and learning points to support going beyond a successful pilot. Through this, sustainability of the interventions and development outcomes could be secured. Therefore, the purpose of this dialogue:

1. Showcase some of the on-going work in the Community Action Research Programme;
2. Building capacity of the CARP+ Principal Investigators on critical thinking and business incubation with their projects;
3. Share experiences, lesson and challenges in community action research and collaboration; and
4. Collaboratively discuss on the sustainability of CARP initiatives into the future

Expected outputs

1. A synthesis report of the presentations and discussion will be produced.
2. A detailed report on the mentoring session focus in on strategies for sustainability of CARPs.
3. A detailed report on the entrepreneurship and community business incubation training.
4. Key lessons from the event will be developed into a policy brief to help improve agricultural research and collaboration in sub-Saharan Africa

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Approach and Methodology

The side event will be organised as a series of presentations from Principal Investigators and skills enhancement training for the PIs provided by technical experts.

Participants	Participants will include CARP Principal investigators, mentors and trainers.
Dates	The event will be held at Palais des Congres on 6 th -7 th December, Cotonou, Benin
Organizers	The event is organised by RUFORUM in collaboration with the RUFORUM Member universities in Benin (University of Abomey Calavi, Parakou University and National University of Agriculture)
Contacts	i) Dr Anthony Egeru (a.egeru@ruforum.org) ii) Dr Runyararo J. Rukarwa (r.rukarwa@ruforum.org)

Draft Agenda

Sessions	Activity	Led by
DAY 1		
8:30 – 9:00	Arrival & Registration	Runyararo Rukarwa
9:00-9:10	Introductions	All
9:10-9:20	Welcome remarks	Anthony Egeru
9:20-9:40	Why are we here? • Objectives & program overview	Runyararo Rukarwa
Presentations from PIs		
9:40-10:10	1. Prof. Richard Mulwa 2. Dr. Elly Ndyomugenyi 3. Prof Anthony Kibe	Principal investigators
10:10-10:30	Discussion	Prof. Kay
HEALTH BREAK		

4

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11:00-11:40	4. Prof. Elhadi Ali Ibrahim 5. Prof. Muna Mohamed Elhag Musa 6. Prof. Abdalla Mohamed Abdella 7. Prof. Ahmed Idris	Principal Investigators
11:40-11:50	Discussion	Prof. Okori
11:50-12:50	8. Prof Johnny Mugisha 9. Prof Achille Assogbadjo 10. Prof. George Nyamadzawo 11. Prof. Festus Annor-Frempong 12. Prof. Agnes Mwang'ombe 13. Dr Basil Mugonola	
12:50:13:00	Discussion	Prof. Okori
LUNCH BREAK		
14:00-14:30	14. Dr. Ombili Angombe 15. Dr. Jan Swanepoel 16. Prof. Vallantino Emongor	
14:30-14:40	Discussion	Prof Kay
14:40-17:00	Reimagining the CARPs for sustainability	Prof. Kay & Prof. Okori
END OF DAY 1		
DAY TWO		
8:00-8-10	RECAP of Day 1	Prof. Kay
8:10-8:20	Introduction to Entrepreneurship and community business incubation Training	Dr. Anthony Egeru
8:20-13:00	Entrepreneurship and community business incubation Training	Mr. David Gonahasa
END OF DAY 2		

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