



The Seventh African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Triennial Conference 2021

Building Capacity of Young Professionals and Development Practitioners in the use of Social Media

Date: 1st -2nd September 2021

Concept note

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a Network of 129 universities in 38 African countries with a vision to transform universities to catalyze sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa.” As part of this vision, the Seventh Africa Higher Education Week and First RUFORUM Triennial Conference will be held 6th – 10th December, 2021 in Cotonou, Benin, under the theme “Operationalising Higher Education for Innovation, Industrialisation and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action”. The five-day conference will bring together over 1000 participants such as policy makers including Ministers and Government Technical Experts, Higher Education Leaders in Africa, development partners, private sector, researchers, innovators, students, and farmer organisations, among others.

The global knowledge economy has broadened in the 21st century and has created a push for demand to process and share information. In light of this, there is increasing expectation from stakeholders in higher education necessitating universities to incorporate information processing and dissemination in their training curricula. For this reason, the use of social media platforms is a cost-effective way for disseminating research and innovations whilst taking advantage of increased internet access and connectivity by researchers linking them directly with their target audiences. Universities in sub-Saharan Africa ought to adapt and innovate to achieve amiable transformation in their processes that strengthen the utilization of social media platforms as vehicles that increase the visibility, accessibility and utilisation of their research outputs in policy and development discourse (Apio et al., 2016).

Justification of Activity

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there has been increased use of digital tools and platforms for education, networking and socializing. Many people have realized the importance and adopted the use of social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Blogging sites due to the benefits that these digital platforms bring. Despite these changes, Universities in Africa continue to lag behind and have not fully embraced social media as a new form of civic engagement that provides an admirable forum for discussion of pertinent issues like research, innovation, industrialization and economic development among many others. Training University Students in the effective use of social

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media for engagement will enhance their use of new media platforms for communication, promote awareness about not only the RUFORUM Triennial Conference but also on key issues arising in the Higher Education Sector in Africa.

Training Objective

Overall Objective: The training will strengthen the capacity of Young Professionals and development practitioners in the use of digital platforms for engagement.

Specific Objectives:

The Social media training aims to;

- 1) Train students to engage, network, collaborate and share knowledge using digital tools
- 2) Ensure deeper understanding and use of selected digital tools and platforms
- 3) Support visibility of key events during the RUFORUM Triennial Conference

Students will be required to register and confirm attendance through Zoom link <https://bit.ly/3jIFp83> before the training.

Format of Training

A total of 300 students and development practitioners are expected to attend the training which will take place from the 1st - 2nd September, 2021 from 9:30am - 5:00pm (East African Standard Time). The training will be led by Ms. Joan Apio, the Consultant with support from Mrs. Patricia Kahill Kuteesa (Kahill Insights Ltd). The training sessions will be hands on and practical. Participants will learn by doing. The training will require equipment such as laptops or tablets and a good internet connection given that most of the demonstrations will be online. Participants with internet-enabled phones will be encouraged to use their phones in sessions requiring so.

Expected Outcomes

- 1) Improved understanding and appreciation of Social media in information dissemination and advocacy
- 2) Increased awareness and participation of young professionals in the development processes in Africa using digital tools.
- 3) Increased in visits and hits to the RUFORUM online channels including the Website and Social Media platforms
- 4) Recommendations through a summary report on how to train and reach out to more member university using digital platforms.

Workplan and Timeframe

The estimated timeframe of work is Seven (7) Working days. Below is the breakdown;

- **Day One:** Design and implement Online survey for Skills assessment to understand the level of training needed

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- **Day Two:** Review of the program Skill gaps report and developing of training program
- **Day Three:** Communication with students and sharing of Program
- **Day Four:** Online Training of Students (Day One)
- **Day Five:** Online Training of Students (Day Two)
- **Day Six:** Review of Training and Report Writing
- **Day Seven:** Briefing of selected Online Reporters (Before and during the conference)

Suggestion: Identify fifteen (15) students from the training to remotely work with the Secretariat to support the triennial activities and compliment the Benin on ground team.

Proposed Tentative Programme

Day One: Concepts and Reflections		
Time	Activity	Trainer
09:30-10:00	Registration and arrival of Trainees	All
10:00-10:30	Introduction of Trainers, Setting the tone, Expectations and Objectives	Joan
	A brief about RUFORUM, Communication and Advocacy	Evaline
	Introduction to Web 2.0 and Social Media basic principles	Joan
10:30-11.40	Break	All
10:40-13.30	Major social media sites for collaboration and networking	Joan
	Writing for Digital Media (concepts and guidelines)	Patricia
	Effective communication and sharing using Social Media (Establishing your Social Media Audience)	Patricia
13:30-14.30	Lunch Break	All
14:30- 16:40	Content sourcing, generation and targeting your message including handling feedback on Social Media	Patricia
	General discussion and reflections	Patricia
16:40-16:50	Departure / Logout	All

Day Two: Hands on sessions on the use of Digital tools and Platforms		
Time	Activity	Trainer
09:00-09:30	Recap from Day One Training	Patricia
09:30-11:00	Content planning, scheduling and dissemination using Social Media	Patricia
	Creating sellable, relatable content for your audience	Patricia
	Q&A Session	Patricia
11:00-11.30	Break	
11:30-13.30	Introduction to RUFORUM Digital Platforms and Conference Hashtag	Joan
	Engaging in Higher Education Dialogue. What is your responsibility?	Joan
	Q&A Session	Joan
13:30-14.30	Lunch	All
14:30- 16:40	Practical sessions of concepts learnt in Day 1 and Day 2	Joan

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	Q&A Session.	Both
16:40-16:45	Departure / Logout	All

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