RUFORUM - FOOD SECURITY RESEARCH PRIORITIES

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The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture

Formerly a Rockefeller Funded Project which was called FORUM (1992-2003). RUFORUM established in 2004;

32 Member Universities in 18 countries

Secretariat at Makerere University, Kampala Uganda
VISION
A vibrant agricultural sector linked to African Universities producing high performing graduates and quality research and innovations responsive to the demands of African farmers, generate livelihoods and economic development.

MISSION
To strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to the needs of small holder farmers through training of high quality researchers, output of impact oriented research and maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, NARIs and governments.

IMPACT STATEMENT
High performing African universities that produce skilled, proactive graduates, demand driven research outputs and innovation in response to local, regional and national agricultural development priorities.
RUFORUM Strategic Goals

- Train a critical mass of Masters and PhD graduates, **who are closely connected to small farmers and rural areas**
- Encourage collaborative research and training that **engages a wide range of stakeholders**
- Encourage the participation and **voice of women**
- **Enhance the adaptive capacities of universities** to changing technologies, the knowledge economy and climate change
- Assisting universities to **use new technology to support learning & knowledge management**
- **Mainstream new pedagogical and research approaches.**
- **Facilitate a dynamic regional platform** for policy advocacy, coordination, and resource mobilization
Typical Small Holder Farmer - Producers of most of the food in Africa

- < 1 ha farmland
- Intense cultivation with multiple crops, livestock and forest species
- Over reliance on rainfed agriculture
- Minimal input use
- Fragile production ecosystems
  - Drylands
  - Steep slopes
  - Highly eroded
- Limited market access
- Poor access to extension services
INTERVENTION APPROACHES FOR SMALL HOLDER FARMERS

- Agroecological intensification
- Ecological Principles
- Limited use of industrial agro-chemicals
- System diversification and integration
KEY RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS

- Ecosystem diversification for improved food security
- Genetic modification for enhancement of resilience to production constraints and nutrition quality
- Soil health
- Disease and pest management
- Cultural practices for improved yields
- Watershed management
- Value addition and improvement of postharvest systems
- Market access for small holder farmers
- Farmer engagement for improved knowledge and technology transfer
- **Food security and nutrition benefits of agricultural projects**
AGRIC INTENSIFICATION
AFRICAN VERSION

Smallholder farmers
(Mostly poor)

Sustainable Production Intensification

Integrated Natural Resource Management.

Potential

Increasing production
(key staple food crops)

ADOPTED FROM MASUKI
RUFORUM Model

• The type of FORUM that engages all the stakeholders that must be on board:
  – The farmers engaging with faculty and students
  – Government agencies, NGOs, the private sector and other development agencies engaged in research and interacting closely with universities on policy and curricula
  • MSc graduates with the right experience
  • Universities that act collaboratively to share ideas and resources
  • Unique participation by university vice chancellors who pay their own costs of participation in board meetings.
Some RUFORUM Programs
End-User Driven Collaborative Agricultural Research for Food & Nutrition Security

The RUFORUM Graduate Research Grants US$60,000 (GRG) - a tool for stimulating and sustaining a ‘business unusual’ action research and training orientation in African faculty; providing incentives for increasing the relevance and quality of research.

Over 130 CG’S awarded since 2004
Over 600 graduates supported since 1992

- RUFORUM uses three approaches: the MSc/M.Phil and PhD programmes, attachments and short targeted courses for professional and skill development
- Facilitated establishment of 5 regional PhD training programs with 2 other PhD programs to be launched
- Established 3 regional M.Sc programs focusing on Research Methods, Plant Breeding and ICM
COMMUNITY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

- **Goal**: To provide support to understudy the community action research projects in Kenya, Malawi and Uganda by a PhD student
  - University Outreach Support to Farmer Associations in Western Kenya
  - Enhancing Fish Production and Marketing for Food Security and Rural Incomes of Small-scale Producers in Malawi
  - Developing an Outreach Framework for Strengthening University-Farming Community Engagement for Improved and Sustainable Livelihoods (SUFACE)
Conclusions

✔ RUFORUM aims to promote research with potential to alleviate current status of resource constrained farmers
  ✔ World class science to address local problems
  ✔ Capacity development to sustain quality agricultural research and University level training

✔ Committed to partnerships for this purpose

✔ Current partners include ANAFE, FARA, ASARECA, CORAF and CCARDESA.
INTELLECT vs ENTHUSIASM

THE FOUR ENTREPRENEUR TYPES

BY STANDERS
Know but don't care

CHAMPIONS
Know and care

WEAK LINKS
Neither know nor care

LOOSE CANNONS
Care but don't know