Enhancing collaboration and Quality in Postgraduate Training: Joint Module Training Delivery in RUFORUM Regional Programmes

In its efforts to strengthen the quality of post graduate training programmes and partnerships, RUFORUM and the member universities are using a combination of innovative approaches in the curriculum design and delivery of the regional postgraduate training programmes. A case is the RUFORUM multidisciplinary PhD programme in Agriculture Rural Innovation (ARI) which is hosted simultaneously by three RUFORUM member universities (Makerere University- Uganda, Egerton University - Kenya and Sokoine University of Agriculture - Tanzania) using same curriculum and content. The PhD ARI Program is implemented in collaboration with three other European universities namely Montpellier Sup Agro in France, Wageningen University in the Netherlands and University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

With financial support from Carnegie Cooperation of New York, RUFORUM supported the joint implementation of field based module on *Participatory Methods and Action Research for innovation in livelihoods and agricultural systems* offered under the PhD Agricultural and Rural Innovations (ARI). This module is unique in delivery as it brings together students from the three universities in Africa and three universities in Europe to a Common facility. This year’s field training took place in Rakai District in Uganda. A total of 18 students and five academic staff from the consortium spent two weeks in the field to learn together with farming communities. The students were from Africa (DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda); Europe (France and Spain); and Latin America (Guatemala). Female participants represented 31.6%. The diversity of students and staff was a learning resource that enabled substantial cross learning and complementarity of skills.

The joint module provides valuable insights on how scientists could engage with communities to undertake research for development. This gives opportunities to students to rethink and nest their research into development challenges of communities as well as apply some of the tools learnt in their own research.

Below there is an anecdotal testimony from one of the students of the field module: “The course offers a different approach to research diversity such as agro-ecological zonation, farm strategy model, and innovation histories as an alternative to statistical representativeness. The most exciting are the hands-on tools and combined approaches such as the use of GPS, GIS, Innovation Histories and Trends which we used to comprehensively understand the communities and their livelihood dynamics. At the end of the course we had an exciting feedback session to provide insights on possible innovative solutions for improving livelihood of these communities. It was good to note the keen interest of the NGOs and policy makers working in the area to take on the suggestions and implement them. I also appreciated an opportunity for co-learning, experience sharing, and team work with fellow classmates from various countries and cultures”. Mrs. Dorcas Loga Okello

A number of spillover effects have emerged for this arrangement which include; opportunities for joint supervisor of the students by European and African staff hence sustaining partnerships, cross cultural learning, assured consistent quality of the ARI brand (student) across the participating universities.
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Anna Enock Maselle is a Tanzanian citizen, holds a first degree in Human Nutrition of the Sokoine University of Agriculture and Master of Arts in Rural Development. Anna is currently working as an Assistant Lecturer at the School of Social Sciences in the Department of Development Studies, University of Dodoma, Tanzania. She is now pursuing a PhD in Agricultural and Rural Innovations at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro. Anna’s research interests are on informal sector, food and nutrition security and innovativeness for poverty reduction. She can contacted at atshalla_2000@yahoo.com.

Henry Massa Makuma is a Ugandan PhD Scholar in Agricultural Rural Innovations at Makerere University. Henry holds a first degree in Environmental Science and a Master of Science in Environment and Natural Resources Management. Henry is experienced in competitive grants and scholarship management and administration management; student field attachment and industry placement; short skills enhancement and mentorship. Other added skills include Monitoring, evaluation and lesson leaning of capacity building projects. Henry has worked in the private sector as a consultant and initiated a number of programs on climate change and agriculture including a think tank on gender and climate change and an Info-Shop and Library dealing in dissemination of geo-spatial data. In addition he has been involved in research, advocacy, writing and policy engagements. His research interests include agricultural rural
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Regina Masatu Maunde is a Tanzanian national undertaking PhD studies in Agricultural and Rural innovation at Sokoine University of Agriculture. Regina is a holder of BSc. Agricultural Education and Extension, M.A Rural Development and International Masters of Science in Rural Development (IMRD). Regina has experience of working with Community Development Training Institutions in teaching Community Development Courses. Also she managed to work with Global Resource Alliance –TZ in mobilizing community for sustainable management of borehole water resources. Since 2013 Regina is working as an Assistant Lecturer at The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy in Dar es salaam, Tanzania teaching Agriculture and Economic Development, Women in Agriculture and Agro Business, Gender issues in Environment, Gender Construction and Gender Needs and Gender in Youth work. Regina’s research interests are in rural development/community development, gender studies, natural resources management and water resources. She can be contacted at regina_maunde@yahoo.com.

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Ogwal Joseph Jones is Ugandan National holding MSc and BSc in Forestry from Makerere University, Kampala and a Post Graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management from Uganda Management Institute. He has undertaken several skill enhancement trainings in Energy Studies, Climate Change Adaptation, Environmental Impact Assessment, Environmental Monitoring (air, water and noise), Watershed Management, Wildlife Research, Environmental Policy and Legislation, Procurement of Goods and Services, Risk management, and PRINCE2.
among others. For over 14 years now, Mr OGWAL has been working as an Environmental Specialists in various sectors namely; Electricity Sector (7+), Wetlands and Environment Sector (5 years), Wildlife Sector (3+ years) and Forestry Sector (1.5 years), from where he has accumulated enormous skills in environmental impact assessment and monitoring. Currently Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL) employs him as a Senior Environment Officer. Mr OGWAL is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Agricultural and Rural Innovation, in the School of Agricultural Sciences, Makerere University. His research interest is on Biodiversity Offsets in Infrastructure Projects and Social Development. Mr OGWAL likes community work, research, developmental and policy discussions and nature walks. He is a member of several specialists groups such as IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, Nature Uganda, and Uganda Wildlife Society and Association of Impact Assessors of Uganda, among others. Mr OGWAL has participated in several thematic working groups on environmental aspects in Uganda and has had opportunity to represent Uganda among delegates attending high profile international conferences such as COP-10 of the Ramsar Convention in Kampala (2005), MOP-4 of the African-Eurasian Migratory Water bird Agreement (AEWA) in Antananarivo, Madagascar (2008) and Extraordinary and Ordinary Meeting of Parties to the Stockholm, Basel and Basel Conventions, Geneva, Switzerland (2013). Mr OGWAL envisions a carrier in Policy Analysis, Consultancies and Advisory Services. He can be reached at ogwaljoe@yahoo.com, jonesogwal@gmail.com.

Pablo Martín is a Spanish national currently, a junior PhD researcher under the Agricultural Transformation by Innovation (AgTraIn) PhD program at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Spain) as first institution, Montpellier SupAgro (France) as second institution with field work in CATIE (Costa Rica). He is a technical forest engineer and holds a Master of Science in European Forestry. His research interests are in payments for environmental services to preserve tropical montane cloud forests from land use change due to agriculture in Costa Rica. He can be contacted at marortpab@gmail.com; pmartinortega@hotmail.com.

Léa Jenin is a French national and an agricultural engineer (Agronome) by training. She graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique de Toulouse (ENSAT) in 2001 and further specialized in Agricultural Economics with SOAS/University of London, where she obtained a Master Degree in 2012. Lea has about 10 years of experience in agricultural development projects in Europe and in developing countries, working for farmers’ organizations, NGOs, FAO or the European Union. She is currently pursuing a joint Doctorate with the University College Cork (Ireland) and the Universidad Politecnica de Madrid (Spain), thanks to a fellowship from the EU-funded AgTraIn Programme. She also serves as a Research Assistant at the Food Business and Development Department of University College Cork (UCC). Her research focus is on "Dairy Chain analysis in Thailand to link small-scale producers to market-oriented opportunities". The purpose of this research is to determine how small scale dairy farmers can build on the booming consumer demand for milk and dairy products in Thailand and strengthen their position on this dynamic dairy market. The scientific interests are in inclusive value chain development, transformation of agri-food systems in
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Saheed Ayodeji Salami is a Nigerian national and holds a first class honours in Animal Production and Health. He further obtained a double degree MSc in Sustainable Animal Nutrition and Feeding from Wageningen University, the Netherlands and Ecole d’Ingenieurs de Purpan, France. His research interests largely focus on strategies to enhance the sustainability of animal feeding systems with particular focus on poultry and ruminant species, as well as to improve the quality of animal-derived foods with emphasis on meat quality for better human health. He is currently a PhD researcher under the AgTrain programme affiliated to the University of Catania, Italy and the University College Cork, Ireland. He can be contacted at sayodeji14@yahoo.com.

Michael Kansiime is a Veterinary doctor, a trained teacher, a social entrepreneur and a dairy, apiary and banana farmer in Uganda. He holds a Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and a Master of Business Administration both from Makerere University. For 10 years, Michael worked and was very instrumental in the transformation of Uganda Revenue Authority (URA). Michael currently leads the Africa Institute for Strategic Services and Development (AFRISA) Secretariat and Director of Programs, at Makerere University, College of Veterinary Medicine Animal Resources and Biosecurity and lecturers on the Master of Livestock Development Planning Program (MLD). Michael is experienced and knowledgeable in policy issues, innovation systems, organizational development,
business management, networks and partnerships. Currently, a PhD student of agricultural and rural innovations and his research interest is in Agricultural Financing Systems. Michael is a partner in Farmers Planet Limited that offers consultancy services in the Agriculture and livestock, a practicing farmer owning Canaan Country Farms. Michael was selected and awarded the “African Food Security Challenger 2013” by the Global Knowledge Initiative and Pennsylvania State University (PSU) of USA for his outstanding work contributing to Global Food Security and has continued to write and win many Grants in the area of Food and Income Security for communities. He has delivered lectures on Agribusinesses, Food Security and Household wealth locally and internationally. He believes that the prosperity of the 21st century will be delivered by the livestock sector and that AFRISA presents an opportunity for Africans to “ride on the back” of the animal to prosperity. He is happily married with Children. He can contacted at drkanmich@gmail.com.

Loga Dorcas Elizabeth is female and Ugandan. She graduated with a Masters in Agricultural Extension Education of Makerere University in 2013, where she researched on the ‘Effects of short-term hunger on schooling among Universal Primary schools in Kamuli and Soroti Districts of Uganda. She graduated with a bachelor in Agribusiness Management of Makerere University in 2010, where she researched on postharvest losses within the maize value chain. She is an agricultural extension worker by training. She has worked with Africa 2000 network (A2N) as a Community Development Worker, (CDW) where she trained farmers in use of new agricultural technologies and organized exchange visits as a practical learning tool for farmers. She was on highly competitive basis awarded the Field Attachment Program Award (FAPA) by the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). With the FAPA award, Dorcas partnered with the Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), and was not only able to disseminate her research finding but also scaled up the technology to five other sub counties within Kamuli district in Uganda. When Dorcas completed her masters, together with two colleagues, they started up a Non-Government Organization (NGO) called Forum for Sustainable Agriculture in Africa (FOSAA), whose mandate is to enhance agricultural sustainability through capacity building, innovations, and research and development initiatives. Together with the FOSAA team, she has championed the spread of Agro-ash fertilizer in Nakasongola and Mukono districts in Uganda. She is currently managing the “Sharing Capacity to Build Capacity for Quality Graduate Training in Agriculture in African Universities (SHARE)” project, an Intra-ACP Academic Mobility Project, which is a partnership of 12 African Universities led by Makerere University. She has also participated in the implementation of the ACP-EU EDULINK project “Strengthening Agricultural and Rural Innovation Studies: A Regional PhD program in Agricultural and Rural Innovation Studies (ARIS I) in eastern, Central and Southern Africa, and “Strengthening Human Resource Capacity to Foster Agricultural and Rural Innovation in Eastern Africa (EDULINK II Project)”. She is personate about managing and facilitating projects aimed at building efficient partnerships for sustainable innovations development. Dorcas is currently a PhD fellow of Agricultural and Rural Innovations of Makerere University, and her research interests lie in Innovations among the youth in Agriculture in Uganda. She is married with two children. She can be contacted at dorcaslokello@gmail.com.
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STAFF BIODATA

Didier PILLOT

Born in 1954 in France, Didier Pillot is an agro-economist by training: Engineer and MSc in agriculture and PhD in economics. Over the past thirty years, he has first been working in agricultural development and natural resource management in contexts of transition, largely in the Caribbean and in South-East Asia, mostly for international organisations and professional organisations. He first started in Haiti (1976), developing research on farming systems associated to development projects during five years, contributing to the recognition of indigenous labour intensive cropping systems. After completing his PhD on this topic, he went back to his home country to initiate “Réseau Recherche-Développement”, a national French based network on Research and Development in Agriculture supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This led to actively advocate for closer links between the research institutions in agriculture and the NGO and CSO community acting on the field, and to develop international networks. In 1995, he participated in founding the first NGO Committee within the CGIAR. He finished by heading the most important professional NGO for agriculture and rural development in France, GRET, from 1996 to 2001, while he still coordinated directly several research projects on agricultural involutions in SE Asia, especially in Vietnam and Cambodia and on agroforestry based intensification in Africa. He also took a number of collective responsibilities in the NGO for community in France, like Secretary General of Coordination Sud, Vice-President of CFSI and President of F3E, in charge of developing evaluations of NGOs’ development projects. In 2002, Dr Pillot joined the Higher Education sector. He became Deputy Director of the College of Tropical Agriculture (CNEARC) in Montpellier, France. There, he developed international cooperation in the field of postgraduate education in agriculture, first with other Agricultural universities in Europe, then with Asia and Africa. In 2007, CNEARC was merged with other Colleges of Agriculture in Montpellier to build the International Center for Higher Studies in Agricultural Sciences (Montpellier SupAgro). Dr Pillot chaired the International Department of the new entity and there developed strong collaborations with African and Asian Universities. He became Vice President, then President of Agrinatura, the European Alliance for Knowledge in Agriculture, the European Association of Higher Education institutions in Europe, which have concerns for tropical agriculture and Agricultural Research for development. With Agrinatura, he developed the cooperation with sister organisations in Asia (SEARCA) and in Africa (RUFORUM) leading to different innovative projects to develop new courses at Master and PhD levels, quality assurance systems and exchanges of students and staff. He now coordinates two European Masters of Sciences that are co-
Offered by nine EU universities in Europe: Agris Mundus, a Master of Sciences in Sustainable Development in Agriculture and, more recently a master in Agriculture, Climate Change & Transitions. He is also part of AgTrain, a similar European PhD on innovation in agriculture. Since 2013, he has also been in charge of extending the international networks in Higher Education at Agreenium, the new French Consortium for Higher Education and Research in Agriculture. Didier Pillot is still currently Vice-President of Agrinatura – The European Alliance for Agricultural Knowledge for Development, Board member of GlobalHort, the Global Initiative in Horticultural Sciences and of the Global Confederation for Higher Education and Research in Agriculture (GCHERA). He has authored book, contributed to book chapter and published in peer-reviewed international journals. He can be contacted at didier.pillot@supagro.fr

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Dr. Florence Birungi Kyazze is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Extension Education. As a lecturer, Florence is charged with the responsibilities of teaching and supervising students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels with a specific interest in statistical methodologies, social research, programme development and evaluation. Florence has also worked on a contractual basis with the National Cereals Program as senior social scientist. Under this umbrella, Florence has conducted extensive social research in gender, community mobilization, and participatory approaches. Florence is also a senior advisor and researcher for Women's Initiative in Development and Para-legal Activities Association and a member for the Association of Ugandan Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment. Florence’s research interests also lie within innovations systems in the agricultural sector, market chains and value addition using an innovation systems methodological framework. Florence also works on as a social economist for Agribusiness Management Associates and the Secretariat for Plan for Modernization in Uganda to explore the points of intervention in the value addition chain for fruits in the Teso region. Areas of intervention will go along away to identify economically and financially viable enterprises that will respond to the Presidential Initiative of Prosperity for All, a strategy to eradicate poverty in Uganda. Florence has also won an award for African Women in Agricultural Research and Development Implemented by the CGIAR Gender & Diversity Program. She can be reached on Department of Agricultural Extension Education, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Makerere University P.O. Box 7062 Kampala, Uganda. She can be contacted at fbirungikyazze@caes.mak.ac.ug or fbirungikyazze@gmail.com.