

## Harnessing formidable Partnerships for Agricultural Transformation in Africa



*Image 1: Adrian Bukenya Mulindwa, Country Head - Mastercard Foundation, Uganda speaks to students from Gulu University at the exhibition during the meeting with RUFORUM staff last week.*

The Mastercard Foundation Scholar Programs celebrates 10 years this year as well as a six-year partnership with the Regional Universities Forum for Agriculture (RUFORUM). This partnership demonstrates why it is imperative to celebrate and reflect on partnerships that encourage co-creation, collaboration, and foster synergies to transform the Agricultural landscape through youth skilling in Africa. According to Assoc. Prof. Anthony Egeru, the Manager for Training and Community Development, the last six years of implementing the TAGDev project have been an amazing journey, with a lot of lessons from pilots to scaling. These achievements were made possible through deliberate efforts to provide opportunities to those that need them the most. The Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa works strategy which was launched in Uganda in July 2020 aims to enable more than three million young people in the country to access dignified and fulfilling work opportunities by 2030.

During the recent visit to the RUFORUM Secretariat by the Mastercard Foundation team led by Prof. Phil Cotton, Director for Human Capital Development at the Mastercard Foundation and Mr. Adrian Bukenya Mulindwa, Mastercard Foundation Country Head - Uganda, the dialogue focused on how to upscale the agribusiness innovations to address the youth employment challenge in Africa; addressing the quality of agribusiness initiatives and value addition for increased market access. It should be noted that the partnership has registered tremendous success despite the two-year Covid-19 global challenge. Some of the successes include the creation of 216 Agri-enterprises and over 1,328 jobs in 11 African countries.

The Mastercard Foundation and RUFORUM partnership has a unique and real-world approach designed to transform how universities working with Technical Vocational Education and

Training (TVETs) are responding to Africa's biggest challenge of youth employment and food security. Through youth skilling and upscaling Agri-enterprises, the partnership has registered great success over the years. Further, this partnership has registered a significant impact through the Community Action Research Projects (CARP) by engaging 11 African universities that are directly working with 74,037 smallholder farmers and improving their livelihoods subsequently.

Technology continues to play a vital role in catalyzing the desired transformation. "While Covid19 disrupted higher education and indeed other levels of education, it has been a blessing in pushing African universities to appreciate the alternative modes of delivering education services to the continent." Noted Assoc. Prof. Egeru.

Looking ahead, Assoc. Prof. Egeru hopes that the partnership will encourage a renewed commitment to ensuring improved quality of online learning and developing capacity among university academics to deliver Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) relevant to the continent's demand. Access to higher education in Africa remains a challenge despite various interventions by African governments to increase access to the internet. The creation of an enabling environment for experience and best practices sharing is critical for mindset change and technological shift.

The Mastercard Foundation team thanked the RUFORUM Secretariat for the opportunity to engage with the farming communities and students during the organized exhibition in which various universities from Uganda showcased their Agri-business innovations and products.

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## Note to Editors

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### About RUFORUM:

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of 150 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 2053 MSc, 627 PhD graduates and 229 BSc, of whom 98% work in their countries or region, the generation of over 300 agricultural technologies and mobilized over US\$236.3 million for strengthening postgraduate education in Africa. Please visit [www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org) for more information

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