

ANNUAL REPORT

2014 • 2015



RUFORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

BUILDING CAPACITY IN AFRICA



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



New message!!

Following on the Celebrations to mark RUFORUM's Tenth Anniversary, this Report highlights key activities and achievement during the past year, 1 July, 2014 to 30 June 2015. RUFORUM overall Goal is to enable "improved agricultural productivity and wealth creation of smallholder farmers through developing effective agricultural universities with graduates dedicated to improving rural livelihoods and promoting research relevant to African setting". Implementation of this overall Goal is underpinned by RUFORUM's overall Theory of Change which highlights the activities for which the Secretariat is responsible for. For details of the achievements on planned milestones, see Annex 1. The Secretariat deliverables together with input from the RUFORUM Network members and stakeholders (research institutions, policy makers, private and civil society) are expected to lead to the required outcomes and impacts⁴ within the agricultural sector. The Secretariat deliverables are:

1. Enabling the institutionalization of improved training and research in member universities;
2. Building university capacity to work with research, business and development partners to transform ideas into innovations;
3. Serving as a key actor in platforms for national and continental integration of Research for Development (R4D)

and as a backbone for university interaction;

4. Serving as an envoy of higher education and a voice for wider attention to agriculture through convened events, publications and evidence-based policy papers.

The report has been presented along the Strategic Focus areas of the RUFORUM Secretariat as outlined in the existing Business Plan (2011-2016). This report presents the achievements within five 'core areas' viz. (1) demand driven research, community action and institutional strengthening grants, (2) Regional Training Programs; (3) Monitoring, evaluation and Learning for impact; (4) ICT for improved performance and (5) Enhanced Governance and Management of RUFORUM.

RUFORUM is focusing the re-alignment of universities research and training towards responsiveness to national agricultural innovation systems in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, and more recently to West Africa. During the reporting period, 115 research projects covering a range of topics from crop production, livestock management, natural resource management, environment management, among others, are being implemented to enhance increased productivity of African food and nutrition systems. This has helped to provide evidence of the critical role of human capital in spurring agricultural development in Africa. Rwanda provides an explicit example of how the new generation of young scientists trained under RUFORUM and other agencies,

is helping to transform this once impoverished country into now a food secure and emerging economy with environmental consciousness. Indeed, the RUFORUM's efforts have increased availability of MSc graduates and workforce in the agricultural sector for Africa. RUFORUM has continued to strengthen its own ability to tap into diverse resources but still requires support to scale up some of the initiatives, especially action research linked to strengthening university-community engagement to enhance smallholder productivity and value chains.

HIGHLIGHTS

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TARGET MILESTONES FOR 2014/2015

Signature?

WHERE WE WORK



RUFORUM has
55 member
universities
in **22**
countries

VISION

We envision a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities which produce high-performing graduates and high-quality research responsive to the demands of Africa's farmers for innovations and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development.

MISSION

Our mission is to strengthen the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to demands of small-holder 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 and government

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

THE REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES FORUM FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN AGRICULTURE

BACKGROUND

RUFORUM is a consortium of 55 African universities operating in 22 countries spanning the African continent.

Established in 2004 by 10 member universities and coordinated by a secretariat hosted by Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, RUFORUM is registered as an International Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and has mandate to oversee graduate training and networks of specialization in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). As such, RUFORUM is an evolution from its predecessor, the Forum on Agricultural

Resource husbandry (FORUM) program funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

RUFORUM supports universities to address the important and largely unfulfilled role that universities potentially could play in contributing to the well-being of small-scale farmers and economic development of countries throughout the Sub-Saharan Africa region. The consortium has several unique features for building Africa's innovation capacity and for engaging universities in development process and practice:

It is owned and managed by Africans.

It enables joint action through joint faculty appointment for the 55 member universities, payment of local fees by graduate students and national mechanisms (National Forums) which ensure wider stakeholder participation in the RUFORUM programmes.

It provides a wide array of training opportunities for stakeholders, and it is currently in the process of establishing credit transfer mechanisms among the member universities.

It derives its agenda largely from the continent wide policy frameworks especially of the African Union - New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), The African Union Science, Technology Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024); The African Union Policy Framework on Revitalizing Higher Education in Africa; the Sub-Regional Multi-Country Agricultural Productivity Programmes; and The National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of the member states. As well a constant review of global trends and foresight planning to ensure Africa requires capacity for global competitiveness.

See more at: www.ruforum.org/about-us



DEMAND DRIVEN
RESEARCH,
COMMUNITY ACTION
AND INSTITUTIONAL
STRENGTHENING
GRANTS

ACHIEVEMENTS

KEY PERFORMANCE MARKERS FOR 2014/2015

IMPROVING RESEARCH PROCESS AND PRACTICE

The Competitive Grant System (CGS) promotes academic research with a strong focus on the value chain approach and key commodities and systems. Emphasis has been laid on the process of problem identification and use of proper research methods with active participation of stakeholders such as civil society and private sector organizations to enhance targeting and application of research undertaken.

The Graduate Research Grants (GRGs) are intended to enhance the quality of MSc research undertaken by African universities. During the year, the GRG research guidelines were updated to include thematic focus on value chains and made available online. Beyond RUFORUM, the guidelines have been adopted by the PAEPARD Project and have been directly used to focus research in member universities such as Haramaya and Mekelle Universities in Ethiopia, Gulu and Uganda Martyrs Universities in Uganda, Egerton University and University of Eldoret in Kenya, Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology in Tanzania, and Lilongwe University of

Agriculture and Natural Resources in Malawi. At these institutions, outreach programs have been established and there has been set up active university-community engagement to strengthen crop-livestock value chains.

A total of 55 research projects, focused on smallholder African agriculture, have been awarded. The projects are supporting training and research for 112 field-based MSc students and the upgrading of knowledge relevant to African smallholder farmers with a widened portfolio to include livestock, nutrition and environmental management. This effort will significantly increase the pool of graduates available to support development, particularly in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation anchor countries of Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda. The graduates are provided with strong mentorship and supervision and opportunity for sharing their research results through local, national and regional convenes. The strengthening of women participation within agricultural research has been included as a central theme in RUFORUM's approach.

TRACKING PERFORMANCE OF RUFORUM GRADUATES

The RUFORUM capacity building model to strengthening agricultural research sector has shown remarkable results. The 2014 RUFORUM Tracer Study confirmed that, unlike graduates trained abroad, the RUFORUM supported graduates stay in their home countries or on the continent

and they were, on average, employed within six months after graduation. The 67 FAPA during the period provided graduates with opportunity to share research outcomes with smallholder farmers and to link with potential employers.

TABLE 1.1 • WHERE ARE RUFORUM ALUMNI WORKING?

LOCATION WHERE ALUMNI WORKS	% OF ALUMNI REPORTING BY LEVEL OF TRAINING		
	MSC (N=196)	PHD (N=44)	OVERALL (N=240)
Live and work in own country	93.2	97.9	94.2
Live and work in ECSA but not in own country	4	2.1	3.6
Live and work outside Africa	0.5	0	0.4
Student outside own country	2.3	0	1.8

Source: RUFORUM Tracer Study, 2014

The above demonstrates RUFORUM's ability to support it member universities to form innovative, employable graduates with practical experience and research that

make a difference to smallholder farmers - and thereby in a long-term perspective contribute to improved livelihoods and development of the agricultural sector in Africa.

STRENGTHENING UNIVERSITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

This year, a key objective was to strengthen participatory research and smallholder orientation of university research, training and outreach. The Community Action Research Program (CARP) aims to build models for increasing university contribution to smallholder farmer productivity and incomes through greater application of knowledge. Three pilot projects initiated during the early phase of implementing the Business Strategic Plan 2010-2015, were supported in this reporting period to develop exit strategies. The projects have all leveraged additional funds from the governments of Austria, China and the United Kingdom and from the Food and Business Global Challenge Program of the Dutch Government. RUFORUM has engaged with EARTH University in Costa Rica to adapt their model for field-based training of agricultural entrepreneurs in Africa. A further three CARP projects were initiated with longer time frames (four years instead of three) to engage university

expertise for smallholder enterprise development. The projects focus on value chains of importance to the Eastern and Southern African region using a systems approach with the deployment of multi-disciplinary research teams. Additional emphasis has been placed on facilitating regional learning amongst the GRG, CARP and other research teams. At institutional level, linkages among RUFORUM member universities and stakeholders (particularly farmers and end-users) through the GRGS and CARPS has significantly been improved. This has effectively promoted learning and dissemination of research outputs with raised levels of adoption of technologies, innovations and management practices leading to increased yields, bridging the gap between universities and non-university actors. Principal Investigators are now collaborating to write grant proposals as a result of the capacity developed from

implementing Graduate Research Grants and networking among member universities. Postgraduate education is more student-centered and research based. RUFORUM supported research with a focus on community action and experiential learning has significantly contributed to the shaping and development of outreach programs that are now institutionalized at the member universities. This ensures that research undertaken by graduate students has

a maximum impact on rural communities. National forums providing a platform for stakeholders to articulate demands for university services, advocate for change, and provide feedback on the utility of RUFORUM's activities have been operationalized in 13 of the 22 RUFORUM member countries to improve university engagement with national level stakeholders and sharpen responsiveness of university research and training programs to development needs.

UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT WITH POLICY

The Fourth Biennial Conference was held 21-25 July, 2014 in Maputo, Mozambique to promote regional learning. The conference coincided with RUFORUM's 10 years' anniversary. It drew participants such as policy-makers, academia, students, agricultural researchers, development agencies, agribusiness representatives and development partners from within and outside Africa. The Chief dignitaries at the conference included H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Mrs Graca Machel, Member of the International Panel of Elders and Former Minister of Education in Mozambique as well as a number of AU commissioners, ministers, development partners, knowledge centers, vice chancellors, principals, deans and students also attended.

RUFORUM was widely recognized for its role in the scientific life of the continent, especially in terms of re-orientating university research and development to support Africa's development process and as a key voice for higher agricultural education in Africa.

During the meeting, RUFORUM signed an MoU with the African Union to serve as a key agency for implementing

the African Union Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA, 2024). RUFORUM was also requested to work with the African Union Commission to organize a follow up event for African Heads of States and Government Summit on Science, Technology and Higher Education. This engagement catalyzed important regional convenes such as the Dakar March 2015 First African Higher Education Summit, and the Agreement by African Heads of State and Government in June 2015 to establish a Community of 10 Heads of State and Government to report on needed action to strengthen Higher Education, Science & Technology in Africa. The next RUFORUM Biennial Conference will be held 19-23 September 2016 at Stellenbosch, South Africa and will focus on strengthening linkages between universities and private sector, civil society and other actors.

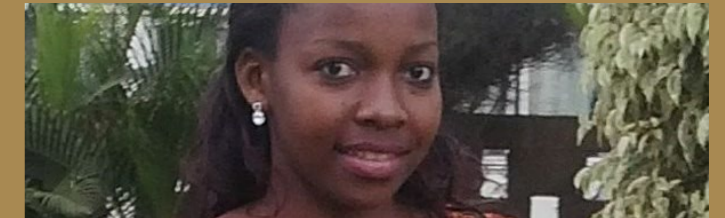
RUFORUM was accorded audience with His Excellency Prof. Peter Arthur Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi in September, 2014. His Excellency has kindly accepted to work with RUFORUM in promoting the cause of higher education in Africa. RUFORUM will continue to engage with other African Heads of States to support the cause of higher education in Africa.

THE RUFORUM GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT A FOCUS ON STUDENTS FROM MOZAMBIQUE

Over the years, RUFORUM has championed transformative graduate research and training in agricultural sciences through supporting graduate research and training implemented under the Competitive Grants Scheme (CGS). One of the competitive grants that is routinely made available through Senior Faculty in member universities is the Graduate Research Grants (GRGs). The GRG supports the training of master level students under the mentorship of a research team drawn from within the university and outside the university. In 2014, Prof. Cugala Domingos from Eduardo Mondlane University was one of the recipients of a GRG to train two master students.



Andreia Mahalia Maulide Massamby was born in Maputo, Mozambique. She obtained a Bachelor in Agricultural Engineering (Eduardo Mondlane University) in 2014. Upon completion of her undergraduate studies, Andreia commenced a two-year Master's degree with a scholarship funded by RUFORUM through its Graduate Research Grant (GRG) awarded to Prof. Domingos Cugala. Andreia is furthering her skills in the field of Crop Protection with particular emphasis in Entomology. Andreia's research is focused on the "Assessment of distribution and pest status of papaya mealybug (*Paracoccus marginatus*) and prediction of potential areas at risk of invasion using ecological niche model in Mozambique". She anticipates that this research will provide information on both the pest status and distribution in Mozambique and contribute to increasing papaya production among smallholder farmer production systems through strategic reduction of *P. marginatus* population density and associated pest damage.



Olzura da Encarnação Miguel from Maputo, Mozambique. She has great focus and admiration for agriculture with a zeal to champion change among smallholder farmers in Mozambique as a mechanism to contributing economic growth, better livelihoods and sustainable development. Ms. Miguel holds a Bachelor of Agronomic Engineering (Eduardo Mondlane University). She commenced her postgraduate studies in 2015 through with a GRG. Ms. Miguel is pursuing a Master in Crop Protection with a focus on "Establishment assessment and impact of exotic parasitoids on the population of the papaya mealybug, *Paracoccus marginatus*". The study is founded on the recent outbreak of papaya mealybug with devastating impacts in Mozambique. The available chemical control approaches are not economically feasible for smallholder farmers that constitute the majority of papaya producers. The alternative approach of using biological control has been seen as an economically and environmentally viable strategy. It is this perspective that this study will seek to investigate so as to provide information for evidence based decision support.



REGIONAL TRAINING
PROGRAMS

ACHIEVEMENTS

KEY PERFORMANCE MARKERS FOR 2014/2015

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE - RUFORUM'S APPROACH

RUFORUM's regional centers of excellence host programs to:

BUILD THE TEACHING AND RESEARCH CAPACITY of member universities and the wider National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems

ENHANCE CAPACITY FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH that targets improving food and nutrition security, and access to knowledge

BUILD CAPACITY TO OVERCOME EMERGING CHALLENGES in the agricultural development landscape, so that Africa does not lag behind the rest of the world

RUFORUM strength lies in its networking approach. The regional training programs applies networking across its member universities as an approach to address overlaps and critical gaps. As well as the programs present a practical strategy for enhancing the capacity of African universities to escalate their PhD training, while at the same time hiring more competent staff. As such, the PhD programs were a response to the demands of the universities themselves to increase the pool of PhD trained faculty and to strengthen research capacity in African institutions. So far, 227 PhD and 245 MSc have been trained in the regional programs. Five regional MSc programs (including one on research methods) and eight PhD programs are currently operational.

To enhance the quality of the programs, a caravan approach is used to address skills gaps - five trainings were conducted during the reporting period in the areas of research methods, biometry, and scientific data management.

During the year, RUFORUM focused on consolidation of the PhD programs and branding of the programs to obtain support from more development partners. In addition, linkages were developed with the CGIAR centers and their research Initiatives to strengthen research elements of the PhD programs. Other partnerships have also been facilitated including Access Agriculture to make use of video mediated learning for increasing uptake of agricultural innovations. Carnegie Corporation of New York, DAAD, The European Union and other donors are currently funding the programs. Carnegie Corporation of New York recently provided additional \$1.5 million grant towards scholarships for the programs, and DAAD has awarded additional seven PhD scholarships. Through EU support, RUFORUM is helping to facilitate the training of 60 PhD students and about 200 MSc students in different universities in the continent through the Intra ACP academic mobility program.

TABLE 2.1 • WHERE ARE RUFORUM ALUMNI WORKING?

PROGRAM	CENTRE OF LEADERSHIP	YEAR OF LAUNCH	NO. TRAINED (2008 – 2013)	NO. STUDENTS GRADUATED
PhD Dryland Resource Management	University of Nairobi, Kenya	2008	36	25
PhD Plant Breeding and Biotechnology	Makerere University, Uganda	2008	28	16
PhD Aquaculture and Fisheries Science	LUANAR, Malawi	2009	15	5
PhD Agricultural and Resource Economics	LUANAR, Malawi	2009	8	2
PhD Soil and Water Management	Sokoine University, Tanzania	2010	25	5
PhD Agricultural and Rural Innovations	Makerere University, Uganda	2012	34	0
PhD Agricultural and Rural Innovations	Egerton University, Kenya	2012	19	0
PhD Agricultural Rural Innovations	Sokoine University, Tanzania	2013	14	0
PhD Food Science and Nutrition	Jomo Kenyatta University, Kenya	2013	9	0
MSc Plant Breeding and Seed Systems	Makerere University, Uganda	2008	39	25
MSc Research Methods	Jomo Kenyatta University, Kenya	2009	96	70
MSc Agricultural Information and Communication Management	Egerton University, Kenya	2008	38	15
	University of Nairobi, Kenya	2009	46	33
	Haramaya University, Ethiopia	2010	54	24
Total			461	220

STRENGTHENING APPLIED STATISTICS

RUFORUM has provided partial funding to Research Methods MSc program. Over the reporting period, RUFORUM funded 14 Research Methods MSc scholarships for training at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) in Kenya.

The Research Methods MSc course is highly attractive across the region as it supports all other key programs. In the recent call for scholarship applications, RUFORUM Secretariat received 167 applications but was only able to fund 14 scholarships.

The funded students have completed their coursework and are developing research proposals as part of the requirements for the fulfillment of the MSc Degrees. The students were from across the continent and were competitively selected. To continuously improve the course, the MSc Research Methods curriculum was reviewed and recommendations are being implemented.

The University (JKUAT) has developed and uploaded onto Moodle 16 courses as open educational resources with RUFORUM direct assistance on six courses. In September 2015, JKUAT will enroll the first intake for MSc Research Methods distance learning. RUFORUM is now exploring various options, including a MOOC, to scale research methods training in the region.

THE REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT (AICM) MSC PROGRAM

The Regional Agricultural Information and Communication Management MSc Program is hosted at Egerton University, the University of Nairobi, both in Kenya, and at Haramaya University in Ethiopia. A call for scholarships was circulated and students were competitively selected from the focal countries to pursue AICM training in Ethiopia. Selected students from the focal countries were registered and

have completed their coursework. The course has 15 students (10 Ethiopians and five foreign students from other member countries). The students are currently finalizing their research proposals. The online AICM course was launched at Makerere University in Uganda in March 2015 and has been advertised for the 2015/2016 intake.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the Research Methods and AICM training RUFORUM has supported trainings in the member countries and in the wider network. In Haramaya, RUFORUM supported training of 15 MSc students under the Agro-meteorology and Risk Management MSc Program, nine students under the Climate Change and Society and six under Dryland Agronomy MSc programs at Mekelle University. In Uganda, RUFORUM funded the

training of 12 MSc students at Gulu University. To date, a total of 71 MSc Students are being trained from the focus countries. Overall, RUFORUM supports the filling of critical skills gaps for agricultural development such as in Applied Statistics, AICM, plant breeding, and agro-meteorology especially for the focus countries as well as strengthening research and proposal development skills.

RUFORUM GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP PROGRAM

The year also saw successful implementation of the Graduate Teaching Assistantship Programme (GTA),

another form of staff exchange that was launched by RUFORUM Vice Chancellors in July, 2014. Beneficiaries

of the GTA have been limited to junior academic staff working in RUFORUM member Universities with the sole objective of meeting the growing demand of Doctoral level researchers required to teach and supervise postgraduate program. Within the GTA mechanism, the sending university provides upkeep and research fees for their staff member (PhD student) while the host university assigns teaching responsibilities to the student and waives

tuition fees. To date, at-least 40 interested applicants have applied through the RUFORUM online application systems. Out of these, eight have been successfully placed by June 2015 as indicated in the table below. This translates to \$560,000 invested by the sending and hosting universities in the GTA programme. The rest of the applications are being processed on case by case basis and it is a continuous process.

TABLE 2.1 • GTA PROGRAM APPLICANTS AND PLACEMENTS

SENDING UNIVERSITY	HOST UNIVERSITY
Makerere University	Stellenbosch University- PhD Horticulture
University of Swaziland	LUANAR – PhD Agriculture Resource Economics
Kyambogo University	Egerton University- PhD Animal Science
University of Zimbabwe	Stellenbosch University – PhD Agriculture Sciences
Uganda Martyrs University	University of Nairobi – PhD Dryland and Natural Resources
University of Rwanda	Makerere University – PhD Agricultural and Rural Innovations
Uganda Christian University	Makerere University – PhD Plant Breeding and Biotechnology
University of Botswana	University of Pretoria – PhD Animal Science

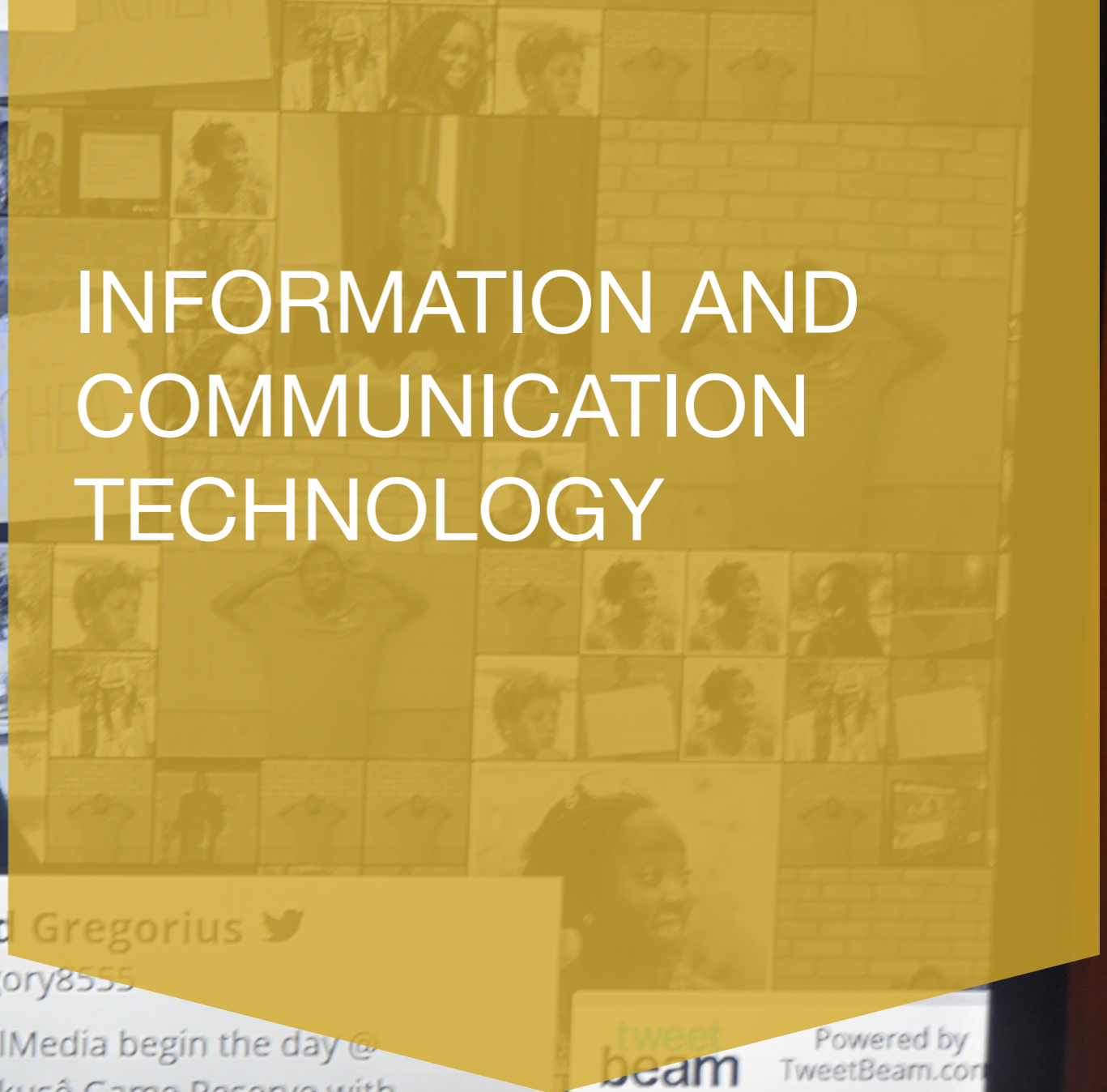
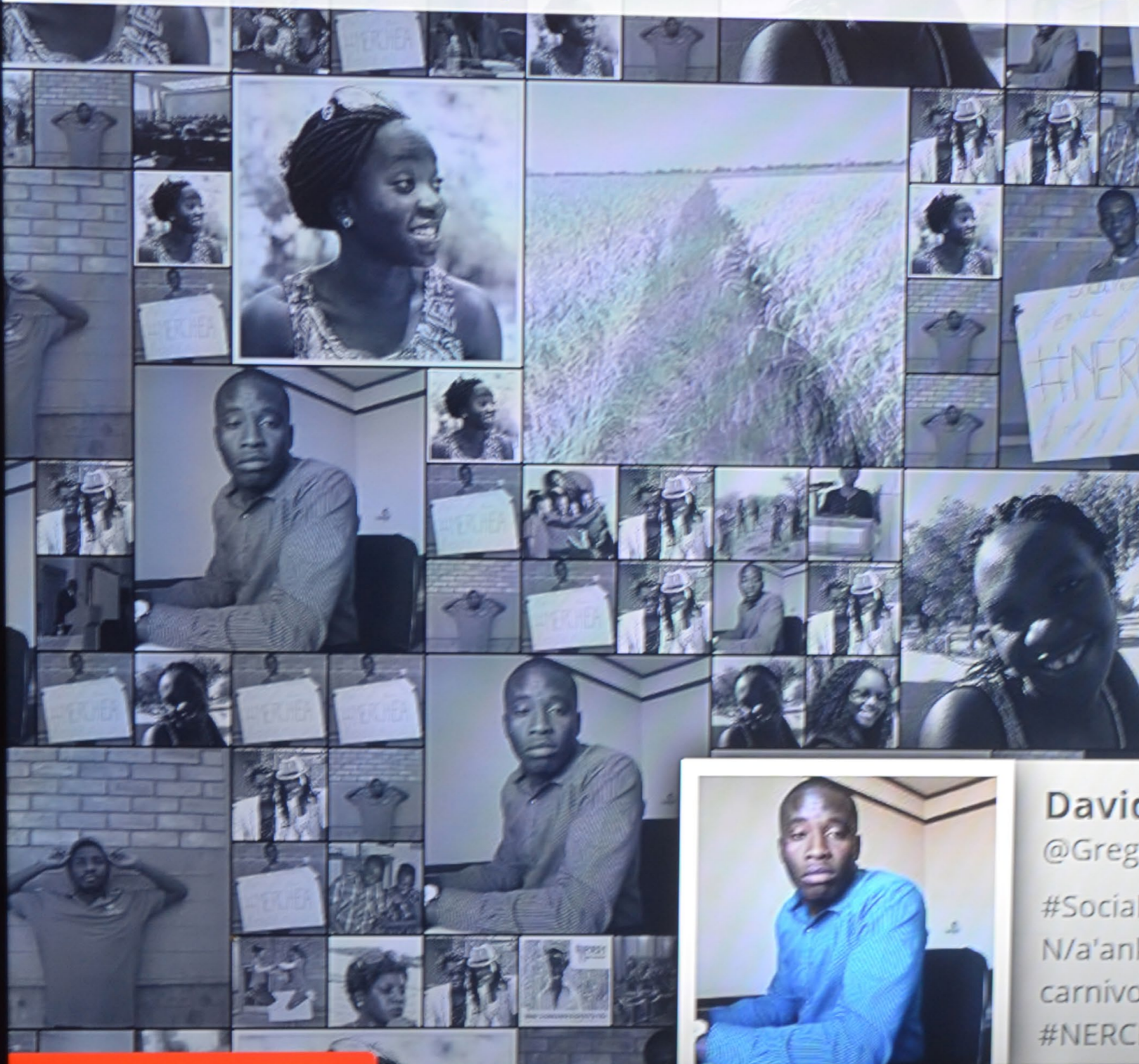
MENTORSHIP, SUPERVISION AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Meetings were organized to support graduate students and link students to mentors. A regional meeting was organized and coordinated by the RUFORUM secretariat on 23rd of July 2014 at the 4th RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Mozambique. Over 100 RUFORUM graduate students and staff from various universities

participated in this meeting. The meeting aimed at mentoring and inspiring the students through planned guest talks shared by some of the RUFORUM Alumni who have been successful in their careers. 36 MSc and PhD students presented their research findings and received guidance from stakeholders.



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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY



David Gregorius

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ACHIEVEMENTS

KEY PERFORMANCE MARKERS FOR 2014/2015

RUFORUM sees ICT as a tool to:

ENHANCE EFFICIENCY of networking and Secretariat functions, and particularly its monitoring, evaluation and learning

INCREASE ACCESS TO AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY of higher education

ENHANCE DISSEMINATION of scientific knowledge to enhance smallholder agricultural productivity.

During the year, modules for the RUFORUM Information Management Systems (RIMS) were developed, following a planning meeting with stakeholders.

The modules are currently in full use and the grants application and management is fully automated. The modules developed were:

ONLINE GRANTS APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

ONLINE SCHOLARSHIP SUBMISSIONS

ONLINE STUDENT REPORTING

ONLINE REPORTING AND FEEDBACK FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

INCREASING EFFICIENCY WITH ICT

To enhance financial management, Microsoft Dynamics NAV System was installed in April 2014 and optimized in 2015 to include a module for human resource

management among others. At Secretariat level, financial transactions - such as requisitions and approvals - are now conducted through the NAV system.

A two-year Information Technology Plan for RUFORUM detailing service level agreements and IT related maintenance schedules has been developed. This has greatly increased the efficiency at the Secretariat. In the next period, RUFORUM will explore hosting arrangements for the RIMS development server at RUFORUM Secretariat to support continuous design and functional improvements.

ICT has also been used to strengthen the regional training programs through the development of e-learning

resources. Publications and other outputs of RUFORUM work are being collected and published in an institutional repository. To date a collection of about 1,500 entries have been made, of which about 500 have been uploaded into the repository. A RUFORUM@10 series including release of 11 publications, three case studies and 161 extended abstracts from the Biennial 2014 were published during the period. RUFORUM hopes to build the repository into one of the largest databases of reputable African research information in the continent.

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF MASSIVELY OPEN ONLINE COURSES

Over the last year, RUFORUM has explored the use of Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to increase access to higher education for African people. The effort has been to find partners to roll out a MOOC in the future. E-learning has remained a critical focus area and a number of trainings have been undertaken including at the University of Gezira, Sudan targeting university agricultural faculty staff and others (March 2015).

The training also focused on engaging senior university leadership on how they could support e-learning implementation. In May 2015, RUFORUM partnered with CTA to deliver Web 2.0 and Social Media Training to participants from the University of Gezira, Agricultural Research Corporation and non-governmental organizations in Sudan.

PROFESSIONALIZING EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND INCREASING VISIBILITY

The RUFORUM Communication Strategy was finalized and presented to the Principals and Deans meeting in Khartoum, Sudan on the 8th of June 2015. It will be adopted with suggested amendments during the August 2015 Annual General Meeting in Windhoek, Namibia.

launched in August, 2015 at the Annual General meeting. Online platforms have been revamped and social media reporters trained to support various meetings and events.

To strengthen engagement of universities and stakeholders, the *RUFORUM Weekly* was launched, and will be shortly followed by a *Quarterly Newsletter* to be

At present RUFORUM has 3272 followers on Facebook, 1,194 on twitter, 557 on the Alumni platform and 2,732 on the RUFORUM blog. There are 6,976 subscribers to the RUFORUM Mailing list with approximately 40% from faculties of Agriculture.

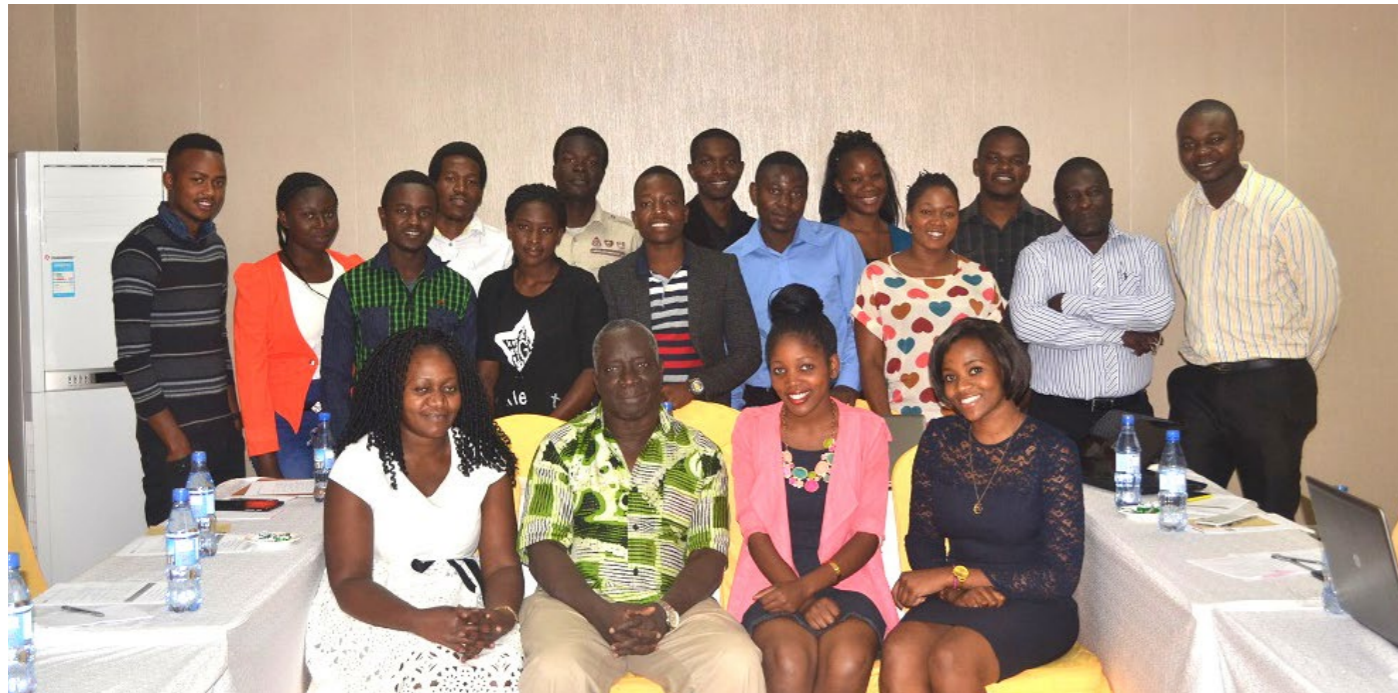
Overall, the visibility and influence of RUFORUM has increased significantly through social media presence and a significantly improved website.

Currently an online search of “RUFORUM” yields over 34,000,000 results with the top results pointing back to RUFORUM. Social media followership increased by 48% from, 806 to 1190 members since 2014. There has been increased geographical representation from West, South and Eastern Africa through use of, particularly Social media for dissemination and visibility.

As part of enhancing its institutional visibility and outreach, RUFORUM embarked on training a pool of young Social Media Reporters from its member universities. To date, RUFORUM has trained 20 reporters in Mozambique, Sudan, Namibia and recently 17 Social Media Reporters in Malawi. For Malawi, specifically, the

Social media training aimed to support visibility of key RUFORUM events namely, the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) Planning Workshop for Developing an Implementation Plan for Priority Area 1 and the side session on Higher Education at the United Nations General Assembly chaired by H.E Peter Mutharika, President of Malawi in New York that was held on 26 September, 2015.

The Social Media Reporters supported the Senior Government Leaders meeting in Lilongwe, Malawi on the 21st and 22nd of October, 2015. The training drew participants from Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mzuzu University members of the RUFORUM Network. The training was facilitated by Lilongwe University of Aquaculture and Natural Resources with technical support from RUFORUM.



MEET PATRICIA NKHOMA NGWALE A SOCIAL MEDIA REPORTER



enable me to contribute towards the visibility of LUANAR and my approach to information dissemination will be more effective.

I am passionate about media and communication therefore I would like to go further with my career by pursuing a Master's degree specializing in Media, Communications and Public Relations and later on attain a doctorate degree in the same area. I strongly believe that communication is a powerful tool to bring positive change in our institutions, communities and countries in general. Ten years from now I see myself being a lecturer in the field of communication and a media consultant.

As a young lady, I would also like to use my knowledge of media and communication to advocate for the girl child education. In my country there are more cases of girls' school dropout and this pains me. I would like to see Malawi and Africa where more girls are educated and not forced into early marriages. I strongly believe that this is possible through communication which will initiate and influence a positive behavioral change among the girls, parents and the societies.

Furthermore I have plans of establishing an initiative where young girls especially from the rural areas will be motivated. This initiative will mainly focus on creating forums for girls to interact with professionals for mentorship. I will soon be blogging on the girl child education and my blog will be 'Girl Child First'. You can follow me at @Nadirahnkhoma on twitter.

I am a media specialist at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), a seasoned journalist and a youth activist. Being a communications person at my University, the Social Media Training organized by RUFORUM has enhanced my skills in the dissemination of information using various platforms of social media. Both the University and my personal twitter accounts which were for some time docile are now active since I know how best I can run them. I now appreciate the benefits of live reporting using the social media platforms; we don't have to wait for television and radio to publicize our events, we are able to tell our own story instantly. I believe that the skills gained from the training, will

PLANNING, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (PMEL)

ACHIEVEMENTS

KEY PERFORMANCE MARKERS FOR 2014/2015

REVIEWING AND IMPROVING THE M&E SYSTEM

During the period, RUFORUM fully integrated its M&E system supported by the e-based RIMS, and enhanced ICT capacity at the Secretariat. Due to the implementation of the online grants application, M&E has been greatly eased, and tracking of milestones has been shifted to the online interface, particularly for grantees. There is a tremendous improvement in reporting by both the sub-grantee PIs and Students as a result of automated online function in the RIMS.

An internal review of the M&E practices and processes at the Secretariat was conducted in May 2015 for purposes of establishing what works and improvements needed. The review established that the M&E processes worked satisfactory at implementation monitoring, but there were gaps in tracking results performance, analyzing

outcomes/effects and impact level data/information. The remedial actions will be completed in the 1st quarter on the upcoming implementation year.

The existing M&E processes and practices which are linked to the selection, collection and analysis of data to produce information are rated as satisfactory and will be further strengthened by improving functionality of the RIMS. There are plans to improve performance in tracking and analyzing outcomes/effects and impact level data. The Secretariat also makes periodic subscriptions for use of the online platform, Survey Monkey. The online platform has been used to conduct 29 surveys from 2011-2015, with only three surveys registering a zero response. This is an encouraging response-rate statistic for online surveys that at best stands at 40% .

NEW STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

A new Strategic Business Plan for the period 2015-2020 has been developed and it is expected to be approved under the AGM in Namibia (August, 2015). The new strategy integrates RUFORUM's strategic and business components into a strategic and business plan in one document and 'refreshes' the current Business Plan (2011-2016) with a base year of 2014/2015. The strategic plan will be reviewed in 2018, in a mid-term evaluation. As part of establishing

the PME community of practice, D-groups platform has been identified and will be used as a starting point to build a robust PMEL community of practice for the Higher Education Community in Africa. A review of indicators in the indicator reference manual was conducted and aligned to the revised ToC as a requirement to be in sync with the Strategic Business Plan 2015-2020.



STRENGTHENING
RUFORUM
GOVERNANCE

ACHIEVEMENTS

KEY PERFORMANCE MARKERS FOR 2014/2015

NEW STAFF MEMBERS AND IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

Building on the results of the functional analysis approved by the RUFORUM Board in July 2014, and on lessons learned from Phase I, seven new staff members were recruited to increase efficiency and support the currently overburdened program staff. Likewise, governance has been strengthened to support high quality program delivery. As a result, there have been a significant improvement in terms of communication and knowledge management, in follow-up of training and grant programs, and in the overall tracking of performance. RUFORUM's financial

management and reporting has been strengthened to ensure timely disbursement of funds to member universities, more systematically follow ups on reporting and higher accountability demands to the supported universities. Conversely, the member universities have improved on paying the annual membership fee, a testimony to their strong ownership and belief in RUFORUM as an effective platform for networking among African universities and for training the next generation of scientists. RUFORUM continues to receive requests for membership.

FORMULATION OF KEY MESSAGES

During the year, the RUFORUM Secretariat has effectively engaged its governance and management organs to discuss and generate consensus on key messages to be presented to the heads of state and governments. The Principals & Deans Committee has produced a communique while the Board Executive has made arrangements to visit and present

RUFORUM agenda in the broader context of rebuilding a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities to the heads of states ahead of the 2016 summit. The strategy is to identify champions at the highest level of decision-making and support.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

The overall management of the RUFORUM activities has been significantly strengthened through out the reporting period with a business orientation perspective. Via the signed MoU with the African Union and the strengthened partnerships with other agencies such as NEPAD, CSIR and the Malawian and South African Governments, RUFORUM

has been able to advocate for increased financial support to the organization's activities from African governments. Thus in the coming period, greater attention towards ownership by network members, greater connectedness with African governments including the Regional Economic Commissions will be pursued for enhancing sustainability

of the network. The issue of financial sustainability is a major risk to RUFORUM operations. Consequently, greater attention will be placed on strengthening partnerships with the private sector, and to increase government and civil society engagement during the coming period.

Networking and partnerships are critical across the range of Secretariat operations and have been pursued across the core areas. As such, various MoU's have been established to facilitate partnerships to support programmatic functions, recognizing the importance of strategic linkages to leverage various capacities in the region. A

key component of RUFORUM's transformative functions are derived from the ability to engage vice-chancellors to share lessons across the network, particularly through exchange visits. During the period, seven vice chancellors visited the Kenyatta University in Kenya to learn from a case of a vice-chancellor transforming an African university. In April 2015, the vice-chancellor of Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) visited Makerere University, as did a management team from Gezira University to Makerere University. Many of the visits have led to signing of MoU to enable stronger units/ departments to support others.

NEW STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

RUFORUM's success has brought in new challenges especially in the area of demand for a continent wide membership and RUFORUM's role in creating this. In addition, there are considerable changes in the agricultural and higher education landscapes that call for realignment of RUFORUM thrusts in the coming years. Consequently, during the reporting period, RUFORUM

has conducted a review of its operations over the last 10 years and prepared a rolling Strategic Business Plan (2015-2020), which will be launched in August 2015. The strategy provides guidelines for membership expansion, enhancing governance of the network, and business principles to be pursued among others.



The background of the slide features a close-up, high-angle view of several green plastic trays filled with light-colored, round soybean seeds. The trays are arranged in a row, with the foreground tray being the most prominent and in sharp focus. The seeds are densely packed, and their natural texture and color are clearly visible. A semi-transparent yellow rectangular overlay is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the text.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FUNDRAISING

KEY PERFORMANCE MARKERS FOR 2014/2015

RUFORUM has made efforts to strengthen resource mobilization during the reporting period. In addition to the proposal writing and engagement of RUFORUM network partners in this regard, RUFORUM has also initiated various means to strengthen resource mobilization in the region. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) remains the largest donor to RUFORUM, providing over 60% of its operating budget. As well as a number of other development partners are providing support to RUFORUM.

In the area of proposal writing, RUFORUM has supported universities to write winning proposals through organisation of write shops, as well as other facilitation support. For example, RUFORUM has mobilized and facilitated teams to develop proposals in response to the Food & Business Applied Research Fund (ARF) call for proposals.

FOUR TEAMS from Benin, Uganda, Kenya and Burundi respectively were successful in writing winning proposals.

These projects provide for multi-stakeholder consortia engagements in integrated agricultural research for development and is an opportunity to promote linkages in research for development between knowledge centers (universities), public and private practitioners as well as research organizations to address aspects of applied research for innovation.

In response to IDRC CIFS RF call for proposals, RUFORUM Secretariat mobilized 14 university teams in Kenya, Malawi, Benin, Ethiopia and Canada to develop proposals to respond and now awaiting feedback on the review of the proposals. RUFORUM will continue to work with

universities to participate in the competitive African Higher Education Centers of Excellence Initiative where its role has been to facilitate partnership building and engagement both within the region and globally.

In June 2015, RUFORUM launched its crowdfunding initiative, the “*RUFORUM Scholarship fund*” that will be used to support potential graduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access quality higher education and seek means to ‘give back’. An Alumni association is being established to explore how to make use of Alumni to support capacity building in the region.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

KEY PERFORMANCE MARKERS FOR 2014/2015

The total income received during the year 2014/15 was US\$ 5,633,900 compared to US\$ 5,503,145 expected during the financial year 2014/15.

TABLE • STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE 12 MONTHS PERIOD UP TO 30 JUNE 2015

	12 MONTHS TO 30 JUN 2015	12 MONTHS TO 30 JUN 2014
	in USD	in USD
Income	5,633,900	6,063,891
Expenditure	(5,094,326)	(4,943,793)
OPERATING SURPLUS	539,574	1,120,098
Net Finance (Cost)/Income	(164,806)	82,029
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	374,768	1,202,127
Other comprehensive income	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	374,768	1,192,854

See explanatory notes on page 38

The total income received during the 12 months period is \$5,633,900 compared to \$9,090,536 received in the previous year. The expected income for 2014/15 was \$5,503,145 which is \$130,755 less than the actual income received due to the new projects funded during the period with new donors.

During the year, two new donors came on board. These were the World Bank and International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). As well as there

was an increase in income from membership subscription due to growth in RUFORUM members from 41 to 46 in the period of 1st of July 2014 to 30th of June 2015. RUFORUM also launched a crowd funding campaign during the year to boost its sustainability, and this brought in \$4,280.

The net finance cost for the year relates to bank interest earned mainly on the fixed deposit (\$35,552) and foreign exchange loss (\$200,394) due to the movement in the Euro and Uganda Shilling rates.

The total expenditure \$5,094,326 included:

Expenses incurred in awarded MSc and PhD grants, and related activities during the year	\$1,745,539
Salaries and other benefits for the Secretariat staff	\$1,020,139
Expenses incurred during the 4 th Biennial conference in Maputo in July 2014	\$593,123
Marketing and dissemination costs attract new donors and create awareness of RUFORUM	\$48,295
Bad debts provisioning made in the current year relating to the long outstanding advances to member universities (which have been outstanding for over four years)	\$163,787
Development of the new Strategic Business Plan	\$46,174
Beefing up ICT work both at Secretariat and for strengthening outreach activities at our universities	\$28,842

TABLE • STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE 12 MONTHS PERIOD UP TO 30 JUNE 2015

ASSETS	30 JUNE 2015 US\$	30 JUNE 2014 US\$
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Equipment	115,945	85,420
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and bank	3,599,800	3,809,993
Advances to member universities	3,080,154	2,466,965
Receivable - member subscriptions	221,620	315,353
Other receivables	70,914	14,478
	6,972,488	6,606,789
TOTAL ASSETS	7,088,433	6,692,209
ACCUMULATED FUND AND LIABILITIES		
ACCUMULATED FUND		
Accumulated fund	6,749,610	6,374,842
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Payables and accruals	339,823	317,367
TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUND AND LIABILITY	7,088,433	6,692,209

See explanatory notes on the following page

EXPLANATORY NOTES

EQUIPMENT

The total value of equipment increased during the period mainly due to additions of one motor vehicle (\$35,188), 20 staff laptops (\$13,751), Secretariat generator (\$22,342) and a reducing effect of depreciation charge (\$40,756).

CASH AND BANK

The cash balance at year end decreased by \$210,193 compared to the prior year due to the usage of the funds in project activities and reduction in income received. The outstanding cash balance at 30 June 2015 is to be used to settle outstanding payables and suppliers' invoices, pending project activities like the advances for 6th Call GRGs (\$1,740,000), August 2015 Annual General Meeting (\$270,000), among others.

ADVANCES TO MEMBER UNIVERSITIES

The member advances increased in the current year by \$613,189 compared to the prior year. This was mainly due to year one funds disbursed to the member universities for the GRG grants awarded under BMGF Phase 2.

RECEIVABLE – MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

There has been improved compliance by member universities in remitting membership subscription. Management at RUFORUM Secretariat also undertook measures to regularly follow up on universities that were in arrears. This resulted into a reduction in the pending subscription by \$93,733 compared to last year.

CURRENT LIABILITIES

These relate to staff gratuity payable, National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) payable, other payables and accruals.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

During the 12 months of 2014/15, the following were undertaken:

1. The finance system was regularly backed up (daily on the server) and the backups are kept off the server on an external hard disc on a weekly basis.
2. The \$500,000 (UGX 1,300,000,000) which was transferred to a fixed deposit account matured on 25th of June 2015 and generated interest income of 9% per annum. Thereafter, the funds together with the interest that was generated amounting to UGX 1,399,450,000 have been re-invested in a 12-months fixed deposit. This will mature on 25th of June 2016 and it will generate interest income for the organisation at a rate of 12% per annum.
3. The Procurement Committee meeting which took place in January 2015 approved the purchase of a power back up for the Secretariat. This is critical especially for the Finance system housed at the Secretariat which cannot operate without power. Installation of the automatic generator was also completed.
4. Regular follow up on membership subscription in arrears. As per the Board's approval, no grants are awarded to universities that are more than three years in arrears.
5. The following financial reports to donors were prepared and submitted during the period:
 - BMGF Phase I final financial report
 - BMGF Phase II financial report for year I
 - Ohio State University – IAGRI project (quarterly financial reports)
 - Rockefeller Foundation (M&E project) end of project financial report
 - APPEAR (Water cap project) end of project financial report
 - Carnegie Corporation Year II financial report
 - PAEPARD Phase II- Year I financial report
 - EDULINK II Online tracking of Alumni – financial report for year 1
 - EDULINK – Post conflict project financial report for Year I
 - The Rockefeller Foundation- Climate Change Project final financial report
 - ACP-Biodiversity-European Union – NUS – final financial report
 - ACP-Innovation- European Union - GO4IT – final financial report



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