Developing capacities to better contribute to the improvement of food security and nutrition in Africa

On 26 October 2017, FAO and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen the capacities of RUFORUM member universities to better contribute to the improvement of food security and nutrition in Africa. The partnership was renewed for a further 3-year period in October 2020.

MAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITIES:
- Developing capacities of young farmers and agriculture graduate students;
- Developing technical competencies of RUFORUM universities to manage digital agricultural data and information;
- Facilitating knowledge sharing on food security and nutrition;
- Supporting policy and multistakeholder processes on food security and nutrition.

PARTNERSHIP MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>FAO-RUFORUM partnership formalised through MoU.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Community-Based Field Attachment Programme Award.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Assessment of the institutional and legal frameworks for food security and nutrition in East Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Capacity development of young family farmers and graduate students on agricultural innovations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Renewal of the FAO-RUFORUM partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Studies on a) COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on family farmers in Uganda, and b) family farmers’ use of digital technologies in Africa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTRIBUTING TO

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.
KEY RESULTS

01 | Developing Capacities of Young Farmers and Graduate Students
- To enhance the capacities of young farmers and agriculture graduate students, FAO and RUFORUM in 2020:
  - trained 30 participants (10 graduate students, 12 young family farmers, 8 adult family farmers) on Entrepreneurship and Business, ICTs in Agriculture for Family Farmers, and Innovation Platforms for Family Farmers.
  - organised a virtual workshop linking young family farmers, adult family farmers, graduate students, and youth involved in developing digital solutions in agriculture: The lack of success stories highlighting experiences of family farmers in using digital technologies emerged as a gap that needs addressing.
  - FAO and RUFORUM are piloting the curriculum for an Agripreneurship Online Course for Eastern Africa, targeting youths. The course comprises five modules: Introduction and Need Finding, Understanding Customers and Segmentation, Prototyping, Financial Management, and Goal Setting and Next Steps.

02 | Developing Capacities in Measuring Food Insecurity
- On 15 September 2021, FAO and RUFORUM jointly organised a technical webinar on Measuring Food Insecurity in the SDG Era. They introduced the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) approach to measure food insecurity. A significant outcome of the webinar was the potential to establish an “African FIES Academy” to train young professionals in Africa on advanced, modern food security measurement and statistics.

03 | Developing Capacities in Accessing Agricultural Information and Open Data Management
- In 2018, FAO and RUFORUM:
  - trained 387 individuals (researchers, librarians, and PhD students in RUFORUM member universities) on AGORA (Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture). AGORA provides access to a digital collection of up to 15,500 key journals and up to 48,000 books.
  - collaborated on a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Open Data Management in Agriculture and Nutrition to support RUFORUM member institutions in open data management. 171 individuals from 50 RUFORUM member universities participated in the MOOC.

04 | Strengthening Agriculture/Food Security Policy Frameworks
- In November 2021, FAO and RUFORUM piloted the Modular Training Program on Public Policy Cycles for Family Farming (MTP) in Uganda. Developed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and FAO in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF) 2019-2028, the MTP focuses on the design, development, implementation, and review of public policies and investments to support family farming.
- In 2020, the FAO Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa and RUFORUM carried out an exercise to map the policy and legislation frameworks and assess the Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) policy coherence and the state of food security and nutrition in Eastern Africa.

05 | Production of Evidence on Family Farmers
- In 2021, FAO and RUFORUM collaborated on a Study on Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on Family Farmers and the Agricultural Sector in Uganda, and documented cases of family farmers’ use of digital technologies in agriculture value chains in Africa.

06 | Facilitation of Policy and Multistakeholder Processes
- In April and October 2018, FAO and RUFORUM organised events for Members of Parliament (MPs) in Uganda and East Africa to engage with academia and explore the role lawmakers and academia should play in achieving food security and sustainable agriculture in Africa.
- On 31 July 2020, FAO and RUFORUM convened a high-level webinar panel on Universities and Research Institutions Supporting Family Farmers During and Post COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa. The panel addressed the role of African universities and research institutions in implementing strategies to reinforce the capacity and resilience of family farmers, especially women and youth, to cope with shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

07 | Knowledge Transfer and Practical Learning/Training Model
- In 2018, FAO and RUFORUM implemented the Community-Based Field Attachment Programme Award (CFAPA), a knowledge transfer and practical learning/training model. Details can be found in a briefing note and the good practice entry in the TECA platform.

LOOKING FORWARD

FAO and RUFORUM are looking forward to continued collaboration in the following areas:
- Strengthening institutional capacities and technical competencies of RUFORUM member universities for research, advocacy and evidence-based policy processes.
- Engaging academia from RUFORUM universities in FAO-led policy processes and multistakeholder dialogues in Africa and at global level.
- Exploring the possibility for scaling up CFAPA.
- Designing the “African FIES Academy”.
- Piloting an “Agrifood Mentoring and Coaching Program for Africa” under a proposal led by FAO’s South-South and Triangular Cooperation Division, RUFORUM, Agripreneurship Alliance, and African Agribusiness Incubation Network and Sustainable Food Systems Ireland.

AREAS OF COLLABORATION

FAO and RUFORUM work in partnership to advance knowledge sharing and dissemination on food security, nutrition, sustainable food and agriculture in Africa; develop capacities and technical competencies of RUFORUM universities in the area linked to food security and nutrition, sustainable food and agriculture, climate change, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation; and strengthen strategic alliances and partnerships with regional organizations for advocacy, policy dialogue and promotion of an integrated approach to food security and nutrition and joint actions for the implementation of SDGs.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RUFORUM

Founded in 2004, RUFORUM is a consortium of 129 member universities operating in 38 countries in Africa. RUFORUM works to strengthen the capacities of universities in Africa to foster innovation, train agricultural professionals, produce impact-oriented research and enhance collaboration between academia and farmers, national agricultural research institutions and governments. RUFORUM Secretariat is hosted by the Government of Uganda with a Secretariat at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda.

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