

UP Awarded: ARUA – UKRI GCRF Partnership Programme for Capacity Building

African countries are confronted with a triple burden of malnutrition. This triple burden consists of (i) deficiency of macronutrients leading to malnutrition (ii) deficiency of micronutrients (iii) overweight and its associated diseases. Africa is also faced with the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. A transformed agricultural and food system is thus a necessary condition for addressing this double-triple challenge.

Achieving nutrition and food security in Africa is a complex and multi-faceted challenge, which requires novel approaches, evidence and new policy and institutional enabling environments. The ARUA Centre of Excellence in Food Security brings together ARUA members from East, West and Southern Africa, as well as a broader consortium of African and international partners working on food security research, policy and capacity development to exponentially increase the networks of each participating institution, and to maximise the translation of knowledge into impact at the grassroots and policy levels. It is intended that the network will bring research and academic excellence to the fore throughout the region, developing strong and viable research universities, offering postgraduate training to talented students, and sharing academic resources across universities on the continent.

This project sets out to collaboratively build the capacities required across research and policy to tackle this multi-faceted challenge and help avoid the policy paralysis that in some countries led to little or no progress towards addressing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The project team, which includes the University of Pretoria, University of Nairobi, the University of Ghana, Legon, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) incorporates expertise in agriculture, post-harvest losses, land use, food security, nutrition and health, rural livelihoods, and policy and institutional analysis. FANRPAN is a multi-stakeholder pan-African network whose mission is to build resilient food systems across Africa through the assessment and creation of food, agriculture and natural resources policies that are both evidence-based and developed in partnership with non-state actors. RUFORUM supports universities to address the important and largely unfulfilled role that universities play in contributing to the well-being of small-scale farmers and economic development of countries throughout the sub-Saharan Africa region.

The consortium will address capacity building and policy development under 5 broad themes: (1) Building capacity in food security through different approaches, (2) Retaining nutrient quality through complementary interventions, (3) Building skills engaging with big data science through the lens of agriculture and food systems, (4) develop policies for optimal nutrition sensitive options, and (5) a high level colloquium.

Work will be focused in three countries in Africa: Kenya and Ghana - which are low-income countries with varied farming systems - and South Africa, which is an upper middle income country. In each country, research and policy capacity will be built through collaborative partnerships across academic institutions, non-governmental organisations, policymakers, and farmers. Through FANRPAN's inter-governmental policy expertise and platforms, we aim to generate lessons learned from our partner countries and disseminate these across Africa to contribute to capacity building and through the application of an appropriate model of evidence into policy in other African countries, and at the regional level.

<https://www.ukri.org/research/global-challenges-research-fund/aru-gcrf-pp-for-capacity-building/>