

Mak Holds Consultative Workshop on Newly Proposed Postgraduate Programmes in gender and agriculture



The Department of Extension and Innovation Studies at CAES, Makerere University through the Gender-responsive Researchers for Agricultural Transformation (GREAT) Project convened a Stakeholder Consultative Workshop on proposed postgraduate programs in gender and agriculture at Makerere University.

This event was part of the activities of the renewed partnership between the University and the CGIAR. Makerere University and the CGIAR in August 2024 renewed their Memorandum of Understanding to accelerate efforts to create more inclusive agricultural systems in Africa. Supported through the CGIAR Gender Impact Platform, Makerere implements the activities through GREAT, co-implemented by the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES) and the School of Women and Gender Studies. This is in line with the broader aim of nurturing a cadre of gender responsive agricultural researchers, equipped to contribute to inclusive and effective Agricultural systems that address the priorities of both women and men in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

According to the PI, GREAT, Dr. Florence Birungi Kyazze, the GREAT has offered short courses for over 8 years. Some of the lessons learnt along the way are that the short courses are not sufficient to produce the kind of calibre that can drive gender and agricultural development. *"Despite having a fully-fledged School of Women and Gender Studies, and a College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at Makerere University, there's no specific programme on gender and agriculture hence the need to institutionalize through an MSc and Postgraduate Diploma,"* Dr Kyazze explained.

Addressing participants at the half-day stakeholder consultative workshop held on 30th September 2024 at Grand Global Hotel in Kampala, Dr Kyazze noted that there was a lot of quality content from the decade-long efforts of GREAT to support the programs. The workshop was geared towards engaging stakeholders on the core competencies and requirements for MSc and Postgraduate Diploma training in gender and Agriculture. It was attended by representatives from the Uganda National Planning Authority (NPA), the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), the Gender Mainstreaming Division at Makerere University, School of Women and Gender Studies – Makerere University, School of Agricultural Sciences – Makerere University, Gulu University, Mountains of the Moon University, and Uganda Christian University – Mukono. Other stakeholders participated in the virtual consultation survey.

Dr Bernard Obaa, Head of the Department of Extension and Innovation Studies, cited the timeliness of the engagement, noting that gender and agriculture are one of the research themes of DEIS, and it is therefore important that the proposed graduate programs would be a pillar in operationalizing that theme. He thanked Prof. Margaret Najjingo Mangheni (in absentia) for her support and appreciated the School of Women and Gender Studies for partnering on this initiative.

In her remarks, the Principal, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Makerere University, Prof. Gorettie Nabanoga expressed gratitude for the continued staff effort in research and innovation. She highlighted the need for staff to pay attention to the contribution of their research if meaningful transformation is to be realized. *"As a College, we are intentional on making meaningful and positive contribution to national development through research, but we haven't yet achieved this,"* she noted, calling on staff to focus on research that will drive national transformation.

Prof. Nabanoga also highlighted the university's focus on impactful programs, especially as Makerere celebrates and reflects on its 100 years of existence. *"The agricultural sector being the backbone of the economy and source of livelihood for the majority of the population, the proposed programs in Gender and Agriculture are envisaged to be quite impactful at the national level"* she said.

She reiterated CAES's concept of co-creation and was happy that it was being put into practice by DEIS in the development of the new programs. She welcomed and encouraged the partnership with the School of Women and Gender Studies, and other universities in this process of co-creation to enhance the impact of Makerere University's contribution to Uganda's Development Agenda 2030, as well as other regional and global development targets.

During the workshop, stakeholders defined the key competences of the desired graduates of the Post-graduate diploma and MSc in Gender and Agriculture. They highlighted essential competences of the graduates included but not limited to; skills in gender analysis, advocacy, and the ability to integrate gender into agricultural development interventions, ability to engage with basic concepts, principles and theories of gender; ability to design and facilitate

relevant training programs in gender in agriculture; display positive attitude and behaviors towards gender inclusivity and influence change in others; integrate gender into research and development interventions; and application of appropriate tools, methods and strategies to empowering women and youth.

Stakeholders indicated that the graduates of MSc would among other things be expected to have additional analytical and research skills in gender and ability to communicate well to the scientific and non-scientific communities.

The topics synthesized from the resources used by GREAT were enriched with content and new areas suggested for inclusion as curriculum topics in the Postgraduate programs

These would be enriched with the feedback gathered from several consultation avenues, and refined, and reviewed through various layers of stakeholders.

About GREAT

The GREAT initiative started in 2015 as a 5-year collaborative capacity building project between Makerere University and Cornell University in USA, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. GREAT later transitioned into a broadened tripartite two-year partnership to include the OneCGIAR through the GENDER Impact Platform (2021-2023). GREAT equips researchers to create more inclusive and effective Agricultural systems by addressing the priorities of both women and men in Sub-Saharan Africa. The project has built ample technical capacity of staff at Makerere University, established strategic partnerships with various institutions, and developed ample training material to enhance curriculum in gender and agriculture.

Over the years, GREAT has continued to deliver courses to agricultural researchers in the theory and practice of gender-responsive research, seeking to increase opportunities for equitable participation and sharing of benefits from Agricultural research to improve the output of smallholder women farmer, entrepreneurs, and farmer organizations.

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