



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

Cross Learning Among Higher Education Collaboratives



THEME

Positioning Africa's Universities and the Higher Education Sector to effectively impact development processes on the continent

Hosts:

The Government of Botswana and
RUFORUM member Universities in Botswana led by Botswana University of
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Venue:

Chevron

Date: 2nd December, 2025

Time: 08:30-12:45

Contact: Dr. Abigael Nekesa Otinga (a.otinga@ruforum.org)

Background

Learning and adaptive management of projects has inherently become mainstreamed within development projects today. This is largely advocated with a view of shifting the culture traditional monitoring and evaluation that has literally tended to focus on 'counting the beans' without deliberate feedback loops for system improvement. Further, learning adaptive management of projects is being promoted because it also addresses the challenges associated with project management where projects find it difficult extracting, distributing, and applying learning across both cultural and structural boundaries thereby limiting the potential of exploiting the generated knowledge . Accordingly, there's now a popular saying that "organisations are either learning or they are dying" because learning is a process that enriches knowledge, and knowledge is the capacity for effective action.

Owing to the complexity and uncertain nature of development and humanitarian needs, systematic, integrative and collaborative processes in program design, data gathering and information dissemination as well as interpretation and learning process that support evidence-based decision making, adaptation, flexibility and innovative delivery of actions are required. It is thus common that most development projects and/or programs developed today whether by civil society and/or higher education institutions are required to provide an actional learning and adaptation plan (LAMP). However, for most of the institutions and/or project partners, the LAMP is often developed for compliance rather than for improving internal and external processes for program success. Where bits and pieces of it are deployed, there is strong compartmentalization into 'lessons' or 'success stories' and fall short of addressing the comprehensive learning needs among diverse stakeholders involved in the program delivery.

The result of such patterns is that learning is reduced to be a preserve of a few individuals in the organization often attributed to monitoring, evaluation and learning officers or directorates and/or directly involved project teams. This undermines the functionality of learning as an instrument for driving social change and impact arising from program interventions. Yet, information and feedback from various actor groups is critical in triggering actions towards improving services and driving engagement pathways that strengthen accountability and mutual respect. Given the collaborative nature of several development actions today with the involvement of citizens at various levels through engaged communities, it opens avenues for feedback, learning and adaptation for action because without action, no learning would have taken place. However, it is critical to note that what is actionable may vary within and between stakeholders including individuals and institutions. This may be influenced by how information is processed; it is transmitted and how it is received.

Across all Mastercard Foundation partnerships, the learning and adaptive management plan is an important imperative and partners are often encouraged to use the LAMP in their processes and operations. Therefore, this session seeks to bring together higher education collaboratives explore

the various ways they have listened, documented, learnt, unlearned and are relearning to derive relevant information to guide their programming actions.

Purpose and Objectives of the session

The overall objective of this session is to initiate an annual higher education collaboratives cross-learning initiative that leverages the diverse RUFORUM network as well as the Mastercard Foundation partners network. The specific objectives are:

Conveners

This session is by RUFORUM Secretariat, Mastercard Foundation, the TAGDev Collaborative, Education and brings together other higher education collaboratives such as the Education Collaborative, Climate Collaborative, Digital Learning collaborative among others.

Agenda

Moderators: Dr. Aster Addamu (Mastercard Foundation) and Prof. Nancy Mungai (Egerton University)

Day 1: Tuesday 2nd December, 2025

Venue: Chevron

Registration link: <https://ruforum-org.zoom.us/j/88183335411?pwd=JUoRZkZkWDGR7nm0ueFaR6wIQaOybx18.1>

Session Chair: Dr. Aster Addamu,

Rapporteurs: Dr. Frejus

Time	Event	Person in-charge
08:00-08:30	Guests Arrival and Videos	Protocol team (Emmanuel Okalany, Winston Abanaitwe, David Amitu)
08:30-08:45	Welcome Remarks	Dr. Florence Nakayiwa, Deputy Executive Secretary, RUFORUM
08:45-09:05	Key note: Building Common Ground for Impact Oriented Programming: Moving Beyond Counting the Beans	Mr. Eric Tuyisenge, Mastercard Foundation
09:05-09:35	Fireside Chat: Engaging University Systems, Processes, Practices and People	
	1. Prof. Justine Namaalwa (Makerere University): Creating Internal University buy-in across a complex public university environment: best practices for program integration 2. Prof. Duncan Ongeng (Gulu University): Building confidence in the university and stakeholders for breaking barriers for ecosystem stakeholder (local governments, RDPs) engagement.	Prof. Nancy Mungai (Moderator)
09:35-10:00	Facilitated Q&A with the Audience	Prof. Nancy Mungai (Moderator)
10:00-10:30	Health Break	Hotel
10:35-11:25	Fireside Chat: Innovations for catalyzing scale delivery and impact	
	1. Prof. Jan Swanepoel (University of Free State): Value Propositions for Attracting Private Sector and Other Institutional Programs for Resource Leverage 2. Mr. Adnane Mohammed (UM6P): Engaging TVETs and Employment Agencies for Transitioning the Out of School Youth 3. Ms. Sandra Malaika (Carnegie Mellon University-Africa): Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for internal change and impact demonstration; how process innovations catalyzed personnel action	Aster Addamu (Moderator)
11:25-11:40	Facilitated Q&A with the Audience	
11:40-12:30	Technical Session: Informing Strategy and Action with Evidence	
	Ms. Joyce Muchena (Mastercard Foundation) and Dr. Irine Akite (RUFORUM): Championing gender inclusive design and delivery across higher education collaboratives: Lessons for unlearning, learning and re-learning Ms. Ify Monyei (Green House Capital): Entrepreneurship and Innovation Orchestration Ecosystem: Evidence from a Regional Study and Business Development Strategy for Higher Education Institutions	Dr. Patrick Byakagaba (Moderator)
12:30-12:45	Facilitated Q&A with the Audience	
12:45-13:45	LUNCH Break	Hotel

