

Alliance for African Partnership Launch Event, July 18-22, 2017 Dar e Salaam, Tanzania Summary Report

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The Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) is an initiative of Michigan State University that will develop and promote collaborative and cross-disciplinary research with African partners and institutions aimed at solving some of the global challenges we are facing today.

The AAP held a Launch event and Grantees Workshop in Dar es Salaam, July 18-22, 2017. The Launch was well attended by MSU professors from various departments and AAP staff, led by their Provost, June Youatt, vice chancellors of African universities, deputy vice-chancellors, professors, researchers, innovators, NGOs, industry representatives, ministry representatives and students. Most of the participants are working with MSU staff to implement programs in their home countries.

I attended the launch and grantee workshop with Prof. Ruth Oniang'o, the Founder of Rural Outreach Program (ROP) Africa. ROP is one of the 2017 grantees of the AAP working with Prof. Jennifer Olson (MSU), Eric Tarkleson (EndaTech, Arusha) and other professors at MSU. As ROP Program Officer, I take Jennifer Olson around western Kenya to carry out project activities.

The key-note address titled "Ants, Bees, Termites and People" was given by Dr. Celestine Monga of the African Development Bank. His talk was in line with the conference agenda of partnerships. The argument was that cooperation and teamwork gives some animals greater survival advantage. The conclusion of his talk highlighted four deficit areas that most Africans suffer from:

- i. Lack of self-esteem: we need to take ourselves seriously and present our ideas with conviction.
- ii. Lack of knowledge and learning: mostly a lack of curiosity; we ought to read to know and to understand. No culture has a monopoly on knowledge.
- iii. Lack of leadership: visionary leaders work to strengthen institutions so that countries can survive bad leaders.
- iv. A lack of conflict managing skills in the home, at work and even nationwide.

During the three days, participants were engaged in thought provoking discussions on partnerships: examples of partnerships, what it takes to have successful partnerships, making partnerships sustainable, past experiences with partnerships, examples of good/bad partnerships, evaluating partnerships, recognizing partners' contributions in a partnership, and building systems that support partnerships...in our institutions.

Participants discussed in small groups what the AAP means to them, the vision, mission, objectives of the partnership, and what they would like the AAP to look like. The ideas and

actionable approaches generated from the working groups will be made available to the public at a later date <http://aap.isp.msu.edu/>.

The AAP awarded grants to 15 proposals submitted in their 2017 (and first) grant competition. The grants were awarded to proposals covering a range of disciplines: health, nutrition, agri-food systems, cultural heritage preservation, water, environment, energy, and youth empowerment. Rural Outreach Africa is a grantee of AAP. More information on page 5.

During the Grantee Workshop on the last day, Professor John Kaneene gave the five ingredients necessary to sustain partnerships:

- i. Money: continuous efforts to get more funding for projects
- ii. Accountability
- iii. Communication and transparency
- iv. Discipline to deliver
- v. Mentorship of young people

Some of the points I gathered from the event are:

- Partnerships are built on TRUST, and partnerships begin with THE PERSON. Two people/parties have to agree to work together.
- To foster trust, both parties have to be accountable to each other; each should carry out their duties with diligence and integrity. The partners should share equally in the success and in the failures. No blame game.
- Ownership, inclusivity, and sustainability are important aspects of successful partnerships.
- Partnerships are relationships; they recognize that everyone has something to offer. For example, a western partner will come with money and the African partner's contribution may be in-kind (employee time, expertise, use of facilities) but still significant.
- In Africa, partnerships need to address our development agenda. Partnership priorities should be aligned to cater to the local goals and objectives. The best way to do this is by employing a bottom-up approach to development work.
- Africans, we need to develop our own knowledge to serve as a reference point: to know where we have come from, what has been achieved, what has failed, and where we hope to reach when working with partners. Currently, there is little reference available because when projects end, reports are filed away and findings are not made public.
- Involving the civil society is critical for successful programs. NGOs understand cultures; facilitate information and exchange, implementation, support collection and dissemination of knowledge, and monitoring and evaluation. Programs should include capacity-building in the course of the project to strengthen competencies of those on the ground.
- Mentorship is critical to development. Experienced professionals in Africa were encouraged to be intentional with mentoring young professionals. Young people also

were encouraged to be receptive to mentorship and aggressively look for mentorship opportunities.

- As a young professional, I learned that I should invest in good, working relationships and to network because that is how most people get career development opportunities-through people they know.

Some sampled pictures from the AAP Launch.



Prof Ruth Oniang'o with Prof. Berhanu Abegaz (former Executive Director, African Academy of Sciences)



Prof. Ruth Oniang'o with Amy Jamison (MSU) and Prof. Wanjiku Chiuri (Laikipia University)



Signing of MoU between AAP and the African Capacity Building Foundation



Signing of MoU between AAP and the African Center for Economic Transformation



Prof. Ruth Oniang'o with (L-R) Bongiwe Njobe (GFAR), Prof. Jennifer Olson (MSU) and Prof. Kgomotso Moahi (University of Botswana)



Prof Ruth Oniang'o and Dr. Boniface Dulani as presenters in a panel titled: Building bridges and transforming lives in action. Session chair is Prof. Peninah Mlama (University of Dar es Salaam)

Rural Outreach Program Africa - Alliance for African Partnership Agricultural Technologies Project Partnership

Report prepared by: Njeri Karanu
Program Officer, ROP

Rural Outreach Program Africa is partnering with AAP, an initiative of Michigan State University, to develop labor-saving, efficient farm tools that are suitable for ageing women farmers in rural Kenya. Using a human-centered design approach, the project will work with local farmers and local fabricators (*juakali*) to identify potentially successful technologies that could be produced locally and that would have high demand. Farmers will be engaged in the design process: sketching, prototyping and field testing of the tools.

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Develop a successful user-centered design methodology to address this major problem
2. Identify potential technologies and develop prototypes with local entrepreneurs
3. Test the prototypes with women farmers

This project will bring together students and faculty, entrepreneurs (blacksmiths, metal workers and engineers) and farmers from Kenya, Tanzania and Michigan. Other partners in the project are Jomo Kenyatta Agricultural and Technology University, and a Tanzanian engineering company, EndaTech.

Project activities include:

- i. Needs assessment of local farmers in Western Kenya to understand the limitations of currently available technologies, the types of technologies that would be preferred, and specifications for those technologies.
- ii. Co-design technologies: work with farmers to generate design concepts (i.e., sketches). Team members will also draw on ideas from new and old ideas, and discuss with farmers and local makers.
- iii. Select promising ideas.
- iv. Build prototypes by makers in Michigan, Kenya and Tanzania.
- v. Field test the prototypes, and adopt an iterative process of refining the designs and manufacturing process.

So far, Jennifer Olson (Project principal) and Njeri Karanu (program officer, ROP) have been to the field twice, for a total of 10 days, to: 1) conduct an assessment of currently available tools that the farmers use, 2) an assessment of the local metal workers: blacksmiths and fabricators in Kakamega, to see how well they are equipped and the kind of work they do, 3) conduct focus group discussions with farmers to get

their ideas on what the ideal farming tools would look like, and 4) to have farmers test out some available improved tools and give their recommendations on modifications.

See pictures below.



Meetings with farmers' groups. Left: an old hand hoe used for planting beans and for light weeding. Right: a woman demonstrates how she uses the *jembe* for planting and weeding.



Left: a wheel-hoe weeder. Right: a walking tractor. These implements were found at Bukura Agricultural Development Centre. The wheel-hoe was developed at the institution but stalled due to lack of demand from farmers.



Left: a fabricator takes measurements of an old planter from USA that he will fabricate/modify. Right: a modern planter + fertilizer applicator developed by *juakali* artisans in Siaya, Kenya. The projects intends for the tools to be developed locally for sustainability.



Left: a simple planter developed by a local *juakali* artisan in Sabatia, Kenya. Right: shallow weeders fabricated by *juakali* artisans in Siaya. These are in high demand because conservation agriculture is currently being promoted in western Kenya.



Left: a group of women farmers discussing what an ideal planting/weeding tool would look like. The project is involving farmers right from the beginning to come up with designs and sketches to be prototyped. Right: a group of farmers test out some technologies- jab planter and a simple planter. They gave their reviews on the benefits and limitations of each tool and suggested modifications.



A cereal thresher/sheller developed by a *juakali* artisan in Siaya, Kenya. It is operated by a small diesel engine fitted with a fan to blow away the chaff. The thresher can also be operated manually and it comes with sieves of different sizes for maize, sorghum and millet threshing.

