

Message from the Executive Secretary

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to this first 2010 issue of the Agricultural Education News which signifies the end of the year 2009 and gives us the opportunity of looking forward into 2010. In this issue, I am happy to be sharing with you the progress we have made in our network activities. Key progress has been on staffing, project activity implementation and on resource mobilization. I will be sharing with you as well, our vision for the future.

The 2009 year started on a good note with the Network Manager reporting for duty in April 2009. Subsequently, the Administration Assistant, Mr. Tom Ndege was engaged and reported for duty from 1st October. This strengthening of the Secretariat staff is a very good foundation for enhanced delivery.

Project activities have progressed smoothly. In Volume 15.1 of the Agricultural Education News we highlighted the key projects we are involved in: The SASACID (Strengthening Africa's Strategic Agricultural Capacity for Impact on Development); SCARDA (Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research for Development in Africa); MRCI (Mobilizing Regional Capacity

Initiative—Contextualizing learning Materials Development) and The FAO supported programme on revitalizing Forestry Education. In this issue we will be giving some insights on how these project activities have progressed.

For 2010, we look forward to launch various new projects for our member institutions. But while we are waiting for confirmation for financial support for these new projects, I am happy to let you know that the activities linked to our SASACID, MRCI and Forestry roundtable projects will continue. The network will also be involved as partner in two new projects: FARA/DANIDA UniBRAIN (Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation); and RUFORUM /ACP Programme on conservation and use of neglected underutilized crop species. We are also pleased that in the second project, we will be teaming up with Ruforum and Bioversity International.

As the volume of work therefore intensifies, we will be relying more and more on the network membership for enhanced implementation. We are looking forward to establishing sub regional Focal Institutions in



the first half of 2010. The SEFs who will be engaged will boost implementation capacity of the network.

In 2010, we are very upbeat and looking forward to greater activity implementation. We see a lot of potential and opportunities for networking and we intend to continue leveraging on each other's comparative advantages.

May I take this opportunity to wish all of you a happy and prosperous 2010!

Aissetou Drame Yaye
ANAFE Executive Secretary

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STAFFING

Tom Ndege joins as Admin Assistant

Mr. Tom Ndege joined ANAFE at the beginning of November 2009. Mr. Tom Ndege holds a BSc in Accounting and an MSc in strategic management from Moi University. Mr. Ndege has enormous experience in the fields of Administration and Financial Management. He will facilitate administration of ANAFE projects and also on financial management. He will definitely be an asset to ANAFE. May you all join us in welcoming Tom to the ANAFE family. Here is hoping that his stay at ANAFE will be up to his expectations.



Mr. Tom Ndege

PROJECTS

SASACID

Work on the project SASACID (Strengthening Africa Strategic Agricultural Capacity for Impact on Development) progressed in the last half of 2009. Advertisements for the establishment of regional focal institutions were sent out with the deadline for application being 30th October 2009. We are happy that a total of 12 applications were received. These applications are being evaluated and selection committees will be visiting the shortlisted institutions in the first quarter of 2010. The intention is to launch the Focal Institutions by the end of March, 2010.

The focal institutions will establish an ANAFE office which administratively will be responsible to the University/ College. Each focal Institution will also appoint a Senior Education Fellow to run the office, backed by all required administrative and financial support. The Focal Institution will provide required administrative and financial services to support the RAFT. The FI will be used as a springboard to champion ANAFE activities.

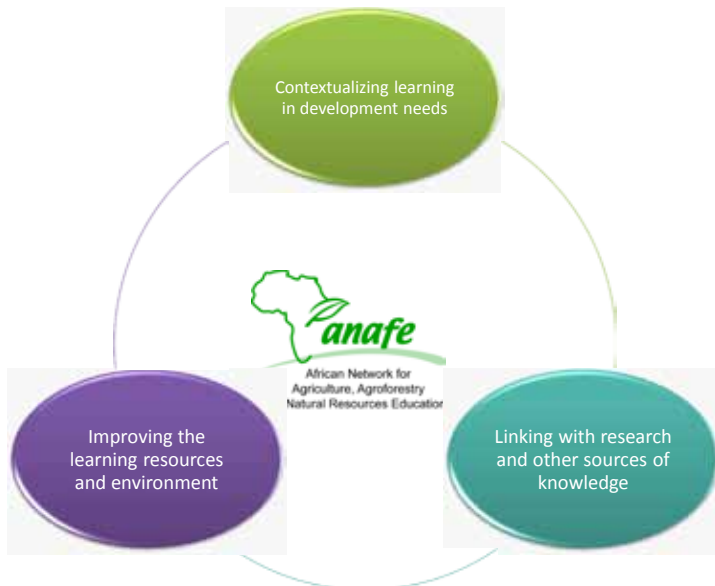
SCARDA

Work on SCARDA (Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa) progressed well. The major activity in the last six months of 2009 was on preparation of the Tracer Studies. A contract between ANAFE and SADC has been developed where ANAFE as the Lead Service Provider will champion the implementation of the Tracer Studies. The objective of the tracer study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the agricultural training programmes through the assessments of the graduates working within the agricultural value-chain. The main purpose of the study is to provide information on the skills and competencies acquired by graduates of tertiary agricultural education systems in line with the ever-changing market requirements in the national agricultural research and development industries.

Targets will be professionals and interns who graduated from agricultural and natural resource management universities and colleges. Industry value chains to be assessed will be agricultural input providers, national agricultural research institutes (NARIs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), private agricultural production companies, farmers' organizations; agri-processors and agri-marketers.

The tracer studies will be conducted in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia. ANAFE will organize and supervise survey instrument development; data collection, analysis and reporting; and organize validation workshops in the three focal countries. Consultants will be engaged in the respective countries to carry out the work. The work will be implemented in the first quarter of 2010.

MRCI—Contextualization of Learning Materials



Lecturers cited lack of incentives to produce contextualized learning materials. They also noted high workload; lack of data to write on; lack of mentors and advisors; lack of finances to publish materials and difficulties encountered in forming writing teams. Across the eight countries, there were no institutional policies in place to encourage contextualized learning material writing.

The students lamented that learning materials were inadequate which they ranked to being poor. Staff noted that they needed support to produce contextualized learning materials including provision of ICT facilities and equipment; support to attend conferences and workshops and recognition for promotion.

Key recommendations from the study are that:

1. Institutions should put in place policy mechanisms for rewarding development and use of contextualized learning materials
2. Lecturers should be re-tooled in contextualized learning material development
3. Tertiary agricultural and Natural Resources Management (NRM) curricula should be reviewed to incorporate experiential learning and
4. Tertiary agricultural and NRM institutions should foster much more the development of local post-graduate degree programmes

In the first quarter of 2010, training teams will be established. The teams will undergo training to develop the training materials. Assistance of the African Virtual University will be sought in contextualizing the learning materials developed.

Results from the survey in eight countries: Benin, Mali, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Malawi have been completed and are available. The objectives were to evaluate the bottlenecks in human and institutional capacity to develop contextualized learning resources in tertiary agricultural educational institutions.

Results from the study indicated that staff prepare their own

material with information downloaded from the internet and there is virtually no use of contextualized learning materials. Most lecturers use computers every day for word-processing, presentations and database applications. In some West African countries like Mali, however, computer availability to lecturers is a challenge. The pattern was the same regarding students' computer usage.



FAO Forestry Roundtable

The project on re-vitalizing Forestry Education is on-going in four East African countries: Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Discussions are on-going in surveys being conducted. Key issues include the following:

- How trees outside forests can be incorporated in forest management
- How multi-sectoral needs can be met (especially water, energy, agricultural sustainability, wildlife, environment and climate change)
- What new institutional arrangements are needed for efficient forestry and
- What new innovations are needed in forest resource assessment?

Country level consultants recruited in the four countries are currently finalizing the surveys with the synthesis report being expected by the end of February 2010 and the roundtable meeting to take place in Arusha in May, 2010.

NEW PROJECTS

UniBRAIN

UniBRAIN (Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural iNnovation) is a project amongst many initiatives that are seeking ways and means to promote agricultural innovation.

What is unique in UniBRAIN is its value proposition which is “to promote innovation and produce graduates with entrepreneurial and business skills and research based knowledge that is relevant to the development of African agriculture and agribusinesses”.

The project will be funded by DANIDA and key implementing partners are FARA; ANAFE, ATPS (African Technology Policy Studies) and PanAAC (Pan African Agribusiness Consortium). The project will be launched in February, 2010.

The year 2010 will be the inception phase and we will be discussing with the network members on the progress in its implementation.

ACP S&T Programme Conservation and use of Neglected and Underutilized Crops

This project will be jointly implemented by Ruforum, Bioversity International and ANAFE. The project is entitled: Building human and institutional capacity for enhancing the conservation and use of Neglected and Underutilized species of crops in West Africa, and Eastern and Southern Africa. The objectives of the study is to reduce

poverty and enhance greater food and nutritional security in West Africa, and Eastern and southern Africa through enhanced conservation and use of neglected and underutilized species. The target groups are educational organizations (schools, universities); research organizations/Researchers; student and women. The project will be funded by the ACP.



REGIONAL MEETINGS

West and Central Africa

An ANAFE regional meeting was held in Cotonou, Benin from the 10th to the 11th of December 2009. The meeting focused on discussing with the membership on aspects of developing a regional strategy for strengthening the participation of Tertiary Education Institutions in the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

Opportunity was also taken to raise members' awareness on the advertisements for the Focal Institutions and to share with them the preliminary results from the MRCI work.

The specific objectives of the meeting were to:

1. Strengthen the ANAFE platform for information and knowledge sharing amongst member institutions
2. Increase members' awareness and knowledge of ANAFE programmes and
3. Identify ANAFE's role and refine its strategy in supporting the CAADP processes

There were 38 participants. Participants were drawn from ANAFE member institutions in West and Central Africa; FARA; NEPAD; ICRAF; ICRA; African Virtual University (AVU) and RuFORUM. The regional meeting for the East and Central Africa and Southern African regions are planned for April, 2010.

Key recommendations drawn from the meeting will be used to update the ANAFE strategy.



Participants at the Francophone regional Meeting in Cotonou, Benin



Participants discussing at the Cotonou Regional Workshop



NEWS AND UPDATES

Proceedings on Climate Change and Production of Book

The Proceedings from the "Climate Change Symposium" which took place in Malawi in 2008 have now been produced and will be posted on the ANAFE website shortly. A book with selected chapters from the symposium is also being produced and is targeted to be out by middle of 2010.

Biodiversity partnership

An MoU has been developed with Bioersivity International. The MoU seeks to strengthen and mainstream Agricultural Biodiversity in Higher Education. This is against the background of the alarming loss of biodiversity in the world's ecosystem; the joint recognition the agrobiodiversity provides essential ecosystem services; generates income and provides nutritional security for millions of rural and urban poor. It is recognised that the teaching of Agrobiodiversity is currently under-represented in Higher Education curricula. There is a need therefore to develop competent professionals for research, education, development and policy advice.

Bioersivity is an international research organization dedicated solely to the conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity. Bioersivity undertakes, encourages and supports research and other activities on the use of conservation of agricultural biodiversity.

Areas of cooperation with ANAFE will therefore be centred on integration of agrobiodiversity in the curricula; and promoting research and awareness of agrobiodiversity issues to all stakeholders.

**Contact
Us!**

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