



**STRENGTHENING MEDIA ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AFRICAP PROGRAMME'S  
RESEARCH TO INFLUENCE POLICY**

# **MALAWI TRAINING REPORT**

**November 2019**



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## 1. Introduction

Agriculture contributes about 15 percent to the African continent's GDP (FAO). Meantime, smallholder farms constitute approximately 80 percent of all farms, while employing about 175 million people directly with significant impact on the environment. In SSA, smallholder farms constitute approximately 80 of all farms, and employ about 175 million people directly, and have significant impact on the environment.

The programme, called Agricultural and Food-system Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP), is a £9.2million research programme focused on improving evidence-based policy making to develop sustainable, productive, agricultural systems, resilient to climate change. It is led by the University of Leeds, a leading Russell Group university in the north of England, in partnership with the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, a pan African multi-stakeholder policy network whose regional secretariat is in Pretoria, South Africa.

The programme is focused on generating evidence-based policy to transform agriculture and food systems in Africa. GCRF-AFRICAP aims to improve productivity of farming systems and their resilience to shocks emanating from climate change impacts. The aim is to support climate-smart and sustainable agricultural development, thus assist countries to attain their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of reducing poverty and hunger, whilst attending to the key targets of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods in Africa. The programme assesses how food, agriculture and natural resources policies can be developed so that they support SDG 2; no hunger and SDG 13; climate action.

AFRICAP conducts its research activities in Africa (South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi) and the UK. The funding for the programme is from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), a £1.5billion UK Government programme to support research that addresses critical problems in developing countries across the world. It is administered by the UK's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

As well as the University of Leeds and FANRPAN, other partners in the programme include from the UK – the University of Aberdeen, the UK Met Office and Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), Malawi; National Agriculture Marketing Council (NAMC), South Africa; economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Tanzania and the Agriculture Consultative Forum (Zambia).

## 2. Engagement of Media in the GCRF AFRICAP Programme

The media's potential to play a vital role in international development has long been acknowledged, being capable of providing a powerful platform for debate, discussion and collective problem-solving. Whilst the AFRICAP programme has a Policy Advocacy and Engagement Plan, there is need for supplementary media support aimed at amplifying programme activities and their impacts beyond the limited geographical implementation sites. The media has a critical role of supporting and profiling developmental interventions to a broader audience, creating awareness and promoting adoption of lessons by people in similar circumstances.

The rationale for supplementary media support is premised on the understanding that research conducted development issues is not an end in itself. If knowledge created by research interventions such as AFRICAP is shared and debated publicly, it is more likely to be adopted by policymakers and practitioners. Policymakers often use multi-media sources such newspapers, radio and television as sources of information. They also rely on feedback to publications and radio phone-ins to gauge public opinion. Media debates can fuel public interest and concern over particular issues, adding to existing pressure on governments to change policy.

The media profiles developmental interventions to a broader audience, creates awareness, shares and promotes the adoption of new innovations and lessons learnt. That is why the media is prioritised in the GCRF-AFRICAP programme through capacity building for journalists to report on climate change and agriculture.

### 3. Workshop Objectives

On the 25th of November 2019, the FANRPAN Malawi Node Host Institution, the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) convened a media training workshop at the SunBird Hotel in Lilongwe. The workshop's aim was to enhance journalists' knowledge about the AFRICAP programme, climate change and agriculture issues, how research influences policies. More specifically the workshop had the following objectives:

- Gain an understanding on the nexus of climate change and agriculture.
- Gain an understanding on how (and if) the media can communicate agriculture, climate change and interventions by the GCRF-AFRICAP to help audiences understand the role of research in influencing policies to help the countries improve food security.
- Enhance skills as a journalist on how to report agriculture and climate change issues.
- Interact and share ideas with other journalists and experts in climate change and agriculture to gain further insight on the subject.
- Develop skills to articulate clearly policy issues on agriculture and climate change.

### 4. Workshop Proceedings

The National Director of CISANET, Ms. Pamela Kuwali, welcomed all participants to the workshop. In her remarks, Ms. Kuwali highlighted the strategic engagement with the media in Malawi. The media are critical in information dissemination and in shaping opinions, therefore CISANET – the FANRPAN country node – are convinced that the media can help add value to the on-going GCRF-AFRICAP programme by understanding its projects in Malawi and disseminating the research evidence to inform policy making. She challenged the media to participate in the dialogue to ensure effective collaboration which will build the capacity of the media while also promoting the work of GCRF-AFRICAP.

CISANET Communications Manager, Mr. Dyson Mthawanji led the introductions session where each of the participants identified themselves, their organisation and mentioned their experience with covering agriculture and climate change issues.

Mr. Mthawanji also introduced the facilitators; Ms. Mantoe Phakathi and Mr. Busani Bafana who explained the objectives of the engagement workshop, noting the need to build the capacity of the media to cover scientific issues effectively. The workshop was also aimed at raising awareness about the GCRF-AFRICAP programme with special focus on projects being undertaken in Malawi.

#### 4.1. Expectations

- To learn different angles on agriculture writing
- To learn a systematic approach of articulating climate change issues
- How to effectively communicate Climate Change issues to farmers and with farmers
- To improve interaction with all actors in the agriculture value chain and who are affected by climate change
- To understand how the current policies and laws in Africa respond to climate change
- To share experiences and build a network of journalists with an interest in agriculture/climate change issues.

#### 4.2. Presentations and Discussions

GCRF/AFRICAP programme manager, Sithembile Mwamakamba said the media have an important role in articulating evidence-based research in effective policy making.

Stephen Whitfield, Associate Professor in Climate Change and Food Security at the Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds, told participants that the media can be a conduit of published research but journalists need to publish research evidence to influence policy accurately and in an understandable manner.



Science Journalist, Charles Mkoka, challenged journalists to take advantage of the agriculture development Malawi to report on agriculture and climate change issues. He said media platforms were sprouting across the world and in the African region dedicated to promoting knowledge on climate change issues that journalists can tap into, such as the Agenda 2063 media network.

to support agriculture development in line with insights from evidence research.



Science Journalist, Charles Mkoka, challenged journalists to take advantage of the agriculture development Malawi to report on agriculture and climate change issues. He said media platforms were sprouting across the world and in the African region dedicated to promoting knowledge on climate change issues that journalists can tap into, such as the Agenda 2063 media network.

In addition, discussion revealed that there is also a relationship gap between journalists and researchers/scientists which need to be closed through mutual collaboration. Journalists need to understand how researchers work and how research evidence can be best presented to inform policy makers and the general public. Researchers, too needed to appreciate the work of the media and find best formats to present their work so that it is published factually and in an understandable manner without distorting the key findings of the research.



What can the media and researchers to foster a working relationship? A number of issues were identified that the media need to address to effectively work with researchers and to use evidence research for policy advocacy.

Following presentations on the CGRF-AFRICAP programme, there was a discussion on how the media can support evidence-based research to drive policy development given the complex nature of policy formulation.



The media has to interrogate policy making processes and quiz policy makers in enacting effective policies

Journalists	Researchers
Always in a rush to meet tight deadlines hence no time to understand research output nor to factually write about it	Research evidence is many times presented in a technical manner with jargon that only researchers understand
Journalists are often not creative or truthful in disseminating information on research evidence	They have a mistrust that journalists will misquote/dilute their research
Journalists often do not read around research outputs (need to do background research and checks before engaging researchers)	They have to ensure protection of the Intellectual Property of their work before it can be released publicly
Do not ask the right questions	The publication process of research work is long and slow because of peer review needs.
Do not follow up stories	
Do not develop a relationship with researchers first before publishing research work	
In many instances, journalists assume knowing it all to hide their ignorance	

Mr. Vitumbo Chinoko, the Advocacy and Partnerships Coordinator at CARE Malawi, presented the various global and African frameworks and policies that speak to agriculture and climate change, noting the Paris Agreement, The Maputo and Malabo Declarations and the Sustainable Development Goals. He highlighted that despite the various frameworks guiding actions to adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change, governments' commitments to action have been weak. Mr. Chinoko said all African governments have failed to meet their targets on climate change except Mauritius while also explaining their poor show on food and security targets too.

He lamented that investment in agriculture – which is being affected by climate change – has remained low generally in Africa but it was important to also look at where the money was being invested in line with the target of six percent economic growth from agriculture as set in the CAADP principles. The Paris Agreement was an opportunity for countries to do more than less in climate change actions.

Mr. Chinoko said while climate smart agriculture was an important intervention in Africa, there was need to ensure it was sustainable, improves production and also incentives profitability of farmers while embracing issues of gender, equity and resilience.

Challenges identified by participants included the following:

- Resources (financial, technical (transport/airtime))
- Bureaucracy in getting information from government, scientists depending on the sensitivity of issues being covered
- Lack of interest among journalists to tackle climate change and agriculture stories (crisis makes front-page)
- Climate change issues are technical and navigating the science and data is difficult for journalists
- Framing the science story
- Lack of specialisation among journalists
- Editorial Policies which set the agenda on coverage of development issues.

Some of the solutions proposed by participants included the following:

- Human interest stories
- Scientists need to summarise their output of their work which is technical, simply the jargon e.g. communicating carbon emissions to farmers
- Partnership to pull resources together among journalists/institutions (grants/fellowships)
- Access to information Act should be implemented
- Establish special desks on climate change and agriculture reporting
- Networks – Association of Environmental Journalist of Malawi, Agriculture Network in Malawi, MISA-Malawi

### 4.3. Recommendations

The workshop achieved the expectations of many participants in disseminating information about the CGRF-AFRICAP programme. In addition, participants were agreed on the need to build the capacity of journalists to report on agriculture and climate change through practical on the field exposure to see the programme in action. Journalists also highlighted a number of challenges they face in writing about agriculture and climate change. The following recommendations are made:

1. That CGRF-AFRICAP convenes more detailed training session on the programme and facilitates journalists to witness the work of the programme on their ground in Malawi.
2. That CGRF-AFRICAP considers developing a media fellowship that will enable journalists to do dedicated coverage of its programmes at a given time.

## 5. ANNEXES

### 5.1. Workshop Programme

Time	Time	Responsible
08:00 – 08:30	Arrivals and registration Session 1	FANRPAN Node
08:30 – 09:00	Welcome and introductions Input(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and introductions</li> <li>• Official remarks (About the FANRPAN Node Hosting Institution – link between CISANET and FANRPAN, Agriculture and climate change in Malawi, Why AFRICAP is important for Malawi? What has Malawi been doing?</li> </ul> Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House rules</li> <li>• Overview of workshop</li> </ul>	Mantoe/Busani
09:00 - 09:30	Session 2 Agriculture and the Climate change nexus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is FANRPAN all about?</li> <li>• Why the partnership with the University of Leeds?</li> <li>• How climate is change affecting or affected by agriculture?</li> </ul>	FANRPAN Regional Secretariat
09:30 – 10:00	Session 3 Global and continental frameworks and policy on agriculture and climate change	Vitumbiko Chinoko CARE's Advocacy and Partnership Coordinator Southern Africa
10:00 – 10:30	Tea Break	
10:30 – 12:30	Session 4 General overview of GCRF-AFRICAP programme	Dr Stephen Whitfield, University of Leeds (Talk Specifically about the work in Malawi)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	

13:30 – 14:00	Session 5 Climate Change and Agriculture – the story of the day.	Session 5 Climate Change and Agriculture – the story of the day.
14:00 – 15:00	Session 6 Solutions Reporting Agricultural Reporting (tips)	Mantoe/Busani
15:00 – 16:00	Session 7 - Experiences of local journalists  - Tips on Reporting on Agriculture and Climate Change  Opportunities for building networks	Charles Mkoka  Mantoe/Busani
17:00	Assignments Conclusion and closing	

## 5.2. List of Participants

No:	Name
1.	Clement Chinoko
2.	Chimweme Njoloma
3.	Martha Chikoti
4.	Doreen Sonani
5.	Esther Elson Nglambi
6.	Hawa Juma
7.	Isaac Salima
8.	Brighton Tchongwe
9.	Busani Bafana
10.	Llyod Mbwana
11.	Dyson Mthawanji
12.	Charles Mkoka
13.	Wezi Nyirongo
14.	Alick Ponje
15.	Godfrey Matcha
16.	Grace Kapatuka
17.	Joseph Kayira
18.	Bernard Thungwa
19.	Fostina Kamanga
20.	Chisomo Kapolo
21.	Mantoe Phakathi



### 5.3. Media Story on the Training Workshop

#### Articulating the agriculture story in a changing climate

Written by Busani Bafana

Global food production level needs to rise by 70 percent if we are to feed 9 billion people who will be on earth in 30 years, according to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

This is possible if agriculture adapts to the impacts of climate change. The phenomenon is hindering farmers from producing more, even healthier food. Is this news? Maybe. Is the media telling this story.

Lack of specialisation and indifference, are some challenges which hold back journalists from telling the science story on agriculture and climate change. This emerged at a media training held in Lilongwe, Malawi on November 27, 2019, organised by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and Agricultural and Food System Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP) programme. The one-day media engagement was hosted by the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) in partnership with University of Leeds in the UK and the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), a local partner in Malawi supporting the project.

Lack of financial, technical resources and interest among journalists to tackle climate change and agriculture stories in addition to unpacking technical science information are hindering the coverage of agriculture and climate change issues.

Furthermore, bureaucracy in getting information from government and scientists depending on the sensitiveness of issue being covered was also a hurdle.

AFRICAP is a four-year research programme focused on improving evidence-based policy making to develop sustainable, productive, agricultural systems, resilient to climate change being implemented in Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. The programme is led by the University of Leeds, UK, in partnership with the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), a pan-African think-tank based in South Africa.

GCRF/AFRICAP programme manager, Sithembile Mwamakamba said the media have an important role in articulating evidence-based research in effective policy making.

"Often policies are announced overnight and the media has a big role to play in terms of reviewing of policies of policies and presenting the research to influence policy makers in particular on food security on the back of the impacts of climate change on agriculture," Mwamakamba said.

Stephen Whitfield, Associate Professor in Climate Change and Food Security at the Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds, says journalists can be conduits of published research that presents evidence.

"There is need for the media to communicate our work in a way that is understandable to the public", Whitfield said.

African governments have made several policy commitments geared on promoting investment in agriculture development for food and nutritional security on the continent, such as the Maputo Declaration and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth And Transformation for Shared Prosperity And Improved Livelihoods.

Speaking at the workshop, Vitumbiko Chinoko, Advocacy and Partnership Coordinator, Southern Africa at CARE, said African countries need to do more to meet the commitments made under various instruments such as the Paris Agreement and the Malabo Declaration.

"When you are also failing to meet your commitments to climate change, it is no brainer why you are failing to meet your targets on food security, on nutrition and other related issues," Chinoko said noting that the agriculture value add tied to the 6 percent growth rate outlined in CAADP Principles has not been met by many countries in Africa.

Science Journalist, Charles Mkoka, who shared his experience in covering agriculture and climate change issues, said the media in Malawi are at a watershed moment because of the agriculture development in the country which presented new opportunities for insightful science reporting. Mkoka, who is the coordinator of the Agenda 2063 media network in Africa, said media platforms were sprouting across the world and in the African region dedicated to promoting knowledge on climate change issues that journalists can tap into.

"We need to get the word about development issues and agriculture being one of them. The future looks bright and there are opportunities to engage and network," said Mkoka.

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*This report was prepared by: Mantoe Phakathi – Media Consultant. The training workshop was coordinated by the Agriculture Consultative Forum (ACF)*

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*About the Agricultural and Food-system Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP) Programme*

*The Agricultural and Food-system Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP) programme is a four-year research programme focused on improving evidence-based policy making to develop sustainable, productive, agricultural systems, resilient to climate change. The programme is being implemented in Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and the UK led by the University of Leeds, a leading Russell Group university in the north of England, in partnership with the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), a pan-African multi-stakeholder policy network. The programme is funded by the UK Government from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), which aims to support research that addresses critical problems in developing countries across the world. It is administered by the UK's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) - UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).*

*Implementing Partners: FANRPAN; University of Leeds; University of Aberdeen; the UK Met Office; Chatham House - Royal Institute of International Affairs; the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), Malawi; Department of Agriculture Research Services (DARS), Malawi; National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), South Africa; Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Tanzania; and the Agricultural Consultative Forum (ACF), Zambia.*

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