

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

## **ZAMBIA 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; the Agricultural Consultative Forum (ACF), 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 on 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 as 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 thus 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 21st of November 2019, the FANRPAN Zambia Node Host Institution, the Agricultural Consultative Forum (ACF) convened a media training workshop at the Blue Crest Lodge in Lusaka. The workshop's aim was to enhance journalists' knowledge about the AFRICAP programme, climate change and agriculture issues and how research influences policies. More specifically the workshop had the following objectives:

To help journalists:

- 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 improve their countries' 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.

#### 4.1. Journalists' Expectations

- Learning different angles of reporting climate change and agriculture issues.
- Learning a systematic approach to discussing climate-smart agriculture.
- Finding an easier way of communicating with farmers.
- Creating a platform for journalists, farmers and researchers to interact.

#### 4.2. Challenges

- Poor understanding of climate change issues, particularly its relationship with agriculture.
- Lack of creativity in reporting climate change and agriculture.
- Inadequate resources for travelling to remote areas and spending more time doing stories.
- Poor ability to provide analysis on climate change and agriculture.

To help the participants with the required skills, the training comprised the following presentations.

Time	Activity	Responsible
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop objectives</li> <li>• About ACF</li> </ul>	Mr Masiye Nawiko – ACF, Executive Director.
Agriculture Climate Change, Policy Nexus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About FANRPAN</li> <li>• FANRPAN in regional policy formulation</li> <li>• The nexus between science and policy</li> </ul>	Ms Sithembile Mwamakamba - Programme Manager, GCRF-AFRICAP, FANRPAN
Agricultural and Food System Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advisory Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About AFRICAP</li> <li>• Agro-Climatic Risks in Zambia</li> <li>• Climate Scenarios</li> <li>• GCRF-AFRICAP activities in Zambia</li> </ul>	Mr Stephen Whitfield – Leeds University, Researcher
Overview of Global Climate Change and Policy Response in Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of climate change globally.</li> </ul>	Mr Aurelius Nkonde, Senior Climate Change Officer, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Role of Journalists in agriculture and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements of a good story</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Information Sources</li> <li>• Interviewing techniques</li> </ul>	Busani Bafana – Media Consultant, FANRPAN
Solutions Journalism Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is Solutions Journalism</li> <li>• How can journalists apply solutions journalism in climate change and agriculture reporting to make the subject appealing to audiences?</li> </ul>	Mantoe Phakathi – Media Consultant, FANRPANW
Sharing of Best practices in agriculture and climate change reporting	Experiences of an environmental journalist	Friday Phiri – Former environmental journalist and now Communication Specialist

### 4.3. Presentations

Ms. Sithembile Mwamakamba, the GCRF-AFRICAP Programme Manager provided a presentation about FANRPAN`s work in 17 African countries. She explained that FANRPAN is helping African governments to meet their obligations in agriculture and climate change in terms of the Sustainable Development Goals; SDG 1, 2 and 13 and the Paris Agreement. Countries are also supported to meet commitments under the African Union such as the Malabo Declaration and CADDP.

Dr. Stephen Whitfield from the University of Leeds, who leads the GCRF-AFRICAP`s Farming Systems work presented the programme overview. He then presented specific work that is currently being done in Zambia and emphasised that there is a need for a formation of a strong partnership between the researchers and the media to help with the unpacking of information for different audiences. The participants wanted to know what role they were expected to play in helping the programme meet its objectives. In response, Whitfield urged the journalists to work closely with the researchers to get the right information on the progress of the programme. He offered his contact details and asked the participants to contact him anytime they needed information adding that he was going to refer them to some of his AFRICAP colleagues should he not be in a position to answer any specific questions.

Mr. Aurelius Nkonde, a Senior Climate Change Officer from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources took the participants through the global climate change response and what policies the Government of Zambia was implementing at national level. He also emphasised the need for journalists to get in touch with his department to get more information on climate change adding that they are working on a communication strategy that will enhance the flow of information between his department and other stakeholders including the media.

Thereafter, FANRPAN media consultant, Mr. Busani Bafana, dealt with what makes it difficult for reporters to tell the agriculture and climate change story. He further took the participants through techniques they can use to ensure that they stay on top of the game despite the challenges they face.

Ms. Mantoe Phakathi, a FANRPAN media consultant, shared with participants how they can still make agriculture and climate change appeal to

audiences despite the challenges they present. Through the solutions journalism approach, she emphasised the need for reporters to balance the negative with the positive so that agriculture and climate change is not only about gloom and doom but that there are also opportunities.

One of the participants, Mr Friday Phiri, an experienced environmental journalist, who is now serving in the Information Department at the Environmental Authority, shared his experiences in telling the agriculture and climate change story. He highlighted the challenges which are mainly about lack of resources for travelling but also mentioned the opportunities that come with fellowships to cover these stories.

### 4.4. Discussion

Some of the key points that emerged during the discussion that followed the presentations include the following:

- The main concern for participants was that policy formulation in many African countries is not transparent and that it follows a complex process. For journalists to play a role, participants requested that FANRPAN should support reporters to understand policy formulation issues so that they could call for the use of scientific evidence from the government. In response, FANRPAN stated that the training was the organization`s way of establishing a relationship with journalists adding that the first step was to create a database to identify the reporters to work with and support with different programmes in the future.
- The participants pointed out that the main challenge for journalists is that they are not specialised. Although some have columns and programmes dedicated to agriculture and climate change, they are assigned to cover other issues outside their beat from time to time. In some instances, they are moved to cover other issues besides climate change and agriculture which means there is no continuity. Experienced reporters are shifted to cover other issues leaving a void in reporting climate change and agriculture.
- Participants felt scientists are not availing data to journalists which makes it difficult for them to play the critical role of advocating for evidence-based policies. On this note, it was stated that GCRF-AFRICAP is forging a working relationship with journalists so that the gap between them and researchers could be bridged.

- The participants were encouraged to also work with the FCA and the government to access research information on agriculture and climate change.

- Participants also felt that editors do not prioritise agriculture and climate change stories, the same way they do with others such as politics, business, sports, entertainment, etc. They argued that editors believe that it is expensive to produce quality agriculture stories yet the news do not rake in a lot of money from advertising like other issues such as business and sports. The participants suggested that FANRPAN could avail reporting grants for journalists to travel to remote areas where they can access farmers to report on their issues.

- It was observed that Africa is a story of hunger and malnutrition and the media was challenged to play a critical role in changing the narrative by creating a balance between the good and the bad.

- Researchers expect journalists to build knowledge about climate change and agriculture among audiences. This can only happen if the journalists themselves are empowered with the right information and skills to disseminate the right information.

- Climate change and agriculture are cross-cutting issues and it is up to journalists to find different angles to the subjects so as to create more stories for different audiences. Whether it is business,

sports, politics, etc, there is always a way these issues are impacted by agriculture and climate change.

#### 4.5. Recommendations

- Considering that media outlets do not seem to have resources to allow journalists to travel to remote areas and spend enough time working on stories, it is recommended that FANRPAN should consider offering media fellowship to reporters so that they may access grants to be able to do these stories.

- GCF-AFRICAP should continue engaging the journalists who participated in this training by availing opportunities to cover the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties to help them appreciate the issues and build their capacity.

- There were very few women who participated and it is recommended that in future female journalists should be directly targeted instead of engaging them through their editors.

- It was recommended that journalists form collaborations to ensure that they reduce the costs of producing news.

- There should be a continuous relationship between researchers and journalists which has already been established through this training.

## 5. ANNEXES

### 5.1. Workshop Programme

Time	Activity	Responsible
08:00 – 08:30	Session 1 Arrivals and registration	NAMC Bonani Nyhodo
08:30 – 09:00	Welcome and introductions Input(s): • Workshop objectives • Expectations • House rules • Overview of workshop	Mantoe Phakathi and Busani Busani – Media Consultants
09:00 - 09:30	Session 2 Agriculture and the Climate change nexus • What is FANRPAN all about? • Why the partnership with the University of Leeds? • How is climate change affecting or affected by agriculture?	Sithembile Mwachakamba – GCFAFRICAP programme manager, FANRPAN Regional Secretariat
09:30 – 10:00	Session 3 General overview of GCRF-AFRICAP programme	Dr Stephen Whitfield, University of Leeds
10:00 – 10:30	Tea Break	
10:30 – 12:30	Session 4 General Overview of Climate Change Impact and Response in Zambia	Mr. Aurelius Nkonde – Climate Change Department
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 14:00	Session 5 Climate Change and Agriculture – the story of the day.	Ms.Mantoe Phakathi –Media Consultant
14:00 – 15:00	Session 6 Reporting Climate Change – The Solutions Journalism Approach	Ms.Mantoe Phakathi –Media Consultant
15:00 – 16:00	Session 7 - Experiences of local journalists - Tips on Reporting on Agriculture and Climate Change  Opportunities for building networks	Mr Friday Phiri – Communication specialist and former journalist
17:00	Way forward and Closing	Mantoe Phakathi and Busani Bafana – Consultants



## 5.2 List of Participants

	Name	Institution
1	Justin Akukubelwa	ZNBC
2		Consultant
3	Nchimunya Miyoba	Phoenix
4		FANRPAN
5	Abry Chileleso	EJN
6		Brand Et Al
7	Henry Mulolani	NAIS
8		Batswa Africa Communication
9	Simoono Nyungwe	NAIS
10		FANRPAN
11	Natasha Mhango	NAIS
12		NAMC
13	Mantoe Phakathi	Media Consultant
14		NAMC
15	Busani Bafana	Media Consultant
16		Freelance
17	Siwisha Brian	ZANIS
18		SABC
19	Dominic Chifumbe	Mobiotong

### •5.3. Media Story on the Training Workshop

Media is strategic in feeding a nourishing narrative about agriculture in Africa

Written by Busani Bafana and Mantoe Phakathi

Agriculture is key to Africa's development and economic growth. It can do more with increased investment and innovation now with climate change threatening food and nutrition security on the African continent as research shows.

While a resource-rich sector to boost economic growth in Africa, agriculture suffers from a poor narrative, necessitating the engagement and building the capacity of the media in telling the agriculture story well. It is in recognising the role of the media in projecting development initiatives in Africa that the GCRF-AFRICAP project held a media engagement workshop in Lusaka, Zambia recently.

The engagement workshop which attracted more than 18 journalists working for online, print, radio and television channels across Zambia, acquainted journalists with the GCRF-AFRICAP project. The project is Agriculture and Food System Resilience increasing capacity and advising policy. It is focused on developing a sustainable pathway around agri-food systems to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the most relevant being #1, #2 and #3 on ending hunger, reducing poverty and on climate action.

GCRF/AFRICAP programme manager, Sithembile Mwamakamba said while the SDGs are the overall guiding framework globally, in Africa, agriculture was a priority target sector with African governments making several commitments towards securing a food and nutrition future for the continent through investment in agriculture. Some of the commitments include the Malabo Declaration, CAADP and the Maputo Declaration.

#### Challenges

Journalists noted that telling the story of agriculture is a challenge that requires skill, knowledge and above all passion. Agriculture is a complex science the media is often at odds to unpack to public audiences.

Researchers have a contention with the media. Owing to the methodological and empirical nature of academic research, many a time researchers fear to be misrepresented. Often journalists do not bother to read around the science and understand the issues presented in academic research outputs. Furthermore, more researchers find fault when journalists do not ask the right questions and sloppily do not fact check what they write before they publish.

Read, read and read and research, advises Friday Phiri, an award-winning Zambian journalist who has reported widely on agriculture and climate change. "But the heart of the matter is passion," quipped Phiri.

#### Solutions

Professor Stephen Whitfield, Associate Professor in Climate Change and Food Security at the Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds, underscored the need for a relationship between researchers and the media to ensure the messages of evidence-based research are accurately reflected in media stories.

"It is important to build our collective capacities how we as scientists can communicate our science to the media and for the media to understand the context of research and the complex outputs and still be able to communicate it well, said Prof. Whitfield.

"The relationship between scientists and the media is very important because as academics we speak our own language to each other and we do that on a daily basis and that we are cautious on how we are involved in our findings and how we communicate our findings for fear of being misunderstood, miscommunicated and misrepresented."

In Zambia, the ACGR-AFRICAP project is seeking to increase production and productivity of farmers by promoting the use of improved crop varieties and seed certification. A survey has been done to understand the seed sector in Zambia with a focus on increasing the production of soybean as a viable alternative cash crop to maize.

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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.*

*For More Information*

*Website: <https://africap.info/>*

*Twitter: @gcrfafricap*

*Email: [contact@africap.info](mailto:contact@africap.info)*

