

Advancing Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains through Strengthening Transdisciplinary Skills and Cooperation in East African Doctoral Education

To develop quality strategies and assurance in doctoral education, Work Package 5 (WP5) is focused on the quality aspects of doctoral education with two activities: 1) defining and applying quality standards for the ADVALUE PhD modules and 2) analysing and discussing current challenges facing PhD Education.

Work Package 5 Quality Strategies for Doctoral Education

Responsible ADVALUE partners:

Makerere University Kampala (MAK), Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU)

Work Package 5 (WP5) is reviewing existent challenges and quality strategies in PhD education in general and identifying demand at universities in Kenya and Uganda, by literature review and analysing statistics of Universities

Purpose

WP5 is added to realise not only the high quality of the newly designed modules but to contribute to the overall discussion and aim for higher quality of PhD education in the sector in Kenya and in Uganda.

Quality standards for the ADVALUE modules

This is mainly on the module structure, which should include

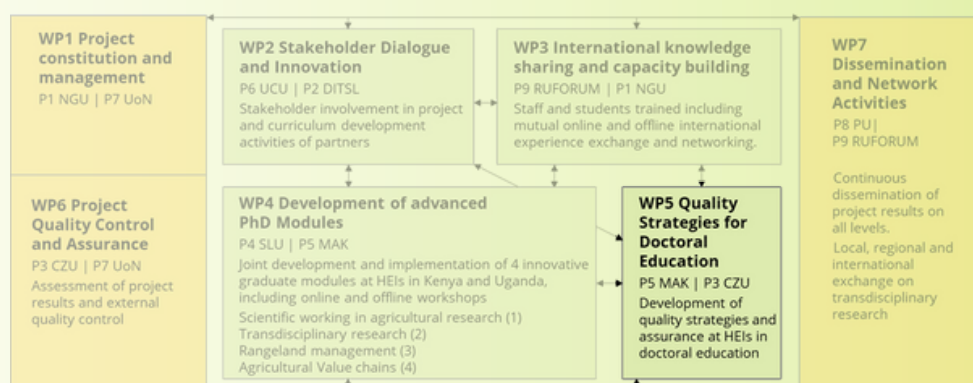
- (i) A description including, name, contact hours, year and semester of the course, learning objectives, learning outcomes, outline and content, mode of delivery, instructional materials, mode of assessment, and recommended reading list
- (ii) Module workload: a modules consist of 60 contact hours, corresponding to 4 credits

Existing challenges in PhD education

- In East Africa many challenges exist in doctoral training. These include
- (i) poor management and administration of PhD programs
 - (ii) weak theoretical and methodological grounding of PhD students
 - (iii) Lack of commitment by staff and students
 - (iv) declining quality of publications and theses

Next Steps

One of the next steps of WP5 will be publishing the situation analysis of the existing challenges in PhD education in East Africa.



WP5 belongs to the core of the project, that are the four Work Packages of the category "Development".



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ADVALUE Interim Conference in Kampala, March 2025

Attendants

In total 131 people attended the three days of the interim conference at Makerere University in Kampala. Staff from all partner institutions but also PhD students from Kenya and Uganda and external stakeholders participated, presented and discussed about PhD education in East Africa (EA).

Outcomes of WP5 Focus Group Discussions

Challenges and opportunities for students, staff and external stakeholders were discussed. Although the challenges varied, there were some commonalities across all three groups: poor work-school balance, high workload that affects feedback to students and poor communication of research results. Opportunities were identified, including the use of available funding and networking opportunities among others.

Programme (extract)

- Key notes from NCHE and NUCAFE
- Focus Group Discussion about PhD education in EA
- Workshops on module content and gender inclusion
- Presentations on transdisciplinary research and data management



photo: MAK media team

Feedback from Kenyan PhD students:

"The ADVALUE Conference was incredibly insightful. As a PhD student, I had the valuable opportunity to share my perspectives, ensuring that my insights could contribute meaningfully to curriculum development. The emphasis on transdisciplinary skills and orientation particularly resonated with me, as many university programs often operate in silos." - *Pauline Omolo, University of Nairobi, Kenya*

"Presentations and discussions were very enriching more so in sustainable agriculture, agriculture value addition and interdisciplinary approaches in addressing challenges faced in agriculture. Presenting my research work at the conference was equally a rewarding experience." - *Daniel Atambo Kengere, Pwani University Kilifi, Kenya*



photo: MAK media team

