

Genetics for Africa (Strategies & Opportunities)

Communications & Outreach

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**Biosciences for
Farming in Africa**

Background

Lack of public awareness of science

Lack of public awareness of research

Lack of uptake/public distrust

Research communication small-scale and opportunistic

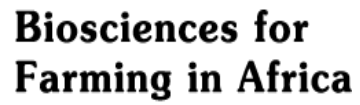
Atmosphere of activism

Unhelpful regulatory environment

Decision-makers are also member of the public!

Few African public champions

Communication intermediaries poorly aware of science/research



INSIGHTS

Africa's future ... can biosciences contribute?

“Insights”, “Viewpoints” & “Analyses”

Media Fellowships

Studies on extension & innovation

Synergies

Pontinnston Innovation Center

6TH AFRICA AGRICULTURE SCIENCE WEEK 2013

AFAB



Biosciences for Farming in Africa

Achievements





**Biosciences for
Farming in Africa**

Feedback (1)

Unique
opportunity for
researchers to
showcase what
they do, how
and why

Improved
understanding
and respect
between media
and scientific
communities

Made our
media fellows
the biotech/
genetics
“experts” in
their media
houses

The increased
media attention
made politicians
take notice and
act



Feedback (2)

Can we do
this in more
countries?

How did you find
the case studies
of local research?

Cover livestock
breeding &
genetics too?

What is the
link to human
genetics?

Can we share
more experiences
internationally

Why don't more
people know about
their own
research(ers)?

Ambitions



Uncover & celebrate
Africa's
research



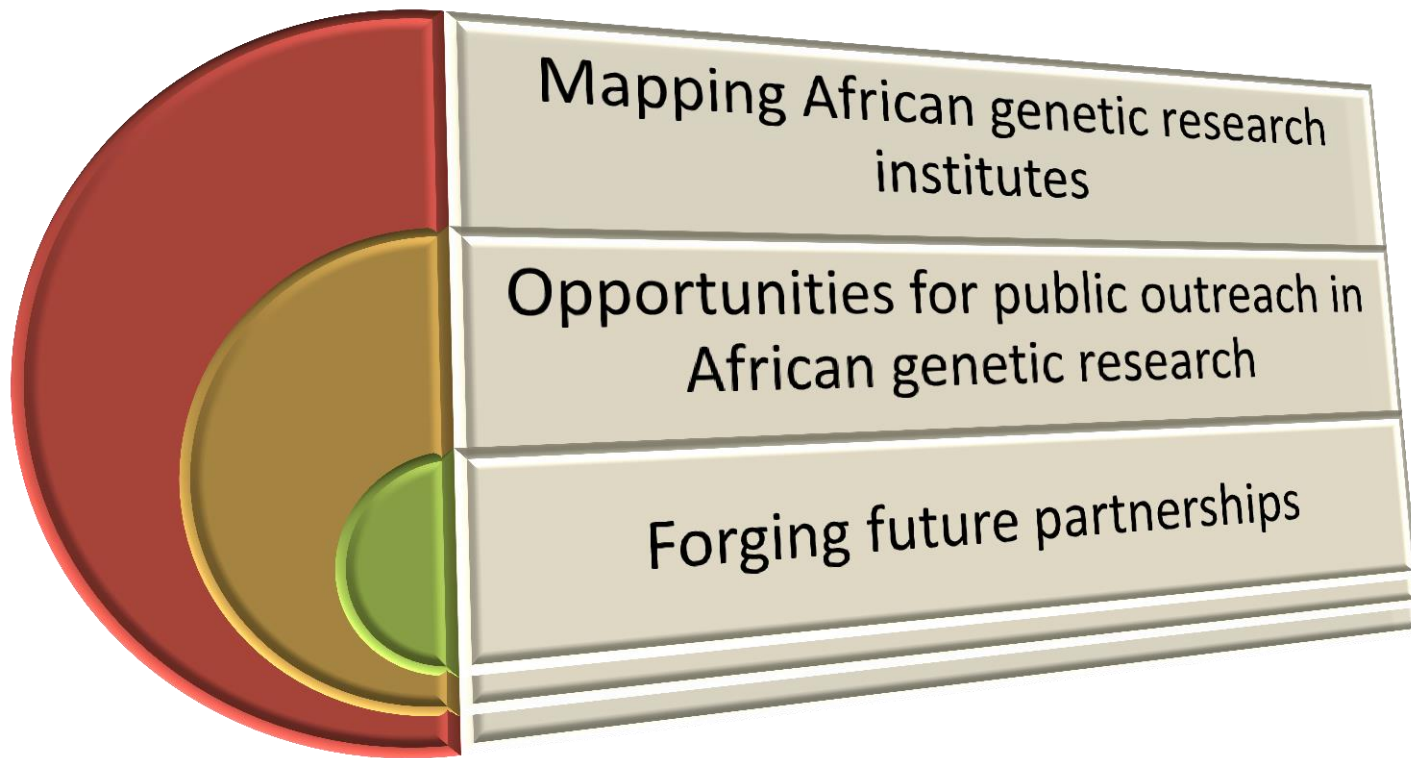
Promote
outreach,
awareness &
engagement in
more African
countries



Cover genetic
research more
widely, including
in animals and
humans



G4A – Planning Grant



Findings & observations

Plant, animal & human research

Challenges in
outreach,
public
understanding
& engagement

Challenges in
accessibility
and public
appreciation of
research

Challenges in
collaboration,
networking &
funding

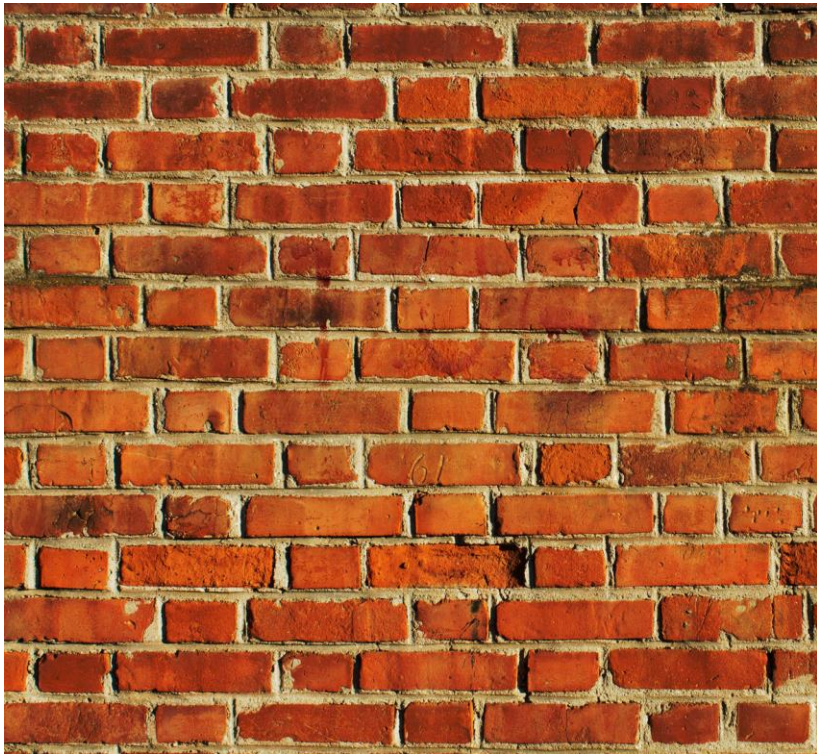
Challenges in
regulatory
understanding
& flexibility

Plant sciences and NPBTs



- Lack of awareness
- Over-regulation makes higher-tech inaccessible for locally relevant work
- Activism has driven public agenda
- Activism has driven (reactive) outreach efforts

Animals, insects, fish



- Research outcomes to transform livelihoods are around the corner
- Regulatory regimes largely untested
- Regulatory regime designed for plants
- Ethics considerations
- Interaction with plant & human genetics

So what about (your) human genetics research?

Is everybody...

Well resourced

Communicating widely

Collaborating internationally

Broadly visible & understood

Able to operate in a flexible & supportive environment

Human genetics



- Community engagement
- Public appreciation & interaction
- Regulatory environment
- Collaboration
- Networking

But – really?



- Medical genetics services rare
- Genetic counselling
- Funding for research & collaboration
- Broader public understanding & uptake?
- Specific genetic understanding of medical/other regulators, IRBs etc
- H3Africa is not the only game in town

Why public outreach matters...

Recruitment/consent

Uptake of research results

Better regulation

Prepare for future controversy

Build support (& funding)

Duty to educate

It's fun!

Power of networking

Share (scarce/expensive) resources

Share experience

Uncover “hidden” African research

Open door to international collaboration (& funding)

Use one discipline to help explain another

Build skills and interest of intermediaries

Increase efficiency/effectiveness of work

Help gain attention for African genetics research

Recommendations – go from this:

Collaboration, outreach, resourcing, skills

Project
A
Crops
Ghana

Collaboration, outreach, resourcing, skills

Project
B
Insects
Kenya

Collaboration, outreach, resourcing, skills

Project
C
Human
health
South
Africa

Collaboration, outreach, resourcing, skills

Project
D
Human
origins
Rwanda

Collaboration, outreach, resourcing, skills

Project
E
Migration
Nigeria

Recommendations – to this:

Cross-cutting outreach & networking

Project
A

Project
B

Project
C

Project
D

Project
E

Collaboration, outreach, communication, expertise, skills, resources

Build broad network of
research(ers)

Run x-cutting public
engagement/awareness
activities – build community
of intermediaries

AMBITIONS

Leverage power of the
community of research

Raise visibility & profile of
genetics research

We would like to invite the H3Africa and
AfSHG communities to be key partners in
this future ambition





Thank you!

If you would be interested in hearing more, and in participating in future initiatives, please email us on:

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