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Baseline report on the status of Agricultural training in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe

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Abstract:

Resource constraints in Sub Saharan Africa universities necessitate interventions to strengthen quality of teaching to produce qualified agricultural graduates. The objective of this study was to identify opportunities and ways to improve curricula and teaching capacity for agriculture training in Zimbabwean universities. Data were collected from nine universities from 30 randomly selected students and teaching staff members who responded through self administered questionnaires specific for each category. Most students (90%) studying agriculture were below the age of 25 years. Female students (80%) preferred non-field based specializations such as Food Sciences and Agribusiness. Across all universities 60% of teaching staff had master degrees as highest qualification with 80% being males. Overall, 59% of academics were involved in reviewing curriculum at departmental level. However, 49 % were not adequately capacitated in pedagogy despite the fact that 66 % of respondents acknowledged presence of training programmes at their institutions. In conclusion, effective agricultural training in Zimbabwean universities is limited by gender bias which is in favour of males compared to females leading to preferential selections of disciplines by female students and lack of adequately trained staff members both in their academic disciplines and pedagogy.