

# Report on the Media training for Food Security Policy Workshop

held on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016,  
Brooklyn Guest House, Pretoria

By

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ScienceLink

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY



This report presents a summary of workshop funded by the USAID -funded Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy (FSP) and a capacity building programme funded by the British Council Newton Fund through the Academies of Science in South Africa and in partnership with Science Link.

The FSP project is managed by the Food Security Group (FSG) of the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics (AFRE) at Michigan State University (MSU), and implemented in partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the University of Pretoria (UP). Together, the MSU-IFPRI-UP consortium works with governments, researchers and private sector stakeholders in Feed the Future focus countries in Africa and Asia to increase agricultural productivity, improve dietary diversity and build greater resilience to challenges like climate change that affect livelihoods. The overall goal of the global Food Security Policy Innovation Lab (FSP) program is to promote inclusive agricultural productivity growth, better nutritional outcomes, and strengthened livelihood resilience through enhanced policy environments. The program will contribute to this by providing better information on key issues to facilitate informed debate on policy formulation and planning at country, regional and global levels, and by strengthening national policy systems.

The skills training workshop for graduates in the science field was conducted as part of the Professional Exchange Programme of the Newton Fund. The British Council Newton Fund is a bilateral initiative between the Department of Science and Technology South Africa and the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (UK) and aims to support collaboration between South Africa and the United Kingdom and to support local socio-economic and development priorities. Their goal is to support Female Scientists and Researchers in science communication and engagement skills development.

ScienceLink is South Africa's first digital science communication agency. The group helps researchers engage their audiences using the latest digital media platforms.

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## Table of Contents

### Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
1 Introduction .....	6
2 Background and rationale.....	7
2.1 Methodology.....	8
2.2 Plan of action .....	8
2.3 Programme.....	9
2.4 Report on proceedings .....	9
3 Conclusion.....	20
4 Reflections, lessons learnt and outputs .....	20
5 Acknowledgements .....	21
Appendix 1: Facilitators and guest biographies:.....	23
Appendix 2: Workshop Programme .....	26
Appendix 3: Feedback on flip-charts .....	29
Appendix 4: Conversation pieces story drafts .....	34

## Executive Summary

Tensions between researchers and the media often create barriers to bringing about policy change that is informed by evidence. Researchers are cautious of the possibility of their work being misrepresented by journalists because of the sensationalised nature of media.

Communicating scientific-based evidence to the media is often an area that scientists prefer to steer clear of. Scientists fail to see the media as an avenue that they can use to facilitate public understanding of science. Similarly, journalists often refrain from engaging researchers because they feel that researchers are unapproachable, unable to use simple terms to communicate their research and are patronising. However, there is a greater need for collaboration between the two, not only to bring about evidence-based food security policy change, but also to improve public awareness of emerging research that can influence food security.

The training session formed part of the USAID-funded Feed the Future Innovation Lab on Food Security Policy that the University of Pretoria partners on with Michigan State University and the International Food Policy Research Institute. One goal of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Programme is to influence food security policy by building the capacity of the media to report on food security policy issues.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for building the skills of young female scientists who participated in the workshop under a peer learning programme grant awarded to Dr Nokuthula Vilakati (a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Institute for Food, Nutrition and Well-being) by the British Council Newton Fund through the Academy of Science of South Africa.

A two-day training workshop was held in Pretoria in June. The purpose of the workshop was to strengthen the relationship between media and researchers in an effort to improve reporting on emerging research in food security. Participants included researchers together with print and radio media personnel from Malawi, South Africa and Zambia.

Anina Mumm, a science communication and digital media specialist with ScienceLink co-facilitated the training with Dr. Vilakati. “The motivation for the workshop was connected to the Department of Science and Technology (DST) Framework for Science Engagement that aims to popularise science as attractive, relevant and accessible in order to enhance scientific literacy and make it more relevant by engaging the media in communicating scientists work” said Vilakati. Elizabeth Mkandawire, a PhD candidate, Prof. Hettie Schönfeldt from the University of Pretoria and Dr. Mangani Katundu, a researcher from Chancellor College in Malawi, presented sessions on food security research findings. The media were encouraged to prepare written pieces on the presentations as well as the actual training.

The workshop provided a platform for journalists and researchers to identify the communication barriers between the two groups. The journalists were of the opinion that, researchers are “arrogant and patronising” and that they are “too protective and overly sensitive about their work.” The researchers shared that journalists often lack the capacity to conduct investigative journalism, they “do not always take account of the damage that may ensue from misinformation” and they “lack an understanding of science principles (i.e. do not always

understand the scientific process)”. Both parties agreed that it is important that “Researchers should not be scared to work with media to communicate their work, not only at the end of the research, but through the whole process to create a deeper understanding of science by journalists”. Reflecting on the training, Lihle Ngwane from the University of Pretoria said, “I have learned that journalists can sell good news and exposes the work done by researchers to the public.” It was also agreed upon that “Scientists should also refrain from being too technical and think of the target market when communicating scientific findings”.

It was agreed that there is need for more training of this nature because strengthening these relationships has implications for policy-makers and the public at large. One of the journalists, Benadetta Chiwanda reflected that the training “has taught me the need for joint efforts between researchers and journalists because a good relationship is crucial as some important research findings that could have been used for the greater good of the public gather dust in archives for lack of proper channels (media) to take such information to the public (or relevant people)”.

## 1 Introduction

Journalists especially, have an important role to play with regard to informing the public and making sure that those working in the public's interest are accountable to the public. Journalists can act as the bridge between the science society and the public. By better understanding the roles of journalists, researchers and policy-makers can help with working together to help build a society that bases its decisions and policies on science.

A number of authors have often described the relationship that exists between scientist/researchers and the media as “distant”, “ a big gap”, “has barriers”, “fence”, “oil and water”, “divided in opinions” and “tense”. Lack of visibility and input from scientists/researchers in communicating with the general public about scientific evidence is often a concern. Efforts need to be made by scientists to try and engage with the public through the use of different kinds of media. The purpose of this workshop was to bridge the gap that exists between journalists, researchers and policy-makers in order to create an environment where they are all able to communicate in an amicable way. The workshop set out to create a platform where participants could develop a mutual understanding of the respective roles of journalists, researchers and policy-makers especially focusing on issues of agriculture, food security and nutrition. Often times, these three groups are required to work together to bring ideas to improve food security, to help build a society that bases its decisions and policies on science. The discussion was, therefore meant to create a comfortable space where all parties involved could voice out the problems they have had with each other and give suggestions for likely solutions.

One of the Feed the future's Food Security Policy (FSP) Innovation Lab's objectives is to promote food security policy change in developing countries. As part of their plan of work, a workshop was planned to present the findings of three case studies (Malawi, Zambia and South Africa) on the process of policy change regarding micronutrients. The workshop was scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016. As prior training had been conducted in Malawi with media representatives, the Innovation Lab researchers felt it would be good to invite some of the young people trained in the earlier workshop to the regional comparative analysis workshop and to invite media representatives from Zambia and South Africa as well.

Following Dr Vilakati's selection for and participation in the Science Communication Training Programme for Female Scientists and Researchers Workshop conducted between the 16th- 18th of March 2016, she was awarded a grant by the British Council Newton Fund and the Academies of Science in South Africa. The purpose of the grant was to build the capacity of young female scientists to actively engage in communicating their scientific work beyond the academic scope. It was decided that the Innovation Lab workshop offered a unique opportunity for young female scientists to engage with policy researchers, media representatives from African countries and simultaneously deliver on the British Council/ASSAf professional development programme. Participating in the workshop offered young scientists the opportunity to learn skills related to science communications, policy analysis along with media personnel and experienced international researchers and key stakeholders related to food security and nutrition policy.

A two-day training workshop for the young scientists in science communication was planned, to be followed by their participation and reporting on the regional comparative workshop to validate the Innovation Lab's three country case studies. Policy makers were also invited to the workshop, however due to their crowded schedules; they were unable to attend the workshop.

Some of the adjustment to the program was the inclusion of journalists who would be contributing in the policy review. The reason behind this was so that both scientists and journalists could learn from one another and acquire the necessary skills for the workshop and beyond. The participants had to learn how to work together and contribute to policy development.

The media training workshop planned by Dr Vilakati was conducted on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2016 at the Brooklyn Guest house, Pretoria. Due to violent unrest in Tshwane during the week of the workshop and security concerns of the international participants, it was decided that the Innovation Lab workshop be postponed. The workshop venue advised that their staff were unable to get to work due to the protests and the remaining staff would not be able to host the workshop. The participants in the media training workshop will be invited to the rescheduled Innovation Lab workshop to take place 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

**Purpose:** The training workshop (21-22 June 2016), sought to bridge the gap between research, media and policy makers with regard to food security and nutrition through improving the capacity of female scientists. First, the workshop sought to equip scientists with the necessary skills for working together with journalists to translate scientific findings in a more user-friendly manner for the public. Second, the workshop sought to assist young scientists/researchers to gain a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities in communicating about their research and contributing towards policy formulation. Appendix 1 contains the list of participants, facilitators and guests together with biographies of the facilitators and guest that attended the workshop.

## 2 Background and rationale

The demand for science writing on the subject of agriculture, food security and nutrition is high. Translating scientific studies for the general population, however, may well be one of the most challenging tasks for the journalist trained to write and the scientist who does the scientific research. Using the planned drivers of change in food security workshop, the first two days were assigned to the media in science training workshop to bridge the gap between research, media and policy makers.

The benefits of the workshop was in line with the strategic aims set by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), South Africa. The strategic aims framework proposed by the DST is to increase science engagement (DST, 2014). The four strategic aims by the DST that the workshop will focus on are to; popularise science and make it accessible; actively engage graduates in the benefit of science in society, engage in science communication and profile the University of Pretoria together with its collaborator's (MSU and IFPRI) science output to address global hunger and food insecurity.

## 2.1 Methodology

AS explained above, the initial intent of the workshop was to train a team of young scientists and media personnel to participate in and publicise the knowledge, insights and lessons learnt from a comparative analysis of three country case studies. Due to the last minute postponement of the Innovation Lab workshop, the team hosting the media training workshop had to improvise regarding the programme. Should the comparative regional case study workshop have been conducted as planned, the participants in the media training session would have been in a position to complete their stories and publish these during the policy workshop.

Due to the unforeseen events and change of plan, it was decided that the best use of the time would be for the young scientists and journalists at the training session to draw on the knowledge and experience of the researchers who participated in the training session and to prepare articles for the [The Conversation](#) publication together. This publication encourages

*“access to independent, high quality, authenticated, explanatory journalism for the general public to better understanding current affairs and complex issues. And hopefully allow for a better quality of public discourse and conversation”.*

[The Conversation](#) prides itself in providing evidence based stories edited by professional editors and sourced from universities and research institute experts to share their knowledge with the wider public. The model used for the workshop ties in with the strategic aims by the DST; which are to popularise science and make it accessible; actively engage graduates in the benefit of science in society, engage in science communication and profiling academic institute in addressing issue of public interest.

## 2.2 Plan of action

The invitation to the workshop was extended to post graduate students with an interest in science communication to attend the workshop and associated with the Institute of Food Nutrition and Wellbeing (IFNuW). The call mentioned that they would engage in interactive discussions of problems faced by scientists, the media and policy makers in policy-making process for agriculture, food security and nutrition.

An invitation was also sent to journalists that regularly report on food security in Malawi, Zambia and South Africa. The journalists from Malawi were selected from among the participants in a media training programme conducted by the Innovation Lab researchers from IFPRI and the University of Pretoria in April 2016.

The aim of the first part of the workshop was to establish how scientists feel about communication and engagement and what they see as incentives and impediments to communicating their scientific work to the public. The second part of the workshop set out to establish what scientists need to know about the media in order to engage more with media and also get equipped with basic media skills so that they are comfortable and can easily communicate their scientific studies to the general public. Thirdly, the journalists were asked to describe what journalists want from scientists; and making scientists understand their role in



communicating the scientific studies including criticizing, their uncertainty as investigative journalist when working with scientists.

## 2.3 Programme

The workshop programme is presented in Appendix 2. The program for the workshop was designed by Dr Vilakati, and Ms Anina Mumm a science communication and digital media specialist.

## 2.4 Report on proceedings

The first day of the workshop focused on identifying the issues, such as the barriers to communication and what needs to be communicated. Mutual understanding between journalists, researchers and policy-makers was established through various interactive group activities. By the end of the first day, journalists and scientists were teamed up to identify key 'stories' that they could write about regarding food security policy change that would be of interest to the public, and newsworthy.



Figure 1: Participants reporting their responses on their roles

Anina Mumm facilitated reflection on roles and responsibilities and dialogue on these. A summary of the main points of the discussion is presented below.

*What is my role?*

The **journalists** described their roles as disseminating information, giving information and facts, having public interest, to interpret, to simplify, to question, educate and advocate.

The **scientists** described their roles as; to generate and document information, communicate evidence, to be credible, to make facts accessible. They also mentioned that they think they can force policy makers to make changes.



Figures 2: Participants deliberating on their impact

*What are their roles/what are the issues? What are the barriers to communication?*

The **journalists** described the roles of scientists and the issues they have with them as;

- Communicating with the media what they have found,
- Be available and proactive
- To simplify language so that it is easy for the audience it is intended for to access
- Be available to journalists
- They are unfriendly, and look down on journalists (especially junior journalists)
- They are not aware/familiar with public interests
- Arrogant and patronizing
- They appear to have a stronger link with policy makers than journalists do
- They are too protective and overly sensitive about their work
- Too many embargoes

The **journalists** suggested the following to scientists;

- They need to make the public aware of what is going on
- They should come up with stories that will interest journalists
- They must be willing to present answers to problems presented in the public
- Journalists are often not considered during policy making processes
- Journalists are often included at the end of the process
- They can be more transparent
- Journalists would love to keep a good relationship if they find a good source
- Media in Africa is too controlled, there is not much independence

*What are their roles/what are the issues? What are the barriers to communication?*

The **scientists** described the roles of journalists and the issues they have with them as;

- They sensationalise issues
- Do not sometimes understand that scientists work in a specific context and have to maintain specific guidelines.
- Often misinform people
- They can be biased take only one side of the story
- Sometimes may approach with a specific agenda in mind
- They lack science understanding/principles (do not always understand the scientific processes)
- Lack investigative journalism
- Do not always take account of damage that may ensue in misinformation of news

*How can we work together? What do we need from each other? (How can we bridge the gap)?*

- Both scientists and journalists must work together with communities, government and the private sectors
- Influence the organisations either the media or academia to make easy access for one another
- Researchers should not be scared to work with media to communicate their work. Not only at the end, but through the whole process to create more understanding of science by journalists.
- Journalist need to look out for science forums and get themselves invited to capture the proceeding and also to increase confidence.
- Scientists can also market their research to relevant media houses that have interest in their work.
- Scientists should also refrain from being too technical, think of the target market when telling their stories.

Both scientists and journalists agreed that communication was still a huge challenge that required some change and working on by all parties concerned.



Figure 3: Anina facilitating the discussions

### ***Bridging the gap between research, media and policy***

The session on “*Bridging the gap between research, media and policy*” discussed ways in which all parties required in the policy making process can participate constructively in policy development of evidence based policies. Bridge the gap creates a platform where everyone’s contribution is considered vital and this situation creates equality. The figure below (figure 4) depicts an ideal situation of how policy development processes have to be conducted. The concept of bridging the gap between science, media and policy can vary based on the specific needs for the policy to be developed.

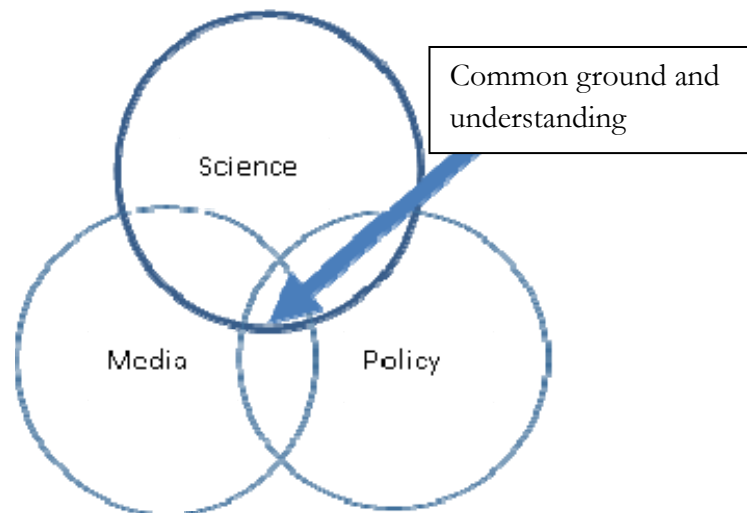


Figure 4: Bridging the gap between research, media and policy (diagram courtesy of Anina Mumm)

The scientist agreed that when they have conferences, it is important to also invite the media. When the media is invited, they must be allowed to engage with anyone they may find interesting as well as get stories that they consider might be of public interest. The journalists also indicated that it is also helpful to give them the agenda in advance. Misinformation from journalists can be dealt with by presenting simple information that will be easy to understand and – scientists need to ask themselves what the journalist could get distort when they try to interpret their scientific findings. Journalists need to work hand in hand with the scientists to ensure that they have adequately captured the real story and research findings, and the scientists need to be a little less sensitive about their work. Scientists need to also be aware that not everyone will accepted their views. They must be prepared to face oppositions and be able to stand by their work. Scientists also need to be mindful that journalists often have to report on issues in which they have had no training and perhaps do not fully understand the findings. Scientist alluded to the fact that in such instances, journalist must refrain from making assumptions.

### ***How to get your message across – what makes a story?***

The session on how to get the message across as a story was loosely translated to simple mean “*I know something you don’t!*”. This part of the workshop deal with issue such as understanding your audience, recognizing what persuading is versus patronising your audience. The session also dealt with the role of cognitive bias and giving people the assurance that there are no stupid questions, creates a more open system for giving out information in a way that the people can understand.

This section was intended to equip scientists with the tools they need to help create interest in what they write and publicise. The story must have a character, theme, present something new,

have an element of suspense (do not tell everything), the use of the imagination, focus on something that people will identify with, evoke emotion, if there are conflicting views or anything controversial about the topic mention it.

The young scientists were also taught about thinking of the next person in terms of how they might interpret information and also what they might be thinking which is of interest to them what is currently making news. Participants were also taught about always asking the five W's when designing a story: What, who, when, where and how?

It is also important for scientists to know who they want to reach out to and understand their audience. Some of the suggested guidelines for creating interesting stories at the workshop that can be used by scientists include:

- Who do you want to reach?
- Why them?
- What are my assumptions or pre-conceived ideas about them?
- What would they get wrong unless it is explained,
- What would be jargon/hard to understand?
- What platforms could they pay attention to?
- What kind of response do I want and what am I looking for from their reaction?
- How to use the message box to create your story (figure 5).

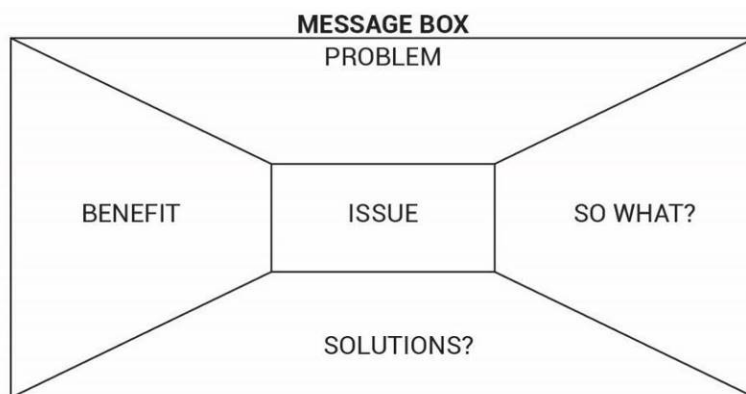


Figure 5: The message box (diagram courtesy of Anina Mumm)

**Example of the message box application.** This example shows a case where the message box was used to address a problem highlighted by scientists of difficulties that they experience related to publishing their work: <https://i0.wp.com/ranganathan.info/scifund/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/message-box.png?ssl=1>





Figure 6: Participants conducting an exercise on how to tell a story using the message box

By the end of the first day of training, groups were formed in order to start creating stories to publish in the media in preparation for day two's training.

At the start of the second day, participants reflected on what they had done on the first day (appendix 5).



Figure 7: Participants on the start of day 2 reflecting on what were the highlights of the first day.

Presentations were made by Ms Elizabeth Mkandwire, Prof Hettie Schönfeldt and Dr. Nicolette Gibson Hall on research they had conducted. This provided input and sources for stories to be written by the participants. It was decided that the target audience for these articles would be [The Conversation Africa](#). The publication was specifically selected as an independent source of

news and views from the academic and research community, delivered direct to the public. *The Conversation* is a good model of what the workshop aimed to achieve in encouraging collaboration between editors and academics to provide informed news analysis and commentary that is free to read and republish.

Dr. Nicolette Gibson Hall presented her experience of publishing in [The Conversation Africa](#).



Figure 8: Dr. Nicolette Gibson Hall presenting on how to conduct interviews and publish in popular media

Prof Hettie Schönfeldt presented some of the findings of the three country case studies conducted as part of the Innovation Lab Programme.



Figure 9: Prof Hettie Schönfeldt – Presentation on Micronutrient interventions





Figure 10: Participants fully engaged during Prof Hettie Schönfeldt's presentation

Elizabeth Mkwandire presented on the tool developed by the Innovation Lab for conducting policy analysis.

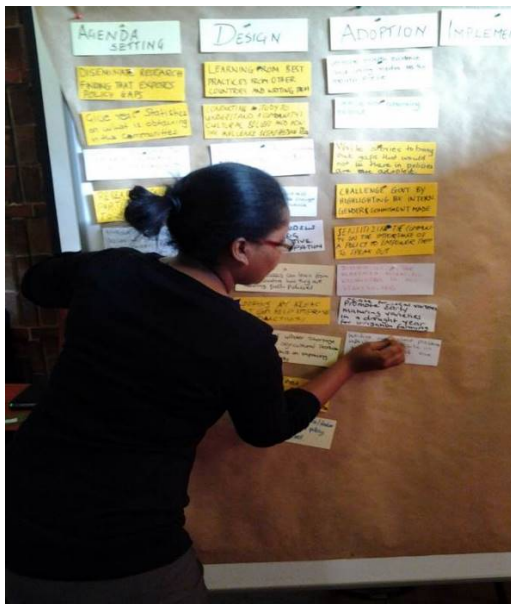


Figure 11: Elizabeth facilitating the Kaleidoscope model exercise



Figure 12: Participants taking in the Kaleidoscope model exercise

Dr Mangani Katundu from Chancellor College in Malawi, presented information about one of his studies which he thought could be used to write an interesting piece for publication in [The Conversation Africa](#). A copy of the draft article is presented in Appendix 4.



Figure 13: Dr Mangani Katundu sharing his study on a local maize variety orange maize (*mthikinya*) with the potential to reduce vitamin A deficiency.

Using the lessons from the first day's programme, participants were grouped with the membership reflecting at least one media person and two scientists. The groups were asked to identify and plan stories of interest in food security based on the presentations. Journalists and the young scientists were encouraged to engage with the presenters (researchers), conduct interviews to ensure that they are able to get the researchers to supply relevant information for them to write stories for [The Conversation Africa](#).

The four stories identified were:

- Micronutrient malnutrition
- Seed sovereignty
- Orange maize variety
- Media and scientist collaboration for popular media publication



Figure 14: Participants writing stories for publication in popular media.

After some brainstorming and interviewing the presenters, each group presented their potential story angle and were encouraged to identify and include insights and facts from the peer-reviewed research of the persons interviewed. They were also encouraged to find multi-media content such as images, video, sound clips or infographics from the presenters. The presenters were given an opportunity to give constructive feedback upon presenting the story angle and also help ensure that the journalists and young scientists have asked the right questions about their research.

The following stories and radio broadcasts were released by the participants after the workshop:

- i. [Bridging science and media](#) by Benadetta Chiwanda, Power 101

- ii. [Local maize varieties for dealing with climate change](#) by Rhoda Msiska, Voice of Livingstonia
- iii. [Scientists work in silos, hoarding information that could benefit the public](#) by Rhoda Msiska, Voice of Livingstonia
- iv. [Focus on disease prevention rather than cure](#) by Kabanda Chulu, Zambia Daily Mail
- v. [Battle for seed and who should control it?](#) by Ephraim Nyondo, the Nation Malawi
- vi. [Draft seed policy: What are the threats?](#) by Ephraim Nyondo, the Nation Malawi
- vii. [Fifteen years on, Irrigation Act still gathering dust](#) by Ephraim Nyondo, the Nation Malawi
- viii. [How government is killing irrigation agriculture](#) by Ephraim Nyondo, the Nation Malawi
- ix. [Government moves beyond current food shortage](#) by Ephraim Nyondo, the Nation Malawi.

The team also published an article on line that can be found at: [http://www.up.ac.za/en/food-security-policy-innovation-lab/news/post\\_2341872-improving-collaboration-between-food-security-and-nutrition-researchers-and-the-media-an-effort-for-policy-change](http://www.up.ac.za/en/food-security-policy-innovation-lab/news/post_2341872-improving-collaboration-between-food-security-and-nutrition-researchers-and-the-media-an-effort-for-policy-change).

### **3 Conclusion**

The participants reflected that the workshop was very useful for both journalists and young scientists, especially because it created an opportunity to realise that science communication can be used as a strategic tool for food research/policy and most importantly it can be used by scientists to communicate their work with the general public. The workshop created an opportunity for each field to experience what the other field experiences and also to share their differences and commonalities and work together in resolving them.

### **4 Reflections, lessons learnt and outputs**

The training provided a platform where the media and researchers identified the barriers in communication between the two groups. The journalists stated that researchers are typically “arrogant and patronizing” and that they are “too protective and overly sensitive about their work.” The researchers shared that journalists lack the capacity to conduct investigative journalism, they “do not always take account of the damage that may ensue from misinformation” and they “lack an understanding of science principles (do not always understand the scientific process)”. Both parties agreed that in order to address these concerns, it is important that “Researchers should not be scared to work with media to communicate their



work, not only at the end of the research, but through the whole process to create more understanding of science by journalists”. It was also agreed upon that, “scientists should also refrain from being too technical and think of the target market when telling their stories”.

Both the media and the researchers expressed that there is need for more training of this nature because strengthening these relationships have implications for policy-makers and the public at large. One of the journalists, Benadetta Chiwanda reflected that the training “has taught me the need for joint efforts between researchers and journalists because a good relationship is crucial as some important research findings that could have been used for the greater good of the public gather dust in archives for lack of proper channels (media) to take such information to the public (or relevant people)”

The scientists/researchers and journalists were able to put together four publications on selected topics (presentations from scientific studies of case studies done for the that were presented by the guest presenters of some of the case studies by the Feed the future’s Food Security Policy (FSP) (in preparation for the bigger workshop). The exercise was to give the participants some exposure by publishing for the general public, through [The Conversation Africa](#) (stories drafts appendix 1-4) and will be posted within the next two weeks for publication. The organizer of the workshop (Dr Vilakati) will take responsibility to see that the publications are eventually submitted.

## 5 Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Sheryl Hendriks, Director of IFNuW, for allowing me to explore the use of science in media training workshop to take place in preparation for an upcoming workshop: Conceptualising drivers of Agriculture and Nutrition policy change through the Kaleidoscope model: consultative workshop on micronutrient policy change. To Ms Anina Mumm, for her expert as science communication and digital media specialist and helping to assist me to do the training of connecting science communication in popular media, teaching the skills on how to communicate science to popular media platforms. Thank you to the guest researchers (presenters) for taking their time to share their research and knowledge in their areas of expertise, Ms Elizabeth Mkandwire, Prof Hettie Schönfeldt, Dr. Nicolette Gibson Hall and Dr Mangani Katundu – who agreed to step in and share his research to be written for public consumption. I am forever thankful to all the participants both journalists and young scientists for their enthusiasm, devotion, participation and interest in this workshop. Thank you to the hosts, for the wonderful venue and for delivering beyond my expectations. To Ms Lorraine Makena and again Ms Elizabeth Mkandawire for assisting with coordinating and making it possible that the workshop takes place.

Finally, I wish to thank the sponsors Feed the Future, DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security, USAID, Michigan State University International Food policy Research Institute and the University of Pretoria.



Figure 15: Group picture of participants and facilitators on day 1



## Appendix 1: List of participants, facilitators and guest and biographies of facilitators and guest

<b>Trainers/facilitators</b>				
1.	Anina Mumm	anina@sciencelink.co.za	Science communication and digital media consultant	Science link
2.	Nokuthula Vilakati	nokuthula.vilakazi@up.ac.za	Post-doctoral fellow	University of Pretoria
3.	Elizabeth Mkandawire	elimka23@gmail.com	PhD Student	University of Pretoria
<b>Participants:</b>				
1.	Rhoda Msiska	rhodamsiska@gmail.com	Student	Malawi
2.	Emphriam Nyondo	efnyondo@gmail.com	Journalist	Malawi
3.	Bernadette Chiwanda	bernachiwanda@gmail.com	Journalist	Malawi
4.	James Majamanda	jamesmaja44@gmail.com	Journalist	Zambia
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11.	Kabanda Chulu	chulukabanda@yahoo.com	Student	
<b>Guest speakers and presenters:</b>				
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3.	Prof Hettie Schönfeldt	Hettie.schoenfeldt@up.ac.za	Researcher	University of Pretoria
4.	Prof Sheryl Hendriks	Sheryl.Hendriks@up.ac.za	Researcher	University of Pretoria



	<p><b>Anina Mumm</b> is a science communication and digital media consultant at Science Link (Pty) Ltd. She is the co-founder of local popular-science hub SciBraai.co.za, and regularly conducts training for journalists in the use of new media and data journalism tools, with a particular focus on how to analyse and visualise data. Anina Mumm helps scientists connect with the world and teaches them skills on how to use multi-media and other innovative digital tools, such as social media to communicate science to popular media platforms. Anina holds an MSc Biochemistry (cum laude), BA Hons Journalism, BSc Hons Biochemistry (cum laude), BSc Psychology &amp; Biochemistry (cum laude).</p>
	<p><b>Elizabeth Mkandawire</b> is a PhD candidate in the Department of Rural Development Planning at the University of Pretoria. Her PhD focuses on gender mainstreaming in food security and nutrition policy. She has a Masters degree in Sociology with specific focus on gender studies. Her interests are in gender, particularly men's involvement in maternal and child health, policy studies and food security and nutrition.</p>
	<p><b>Dr Nokuthula Vilakati</b> holds a PhD in Human Nutrition and has special interests in infant nutrition, indigenous foods nutrition and food security. She is currently pursuing her post doctorate with the Institute for Food, Nutrition and Well-being (IFNuW) where she also serves as a research assistant for the institute. Her current focus for her post-doc is assessing the broader impacts (outreach) of scientific research within the institute. The contribution/benefits to society of scientific research produced within IFNuW.</p>





	<p>Prof Sheryl Hendriks is the founding Director of the Institute for Food Nutrition and Wellbeing (IFNuW) at the University of Pretoria. She holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics from the University of Natal and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Rural Development and Agricultural Extension. She is a global leader in the area of food security and voluntarily led the African Union and NEPAD's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme's (CAADP) Food Security initiatives between 2006 and 2010.</p>
	<p>Prof Hettie Schönfeldt, is a NRF-rated and registered scientist and mentor in the fields of human nutrition and food composition. She is an Associate of the Institute of Food, Nutrition and Well-being (IFNuW) at the University of Pretoria, and a consultant for the food industry in food (including sensory) and nutrition education. She is also coordinator of consumer and health professional communication regarding sheep meat under the auspices of Lamb and Mutton South Africa of the Red Meat Producers Organization.</p>
	<p>Dr Nicolette Gibson Hall holds a degree in Human Nutrition from the University of Pretoria. She currently works as a research assistant at the Institute of Food, Nutrition and Well-being (IFNuW) and while also pursuing her post doctorate studies. She has interests in the role of human nutrition in nutrient composition of food. She is also interested in the translation of scientific findings into consumer friendly messages where she has published many articles and has assisted industries.</p>

## **Appendix 2: Workshop Programme**

# Media training for Food Security Policy Workshop

## 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016

### Brooklyn Guest House, Pretoria



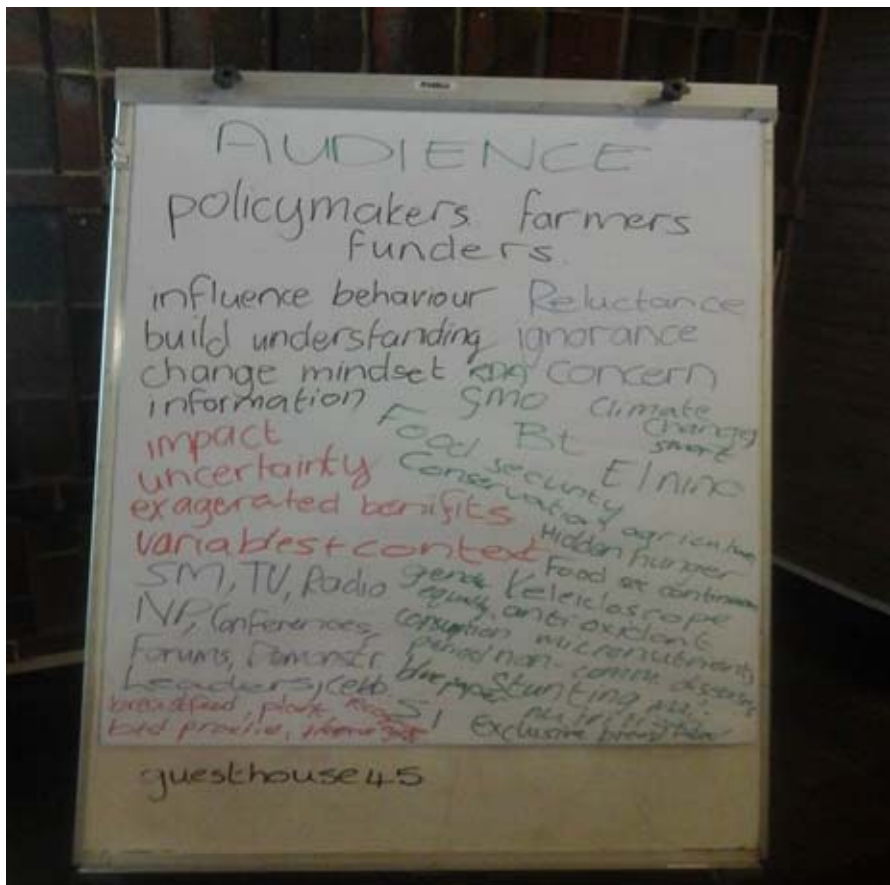
#### Workshop program Day 1:

8:00 – 8:30	Coffee/tea
8:30 – 10:10 Session 1	<p><i>What is my role?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are we here?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Aims &amp; outcomes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introductions, experiences, expectations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Brief presentation: Science communication as a strategic tool for food research/policy</li> <li>• Group activity:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What is my role as a scientist/journalist/policy-maker?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What are the issues?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What are the barriers to communication?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10:10 – 10:20	10min break
10:20 – 12:00 Session 2	<p><i>How can we work together? What do we need from each other?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations &amp; feedback from session 1</li> <li>• Interactive summary: Bridging the gap between research, media and policy</li> </ul>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch

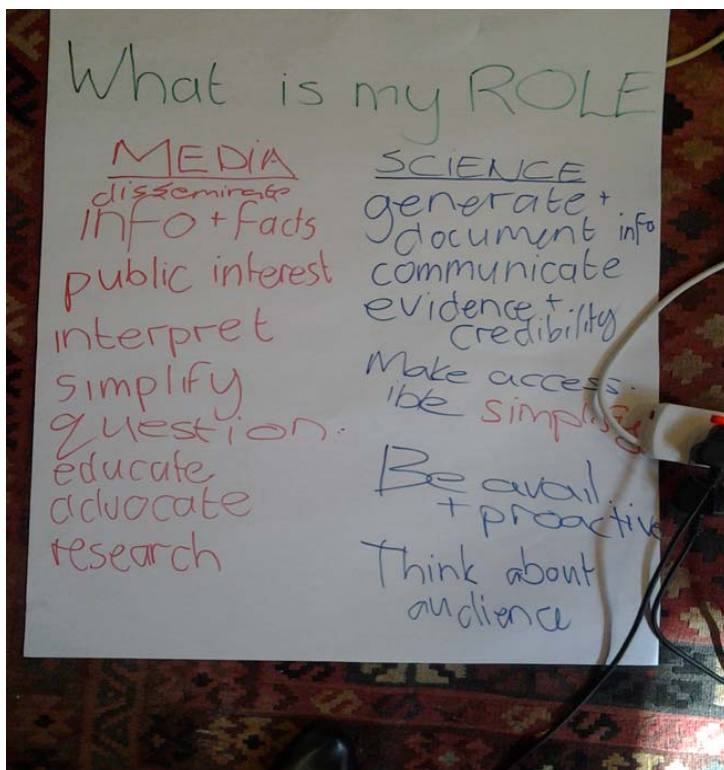
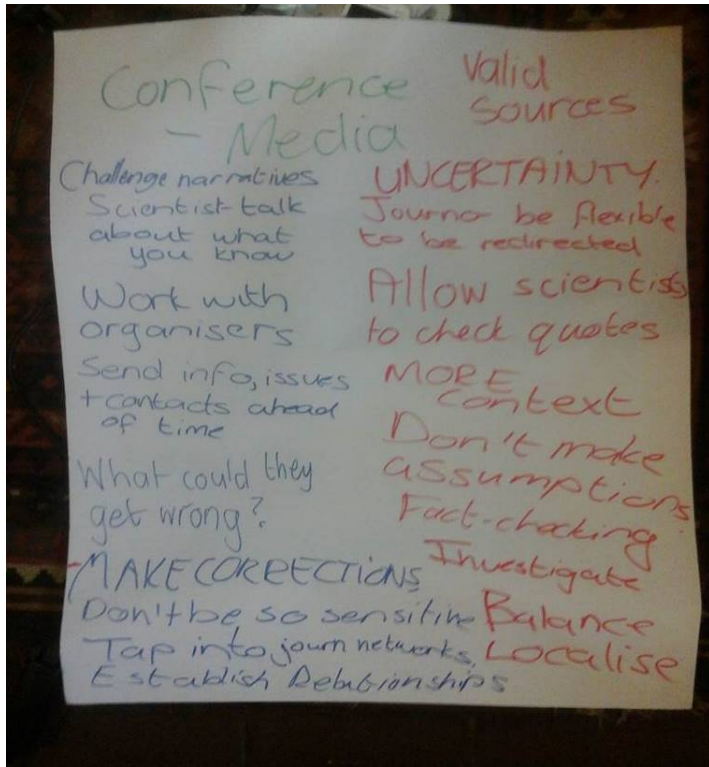


13:00 – 14:25 Session 3	<i>I know something you do not!</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brief presentation &amp; discussion:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Understanding your audience<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Persuading vs. patronising</li><li>▪ The role of cognitive bias</li></ul></li><li>□ How to get your message across – what makes a story?</li><li>□ There are no stupid questions</li></ul></li><li>• Group work: What is the story and why should I care?</li></ul>
14:25 – 14:35	10min break
14:35 – 15:45 Session 4	<i>Group story pitches &amp; feedback</i> <i>How to prepare for Day 2</i>
15:45 – 16:00	Concluding remarks

### Appendix 3: Feedback on flip-charts



Figures 16: Participants deliberation on their impact



Figures 17 and 18: Participants reflections on areas where they function and their roles

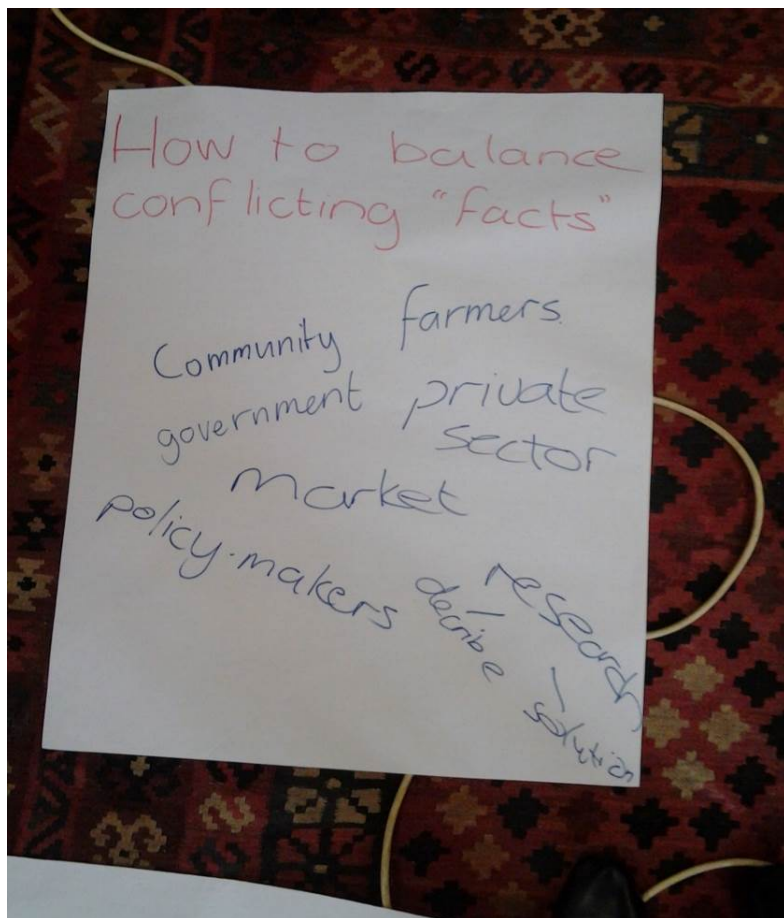


Figure 19: Participants brainstorming outcome.



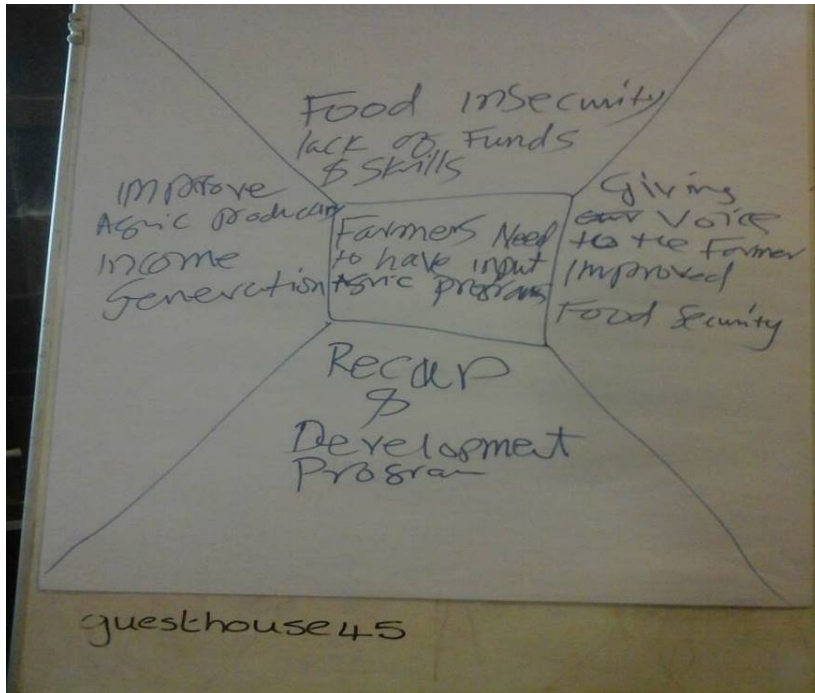


Figure 20: Practical application of the message box by participants



## Day 2: Participants reflection on day 1

Table 1: The participant reflected on what they had done on Day 1 (figure 21)

Reflections		
Understanding your audience	Communication is important	That society should base its decisions on science
Verifying quotes with researchers	Getting to know how journalists work	Journalists and scientists need to work together
The importance of science (research findings) with food security findings	How journalists operate	Media and researchers must work together
Researchers look down on journalists	Scientists fear for their research ideas to be stolen	



Figure 21: Participant's reflections on what the highlights were for day 1

## Appendix 4: Conversation pieces story drafts

**NOTE: Please note that the articles are only drafts they are still being refined by the teams for publication**

“Reclaiming our Nutritious past”

By Mangani Katundu, Kabanda Chulu and Rhoda Msiska

Levels of micronutrient malnutrition have remained high in sub-Saharan African countries despite various initiatives aimed at reducing the problem. The main focus of most contemporary initiatives center around use of supplements, fortification and biofortified crop varieties. Recent research by the Universities of Malawi and Manitoba and Western Ontario have shown that local crop varieties such as orange maize (*mtshikinya*) have potential to reduce vitamin A deficiency for people whose staple food is maize.

According to latest reports, over five million children die of malnutrition around the world, yet this



condition is preventable and curable through dietary means. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) highlights the importance of food based approaches for prevention and control of micronutrient deficiencies such as Vitamin A. Published research on *mtshikinya* has shown that 100g of flour provides 10 percent of the vitamin A needed by an adult in a day. This research highlights the need to explore the role that indigenous and landrace crop varieties can play in the fight against micronutrient deficiencies.

Previous research by scientists such as Minse Modi in South Africa also highlighted the nutritive value of indigenous crops. Such crops are quick wins for reducing micronutrient malnutrition because farmers and local communities already consume such foods and scaling up consumption would relatively face little resistance compared to bio fortified crops.



Previously, the diet of most communities in countries such as Malawi consisted of a variety of foods including other pigmented maize varieties, millet and other cereals. The promotion of white maize to the exclusion of the other pigmented varieties has resulted in the loss of the nutrients that communities would get when they consumed such foods. The importance of consuming nutrients from their natural food sources is that apart from the micronutrient of interest, an individual also consumes other beneficial nutrient and non-nutrient components such as antioxidants that have been known to reduce incidences of diseases such as cancer. In the case of *mtbhikinya*, the carotenoid components include lutein, zeaxanthin,  $\beta$ -carotene and  $\beta$ -cryptoxanthin.

From the farmer perspective, other benefits of growing orange maize include reduced cost of production as the farmers get very good yields even if they mainly use organic manure, and that the maize is early maturing. In addition, the orange maize flour is said to stiffen fast and therefore less flour is used to prepare a given quantity of *nsima* (stiff maize porridge) compared to white hybrid maize. This property potentially makes the *nsima* from this maize have low GI and therefore desirable for people with Diabetes.



It is important that *mtbhikinya* be eaten as part of a nutritious diet that includes foods from all the six food groups. There are also other foods that are rich in vitamin A like Orange flesh sweet potatoes, carrots, green leafy vegetables consumed with added oil, fish, meat and eggs.



## **PLANNING FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH; KEY FOR AFRICA ELOPMENTS-Nutritionists**

By Benadetta Chiwanda, Nicholas Mwale, Nosipho Mabuza and Ntombizethu Mkhwanazi

As the malnutrition cases continue to affect many children in Africa, international nutrition experts have urged families to plan for their children's health.

One expert, Professor Hettie Schonfeldt, Extraordinary professor and Associate of the Institute for Food, Nutrition and Well-being said that malnutrition remains a big problem in Africa partly due to lack of planning for children's health by families.

“The first One thousand days (from conception to a time when the child reaches two years), are very important to the development of a child in a long term.” Professor Schonfeldt explained.

“During this period, the mother and child must be provided with key nutrients necessary for the healthy development of the child”.

She explained that a mother's diet has a direct effect on the health of the unborn baby.

At an early stage, malnutrition can lead to reduced physical and mental development during childhood.

Prof. Schonfeldt mentioned that the dangers of inadequate diets include lower birth weight, disposition to infection and lower Intelligent Quotient (IQ).

Lack of folic acid, according to Prof. Schonfeldt, leads to neural tube defects adding that Iron, Iodine and Vitamin A are also crucial for child development.

Fresh fruits, vegetables, cereals and dairy products such as milk and cheese are some of the foods that are rich in nutrients and should be readily available to expectant mothers and infants.

According to Professor Schonfeldt, good nutrition builds a foundation for the health and development of children, thus the need to emphasize the importance of nutrition for mothers and children in Africa.

A 2013 World Health Organization(WHO) Survey estimated that 6.5 million children under the age of five globally and 2.9 million in Africa died due to malnutrition, which is an equivalent of five children under the age of five dying every minute.

The Global Nutrition Report for 2016 estimates that out of the 667 million children under the age of five worldwide, 159 million under the age of five are too short for their age (stunted), 50 million do not weigh enough for their height (wasted) and 41 million are overweight.

Meanwhile, governments have been urged to take responsibility of ensuring that people in their countries have access to nutritious food.

Prof. Schonfeldt observed that government should implement policies such as food fortification, dietary modification, public health programs and nutrients supplementation so as to ensure improved nutrition among its people.

She also urged governments to focus more on prevention measures as opposed to fighting diseases that come with malnutrition, saying it is more costly to cure than to prevent.

The education system also needs to re-enforce nutrition learning by making it compulsory at school curriculum at all levels. This will help consumers choose products that are rich in nutrients.

Malnutrition should not only be the responsibility of government, the media and the private sector should also play a role in advocating for nutrition messages and up-to-date data provision to help governments implement progressive nutrition policies.

The market industry also has a responsibility to include the nutritional benefits of their products in their advertised messages.



## **Malawi draft seed policy risks leaving smallholder farmers food insecure**

Malawi's draft seed policy, currently awaiting approval by the cabinet, risks leaving smallholder farmer's food insecure as it restricts them from saving and recycling their own seeds.

To meet seed requirements, the majority of small holder farmers in Malawi, estimated at 80 percent, depend on the informal sector which is mostly saving seed from their previous harvest.

The draft policy, if approved, would also limit farmers from selling their local varieties as seed without first registering the variety, a process which is well beyond the means and capacity for the majority of family farmers in Malawi.

Research on a [landrace](#) orange maize variety (*mtbikinya*) by Dr. Mangani Katundu of the University of Malawi in collaboration with Dr. Trust Beta of University of Manitoba, collaborating partners from Western Universities and Ekwendeni Mission Hospital, has highlighted the importance of local landrace varieties to farmers.

According to one farmer in Dedza, Mr Edwin Kasamba, farmers in Dedza and other parts of Malawi have been producing this maize since time in memorial.

The maize has some highly desirable qualities some of which include; high levels of [provitamin A](#), proteins and fats, it is early maturing, gives yields comparable to hybrid varieties even where farmers mainly use manure. It also has desirable sensory properties.

The current policy would make it difficult for farmers to access and use seed of varieties such as this one which are relevant and cost effective for the farmer.

The research by Dr. Katundu underscores the importance of seed policies to promote [biodiversity](#) because nutritional composition between foods and among varieties or breeds of the same crop can differ dramatically.

Consequently, limiting people's rights to use, propagate and trade in landrace crop varieties would limit smallholder farmer's ability to have power over their seeds as they will have to buy hybrid seeds every year.

Even after two to three decades of input support programmes, most smallholder Malawian farmers struggle to purchase hybrid seed and the proposed policy will make them vulnerable to food insecurity.

The government, however, has justified this legislation by pointing to the need to harmonize Malawian seed legislation with other countries in the region, aligning them with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern Africa Development Community

(SADC), Africa Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), and the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, an agreement endorsed by the US government along with many others.

Related to this argument is one of quality—in order to be saved, recycled and sold, seed must be registered and certified by a formal institution.

The policy draft reads that farmers alone cannot determine whether something is truly a ‘seed’ or whether it is in fact just ‘grain’ and thus not worthy of the seed designation. However, Prof Blessings Chinsinga of Chancellor College says this does not make sense because farmers rely on such seeds for their primary material and that they have used landrace seeds for generations.

Professor Chinsinga further notes that if the proposed policy comes into effect, Malawian’s farmers and the abundant knowledge they have nurtured are bound to be trampled over in the process, threatening Malawi’s already fragile food security.

“Moreover, innovation in African agriculture has proceeded through collective community processes drawn from customary practices based on sharing,” he says.

According to Professor Sheryl Hendriks of University of Pretoria, the indigenous knowledge that these farmers have acquired over the years is relevant in help that adapt to climate change induced shocks. Implementing such a policy, she adds, may undermine the knowledge that farmers have acquired over the years.

Dr Katundu, hence, notes that government should ensure that the policies and legislation that they put in place should protect and promote informal seed systems to ensure that farmers have power over their seed and that Malawians are able to exercise their Right to Food.



## **Lillian Mumba**

### **Pretoria 22.06.16**

Scientists and journalists need to work together. There is usually a misunderstanding between the two professions because scientists think that journalists write shallow language. The journalists feel that scientists are not able to articulate issues in simple language.

Scientists believe that journalists oversimplify the work of the scientist and do not put the facts in the right perspective.

Chisomo Kintu, a researcher from University of Malawi says journalists are sensationalists and believes that if science is sensationalised, it loses its meaning. Ms. Kintu further says the journalists misinform their audiences by not reporting facts accurately.

Lihle Ngwane of University of Pretoria says journalists cannot be trusted with scientific research findings because the journalists lack scientific background and tend to be biased.

Ms. Ngwane says she is worried about the journalists making assumptions instead of verifying the facts with the scientists and that there is need for balanced reporting.

Similarly, journalists have complained that scientists are not ready to talk to them about their research findings for public use. The scientists do not involve the journalists in the early stages of their research for easy understanding of the research.

Journalists believe that scientists are too arrogant and patronising. Kabanda Chuulu, a reporter at the Zambia Daily Mail says the scientists are mean because they think they know everything. Mr. Chulu believes the scientists look down on journalists.

The journalists feel that scientists sometimes give conflicting information on the same subject, which makes it difficult for the journalist to make a distinction between which information is more legitimate.

Ephraim Nyondo of Nation Publications Limited in Malawi says scientists talk to themselves, yet they want to convey their findings to the outside world.

An engagement between scientists and journalists in Pretoria revealed that the most important thing that scientists and journalists have to understand is that they working for the betterment of the public, hence the need for the two to work together.



Journalists are encouraged to investigate the information they get from the scientists correctly. Mr. James Majamanda, a researcher at University of Malawi says journalists should check and countercheck their facts by questioning the scientists to avoid diluting and misreporting? the scientific work.

Mr. Majamanda further says if the journalists don't question the scientists, they will publish information which is different from what the scientist has found in the research.