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RUFORUM Celebrating 10 years as a Network and 22 years supporting Agricultural Higher Education

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The Monthly Brief of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)

Celebrating RUFORUM@10

Working against career advancement barriers

To pursue my masters degree in a reputable university has been one of my numerous career objectives. Therefore, securing the INTRA-ACP/ RUFORUM scholarship to study a masters in Agricultural Economics in Eduardo Mondlane University was a great opportunity that I sincerely value as this course of action will no doubt contribute hugely to my career goal as a lecturer in the University of Port Harcourt Nigeria.

Above: Linda Chinenyenwa Famiusi, student at Eduardo Mondlane University

However, beginning the programme was challenging for me because I had to travel to Maputo with my two daughters, both infants (21 months and 4 months old respectively) at the time the study would commence. Prior to my transit to Maputo, my husband had been away for more than six months undertaking his master's degree in Germany.

I had doubts and fears (fear of the unknown) about going with my family to a foreign country where I have no relatives or friends, a completely different culture from the Western African countries and the most frightening part then was that ''Portuguese'' is the lingua franca in Mozambique as I only understand English and a bit of French. I wondered a lot about a couple of things; what is the weather like in Maputo? Will the kids be alright in the new environment? Who would take care of the kids while I am in class? If I secure a nanny, can she be trusted? Will she be able to understand and speak English? Will I be able to get a comfortable accommodation? Will I be able to acquire a visa on entry for my kids and I? Will someone be at the airport to pick us? Will I be able to study adequately? Would the people be friendly to me and my family? I can go on and on as the list is endless.

Despite all these fears, my husband was very supportive, although some family members were not very encouraging as I was told to stay back in Nigeria and take care of my family and apply next time when

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the children are older. I understand their point of view. They wondered basically, about how I would be able to cope with two kids. They cared so much and didn't want the kids and I to be in a difficult and complicated situation. Nevertheless, I was determined and more than willing to give it a try. I eventually ventured into the mission and as the saying goes; there is no better time than now, so off we go to Maputo.

Above: Linda Chinenyenwa with Dr. Akin Adesina at the Opening ceremony of the 4th RUFORUM Biennial conference in Maputo, Mozambique

It was a long and interesting journey to Maputo as we made a transit from Ethiopia to Mozambique. On arrival, we received our visas without hurdles, Elsa was there to pick us and she took us to our temporary comfortable accommodation provided by the University until we were settled in and able to find other accommodation. We were even offered dinner by Dr. Mutundo. Three days after, I found a good nanny, who understands very little English but that was not a problem at all. Two days after, we started lectures. At that point I knew we were going to have a wonderful experience in Maputo. Presently, we have comfortable accommodation and communication is no longer a problem as I now know my way around the city and even in the markets.

Hence, I want to use this medium to thank the INTRA-ACP/ RUFORUM management for this great opportunity. Also, I want to encourage other women to pursue their dreams, though there would be stumbling blocks along the route but truthfully, it is worth a try. Don't give up until your dreams, desires and goals come to fruition.

This is our 10th issue in a series of articles we are releasing as part of our 10 year anniversary. Download by clicking on the following issues to access the previous issues; Reaping what you sow: agricultural partnerships are key (9th issue); Tertiary education: a prerequisite to meet global challenges (seventh issue) Community Action Research Grants: Connecting Universities to Rural Producers (sixth issue) RUFORUM Small Competitive Grants; GRGs – Graduate Research Grants (fifth issue) RUFORUM Network: Changing Pedagogical Paradigms, Priorities, and Practice (fourth issue), Briefing note on the 4th biennial conference (third issue), RUFORUM's Developmental Roots (second issue) and RUFORUM@10 (first issue).

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