

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY



— ALLIANCE FOR —  
**AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

Alliance for African Partnership Convening and Design Workshop  
May 9-12, 2016 • East Lansing, Michigan, USA

“As part of our covenant with society, we must consider new ways in which the world’s best research-intensive universities can make a difference, independently and together, in addressing the vast societal changes influencing the new Millennium.”

*MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon*

# ALLIANCE FOR AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP DESIGN WORKSHOP

## Michigan State University & African Studies Center

Michigan State University's (MSU) African Studies Center and its Africanist faculty are well known for their long tradition of collaboration with African organizations and for developing best practices for research, partnership, and study abroad in Africa. By establishing the Alliance for African Partnership (AAP), MSU is building on this legacy of engagement.

The AAP will promote innovative approaches to collaborative research and partnership with African institutions to address emerging challenges in today's world. It will be designed to support and expand upon MSU's ongoing activities with African partner institutions and to promote new areas for collaboration in addressing challenges that are commonly shared in Africa and globally—be they youth under- and unemployment; climate change; food insecurity; health and nutritional challenges; gender inequalities; cultural heritage preservation; or the promotion of good governance and institution building.

## Purpose of the AAP Design Workshop

Michigan State University International Studies and Programs and African Studies Center hosted a co-creation workshop to engage invited African guests and MSU faculty in open discussion and collaboration on the changing landscape in Africa and the future of institutional partnerships. This workshop provided an opportunity for the MSU community and African leaders to come together to share and build upon ideas about partnership, provide meaningful feedback, and identify the best approaches for building the AAP.

The purpose of this convening was to consider new ways that MSU and its partners in Africa can work together to address the emerging challenges of the new Millennium. The focus of the workshop was on partnerships—understanding previous experiences with partnership, identifying the crucial elements of partnership, and innovating new ways to expand the range of effective and sustainable partnerships to promote research, teaching, outreach, and mutual capacity building.



# WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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The Alliance for African Partnership co-creation workshop was designed to engage participants in a structured innovation process centered around the discussion and definition of good and sustainable partnerships and the design of the AAP partnership model.

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“Through the Alliance for African Partnership, we seek to co-create a new model of mutually beneficial collaboration that will not only help us take on today’s problems, but better prepare us for tomorrow’s challenges as well.”

*Steve Hanson*

*Associate Provost and Dean  
MSU International Studies and Programs*

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Over the two-and-a-half day workshop, participants were taken through a series of structured exercises in pairs and small teams. Participants were able to forge new relationships, share ideas, and collaborate to develop six partnership principles (see page 8). These six concepts will serve as a guide and reference tool for developing the future activities of the AAP.

MSU International Studies and Programs and the AAP leadership team engaged DesignThinkers Group to facilitate the workshop. Throughout the process the team worked collaboratively to “co-create” a vision and a set of potential activities to guide the formation, governance structure, and initial activities of the AAP.





The workshop started with introductory comments by MSU's president Lou Anna K. Simon, who shared MSU's vision of the future of institutional partnerships. In her speech she reinforced the idea that, "A university in the world grant model is one that sees citizens not just as beneficiaries of its knowledge, but also as partners in its co-creation." The co-directors of the AAP, Jamie Monson and Thomas Jayne, then provided background information about the goals and desired outcomes of the workshop, and how the workshop activities fit into developing the overall vision and model for the AAP.

The morning session continued with a series of short talks by 15 distinguished African guests, focusing on their experiences partnering with international organizations. The talks were done in a series of four panels with questions and discussion between each panel.

After the lunch break, the afternoon sessions were dedicated to discussions and developing a shared understanding of the changing landscape, emerging trends, and challenges facing Africa and institutional partnerships.

Several data-mapping tools were used to explore these topics and to help organize thoughts and capture ideas from the earlier presentations and discussions.

The participants were divided into their first set of teams to identify these emerging trends and they then mapped partnership stakeholders. The data captured was used in Day Two to explore opportunities for innovating current partnerships and designing new ones.



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“MSU alone cannot engage in this partnership, but bringing together the collective knowledge, wisdom, and experience of all these partners creates an impact—an exponential impact that one partner alone may not be able to accomplish.”

*Chinwe Effiong*

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# Trends & Stakeholders

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*These descriptions were developed by the participants in small groups on Day One:*

## Research Trends

- Research is increasingly moving in interdisciplinary and collaborative directions that are multi-sited and global.
- There is a growing demand for “transformative” research where the outcomes will transform communities and institutions, not only individuals.
- Research should be evidence-based and solution-oriented.
- Researchers are recognizing Africa’s great diversity.
- Several core themes are emerging: climate change, food security, energy, urbanization, gender, and youth.
- It is essential that research address Africa-led priorities.

## Technology Trends

- Online education and shared learning spaces are providing new and innovative educational opportunities.
- Mobile technologies are transforming communities.
- Social media is connecting people and innovating new ways of sharing information.
- GIS and satellite mapping are impacting research methods and the solutions that research generates to address issues such as climate change.
- Digital partnership engagement through hubs and networks is transforming collaborative research.
- Sustainable energy is developing from and for technology innovation.





## Funding Trends

- Research is increasingly being funded by combinations of private and government funding.
- Funding overall is decreasing for Africa-related research.
- More and more funders are emphasizing Africa-led research.
- There is a significant rise in funding for consortia and partnerships.
- Donors still drive research and development agendas.
- In some cases, international donors are taking over local NGOs as the donors “go local.”

## Social and Cultural Trends

- Researchers and funders are increasingly recognizing the importance of indigenous/local knowledge.
- Gender inclusion remains a major priority.
- Social and cultural diversity is a growing theme.
- Migration and mobility of scholars, including Africans in the diaspora, is affecting research.
- Urbanization continues to be a significant social force.
- The increasing youth population means that youth are becoming major societal actors.

## Other Trends

- Environmental changes—such as climate change and energy needs—are top priorities.
- Governments need to be engaged as research and implementation partners.
- Terrorism and security are driving research and development agendas.



## Partnership Stakeholders

- Families: men, women, elders, youth, and children
- Communities and community-based organizations
- Educational and research institutions
- Donors and funding agencies
- International agencies and NGOs
- Students
- Religious or faith communities
- Africa’s diasporas
- Policymakers
- The private sector

# DAY TWO

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The second day built on the previous day's presentations, discussions, and work around the changing landscape, challenges, trends, and stakeholders.

The first half of the day focused on a team activity and plenary discussion around the question of what constitutes a good partnership.

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“Sometimes, a catalyst brings together people who should naturally be talking to one another. This event is one of those catalysts.”  
*Sosten Chiotha*

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After lunch, participants were divided into six new teams to identify potential innovative activities for the AAP. These ideas will be used by the AAP leadership team to develop the first set of activities for the AAP.

In the afternoon, the six teams were asked to reflect back on the last day and a half of presentations, activities, and discussions to prototype the ideal AAP partnership model.

Teams were able to hone their concept details through a prototyping exercise and gain valuable peer feedback.

## Descriptions of Ideal Partnerships

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*These descriptions were developed by the participants while completing the partnership map activity on the morning of Day Two.*

### **An ideal partnership is:**

1. A mutually beneficial relationship with a shared vision for producing transformative change at local and/or global levels.
2. Based on trust, mutual respect, transparency, empathy and accountability between the partners.
3. Envisioned from the beginning to be sustainable beyond an initial grant cycle, with a view toward long-term collaboration, mutual benefit, and mutual capacity building.
4. Founded on clarity of purpose, with clear contributions to society.
5. Based on engagement of partners at the beginning, in which objectives, activities, resource mobilization and resource allocation plans are developed jointly.
6. Built on a foundation of solid partnership principles and values, which produces a governance structure that reinforces accountability and maintains clear auditing, a structured work plan and metrics, and also personnel and resources that are appropriate, globally focused and culturally sensitive.



# DAY THREE

The last day of the workshop started with an activity called “the peer input process.” Using this approach, the moderator taps into the collective knowledge of a group to gain rapid feedback on a question or challenge with which the whole group may be grappling.

MSU and DesignThinkers Group decided to host two groups during this activity. First, the most senior African guests shared their wisdom regarding the future of Africa and how we might build stronger and more sustainable partnerships going forward.

Second, African students from the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program were invited to talk about their aspirations and hopes for the future of Africa.

These insights were then considered by the six groups as they made the final iterations of their prototypes and prepared for their final presentations.

Late in the morning, each group was given four minutes to present publicly their ideal AAP partnership model to a broader MSU community audience. Each of the six teams made their short presentations, and the audience provided feedback and questions to the teams.

The workshop concluded with a short closing session with summaries by Isaac Minde and Thomas Jayne on planned next steps by AAP management, a vote of thanks by Jamie Monson, and final closing remarks by Nango Dembélé, the Minister of Livestock and Fisheries for the Government of Mali.

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“I envision a partnership where youth and other stakeholders are considered as equal partners, not just the recipients of whatever the partnership will decide.”  
*Pauline Wambua*

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# PROTOTYPES FOR THE ALLIANCE FOR AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP

*The following ideas and descriptions were generated by workshop participants during the exercise in which six teams prototyped their vision of the ideal AAP model. The teams started to generate and gain feedback on these models on the afternoon of Day Two and presented them to the broader MSU community on Day Three.*

## Partnership Approach

- The AAP must be based on mutual benefits for partner institutions and focus on mutually defined issues.
- The AAP should take a collaborative and consultative approach.
- The agenda of AAP and its partner institutions needs to be Africa-focused and Africa-led.
- Joint investment and ownership by all partners and enacting the values of good partnership are key to the AAP's success.
- The AAP should facilitate and strengthen the effectiveness of already established partnerships while generating new partnerships.
- The AAP and its partners need to have a shared vision.
- The AAP's work must align with national policies in the countries in which it works.



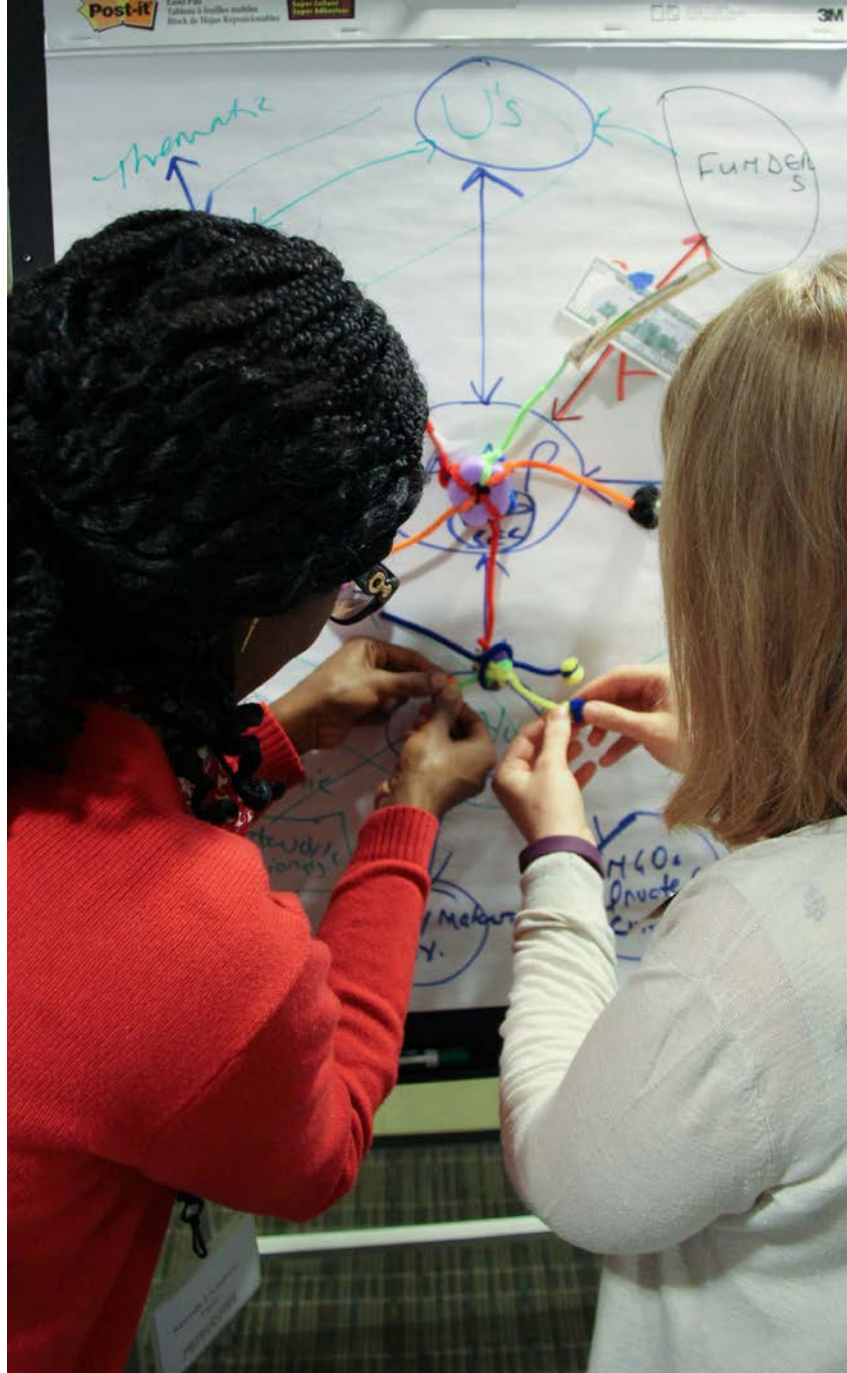


## Key Components for Partnership Success

- A successful AAP will require trust, transparency, and respect from all partners.
- The AAP will need clearly defined objectives and goals and should be specific in its focus.
- A clear organizational structure is essential. This could include a leadership team and other implementing personnel, a steering committee, and/or an advisory board with representatives from diverse stakeholders.
- The AAP must have adequate funding and a solid infrastructure.
- Monitoring and evaluation is a critical component to assure success.
- The AAP should develop a shared vision with partners.

## Partnership Criteria

- The AAP and its partners will need a shared vision and mutually shared interests.
- Multiple stakeholders should be represented as partners: community-based organizations, government, private sector, research and educational institutions. Also, partners should include organizations on national, regional, and continental levels.
- Partners should be credible, trusted, and transparent institutions.
- The AAP may consider building on and/or continuing to support past partnerships.
- The AAP and its partners should have complementary expertise.
- Partners should be connected and grounded in communities.





# ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES & NEXT STEPS

Workshop participants proposed various kinds of activities that could be carried out under the AAP. A shared vision emerged that AAP activities would:

- create a collaborative and cross-disciplinary platform for addressing today's global challenges;
- innovate new models of engagement for shared research; and
- enhance the resources and capacities of African universities, institutions and scholars as well as MSU.

## Illustrative Activities

### Institutional Capacity-building

- Deliver workshops on multimedia techniques for communicating research activities and findings
- Write grants to initiate the launch of the AAP
- Train staff on financial management for grant funding
- Host student recruitment forums
- Hold professional development and soft-skill development programs for public institutions in Africa (universities, research institutes, etc.)
- Facilitate faculty exchange programs
- Develop a code of professional ethics for applied research partnerships

### Solutions-oriented Research Support

- Undertake multidisciplinary and multi-sector research, teaching, and outreach on the changing food systems of Africa
- Support data collection for plant breeding
- Promote research collaboration
- Facilitate joint funding proposals

### Outreach and Implementation

- Develop activities to inspire African youth to pursue careers in the agri-food system
- Create student exchange programs between African and US universities
- Provide opportunities for internships for young African scholars at African institutions
- Organize an AAP leadership conference for students and young professionals (e.g., bringing students from north and south universities together to exchange ideas and promote network partnerships, potentially with the support of established mentors)



## Networking and Communication

- Build relationships between African organizations, MSU, and civil society groups working on social change issues
- Launch programs to enhance south-south linkages and partnerships, such as Africa-India, Africa-China, and Africa-Brazil
- Host an annual gathering of AAP partners to promote cross-learning and collaboration
- Build policy, outreach and advocacy platforms on both topical issues and issues of enduring interest
- Organize annual thematic policy solutions conferences
- Create a centralized office/server that coordinates MSU's capacities in a comprehensive manner in Africa
- Develop an Africa-based platform for food and agribusiness development and commercialization of technologies through public-private partnerships
- Host working lunches to discuss projects
- Advance activities to promote networking
- Create and support a communications portal to promote international communications (e.g., for open calls for research funds, sharing research, upcoming conferences, new technologies, blog sites, social networking, etc).
- Hold thematic summer institutes

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“We see technology as a means of developing a demand-driven sense of policy that will really make a difference.”

*Titus Awokuse*

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## Next Steps

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Several potential next steps were discussed at the convening.

- A summary of the convening (this document) would be circulated to all convening participants as well as all MSU Africanist faculty.
- AAP management would organize a meeting for all interested MSU faculty in early fall 2016 to discuss the outcomes and proposed next steps emanating from the May 2016 Convening and to solicit feedback and suggestions.
- Management made a commitment to all participants to continue in the co-creation mode, which would include instituting an Alliance for African Partnership Advisory Board to guide AAP activities.
- Management acknowledged the proposal to set up an AAP Secretariat to be based in Africa when funds allowed for this.
- Management would move toward an official launch of the AAP in Africa, tentatively planned for early 2017.
- Initial activities of the AAP would be identified through consultation between AAP management and the Advisory Board and showcased during the upcoming official launch of the AAP.

# AAP Convening and Design Workshop Participants

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## Invited African Participants

### **Aggrey Ambali**

Head of NEPAD Science, Technology and Innovation Hub

### **Thelma Awori**

Founding Chair and President, Sirleaf Market Women's Fund

### **Sosten Chiotha**

Regional Director, Leadership for Environment and Development Southern and Eastern Africa

### **Nango Dembélé**

Minister of Livestock and Fisheries, Government of Mali

### **Chinwe Effiong**

Africa Regional President, Junior Achievement Worldwide

### **Chance Kabaghe**

Executive Director, Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute; Chairman, Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes in Eastern and Southern Africa

### **Denis T. Kyetere**

Executive Director, African Agricultural Technology Foundation

### **Mwelecele Ntuli Malecela**

Director General, National Institute for Medical Research Tanzania

### **Richard Mkandawire**

Vice President, African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership

### **Penina Mlamba**

Professor, Department of Fine and Performing Arts and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Chair in Pan African Studies, University of Dar-es-Salaam

### **Ibrahima Thioub**

Rector/President, Assembly of Université Cheikh Anta Diop

### **Leonard Wantchekon**

Professor, Politics, International Affairs, and Economics, Princeton University

### **Paul Tiyambe Zeleza**

Vice Chancellor, United States International University-Africa

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## MSU Faculty

### **Nwando Achebe**

Professor, Department of History

### **Titus Awokuse**

Chairperson and Professor, Department of Agriculture, Food and Resource Economics

### **Michael Bratton**

University Distinguished Professor of Political Science and African Studies

### **Eric Crawford**

Professor, Department of Agriculture, Food, and Resource Economics; Director, Global Center for Food Systems Innovation; Co-Director, Food Security Group

### **John B. Kaneene**

University Distinguished Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health; Director, Center for Comparative Epidemiology, College of Veterinary Medicine

### **Candace Keller**

Associate Professor, Department of Art, Art History, and Design

### **Peter Limb**

Africana Bibliographer and Associate Professor (adjunct), Department of History

### **Saweda Liverpool-Tasie**

Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics

### **Karim Maredia**

Professor and Senior Associate to the Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Director, World Technology Access Program (WorldTAP)

### **Nicole M. Mason**

Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics

### **Ruth Mbabazi**

Research Scientist, World Technology Access Program, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

### **Robert Montgomery**

Assistant Professor, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife; Director, RECaP Laboratory

### **Robert Y. Ofoli**

Associate Professor, Chemical Engineering

### **Susan Wyche**

Assistant Professor, Department of Media and Information

### **Leo Zulu**

Associate Professor, Department of Geography

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## MSU MasterCard Foundation Scholars

### **Ebenezer Ansah**

### **Jorem Awadu**

### **Eva Tetteh**

### **Pauline Wambua**





# Alliance for African Partnership

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## Alliance for Africa Partnership Management Team

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