

University students embrace biotech research as Africa gradually embraces crop biotechnology

Though most African nations have been slow to commercialize genetically modified crops, students across the continent remain committed to earning advanced degrees in biotechnology.

Ironically, Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, has become a hub for such students, though the country has yet to pass its own biosafety law, leaving its publicly-developed GM crops to languish in the laboratory.

Some of these graduate students, like Frank Kumi, a principal research assistant at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, are more hopeful about the situation in their own countries. Kumi noted that Ghana has a biosafety law and imports GM products. The nation is also moving to commercialize pest-resistant Bt cowpea, [its first GM crop](#).

Kumi was motivated to pursue his doctorate after noticing a research gap at his university. “There is only one plant breeder in the crop science department,” he explained. “And the dilemma is that he is on post-retirement. I needed to exploit the opportunity.”

Mercy Ulemu Msiska, currently an assistant director in the Department of Crop Protection in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development in Malawi, said she’s pursuing her training as part of her country’s strategy to build capacity in biotechnology.

...

While her fellow students at Makerere are primarily lecturers, Msiska has been engaging farmers to help them understand the advantages of adopting GM technology

Read full, original article: [African biotech students remain hopeful, despite obstacles](#)