



ORGANIZATION/INSTITUTION MEDIA CONTACT PERSON - Prof. Christine Dranzoa

MUNI UNIVERSITY

Receives Grand Challenges Explorations Grant For Groundbreaking Research in Global Health and Development

Arua, Uganda – Muni University announced today that it is a [Grand Challenges Explorations](#) winner, an initiative funded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#). **Alfred Alumai, PhD** will pursue an innovative global health and development research project, titled **“The hand-pulled small seeds planter: A novel approach to improving small seeds cultivation women smallholder farmers in Uganda”**.

Grand Challenges Explorations (GCE) funds individuals worldwide to explore ideas that can break the mold in how we solve persistent global health and development challenges. Alfred Alumai’s project is one of over 50 Grand Challenges Explorations Round 10 grants announced by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

To receive funding, Alfred Alumai and other Grand Challenges Explorations Round 10 winners demonstrated in a two-page online application a bold idea in one of four critical global health and development topic areas that included agriculture development, neglected tropical diseases and communications. Applications for the [next Round](#) will be accepted starting September 2013.

The hand-pulled small seed planter project will evaluate the beneficial impacts of a small seeds planter for smallholder women farmers in Uganda. The tool will facilitate row cultivation of small seed crops such as millet, upland rice, sorghum, and groundnuts, to reduce agronomic challenges associated with weeding and harvesting, while increasing overall crop production and yields. The project will conduct field trials in northwestern Uganda with three women smallholder farmer groups over a six-month period. After subsequent tool refinement the project will promote widespread adoption by conducting on-site demonstrations and workshops, and presentations via radio broadcasts.

Alfred Alumai is a research scientist at Muni University in Uganda. He has extensive experience in sustainable agroecosystems management.

About Grand Challenges Explorations

[Grand Challenges Explorations](#) is a US\$100 million initiative funded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#). Launched in 2008, over 800 people in more than 50 countries have received Grand Challenges Explorations grants. The grant program is open to anyone from any discipline and from any organization. The initiative uses an agile, accelerated grant-making process with short two-page online applications and no preliminary data required. Initial grants of US\$100,000 are awarded two times a year. Successful projects have the opportunity to receive a follow-on grant of up to US\$1 million.

Muni University

P. O. Box 725, Arua, Uganda

Telephone: +256.476.420.311/2/3

URL: <http://www.muni.ac.ug>