

New animated film marks International Year of Plant Health 2020

Diseases that devastate African communities are the focus of a brand new short animated film launched this week by The CONNECTED Virus Network, based at The Universities of Bristol and Newcastle in the United Kingdom.



©avemario via [123RF](#)

The network's focus is bringing together researchers to find ways of tackling crop diseases, caused by plant viruses, which devastate food crops in sub-Saharan Africa.

Farmers in sub-Saharan African countries face failing harvests as a result of vector-borne plant disease and are often unable to feed their local communities as a result.

Diseases can lead to increased poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity, blocking a countries' economic and social development, sometimes leading to migration as communities look for better lives elsewhere.

To mark The International Year of Plant Health 2020, as designated by The United Nations General Assembly, the new two-minute film focuses on:

- How human activity spreads plant disease
- The importance of diagnostic training to help people in the field address the challenges, and
- The role of The CONNECTED Virus Network in providing this training.

Julia Vaccina Makar and Kye Ottley, students from UWE Animation at The University of The West Of England, Bristol, UK, were commissioned by the CONNECTED Virus Network to make the short cartoon. They worked from a series of images and other information supplied by a number of researchers working in African countries.

CONNECTED Network Director, Prof. Gary Foster (University of Bristol, UK) explains: "With one specific virus currently at the forefront of most people's minds, it's important we remain aware of the devastating impact viruses of a different type have on food crops relied upon by millions of people in Sub-Saharan African countries.

"Few members of the public, or indeed governments, fully realise just how seriously plant diseases affect these communities.

"We hope this short animated film contributes towards a better understanding.

"We are grateful to students Julia and Kye, to Pereko Makgothi who provided the voiceover, and to the UWE Animation tutor team for this exciting collaboration."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>