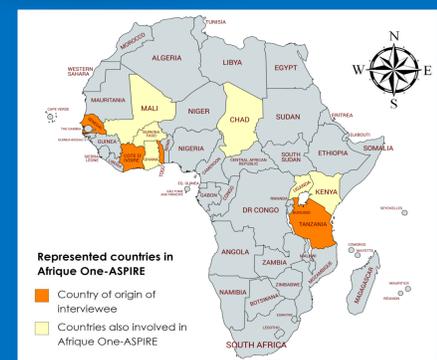


Challenges faced by One-Health research capacity strengthening initiatives in Africa - Perspectives from East and West Africa



Fundamental to One-Health research is interdisciplinarity and successful collaboration of scientists and stakeholders. In the African context, increasing cooperation between scientists from different disciplines and from diverse countries is needed to maximize research output and impact. Generally, research capacity is limited in most LMICs, even though they experience high morbidity and mortality rates. Recognising this, an increasing number of initiatives are aimed at strengthening African One-Health research capacity. The collaboration among scientists and institutions of higher education in Africa is essential to optimise the use of scarce resources while reaching promising students. However, capacity strengthening in One-Health faces specific challenges, in particular in the case of Pan-African programs.

Key Message: Fundamental to Pan-African One-Health research is collaboration of scientists from various disciplines and countries. Challenges perceived by Afrique One-ASPIRE programme members include differing educational and socio-cultural systems of countries, institutions and disciplines, language barriers and a lack of critical mass of students, facilitators and PIs. Long term commitment by funders, institutions and countries needed to improve research capacity in One Health.



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Objectives

Aim:

Elucidating the challenges of working in collaborative Pan-African research capacity building programmes for One-Health as perceived by members of academia in Africa

Special objectives:

1. Identify the main challenges of capacity building in Africa
2. Establish areas where collaboration is potentially difficult when dealing with Francophone/Anglophone partners
3. Determine the advantages of big, Pan-African, collaborative capacity building programs
4. Establish areas for improvement

Results

The challenges perceived can be categorised into 5 main themes:

1. Educational and socio-cultural systems and their differences between Anglophone and Francophone countries
 2. Lack of a critical mass affecting recruitment and retention of students
 3. Limited established South-South collaborations and persistent "brain drain"
 4. Limited availability of skilled facilitators, mentors and supervisors
 5. Challenging collaborative research environments specifically infrastructure, funding for either Francophone or Anglophone countries and language barriers.
- An East-West divide in the priorities of these challenges was noted, as well as between institutional levels.

Conclusion

The study shows the complexities of successfully strengthening One-Health research capacity in a Pan-African context. Attributes of differing educational and socio-cultural systems between countries and disciplines have a strong influence on the successful mentorship of students and working relationships between partners. Established training collaborations still go North-South for historical, linguistic and financial reasons and extra efforts are required to make South-South (or intra-African) training attractive to researchers. The findings provide a unique opportunity for dialogue between capacity builders of different scientific disciplines, nationalities and educational levels to be able to address the challenges faced. Combined science & capacity schemes are key in the African context and have to be considered by funders.

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Methodology

Study design:

- Semi-guided interviews with 12 experienced Pan-African research programme members
- 7 working in Tanzania and 5 in Côte d'Ivoire or Senegal

Analysis:

- Inductive thematic analysis with open coding
- Descriptive analysis of themes expressed

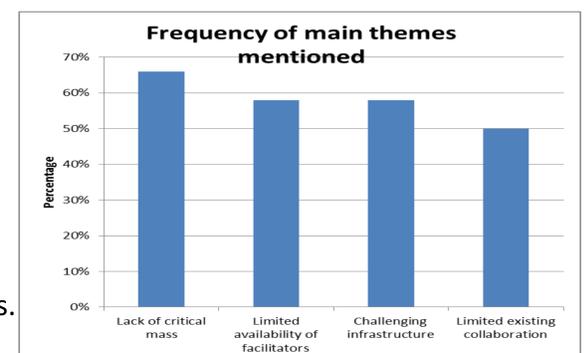
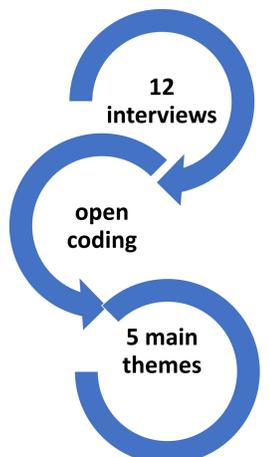


Fig. 1: Frequency of the main themes mentioned by the anglophone and francophone interviewees

