



Impressions from the workshop in Berlin

Sustainable investment in research for health

THE NEED TO ALIGN INVESTMENTS in Research and Development (R&D) with public health demands is one of the most pressing global public health challenges. Questions that scientists and policymakers are constantly discussing are: Who shoulders the responsibility for funding R&D? What is the best way to mobilise and channel research funding? Which research areas are most in need of funding?

The West African Health Organisation, the NEPAD Agency and COHRED, hosted a one day meeting on "*Sustainable Investment in Research for Health*", on June 29, 2014 in Berlin. The meeting, attended by around 35 participants from public and private sector, representing European and African institutions, aimed at identifying opportunities, possible solutions and strategies for moving towards sustainable investment in research for health.

In the introductory presentations, a number of key issues were highlighted:

- Health R&D investment is increasing worldwide. However, investments are by and large coming from high-income countries, focusing on few selected diseases.
- Increasing investment is not the only strategy to be pursued. An efficient allocation of the resources is also essential.
- In order to use resources well, investing in research capacity strengthening is key.
- Good packaging and targeting of research results will help politicians understand the value of research, and supports their decision making on investment in R&D.

The meeting participants decided to spend most of the day discussing four areas seen as essential for creating the environment in which research financing can happen:

- Developing an integrated system for innovation;
- Shifting from funding to investment;
- Creating an African research space; and
- Strengthening advocacy for research.

With these key elements addressed, innovative research financing mechanisms can be developed and will find a conducive environment to gain ground. Such financing mechanisms can either focus on mobilising more funds or on more effectively allocating existing funds.

For further information please see the meeting report at:

<http://www.cohred.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BerlinMeetingReport.pdf>



COHRED Africa

In 2013, COHRED, supported through the R4HA programme, established COHRED Africa. COHRED Africa (www.africa.cohred.org) aims at creating an environment in Africa in which research and innovation for health,

equity and development can flourish. COHRED Africa is hosted in Gaborone, Botswana but will work as a networked organisation throughout Africa. **The official launch of COHRED Africa is on November 6th 2014 in Botswana.**

RHinnO Ethics is ready to go!

A key activity of the R4HA programme was the development of research ethics review management platforms in Mozambique, Senegal and Tanzania. The aim was to ensure that research ethics reviews be done better and quicker by using a simple e-based management system. RHinnO Ethics is the result of this work (see also: www.rhinno.net), and is now operational in the three countries.

A final (R4HA supported) workshop on RHinnO Ethics was held in Johannesburg on September 2nd and 3rd. The aim of the workshop was ensuring harmonisation between the various research ethics committees (RECs) and agreeing to common functionalities and features needed for efficient research ethics management. To date, each REC had requested individual platform customisation. While customisation, such as use of colour and logos is possible, it is important that all RECs use the same software with the same functionalities. It is only with a certain standardisation, that provision of quick online support and software updates can be guaranteed. In Johannesburg, the participants from Mozambique, Senegal and Tanzania agreed on aligning towards a common platform. Using the same management system also facilitates learning, exchanging ideas, and standardising ethics review across countries.



Participants at the RHinnO Ethics workshop, 2-3 September, Johannesburg

The RHinnO Ethics team is looking forward to continued collaboration with our partners. An international Advisory Group on RHinnO Ethics will further help ensure quality improvement.

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