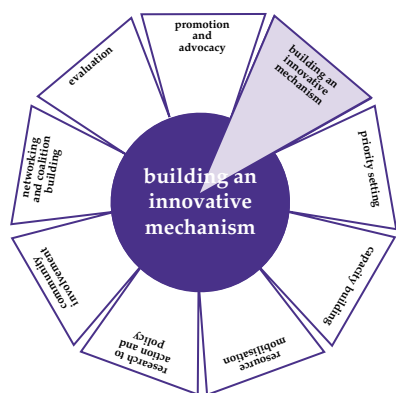


Learning Brief

Tanzania - re-orientation of the ENHR mechanism to reinforce partnership



The issue:

In Tanzania, the institution mandated by the Government to coordinate all health research in the country is the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). This decision was resented by other health institutions in the country for fear of the mechanism becoming the property of NIMR. As a result, ENHR was poorly coordinated and the individual research institutes did not communicate with each other.

The activity:

In December 1998, NIMR organised a national seminar on the creation of a National Forum for Health Research in Tanzania. The participants came from different health and health related research institutions and projects all over the country. The seminar was held to discuss not only the establishment of a National Health Research Forum, but also its composition and the terms of reference of its committees.

The main constraint identified:

Ownership of the ENHR mechanism was the major stumbling block in Tanzania. Lack of ownership of the mechanism resulted in:

- ◆ Lack of effective health research coordination because NIMR did not enjoy the support of other research institutions in the country.
- ◆ Little success in implementing a research agenda. The research priorities were set in 1992, but not all the actors in the country adopted the research agenda.

Lesson learned:

One can say that 'ownership' is both the biggest problem in setting up an ENHR mechanism and a prime motivating factor for active participation. As long as the mechanism is institution-based, partner institutions will regard it with suspicion and, consequently, resist participating in it. That is why Tanzania opted for a novel arrangement, namely setting up the National Forum for Health Research. This allowed all health research institutions to participate, while at the same time ensuring a sense of ownership of the mechanism among partner institutions. Relying on existing institutions and requiring no additional outlays for infrastructure and personnel, this mechanism is expected to prove efficient and economical. It will reduce bureaucracy, strengthen institutional links and collaboration, and enhance the work for better and more equitable health.

Further reading:

- ➔ *Final Report of the Seminar on the Formation of a National Forum for Health Research in Tanzania; 1-2 December 1998; National Institute for Medical Research, Tanzania*
- ➔ *Research into Action; COHRED Newsletter Issue 15, 1998, Geneva, Switzerland*

Contact for more information:

Dr Andrew Kitua;

Director General NIMR

PO BOX 9653, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Phone: +255-51-130 770

Fax: +255-51-130 660;

Email: akitua@twiga.com

These learning briefs are published by the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED). To receive a free copy of the Handbook, and any forthcoming learning briefs, please contact:

COHRED, c/o UNDP, Palais des Nations, CH1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Phone: + 41 22 917 8558 • **Fax:** +41 22 917 8015 • **Email:** cohred@cohred.ch • **Website:** <http://www.cohred.ch>