

ALERRT



African coalition for Epidemic Research, Response and Training

STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT FOR RESEARCH DURING EPIDEMICS

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Introduction

- The Covid19 pandemic is unprecedented. It is a tsunami that no one saw coming.
- The devastating impact of this pandemic threatens the achievements and progress envisaged for research in the the coming years.
- Despite the difficulties presented by the current uncharted environment in which we have to function, research activities can not stop.

Stakeholder management

- Stakeholder management is the process by which relationships with stakeholders are organized, motored and improved.
- It involves systematically identifying stakeholders; analyzing their needs and expectations; and planning and implementing various tasks to engage with them
- A vital part of conducting a successful research study is to develop and maintain fruitful relationships with not only those communities who will be affected, those who have a vested interest in the work, but those stakeholders that are able to influence the project.

Some stakeholders in research

- The community
- Civil society
- National government
- Local/regional/county Government
- Media
- Private sector
- Research institutions
- International institutions
- Others

Examples of challenges of faced in research during a pandemic

Safety and Personal Protective Equipment

- It is imperative to provide Safety and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to anyone needing direct face to face interaction with anyone in project related activities.
- These expenses may be additional and most likely not budgeted. Nevertheless, the research team is obliged of providing them to all stakeholders.

Examples of challenges of conducting research during a pandemic

Participant recruitment and missed follow up visits

- It is likely that participant recruitment will be impacted during a pandemic.
- In a pandemic such as the current one, due to stigmatization, health facility visits will be reduced. Patients may be reluctant to visit health centers as they may be concerned with the risk of contamination. Thus participants recruitment may thus be slower than expected.
- Fear of visiting health facilities may also result in significant loss to follow up due to missed follow up visits.

Examples of challenges of conducting research during a pandemic

Overwhelmed health system

- In the event that the study is being conducted during an epidemiological wave of increased infections, it is possible that the healthcare system can be overwhelmed.

Examples of challenges of conducting research during a pandemic

Managing at a distance

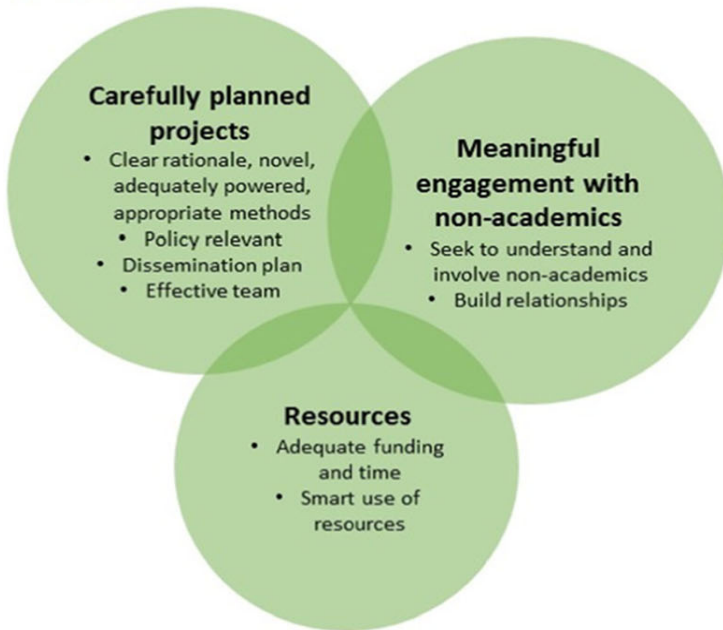
Pandemics impact on how we live and work.

In particular, the effects of social distancing and border restrictions are impacting on the ability to inform, collaborate with and manage stakeholders via traditional methods.

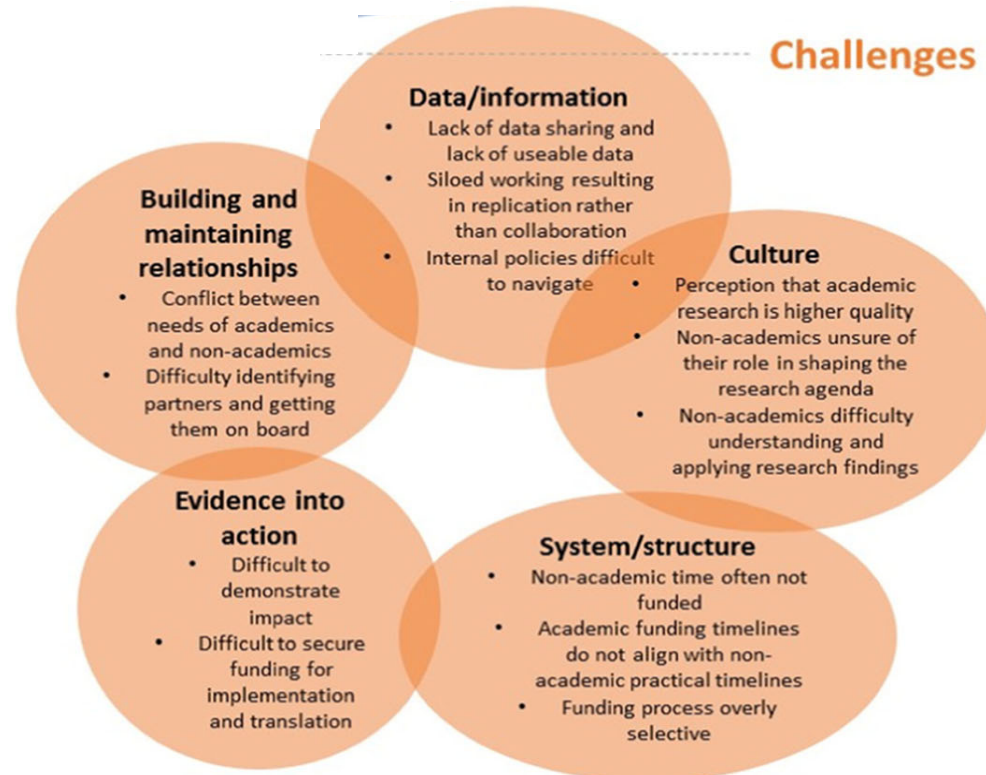
Consequently, we need to utilize more innovative methods to stay connected with stakeholders virtually to ensure communication channels are maintained.

Enablers and Challenges in Stakeholder Management

Enablers



Challenges





VIDEO CONFERENCING

One-on-one and group meetings on Teams and Zoom when we can't meet face-to-face. Working with each stakeholder to use their preferred technology.



REMAINING CLIENT-CENTRIC

Stakeholder engagement strategies, tools and timeframes tailored to best suit the client and support stakeholder buy-in.



ACCOMMODATING STAKEHOLDERS

Utilising alternative communication channels (e.g. telephone or face-to-face where possible) for stakeholders who are reluctant or unable to participate electronically.



CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to comment on the ways we have analysed and interpreted information.

Conclusion

- While the tools mentioned here are not exhaustive, they can help to improve collaboration with stakeholders in these unprecedented times; to manage research projects successfully; and to communicate in an effective, yet not overwhelming manner.

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION