



# The Global Health Network

## Impact Report 2023

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*The Global Health Network is a unique, vast and successful community comprised of health researchers and health research organisations. This valued and trusted facility transfers knowledge, convenes and connects technical excellence between disease areas and across regions, organisations and types of research. It works within healthcare settings in person and through a highly functional digital platform. Researchers find tools, methods, support, resources, gain new skills in their workplace form collaborations and share their know-how. Organisations engage with researchers, disseminate, raise quality, enable standards and share information. The impact is generation of faster and better evidence that is taken up into practice, and the delivery of ongoing lasting competencies and systems within healthcare settings.*

*The Global Health Network exists only to facilitate research and works across all diseases. We know the barriers to research and that they do not vary between types of research or topic and so this cross-cutting facility is so successful because it is delivering the fundamental systems and skills needed to undertake research, deliver high quality evidence and build lasting, capable teams.*

## **Vision**

**Equity in where health research happens, who leads and who benefits.**

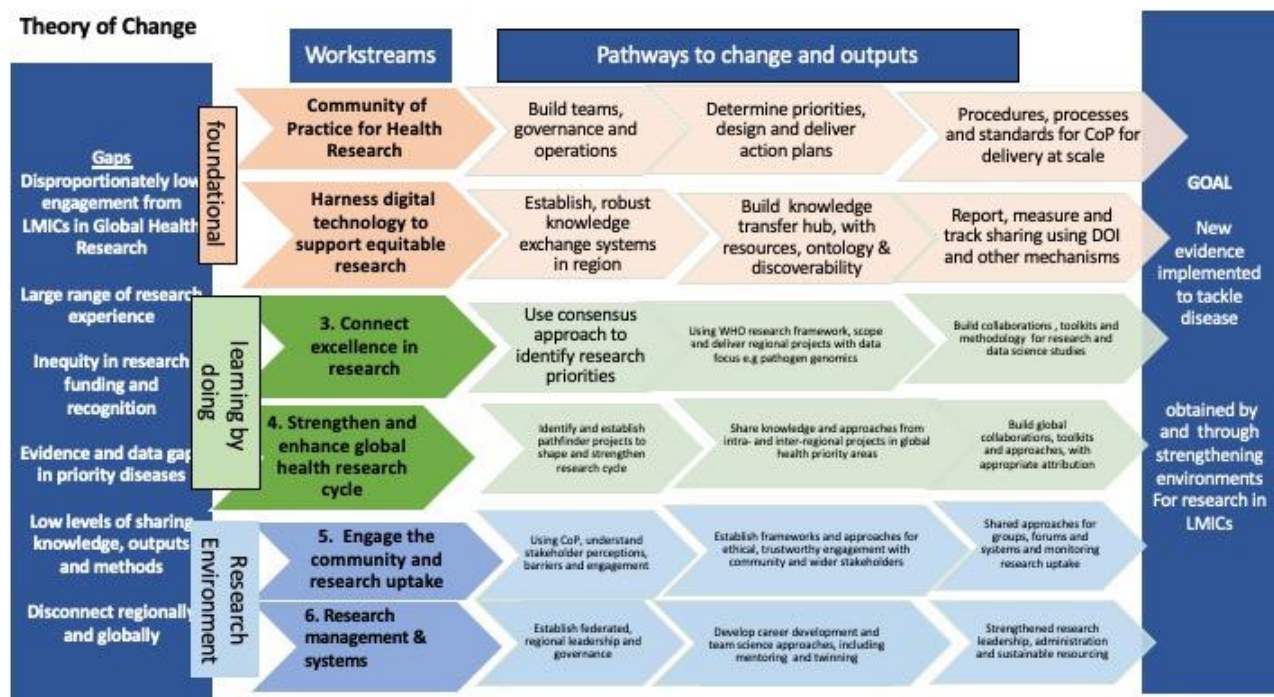
## **Mission**

**Enabling more and better health evidence in diseases, communities and places where interventions are desperately needed by transferring knowledge and strengthening research systems.**

## **Objectives**

1. Mobilising excellence and driving equitable access to research knowledge
2. Workplace research skills development and research system strengthening
3. Enabling, sharing and developing better research methods and processes

## Theory of Change



## Impact and The Global Health Network Today

### How does this work and what is being achieved?

Difficulties in collecting quality evidence do not vary between disease areas, and every disease needs a whole ecosystem of data to guide new evidence for prevention, management and treatment. This ecosystem of studies requires a cycle of research skills that a whole team need to have in place, to effectively sustain beyond one single study. Over the past decade The Global Health Network has worked across diseases and has harnessed this by working with multiple partners, delivering this cycle of skills team-wide both online and in-person in the regions. This is working profoundly to drive efficiency and raise standards by transferring know-how between networks, disease areas, organisations and across geographies. This is being taken up and applied to unblock challenges and connect excellence, for example in pathogen genomics, malaria research, vaccine studies and generating new evidence from existing data sets in child nutrition and the registration of paediatric formulations for priority infectious diseases. This is working because this actively tackles global inequity in access to knowledge.

A vast, global and dynamic Community of Practice that connects healthcare professionals, research teams and health organisations. It effectively transfers know-how across diseases, regions and types of research to deliver skills and methods that make research leadership accessible and feasible. This open and active convening is guiding, supporting and enabling research in diseases and communities where evidence is lacking. This happens through an integrated network of regional centres and a sophisticated digital platform of diverse knowledge hubs that together work in-person and online to connect excellence, share knowledge and foster exchanges to accelerate research evidence and develop lasting capable and independent research teams.

## The Global Health Network is directly impacting 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals:

**SDG3 Health** as we are driving new evidence and supporting the process through to evidence being taken up into policy and practice: example: ARCH where our processes to findings from over 50 studies in malnutrition and pulled this together into clear recommendation and guidelines for use in the community.

**SDG GENDER EQUITY:** We drive women as research leaders and ensuring women are considered in research design (see examples)

**SDG8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH:** We deliver workplace learning and career development, building lasting competitive teams that we measure through the Profession Development Scheme that measures development and spots gaps.

**SDG9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE.** Implementing the best data science structures, ensuring that LMICs are not left behind and driving advances in approaches such as federated analysis or synthetic methods for comparison. Sharing standards for pre-clinical, phase I and clinical laboratories to bring international standards and competitive sites for sponsors.

**SDG10 REDUCING INEQUALITIES.** Delivering the same standard knowledge to a researcher in Ndola or Lima as a researcher in Harvard or Oxford – so they can produce the same quality evidence, and improved access to funding and opportunities

The recent workshop held by the Africa Union and Africa CDC called for the role and value of research enabling and research system strengthen to be better documented and measured. These intermediary cross-cutting factors in that are crucial research, equity, and embedding health research into healthcare delivery are known to be vital, but there is less agreement on how to measure, fund and reward organisations for taking on these activities. The Global Health Network was part of this workshop and the working group that has been set up to work on this issue with the funders and wider stakeholders. It is well recognised that it is difficult to measure the impact of research methodology, process improvement, knowledge mobilisation, networking, training, system strengthening and capacity development. It is important this gap is addressed as these activities are vital if we are to address the current inequity in where research happens, who leads and who benefits as organisations should be encouraged, supported, valued and rewarded for undertaking these activities.

Measures of success are achieved through ongoing quantitative and qualitative means measuring impact over time. Numbers of users, members, page views and webinar attendances, presence at regional events such as workshops, supported classroom sessions, data clinics etc. are important to show discoverability and who is accessing both online resources and in-person events. As important are getting to determine how accessing the knowledge directly changed their research or practice. We seek to report how the overlapping communities of practice and how being part of The Global Health Network, through its training, resources, events, and projects, has improved people, organisations and networks through their own outputs, outcomes and impact, but also careers, ability to achieve funding and sustain skilled teams. Underpinning these are the connections on many levels and often across diseases, themes and geographies, enabling more efficient and higher quality work through learning from each other.

## Summary table of access to knowledge through The Global Health Network August 2023

Unique visits to the online platform	40 million
Number of online research skills training courses taken	3.5 million
Number of documents shared and viewed	1.5 million
Number of documents downloaded	500,000
Number of people who attended an online webinar	25,000
Number of people who attended an in-person TGHN event	5,000

### How research outputs have been improved

Specific Examples of how research outputs have been improved by research organisations disseminating and engaging through their knowledge hubs and researchers access this knowledge and wider training, methods and resources that are provided.

#### Building lasting research capabilities within institutions

A laboratory manager in Ghana, uses The Global Health Network for all his team training, methods and assay validation. The laboratory is now regulatory standard, and they can run international standard studies, which has led to approaches from sponsors and successful grant applications. Without The Global Health Network, they would not have access to this quality and ongoing source of resources, training and quality standards:

*"We realised [The Global Health Network] was a very useful tool to engage students meaningfully and train people, so what we do in the Global Health and Infectious Diseases Research group, is to allow everyone, from lab staff to students, everyone to go through the series of training on The Global Health Network. These are foundational trainings, and you will have done at least 15 or 20 courses...before we engage you further in a specialised field... It's the holy grail for us, it allows us to access content, resources and material training that otherwise we would not be able to afford. We don't have access to or the means to travel to have in-person experience, so it has been fantastic."*

To support the training of student researchers and build research capacity of teams, The Global Health Network Asia team in icddr,b organized two supported learning sessions using e-learning courses from The Global Health Network Training Centre. As a result, participants better understood the gaps in their research knowledge and went on to set up a research club in the institute where they meet regularly to go over different research topics and discuss methodologies and challenges they are facing in their research projects. A participant shared:

*"The e-learning courses on The Global Health Network are fantastic resources for those who want to build their careers in health research. It opened a golden door for the students to enrich their existing knowledge. I participated in both learning sessions. The session on Research Ethics was very much helpful for me. Though research ethics is very important for both researcher and respondent, it constitutes some important aspects and points to consider, which must be accounted for before starting data collection and during protocol design. Research Ethics plays a role like armor for the researchers."*

The research teams in the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital & Research Centre in Pakistan have been using The Global Health Network platform to train their researchers and teams. They developed the Continuing Medical Education Programme in 2022 with the help of TGHN e-learning courses. It is mandatory for their own researchers as well as collaborators to complete the TGHN Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training before they start their research projects. More than 200 have taken up the training courses in the institute. Recently, an

entire study team comprised of physicians, nurses, pharmacists and technicians involved in a phase 3 vaccine trial was trained using TGHN GCP modules. Here are some quotes from interviews of health researchers in Pakistan:

*“We use The Global Health Network platform very frequently. It is like a second home for us. The webpages are always open on our desktops. We use the training resources all the time.”*

*“We found the courses very helpful and comprehensive. This platform can bring together researchers from all over the world and plan and prepare for future pandemics. I would recommend everyone to use the platform and learn how to do good quality research”.*

### Real example of faster progress / better data

Data quality management using the ZIKAlliance 'Pregnant Women Cohort Study'. We have built health research capacity and facilitated new collaborations between researchers on the ground in response to public health emergencies from the COVID-19 pandemic to Zika epidemic in Brazil to the seasonal plague outbreak in Madagascar. During Zika, The Global Health Network and REDe hosted a live training webinar in November 2017. Study Co-ordinators and Principal Investigators from ZIKAlliance sites in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela attended this webinar which resulted in new collaborations between local researchers. *“As a result, REDe has become a highly dynamic community of practice for health researchers in the region, strengthening the research culture and improving connectivity”* - <https://gh.bmj.com/content/6/10/e007131>

### Connecting networks and initiatives to improve the research process

One Health Workshop – Pandora, Chatham House, AfricaCDC - two two-day online workshops in 2022, “Integrating social sciences in One Health research during epidemics” and “Adopting a One Health approach to zoonotic disease risk assessment and risk communication” were organised in collaboration with AfricaCDC, Africa Union, Chatham House, UCL and Pandora. In feedback, responses from participants to the question “What would you do differently after attending this workshop?” included: ‘developing my communication skills’, ‘integrating social sciences’, ‘engagement with community’.

### Community engagement with AMR - AMR, ARCH, Mesh, CE4AMR

A collaboration with the AMR, ARCH and Mesh hubs, partnered with CE4AMR to host a webinar in May 2022, to address research uptake and public engagement with AMR. Several participants stated their key takeaway was that community engagement processes had to be contextualized and inclusive of local individuals to promote ownership. The workshop also gave an opportunity for participants to understand the burden on AMR in communities as well as its associated challenges. From feedback, most agreed they would do something differently as a result of attending this webinar. Participants appreciated and encouraged the consistency in our holding such online events with such topics of health concern and appreciated inviting multi-country experts and not just people based in the “West”.

## Long term, repeated and ongoing impact

The EDCTP Knowledge Hub delivers standalone practical support including for protocol development, data management and data sharing that specifically meets this need for basic data analysis tools with information on when to use what. Together the Protocol Development Toolkit, Data Management Portal and Data Sharing Toolkit have been visited over 70,000 times by visitors from 110 countries. Each element actively promotes collaboration; in particular, the Concept Protocol Tool enables researchers from diverse settings to invite feedback and discuss protocol development with peers, all delivered in an online resource-rich environment to facilitate the rapid translation of a concept protocol into high-quality research studies.

The CHAIN network brings together clinical scientists to build the evidence base to address child undernourishment. They have shared SOPs and CRFs from multiple sites and worked with The Global Health Network to produce toolkits for the communication of study results for communities, clinical professionals and policy makers that may be used as templates by other research groups.

The Brain Health Clinical Exchange Platform is an ongoing initiative funded by the WHO Brain Health Unit and the University of Liverpool. The exchange platform centres around a monthly workshop, focused on neurology case studies. The discussions lead to spin-off collaborations which result in new tools and papers which feed into the exchange platform.

We collaborated with Epidemic Ethics, which is led by the World Health Organization, to build an open forum for ethics experts, researchers and policymakers to help tackle the big ethical questions of global health policies during the pandemic and beyond. Feedback from participants included: *“I will include what I have learned in the classes I give to medical students.”* - Academic, Argentina. *“I will incorporate this knowledge in my teaching and research.”* - Nurse, India. *“It has given me valuable information to apply in the evaluation of clinical research projects.”* - Lab worker, Argentina.

During COVID-19, The Global Health Network partnered with several leading Brazilian institutions to develop ‘Tools for Scientific Dissemination’ eLearning course in English, Spanish and Portuguese to train scientists on best practices for outreach activities to help bridge the gap between scientists and the communities they serve. One of the most popular, highly engaging and well attended online workshops was on “What Does it Take to be a Good Research Leader?” in May 2022. It was a result of a gap analysis survey conducted by The Global Health Network and the African coalition for Epidemic Research, Response and Training (ALERT), which highlighted the need for further leadership training within the research community. An illustrious panel of leaders from various universities and research institutes shared their knowledge and expertise with more than 700 participants.

Integration of TGHN eLearning into two postgraduate degrees and a research laboratory at The University of Cape Town. One of the module convenors said of Good Clinical Laboratory Practices (GCLP): *“The notification of the e-Learning course came at exactly the right time for me. I was due to teach GCLP to MPhil students. So I immediately completed the course myself [and] decided to abandon my half completed slide set and use the resource provided. I have subsequently requested our laboratory staff completed this course for their continued staff development. Some have proceeded onto other courses as well.”* Another module convenor who integrated TGHN GCP e-Learning has used the wider resources to provide career development advice, successfully guiding 3 students to obtaining their first jobs in clinical research.



## Individual Case Studies

The nurturing environment provided by The Global Health Network has led to significant, lasting impact for members as they gain confidence through enhanced knowledge through the Training Centre and Professional Development Scheme, and support from peers allowing them to explore and develop their own initiatives, often contributed back to the same or a different community. These have included new research protocols, a role as a regional coordinator, inter-continental collaborations, face to face workshops, even a new community of practice (for early career researchers) and online pan-African journal. Many of these individuals were supported to attend The Global Health Network Conference 2022 in Cape Town by The Gates Foundation and others which further galvanize their work, and which should have lasting impact with their peers and more widely,

### Mercury Shitindo, Ethicist, Kenya

After joining the platform in 2019, becoming a member of seven hubs, and completing five eLearning courses, Mercury, in collaboration with The Global Health Network, co-founded the African Bioethics Network (ABN) in 2022 and subsequently presented on guidelines for an ethical review of mental health research protocols at The Global Health Network Conference 2022. To accelerate the work of ABN, future planned activities include creating three Training Centre eLearning courses related to Bioethics, collaborating with teams in Pakistan to extend the reach of ABN, and submitting funding applications to cement a sustainable basis for a common approach to bioethics in Africa.

### Research Nurse & PhD Scholar, Argentina

Joined the platform in 2019 and has completed three elearning courses. This is Laura's account of her experience of engaging with LactaHub: *"The material on the website was an excellent tool that made it easier for me to carry out my [doctoral] research...a study of the implementation of a training on exclusive breastfeeding for health personnel, with the objective of achieving greater adherence of the mothers to this practice. I really found LactaHub very accessible and I recommend it not only as a site with didactic images but also as [a] website that contributes to continue promoting the importance of exclusive breastfeeding."*

### Pediatrician Neonatologist, Researcher, Peru

Joined The Global Health Network platform in 2023 and has completed one training course to date. He has incorporated tools from the platform into his teaching and research: *"One of the tools from The Global Health Network we used to learn how to measure neonatal anthropometry. This tool also helped us standardize the criteria for research personnel to measure head circumference, height, and weight."*

### Glenda Ernst, Research Coordinator, Argentina

Glenda joined The Global Health Network platform in 2022. After engaging with a multitude of resources and hubs on the platform, she was awarded a scholarship to attend and present at The Global Health Network Conference 2022, of which she said: *"I have participated in other international conferences but I have never made so many contacts – this meeting has been very motivating for me."* She has since become an advocate for the Women in Global Health Research Knowledge hub. Glenda explains how The Global Health Network has become a vital resource for Hospital Britanico, Buenos Aires, enabling them to become a research organisation, attract sponsors and lead their own studies. *"This is a university hospital that since 2016 performs training in methodology and research in a transversal way to all residencies. The program has been extended this year to residents from the first to the last year of their training."*

*"In each year [we have] incorporated...elearnings to Toolkits and the use of The Global Health Network study templates. The content is clear, accessible and aligned with the requirements of the training we are providing. We consider that the ease of access to the local language facilitates and broadens the access to*

*the courses to various areas in health.”*

### Data Analyst, Nigeria

Joined The Global Health Network platform in 2019, is a member of three hubs and has completed two eLearning courses in the Training Centre. After attending The Global Health Network 2022 Conference, she instigated and is currently developing a community of practice on the platform on knowledge exchange for early career professionals.

### Pediatrician Neonatologist, Researcher, Peru

Joined the platform in late 2022 and has completed one course in the Training Centre. *“Participating in this group [The Global Health Network] is excellent. It allows us to grow further and, above all, facilitates finding the methodologies we need to present our work, ensuring its scientific validity for any type of research and any type of journal.”*

## Target – what we want to do for the next 5 years

To achieve our objectives for the next five years our focus will be:

### 1. Develop the Digital Platform and the component Knowledge hubs

widen the diseases, topics and AI to drive discoverability for equitable access to information. To be the most effective place for health research organisations to share their 2outputs and engage with the global health research community

### 2. Workplace learning

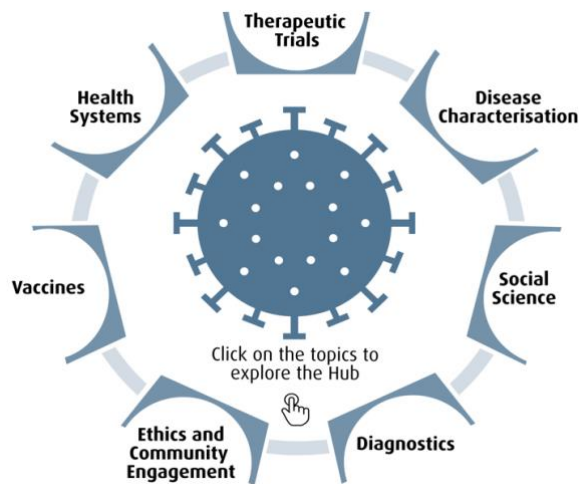
Deliver the essential research curriculum, build teams, leadership and research management

### 3. New research methods

Identify and solve challenges in research design, delivery and reporting. Enable uptake and use of data science and refine methods ensuring LMIC don't miss out and lead innovation (RWD and federated analysis, crowd studies)

We will use the highly effective community of practice mechanisms and systems that we have developed and work with the vast number of engaged research organisations, health workers and researchers to enable the health research that are priorities in LMICs.

Using these proven approaches will enable the team to undertake the whole cycle of health research and ensure that diseases are tackled by generating all the forms of evidence that are needed to prevent, manage and prevent disease

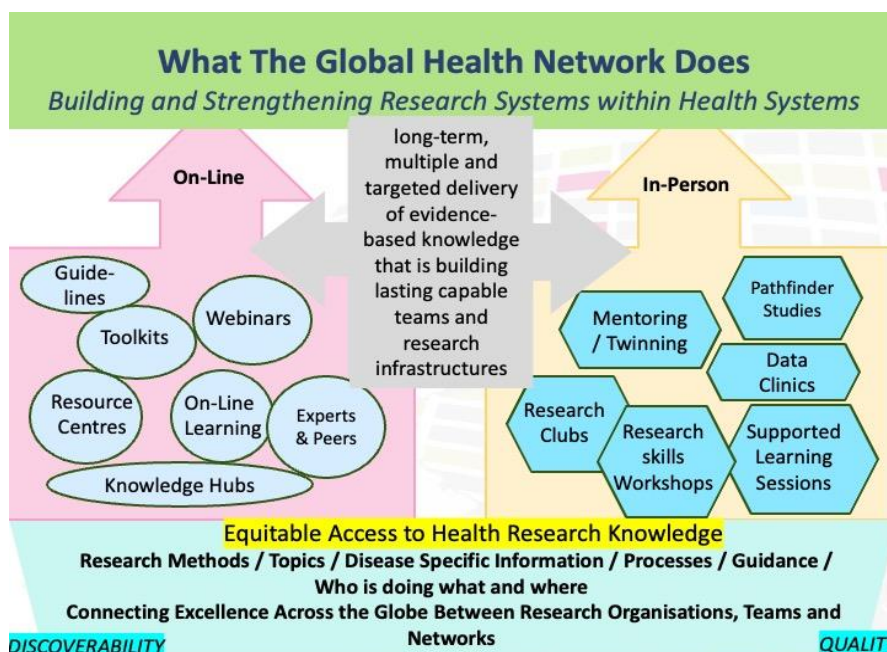


**The Health Research Ecosystem** - The whole set of evidence vital to understand, treat, prevent, and manage any disease

**The Health Research Cycle** - The required steps and processes for all studies – that don't vary between diseases

*Learning-by-doing generates evidence to tackle everyday local priority health burdens & creates active abilities in place to spot and stop a new outbreak. This is what The Global Health Network does.*

## The Approach



In summary our approach is simple, and we shall keep this focus and take it to scale. The Global Health Network works to move health research know-how digitally or in person. This is incredibly effective and works to enable more and better research, build systems and works over time to develop strong and capable teams.

## Delivery

The five-year work plan encompasses the following:

### 1. The Digital Platform and knowledge mobilisation

Knowledge hubs

- For Organisations
- For programmes and projects
- For topics (Community engagement, ethics, data science, climate and health)

Discoverability and recommendations (equity in access to training, methods and resources so that a researcher in Kathmandu can run a study to the same standard as a researcher in Harvard)

Reward and recognition for knowledge sharing

Impact assessment

Who is doing what and where – The Global Health Research Registry

### 2. Workplace learning for systems and teams delivering quality research.

The Essential Curriculum for Health Research

Research System strengthening within Health Care settings.

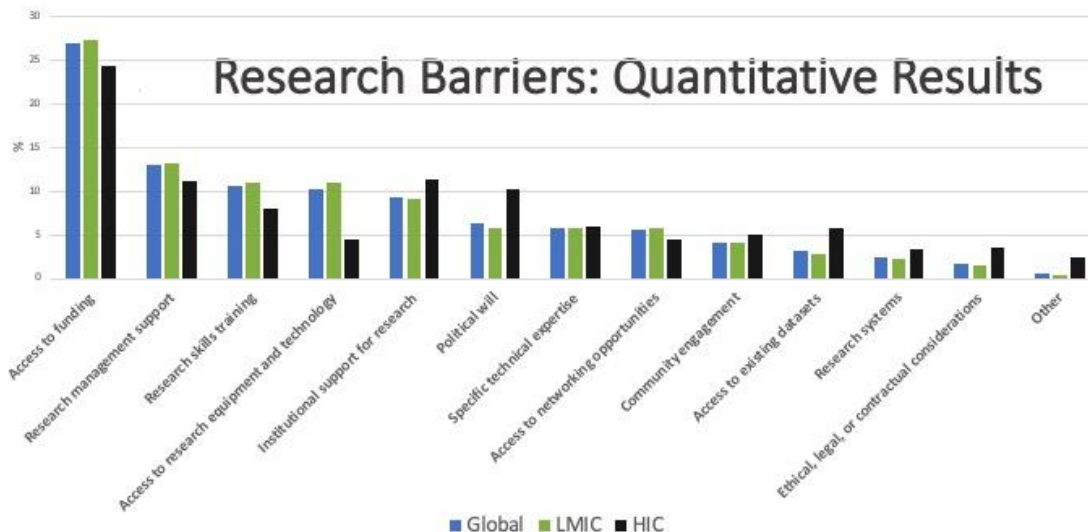
Research Management

Measuring the impact of capacity development, tracking progress and professional development

Learning-by-doing: the 1000 study challenge

- online learning / courses /webinars
- resource centres
- in person / blended supported learning sessions
- workshops
- research clubs
- Research topic clinics (data science, community engagement, ethics, etc.)
- The PDS
- The diploma and further courses planned

Data from a 3,500-participant study: guiding this work



### 3. Achieving the best and most appropriate method for every study

Crowd Delphi studies to determine priorities, understand gaps and find solutions

Identifying and connecting methods and practices to transfer existing excellence

Pathfinder studies to process map studies identifying challenges and solving them

Enabling uptake and engagement in data science everywhere

Ensuring low-resourced and neglected disease areas and communities do not miss out on the evolution in health research

Convening within specific topics to ensure standard, methods, progress and findings are shared

## Financial and Sustainability

1. Consortia funding for the hard-to-fund elements - delivery of capacity building and research system strengthening, networking, convening and knowledge mobilisation.
2. Research Grants as a co-applicant or methodology studies
3. The Social Enterprise for contracts and those who can afford to pay to use.



Enabling research by sharing knowledge

Visit: [www.theglobalhealthnetwork.org](http://www.theglobalhealthnetwork.org)