ALERRT Capacity Strengthening Programme – knowledge brokering across international networks to support co-development and enhance regional research capabilities

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Background

Strong expertise exists within regional and international research networks, so active sharing has the ability to improve the research capabilities of study teams and broader communities of researchers; transferring knowledge and tacit learning between organisations, disease areas and settings. As part of the African coaLition for Epidemic Research, Response and Training (ALERRT) consortium, we harnessed The Global Health Network’s well-regarded mechanisms for building a community of practice and connecting teams, research programmes and networks; enabling ‘know-how’ to move effectively between them.

Methods

Key to this approach is the dynamic pairing of the digital platform and the structured regional initiatives. With the collaboration of multiple research networks, including PANDORA-ID-NET, EACCR, CANTAM, WANETAM, TESA, REDe, core resources and training materials generated by the study teams are reflected on the platform; enhancing the learning and the utility afforded by these to as many other researchers and teams globally.

Results

A range of mediums is used to deliver and disseminate skills-based and research implementation learning. This includes i) Toolkits for setting up practical workshops and supported learning sessions to enhance the institutional research environment; ii) Hosting webinars, to ensure a wider opportunity to engage healthcare professionals in research efforts, key lessons and recommendations; iii) Study profiles which include protocols and patient information sheets, which can be readily downloaded and modified by others to raise standards and speed up research; and iv) new eCourses identified through workshops, collaborative partners, and the research programmes themselves; authored by regional experts. This approach amplifies the expertise housed within any one research programme, scaling the applicability of methods and processes.

Conclusions

By actively convening excellence between networks, organisations, diseases and settings, the ALERRT community continues to deliver sustainable impact to other researchers well beyond the immediate consortium partners.

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