

Theme of the Month

Knowledge Translation - Barriers, Facilitators, and Good Practices

The DELTAS Africa initiative has a knowledge translation objective, 'Scientific Citizenship', which mandates DELTAS grantees to carry out policy, public and community engagement activities. Knowledge translation is an important element to achieving research impact, but researchers face barriers and facilitators at both the individual and institutional level. Here we list the top barriers, facilitators and recommended good practices from a recently conducted literature review by the DELTAS LRP Knowledge Translation theme.

Barriers

1. **Inadequate interaction** between researchers and policymakers means that research may not be well aligned to policymakers' research needs and research **results are not easily accessible**
2. **Researchers lack knowledge translation skills** including simplifying research findings or repackaging them for multiple audiences
3. Knowledge translation is **not emphasized in tenure and promotion processes** of research institutions
4. Research production is mainly funded by external donors. Therefore, research is often not well aligned to national research priorities. In addition, very little or **no funding is allocated to knowledge translation** activities

Facilitators

1. Researchers **interacting with target audiences** through existing networks or by making strategic alliances with policy champions **improves their credibility**, the relevance of the research they produce and **uptake of the evidence** by target audiences
2. **Involvement of target audiences** at various stages of the research process **improves their understanding**, trust and uptake of research findings
3. **Targeted communication and dissemination** of research findings makes sure the right people know the right information at the right time
4. **Training and sensitization** of researchers about the **benefits of knowledge translation** and skills
5. Research funding priorities **aligned to national research needs** and more **substantive allocations** for knowledge translation



Good Practices

- Conduct a stakeholder analysis/analysis of policy making process to fully understand your audience
- Develop a communication strategy so knowledge translation can be targeted and appropriate
- Establish strong links with institutions involved in the decision-making process in research
- Establish knowledge translation platforms or participatory workshops for discussing research findings
- Produce relevant research evidence in relation to the target audience research needs including product or intervention development research, systematic reviews, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness research and operations or implementation research.

DELTAS: Learning Research Programme

The Learning Research Programme (LRP), led by the Centre for Capacity Research, works alongside the DELTAS Africa consortia to produce research-based learning about how to train and develop world-class researchers, foster their careers and collaborations, and promote research uptake. For more information about the LRP research activities and to access the LRP resources (annual reports, in-depth newsletters and all our publications), please visit our DELTAS research page at: www.lstmed.ac.uk/projects/deltas---learning-research-programme

For more information about the LRP please contact justin.pulford@lstmed.ac.uk



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Some of the LRP team at the DELTAS Africa AGM 2019

The four LRP themes include:

Equitable Career Pathways - This theme is framed within the context of a PhD project, led by Millicent Liani, titled: “Examining barriers and enablers to gender equitable scientific career pathways in African research institutions”. Millicent has employed a qualitative case study design, focusing on three DELTAS consortia, including: **IDeAL** (Initiative to Develop African Research Leaders); **MARCAD** (Malaria Research Capacity Development in West and Central Africa); and **SANTHE** (Sub-Saharan African Network for TB/HIV Research Excellence).

Research Training - Currently led by Abiola Aiyenigba, this theme explores the range and quality of professional development opportunities available to African-based researchers as well as the individual and institutional benefits – in terms of professional development – associated with DELTAS Africa membership. Research activities have included a mapping of health-related postgraduate training courses available in sub-Saharan Africa, an online survey of African researchers’ professional development needs, opportunities and barriers, and a qualitative case study exploring the extent, and process by which, researcher training in sub-Saharan Africa may be enhanced through consortia membership. Participating DELTAS Africa consortia include: **CARTA+** (Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa+); **MARCAD**; and **Afrique One-ASPIRE** (African Science Partnership for Intervention Research Excellence).

Knowledge Translation - Also framed within the context of a PhD project, led by Violet Murunga and titled: “Exploring the research uptake strategies being used by African researchers to promote evidence-informed decision making”. Phase one of Violet’s research is a qualitative case study of selected DELTAS Africa consortia: **AMARI** (African Mental Health Research Initiative); **THRIVE-2** (Training Health Researchers into Vocational Excellence in East Africa-2); and **WACCBIP** (West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens).

Consortia Management - Framed within the context of a PhD project, led by Nadia Tagoe and titled: “Examining the process of establishing and managing health research capacity strengthening consortia”. Nadia is based at KEMRI-Wellcome Trust, Kilifi, Kenya, under the **IDeAL** programme and has employed a mixed methods research design. To date, Nadia has completed key informant interviews with almost all DELTAS Africa consortia Directors and Programme Managers as well as a focused case study in three selected DELTAS Africa consortia including: **CARTA+**; **THRIVE-2**; and **DELGEME** (Developing Excellence in Leadership and Genetic Training for Malaria Elimination in Sub-Saharan Africa).



Millicent Liani



Abiola Aiyenigba



Violet Murunga



Nadia Tagoe