

CONNECTING HEALTH RESEARCH IN AFRICA AND IRELAND CONSORTIUM (CHRAIC)

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Background

Researchers from three Irish institutions, six African countries and one nongovernmental organisation (NGO) comprise a long-term partnership for capacity building for pro-poor health research in Africa.

Partners:

- Irish researchers are from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)
- African researchers are from Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda
- The Council for Health Research for Development (www.cohred.org), which has unique expertise in research capacity building, and the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (www.alliance-hpsr.org), which focuses on research prioritisation and research into policy processes, are both advisers to the Programme.

Research Aims

The Programme aims to summarise existing research and knowledge gaps on specific components of health systems' capacity to deliver interventions for the Health and HIV/AIDS Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); establish a doctoral training programme; assess and strengthen African HEIs' research capacity; conduct Irish Aid-relevant research; and strengthen research into policy links.

Progress to Date

The first international workshop was held in Dublin in June 2008, bringing together researchers and/or senior academics from the African partners along with senior representatives of COHRED and the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research to plan the country level knowledge synthesis of governance, human resources, equity and access of their specific country's health system, in relation to existing knowledge, gaps and research priorities, including a review of information on progress towards the HIV and health related MDGs (4,5 and 6).

The taught course has been developed for the CHRAIC PhD programme. Five PhD studentships have been funded from the programme for the academic years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010. Existing research modules have been used, with some adaptation, from the Health Research Board PhD Scholars programme and the Masters in Global Health at TCD. Some new training modules have been designed, in particular the Social Determinants of Health in NUI, Galway.

Dissemination

Draft reports from all countries were presented in the April 2009 workshop held in Kampala. A satellite meeting to discuss country reports was held at the Global Symposium on Health Systems Research in Montreux in 2010. The new training modules will be adapted and made available to all partners.