



Building African capacity to do HPSR+A: **Health Policy and Systems Research and Analysis**



About CHEPSAA

WHY WAS IT FORMED AND WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

The Consortium for Health Policy and Systems Analysis in Africa (CHEPSAA) is a network of seven African universities and four European universities working to strengthen the field of Health Policy and Systems Research and Analysis (HPSR+A) in Africa.

The CHEPSAA network was formed in response to the fact that African capacity to conduct and use HPSR+A is relatively limited.

Not much funding is available for this type of research, few African

scientists work in this area, the field is often underemphasised in public health education, few African universities offer relevant training programmes, policy-makers are often unaware of relevant research and researcher-policy maker interactions to support evidence-informed policy making are generally weak.

To address this, CHEPSAA has 5 overall project objectives:

- Finding out what priority actions are needed within

member organisations, as well as more broadly, to develop capacity (through needs assessments).

- Acting on these needs assessments through building our assets and strengthening staff competencies (e.g., through mentoring younger staff) and addressing gaps in organisational support (e.g., developing career pathways).
- Consolidating and developing relevant postgraduate training programmes (e.g., through developing teaching materials that will be freely available online).
- Creating spaces for networking among researchers, teachers, policy-makers and managers.
- Managing all this knowledge effectively to enable effective communication.

Initiated in 2011, this EU-funded programme will run until 2015.



What is Health Policy and Systems Research and Analysis (HPSR+A)?

Health Policy & Systems Research & Analysis (HPSR+A) is a growing, multi-disciplinary field (a blend of economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, public health, epidemiology, etc.) that seeks to understand:

- What health systems are, how they function and what drives that functioning.
- What needs to be done to strengthen health systems.

- How to influence policy agendas on health system development.
- How to develop and implement policies in ways that strengthen health systems.

Source: WHO/AHPSR. 2007. What is Health Policy and Systems Research and why does it matter? *WHO/AHPSR Briefing Note 1*. Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, World Health Organisation. Geneva.

Making progress

WHAT HAS CHEPSAA DONE TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES FOR THE PERIOD 2011 TO 2012?

CHEPSAA has been in operation for almost two years during which time partners have:

- Designed and documented an approach for assessing the capacity development needs of African consortium members and their national policy networks.
- Completed assets and needs assessments at partner and country levels (and used the assessments as a basis for planning other activities).
- Developed various strategies related to:
 - » Staff and organisational development activities (to support teaching and research).
 - » Networking and getting research into policy and practice.
 - » Knowledge management.
- Started to develop new health policy and systems training curricula for use in Master's programmes or short courses (the curricula will be used by all member organisations in their own courses and will be freely available online as Open Educational Resources).
- Convened annual consortium meetings in Ghana and South Africa.
- Created a health policy and systems resource website and social media presence.



Looking ahead

FORTHCOMING CHEPSAA ACTIVITIES

Over the next three years, CHEPSAA will continue work on activities designed to strengthen capacity development.

Key activities will be:

- Continued curricula development for Open Educational Resource production (members are already working on a module provisionally titled an 'introduction to health policy and systems' and plans are underway to produce a module related to 'health policy and systems research' and 'advanced health policy analysis').
- National networking (to share ideas and experiences and build common understandings).
- Advocacy-type work.
- Supporting emerging African HPSR+A leaders (e.g., hosting workshops to address the range of skills needed as an academic; providing mentoring opportunities; and consolidating an African network among those involved).
- Sharing experiences (e.g., about the competency profiles needed to be a senior HPSR+A academic).

Assets and challenges

WHAT ARE THE AVAILABLE ASSETS AND KEY CHALLENGES IN HPSR+A CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT?

CHEPSAA's work has highlighted the important assets already available in this field in Africa; assets that can be used to support further field building. Within CHEPSAA's African member organisations:

- Research, teaching and researcher-policy maker engagements are already taking place.
- All partners are actively using their assets to build

HPSR+A in their own organisations.

- Partners have different and valuable experiences to share with each other.

CHEPSAA's unique focus on teaching and capacity building, as opposed to conducting primary research, makes CHEPSAA itself a key asset.

Amidst these positives, the clear challenges that remain in terms of strengthening the field of

HPSR+A in Africa are the need:

- To build a vision for HPSR+A in organisations and networks.
- To recognise the resource needs that go hand-in-hand with building the field. These resources include people, goodwill, research funding and putting funding for teaching on a more secure footing.

CHEPSAA MEMBERS



University of Dar Es Salaam, Institute of Development Studies



University of the Western Cape, School of Public Health



University of Witwatersrand, Centre for Health Policy



University of Cape Town, Health Policy and Systems Programme, Health Economics Unit



University of Ghana, School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy, Planning and Management



Great Lakes University of Kisumu, Tropical Institute of Community Health and Development



University of Nigeria, Enugu, Health Policy Research Group & the Department of Health Admin & Management, College of Medicine



University of Leeds, Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development



Karolinska Institutet, Health Economics and Systems Analysis Group, Department of Global Health & Development



Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, University of Basel, Health Systems Research & Dynamical Modeling Unit



London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Health Economics and Systems Analysis Group, Department of Global Health & Development

CHEPSAA members work in: Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, UK, Switzerland & Sweden



For more information:

Website: hpsa-africa.org

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