

Core competencies for health policy and systems researchers and educators in Africa: development and curriculum design

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BACKGROUND

- Health policy and systems research & analysis (HPSR+A) is an emerging interdisciplinary field of considerable importance to achieving Universal Health Coverage but with limited capacity in Africa.
- The overall purpose of the Consortium for Health Policy and Systems Analysis in Africa (CHEPSAA) is to increase sustainable African capacity to produce and use high quality HPSR+A.
- CHEPSAA's Emerging Leaders (EL) Programme contributes to capacity development by building a critical mass of future leaders who are committed to working in HPSR+A in Africa and who are equipped with the necessary skills and capabilities.

AIM

To support the development of African HPSR+A educators and researchers as well as strengthen the development of courses provided to a range of health professionals for the primary purpose of strengthening health systems.

METHOD

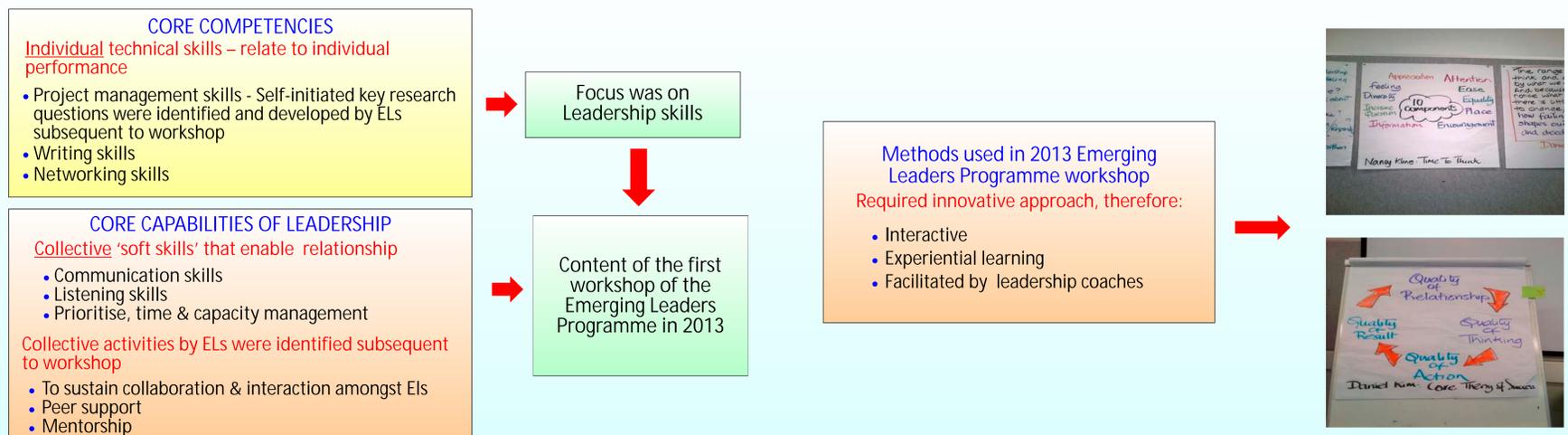
Process of developing EL programme

- Detailed discussion involved difference between capabilities and competencies.
 - Emphasis geared at designing capacity development programme that focuses on capabilities important for leadership.
- CHEPSAA developed a set of core capabilities and competencies for HPSR+A researchers and educators through a consultative process between emerging HPSR+A researchers/educators
 - Emerging researchers identified core capabilities to strengthen, which were consulted and supplemented with core capabilities the experts proposed to be key to HPSR+A.



Core capabilities and competencies informed the content and learning modalities of a 2 year African Emerging Leaders Programme.

KEY FINDINGS



IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCES and PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCES

Unconventional

Facilitated, heightened interest

"...felt that I had learned new ideas about how workshops could be facilitated (a real different way of thinking) and saw value in using coaches for teaching leadership skills (Participant 10-M)
 "First, the arrangement of chairs in the venue is circular...In fact there were no tables at all!" (Participant 7)

Modes of learning

"... the mode of teaching, learning and unlearning; was totally amazing, very stimulating and thought provoking" (Participant 13).

KEY OUTCOMES

Improved leadership skills

"I leave Cape Town knowing I am enough, inspired & charged to ACT as a leader" (Participant 13)

Leadership - is not knowing all answers

"...it is fine to not have answers to everything all the time and that you can still be a leader even if you don't have all the answers" (Participant 12)

Learning about below the line

"I can now think, consider, thinking below the line (i.e. that I should be flexible and accept complexity. Things are not always structured and there is no straight line to move through in order to reach a goal" (Participant 15)

Confidence

"I can now be confident to put myself in the work I do and not stand back. I can use the first person singular (I) when I talk instead of we..." "I am enough!" (Participant 15)

Improved networks

"This opportunity has opened up my networking capacity in a way that will allow for continued interaction and mentorship within the members in the network." (Participant 17)

LESSONS LEARNED

- Objective achieved: Realisation of importance of capabilities
- But need a balance BETWEEN Capabilities & Competencies
- Leadership skills
- Not tangible, measurable - require innovative methods
- Leadership - more than about acquiring skills, but also unlearning

CONCLUSION

- Set of core capabilities and competencies in HPSR
- To inform development of related Masters of Public Health programme and
- Conceptualisation of an African DrPh
- To shape final Emerging Leaders programme workshops in 2014

CHEPSAA AFFILIATES



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