

10 YEARS OF HARNESSING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE TO ENABLE FASTER AND BETTER RESEARCH IN GLOBAL HEALTH

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Introduction:

The World Health Organisation called for Low and Middle-Income countries to be the generators rather than the recipients of health research data. To address the lack of locally-led research in these regions, The Global Health Network was set up to transfer knowledge, resources and methods between disease areas, regions, roles and organisations.

Aim:

To deliver the skills, resources and training needed to enable quality health research data to be generated in diseases, regions and communities where evidence to tackle local disease burdens is lacking.

Methods:

A platform comprising of an online science park and three regional hubs in Africa, Asia and Latin America has been developed and online and face to face framework communities of practice have been built within. This provides a mechanism for research consortia to share outputs, methods and processes whilst raising engagement and awareness of their work. Alongside this, research teams and health-workers are accessing training, career development and each other to build their research competencies and experience.

Results:

The idea for this facility was conceived 10 years ago and has grown to become a unique resource that is being used widely across the globe. The platform has been viewed over 15 million times and over 800,000 online research skills training courses have been taken. Many hundreds of thousand research documents have been shared. Research teams report how the guidance tools and templates they have accessed from this platform have made their study design, planning and operational delivery easier and faster. Furthermore, we know that research teams are sharing standards and processes and therefore raising quality. Such data can be shared because research teams are helping each other collect data in the same way.

Conclusion:

The Global Health Network has proven to be a trusted resource that enables the capture of high quality data in places where research experience was lacking. This has shown why it is important to share methods and processes across regions, roles and studies because we have learnt that challenges that make research difficult do not vary between diseases. Better progress by all can be made by sharing what works.