



BUILDING SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONAL RESEARCH CAPACITY TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH

THE CHALLENGE

Many public health programmes in low- and middle-income countries are “data rich but information poor”: too often, data that is relevant for improving public health is left on the shelf or lies unused in electronic servers.

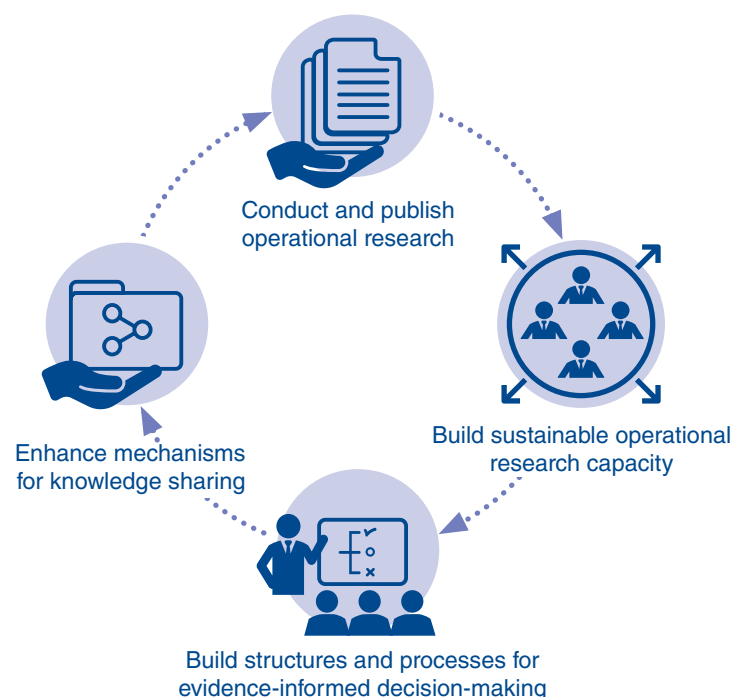
THE SORT IT SOLUTION

The **S**tructured **O**perational **R**esearch and **T**raining **I**niTiative (SORT IT) seeks to make countries “data rich, information rich and action rich,” thereby improving health care delivery and outcomes. SORT IT is a global partnership-based initiative coordinated by TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, and implemented with partners.

Participants conduct operational research on various topics such as multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, malaria, HIV/AIDS, neglected tropical diseases, maternal and child health, outbreaks and emergencies, antimicrobial resistance and non-communicable diseases. Scaled up to 92 countries over 8 years (with approximately 900 participants), SORT IT has proven to be adaptable to various geographic contexts, thematic areas and research methodologies.

THE SORT IT OBJECTIVES

SORT IT supports countries and institutions to:



THE SORT IT APPROACH

SORT IT targets implementers and front-line workers such as doctors, nurses, paramedical officers, and data analysts, often with little or no prior research experience. The approach combines research training with research implementation. Participants are supported with hands-on mentorship provided by experienced mentors.

The SORT IT training cycle runs over 10 to 12 months and is comprised of four modules:

- *Module 1:* Protocol writing
- *Module 2:* Quality assured data capture and analysis
- *Module 3:* Manuscript writing for publication
- *Module 4:* Evidence-informed decision making

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT

69% of SORT IT publications have shown an impact on policy and practice. For example:

INFLUENCE OF THE 2014-2015 EBOLA OUTBREAK ON THE VACCINATION OF CHILDREN IN RURAL GUINEA

Camara B S *et al.* Public Health Action. 2017;7(2):161-167

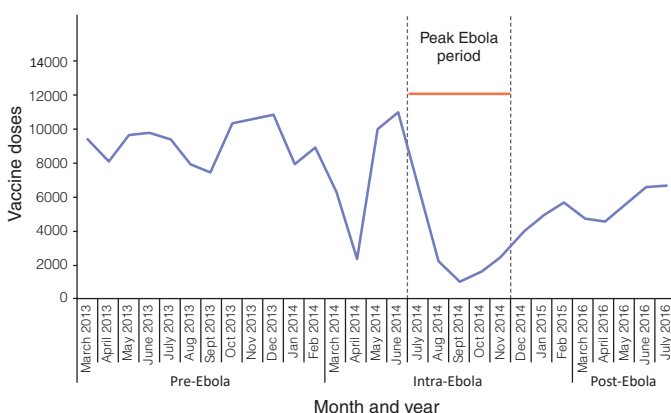
STUDY FINDING

- Vaccine administration declined significantly during the outbreak, and the decline persisted into the post-Ebola period. (Figure below.)

IMPACT

- Ministry of Health conducted mass community awareness and education campaigns on vaccination.
- A safety net of vaccine stocks was introduced as a stop-gap measure for future outbreaks.

Figure: Trends in vaccine administration for children before, during and after the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak, Macenta district, Guinea.



Adapted from Public Health Action. 2017;7(2):161-167

ENGAGING PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS AND THEIR PEERS IN HIV TESTING AND HARM REDUCTION IN UKRAINE: DO THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Kravchenko N *et al.* J Infect Dev Ctries 2019; 13(7S):118S-125S

STUDY FINDING

- HIV testing increased by over 300% (from 164,417 to 639,685) and significantly more HIV-positive individuals were identified and referred for harm-reduction services.

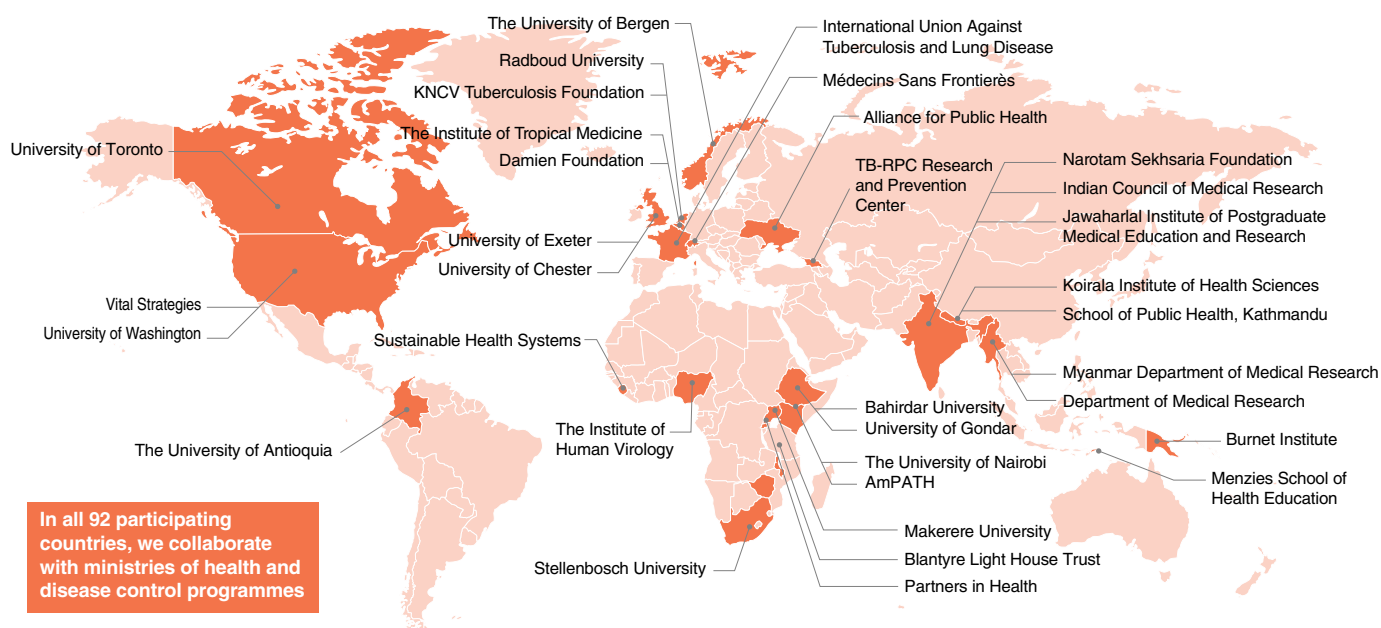
IMPACT

- Active engagement of people who inject drugs and their peers makes a real difference in improving access to HIV prevention and harm reduction.

SORT IT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicator	Target	Progress (as of July 2019)
Participants' satisfaction scores	80%	100%
Participants completing all course milestones	80%	93%
Papers published within 18 months of submission	80%	92%
Papers assessed for impact on policy and practice	80%	90%

MINISTRIES OF HEALTH AND OTHER PARTNERS



In all 92 participating countries, we collaborate with ministries of health and disease control programmes

TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, is able to conduct its work thanks to the commitment and support from a variety of funders. These include our long-term core contributors from national governments and international institutions, as well as designated funding for specific projects within our current priorities. For the full list of TDR donors, please visit our website at: <https://www.who.int/tdr/about/funding/en/>

TDR is co-sponsored by the following organizations