

ESSENCE Members Annual Meeting **Enhancing the ESSENCE Partnership for a Changing World**

26-27 April 2021
via zoom

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Objective: To convene the annual meeting of the ESSENCE initiative members and observers, as well as a wide range of stakeholders, and to advance building partnerships for a changing world. The agenda of the meeting is annexed to these minutes.

Facilitators: Hannah Akuffo, Sida, Linda Kupfer, FIC/NIH, ESSENCE Co-chairs

Moderators: Montasser Kamal, IDRC; Simon Kay, Wellcome; Garry Aslanyan, ESSENCE Secretariat

Encl.: Annex 1 – Agenda
Annex 2 – Photo de famille
Annex 3 – List of Participants
Annex 4 – Virtual roundtable - Updates from members
Annex 5 – Reports from Breakout Sessions

1. Welcome and introduction on the meeting – Hannah Akuffo; Linda Kupfer

The co-chairs both welcomed the participants to the two-day meeting and reviewed the agenda items as well as the purpose of the gathering. Hannah Akuffo specifically shared a brief background on ESSENCE (*Enhancing Support for Strengthening the Effectiveness of National Capacity Effort*) since its inception in 2008 at the Global Ministerial Meeting in Bamako; while emphasizing its remarkable progress in facilitating dialogue among partners and piloting a number of innovative approaches to achieve its goals. She touched upon the efforts of the group in producing a series of Good Practice Document (GPD) that have been translated into different languages and which are in fact helping to improve health research capacity in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Following no dissenting thoughts from the participants, the co-chairs again thanked everyone for coming and moved to the next agenda item.

2. Value of partnerships – opportunities in a changing world – Val Snewin, DHSC; Amos Nungu, COSTECH

Both speakers were invited to reflect on why ESSENCE is as novel and relevant as ever and to discuss what ideal partnership to promote research and build capacity in a changing world look like.

- To lead off the discussion, Val Snewin informed that while it might seem like a long time ago that the concept of ESSENCE as a group of funders getting together was promoted, and while some things have changed, a lot are still the same, which is why ESSENCE is still relevant and important although in a changing world considering the work that has been done on [Research Capacity](#), [Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation](#), [Costing](#) as well as how to deliver programs.
- On what has changed, she mentioned the plethora of new organizations and funders developing new global research or development programs, and the new networks that have sprung up. Although ESSENCE interest lies in *research capacity strengthening and often in sub-Saharan Africa* and other networks, those involved were not aware of other ongoing networks. This points to the relevance and role of ESSENCE in helping to share learning without reinventing the wheel via these networks and the GPDs as new funders and programmes start. ESSENCE helps network the networks as there are a number of funders network that it can and does bring together.

- Her presentation also focused on how one of ESSENCE initiatives led to the thinking around how to engage on a country by country basis with Tanzania (COSTECH) as one of the pilot model which has developed beyond a pilot in country to an equal partnership in meeting the needs of different research landscapes.
- She then informed of the commitment of ESSENCE funders to align with the priorities of the countries in which they work especially taking some of the principles of the [2005 Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness](#) into research funding and aid, and to harmonize activities and procedures with each other. While the landscape has changed and improved (e.g. AAS, COSTECH, GACD, SGCI)¹ the challenge of who to engage with often remains. Noting perhaps it is time to reconsider the ISHreCA² network of researchers.
- Amos Nungu raised the importance of infrastructure both the physical and human infrastructure to have a capacity to make partnership work well and be equal; as well as the issue of sustainability for future improvement and other development indicators.
- Other issues raised during the discussion are specifically:
 - Building capacity into research especially in terms of human capacity to provide learning opportunities and ensure researchers are able to participate in proposal preparation and perform experiment locally.
 - Having different counterparts and players engage with how to best to work together under ESSENCE umbrella of harmonizing and aligning research for health funding.
 - The need for a network level partnership or a network type of engagement especially within country collaborations and government research agencies as networks within countries could move the agenda a lot forward, build capacity, preserve resources and help institutions to grow in terms of capacity strengthening.
 - Based on the lessons learned from different funding agencies, it was stressed that the demand has to be local and fuelled by local organizations, not just by an external funder. Noting SGCI could be a platform for a network in Africa just like AAS having good research network and fellows.
 - Considers it necessary to deepen the thematic dialogue on ownership about the different types of networks, how to show impact and measure or monitor the health of a particular partnership, and the preoccupation with impact of research as well as the use of research.

The participants were later assigned to different breakout rooms to get to know each other and build on the thematic dialogue while focusing on examples of partnerships that work well and what could make them work better; lessons learned, elements to promote research and build capacity, as well as the best arrangement between funders and their partners.

3. Update about ESSENCE Endeavours

Short presentations were given on four topic areas that ESSENCE has taken forward over the last few years. Below are the areas following the order in which they were presented:

- ESSENCE Implementation Research (IR) Working Group
 - **Ana Lúcia Weinberg (EDCTP)** gave a short presentation on one of the key deliverables of ESSENCE that guides the funders community on various topics to lead off the discussion. She informed of the recently published IR Good Practice Document (GPD) called the [Seven approaches to investing in implementation research in low-and middle-income countries](#) which has been widely disseminated to the research community and agencies working on or interested in starting to work on IR.
 - She also reflected on the dissemination strategies and communication plans set up to effectively reach the scientific community. The associated communication activities and channels used to-date include [ESSENCE website](#) for easy download and the [twitter account](#) to facilitate immediate communication to a wider audience, as well as through a series of webinars. She noted that ESSENCE currently offers a platform for funders to have IR webinars to discuss gaps and opportunities in the field.
 - Have used infographics and members' channel (e-newsletters, websites and in-person dissemination at meetings and scientific conferences) to also facilitate direct and easy communication to funders of research, professionals and researchers working in the wider area of interest relevant to IR.
 - On next steps, critical topics that are of interest to the members and would be considered for future work and investment include IR curriculum development and training in LMICs; Career path; Networking and Mentorship; and IR in the time of Covid-19. Other areas include jointly organizing scientific meetings in LMICs, addressing language barrier and adopting multilingual approaches to IR, the disconnect that exists between clinical trials and IR and the role of funders, as well as coordinating training activities amongst funders.

¹ The African Academy of Sciences (AAS), Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI)

² Initiative to Strengthen Health Research Capacity in Africa (ISHreCA) - <http://ishreca.tropika.net>

- b. Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH)
- **Andrew Dykens** (*Potential CUGH, IR Database*) briefly presented on CUGH capacity building database as well as a focused initiative of the IR and research database. He noted that this is a platform to catalogue global institutional capacity building gaps and existing resources for the purpose of aligning common interest and facilitating the formation of equitable global health partnerships. Are focused on developing a focus initiative on IR capacity building platform to host a global database of IR, training programs and IR mentors, as well as in the process of raising awareness across the World Health Organization (WHO) regions in order to facilitate the matching of institutions and individuals to programs and mentors.
 - Further underlined that the capacity gap training needs and available training expertise or resources are open source while encouraging individuals, academic institutions, governments, NGOs and low resource settings to search the database to identify possible matches for the development of capacity building projects. Noting they can also use it to share training needs and identify institutions with training resources for multiple domains like medicine, nursing and public health.
 - Informed that CUGH is seeking for funding for the development of an advanced application that will support the desktop and mobile utilization of a robust filtering system for end users and recording system tools for data upkeep and maintenance and tools for early global health partnership development. Further information on IR database available [online](#) or contact jdykens@uic.edu.
- c. Update from ESSENCE Research Management Working Group (RM WG)
- **Hannah Akuffo** (*Sida*) reported on the progress made in relation to the second edition of the [Five keys to improving research costing and pricing in low-and middle-income countries](#) good practice document (GPD) recently published in three languages (English, French and Spanish) to reflect the current practices of funders and research institutions of different types.
 - Further informed of the dissemination strategies and plan set up to pursue them, noting while the website provides a list of downloadable ESSENCE publications including the costing document, the working group (WG) is also using existing communication channels of member organizations and associated links to their networks and research communities to further reinforce the communication efforts of ESSENCE Secretariat.
 - Have published major news about the document and used key dissemination events including organizing a series of joint webinars with member organizations to promote its use, reach a wider audience outside ESSENCE agencies and to ensure that the perspectives from both funders and research institutions are voiced.
 - **Elaina Davis** (*DHSC*) stressed that a regional approach has been adopted to tailor the webinars for regional context and to reach different language communities. The webinars have allowed ESSENCE to introduce its work and identify topics that could feed into further discussions, training or other interventions.
 - In terms of moving the WG forward, the three critical topics that the group is considering include benchmarking consultation with recipients to assess the development across different areas of RM; developing training materials to support the presentation of the document in a way that allow others to take it forward and deliver it as training, and the translation into Portuguese using specific examples to make it more relevant to that context.
 - During the discussion, there was a comment on leveraging what has already been done by ESSENCE in countries where research management is still in its nascent stage and is inevitable to have partnerships spelling out the principles for equitable partnership which has become the cornerstone to ensure success.
 - The issue of ESSENCE continuing the discussion around research costing and research managers' competencies around RM within the consortium of universities and making it implementable at universities was emphasized and advocated for.
 - The participants were invited to provide suggestions for groups or networks that ESSENCE could explore doing joint webinars with to promote the GPD, or other opportunities to engage other networks that member agencies are working with.
- d. Working Group on Review of Investment (WGRI)
- **Peter Kilmarx** (*FIC/NIH*) informed the participants of the working group's main activity from 2020 focusing his presentation on the inaugural meeting of the [ESSENCE Mechanism](#) held in June 2020. He noted that the purpose was to convene ESSENCE members and other key stakeholders to help with the review of investments in identifying gaps and strengthening coordination and collaboration of funders.
 - Informed that leading up to the meeting, the WG had three workstreams (Data and Metrics, Collaboration and Coordination, and Gap Filling) to work on mapping research capacity using metrics to assess the current national health research capacities, assessing collaboration and coordination models, and assessing critical gaps, as well as making a deep dive analysis of eight countries to gain a better understanding beyond what the global metrics were showing.

- Have confirmed that the current strategic alliance of ESSENCE is probably the best collaboration model rather than a global pooling of funds or other types of collaboration model. The second meeting of the ESSENCE mechanism is planned for the week of 1st November 2021.
 - On forward progress and some next steps, Peter Kilmarx emphasized the significant progress that has been made on the indicators as they have actually been able to confirm the extent of global inequality in research capacity. However, more work is expected on improving the indicators through annual assessment of research capacity at country level and using the data to focus efforts on funders capacity building activities.
 - Stated that the use of the indicators is been taken up by some key groups including GPMB³ in the process of including research and development capacity and monitoring framework for preparedness, as well as GHSA⁴ with eight countries supporting the development of a research and development task force that would use the metrics that ESSENCE has developed as an element and measure of global pandemic preparedness.
 - **Thabi Maitin (SAMRC)** commented on the resource bank where important information and WGRI's work can be found including the paper published in the [Annals of Global Health](#) that summarizes the work that has been done to date and the 2018 World Bank, CEPI report [Money and Microbes: Strengthening Research Capacity to Prevent Epidemics](#) that directly mentioned ESSENCE to identify and articulate a mechanism that permits a through review of current and planned investments in clinical research capacity building in LMICs.
- e. Equitable Partnerships (EP) Working Group
- **Laura Scott (UKCDR)** presented on the project that UKCDR and ESSENCE are delivering on actual partnerships and how it fits in with ESSENCE work. She noted that UKCDR is current working with a group of research funders to amplify the value and impact of research for global development by promoting coherence collaboration and working to action through a number of tools like aligning funders to support enablers of research for impact.
 - At the moment the partners are working with ESSENCE with its long track record of delivering good practice guidance to research funders on actual partnerships, acting a resource hub for funders to showcase their activities and opportunities for engagement. **Garry Aslanyan** added that the partners will use the same approach that ESSENCE used for its GPD series while informing the participants and their networks to expect to be consulted at different stages of the development of the GPD.
 - Underlined that the WG has been able to identify ten principles for research partnerships and international development in 2017, and built on a meeting of IRDFF⁵ which is an inclusive meeting that explores commonality across local funders to improve research funding process. Further informed that the funders have also identified a gap which is a strong sense understanding of barriers to implementing an "actual partnership" research practices and principles in practices for research funders.
 - The goal of the project is to deliver a report identifying the barriers to enable funders to act for partnerships with practical recommendations to support them to embed actual partnership practices; a set of case studies to highlight good practice and lessons learned aiming to be released in 2022; and an [actual partnership resource hub](#) of tools, guidance and resources from global partners to promote equity in international development research partnerships practice which was launched in March 2021.
 - For more information on the definition of actual partnership, the partners' blog, examples and resources that provides insights for partnerships and practice that could be included in the resource hub, and more update on UKCDR's work on EP, please visit [online](#) or contact L.scott@ukcdr.org.uk.
4. Virtual roundtable – update from members and report back from breakout sessions (Please see Annex 3 and 4).
5. Final remarks and closing
- Hannah Akuffo reiterated her thanks for everyone's participation in the meeting and much more to see the energy that is still in the ESSENCE group of idealists showing how the partnership is growing. She noted that this was her last ESSENCE meeting and definitely as co-chair as she retires from active service from Sida in July 2021. Noting being part of this meeting was a lovely way to leave seeing the enthusiasm from the participants to continue to work together. She then thanked everyone for their cooperation and friendship for more than 10 years, the surprise celebratory virtual farewell organized by ESSENCE Steering Committee and the vote of thanks from some of the participants. In addition, the brief mention of her work history and personal qualities by Garry Aslanyan, the virtual toast and the "*Essentials of ESSENCE Poem*" written for her by Linda Kupfer. She noted the meeting was a success and that the co-chairs look forward to welcoming everyone in 2022.
6. The meeting adjourned at 16:20 Central European Time.

³ Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) - https://apps.who.int/gpmb/annual_report.html

⁴ Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) - <https://ghsagenda.org>

⁵ The International Research Development Funders Forum (IRDFF) - <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/international-research-for-development-funders-forum-irdff/>

Annex 1 - **AGENDA**[Zoom link both days](#)<https://who.zoom.us/j/98494425583>**Monday, 26 April****13:55** Participants to connect at least 5 minutes in advance.**14:00** 1. Information on the meeting and participants

Item time: 5 minutes

Objective: To provide information about the meeting.

- *Garry Aslanyan, TDR and ESSENCE Secretariat*

14:05 2. Welcome

Item time: 10 minutes

Objective: To welcome participants, give background on ESSENCE and review the meeting agenda.

- *Hannah Akuffo, Sida and Linda Kupfer, FIC/NIH, co-chairs ESSENCE*

14:15 3. Value of partnerships – opportunities in a changing world

Item time: 30 minutes, 10 minute presentations followed by discussion

Objective: To reflect on why ESSENCE is as novel and relevant as ever and discuss what ideal partnership to promote research and build capacity in a changing world would look like.

Moderator: Montasser Kamal, IDRC

- **Why ESSENCE matters now more than ever.**
 - *Val Snewin, Head of Global Health Research Partnerships, UK Department of Health and Social Care – 10 minutes*
- **What would the ideal partnerships look like in a changing world?**
 - *Amos Nungu, Director General, Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), Tanzania – 10 minutes*

Discussion / Q&A – 10 minutes

Monday, 26 April (continued)

14:45 Split into breakout groups

Item time: 45 minutes

Objective: Get to know each other in the small groups; discuss partnerships and some ways one might attain them.

Each breakout group will have a moderator.

Questions for the group to consider:

- Examples of partnerships at your organization that you believe are good
- What would make them better and what are some lessons learned
- What are elements of partnership to promote research and build capacity in LMICs

15:30 5 minute break

15:35 4. Updates about ESSENCE endeavours

Item time: 40 minutes, 5 min. presentations followed by 20 min. discussion

Objective: To present updates from various working groups and gather input for future activities in the areas.

Moderator: Simon Kay, Wellcome

- **A. Implementation Research**
 - *Linda and Ana Lúcia*
 - *Andrew Dykens, Potential CUGH Implementation Science Database*
- **B. Research Management**
 - *Hannah and Elaina*
- **C. Review of Investments (including ESSENCE Mechanism)**
 - *Thabi and Peter*
- **D. Equitable Partnerships**
 - *Marta and Garry*

Discussion / Q&A – 20 minutes

16:15 5. Wrap-up of Day 1

Item time: 15 minutes

- **Hannah Akuffo and Linda Kupfer, Co-chairs ESSENCE**
- **Q&A**

Adjourn at 16:30

Tuesday, 27 April

13:55 Participants to connect at least 5 minutes in advance.

14:00 6. Welcome, summary of Day 1., including key messages from the breakout sessions.

Item time: 10 minutes

- Hannah Akuffo and Linda Kupfer, Co-chairs ESSENCE

14:10 7. Looking ahead – split into breakout groups

Each breakout group will have a moderator.

- Part A: Networking session: split into groups for further networking and brainstorming on potential areas where ESSENCE could add value.

Timing – 45 minutes

14:40 5 minute break

- Part B: Report from networking session.

Timing – 30 minutes

15:30 8. Virtual Roundtable

Item time: 3 minutes each followed by 10 minutes discussion

Moderator: Garry

- Updates from members

16:10 9. Final remarks and closing

Item time: 5 minutes

- Hannah Akuffo and Linda Kupfer, Co-chairs ESSENCE
- Garry Aslanyan, TDR/ESSENCE

Adjourn at 16:15

Annex 2: **Photo de famille**

Annex 3 – List of Participants

ESSENCE Co-chairs

Hannah Akuffo

Senior Specialist, Methods in Research
Cooperation, Swedish International
Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Sweden

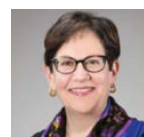
Hannah.Akuffo@sida.se



Linda Kupfer

Senior Scientist, Fogarty International
Centre/U.S. National Institutes of Health
(FIC/NIH)
USA

linda.kupfer@nih.gov



ESSENCE Steering Committee

Ana Lúcia Weinberg

Member, ESSENCE Steering Committee
Strategic Partnership Officer, European
and Developing Countries Clinical Trials
Partnerships (EDCTP)
The Netherlands

weinberg@edctp.org



Anna Thorson

Member, ESSENCE Steering Committee
Scientist/Research Manager, WHO
Switzerland

thorsona@who.int



Montasser Kamal

Member, ESSENCE Steering Committee
Program Leader, Maternal and Child
Program, Inclusive Economies,
International Development Research
Centre (IDRC)
Canada

mkamal@idrc.ca



Simon Kay

Member, ESSENCE Steering Committee
Head of International Operations and
Partnerships Science, Wellcome
UK

s.kay@wellcome.ac.uk



Thabi Maitin

Division Manager, Research Capacity
Development, South African Medical
Research Council (SAMRC)
South Africa

Thabi.maitin@mrc.ac.za



ESSENCE Secretariat

Garry Aslanyan

Manager, Partnerships and Governance,
UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special
Programme for Research and Training in
Tropical Diseases (TDR), ESSENCE
Secretariat

aslanyang@who.int



Kemi Oladapo
Consultant, TDR, ESSENCE Secretariat

kemioladapo@gmail.com



Meeting Participants

Abraham Aseffa
UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special
Programme for Research and Training in
Tropical Diseases (TDR)
Switzerland

armidiea@who.int



Alyssa Chase-Vilchez
Programme Manager
Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases
UK

a.chase@gacd.org



Amos Nungu
Tanzania Commission for Science and
Technology (COSTECH)
Tanzania

amos.nungu@costech.or.tz

Ana Gerlin Hernandez Bonilla
SIHI / TDR - Social Innovation in Health
Initiative (SIHI)
Switzerland

anhernandez@who.int



Andrew Dykens
Potential CUGH, IR Database
University of Illinois at Chicago
USA

jdikens@uic.edu

Anna Lee
Wellcome
UK

an.lee@wellcome.org

Aylin Tüerker-Strzelczyk
GIZ (BMBF Funded Research Networks
for Health Innovations in SSA)
Germany

Aylin.tuerer@giz.de








Bassirou Bonfoh
Director General, Centre Suisse de
Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d'Ivoire;
Director, Consortium Afrique One
Côte d'Ivoire





bassirou.bonfoh@csrs.ci



Bjorn Kjellemo
The Research Council of Norway
Norway

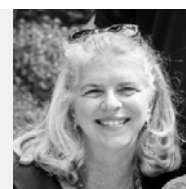
bjk@rcn.no

<p>Brad Newsome Program officer, Fogarty International Center, U.S National Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH) USA</p>	<p>brad.newsome@nih.gov</p>	
<p>Caroline Harris Programme Manager for Global Health Strategy, UK Medical Research Council (MRC UKRI) UK</p>	<p>Caroline.harris@mrc.ukri.org</p>	
<p>Christine Sizemore Fogarty International Center, U.S National Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH) USA</p>	<p>cs390s@nih.gov</p>	
<p>Detlef Böcking DLR Project Management Organisation on behalf of German BMBF Germany</p>	<p>detlef.boecking@dlr.de</p>	
<p>Elaina Davis Global Health Research Advisor, Science, Research and Evidence Directorate, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) UK</p>	<p>elaina.davis@dhsc.gov.uk</p>	
<p>Genevieve Boily-Larouche Canadian Institutes for Health Research - Institute of Infection and Immunity Canada</p>	<p>Genevieve.Boily-Larouche@cihr-irsc.gc.ca</p>	
<p>Hans Hagen Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness GloPID-R</p>	<p>hans-eckhardt.hagen@fondation-merieux.org</p>	
<p>Ian Askew Director, Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, WHO Switzerland</p>	<p>askewi@who.int</p>	
<p>Irini Pantelidou Project Coordinator, Research Ecosystems in Africa and Asia, International Operations and Partnerships Wellcome UK</p>	<p>i.pantelidou@wellcome.org</p>	
<p>Janelle Cruz Fogarty International Center, U.S National Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH) USA</p>	<p>janellelynn.cruz@nih.gov</p>	

Jennifer Gunning Manager International Relations, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR/IRSC) Canada	Jennifer.gunning@cihr-irsc.gc.ca	
John Reeder Director, UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) Switzerland	reederj@who.int	
Jonathan Underwood Manager, International Operations Wellcome UK	j.underwood@wellcome.org	
Jose Jackson-Malete Michigan State University USA	jacks184@msu.edu	
Karen GOSCH GIZ (BMBF Funded Research Networks for Health Innovations in SSA) Germany	karen.gosch@giz.de	
Karin Dyason Southern African Research & Innovation Management Association (SARIMA)	karin@sarima.co.za	
Kathleen Victoir Institut Pasteur - Pasteur International Network Association France	kathleen.victoir@pasteur.fr	
Lara Pandya European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnerships (EDCTP) The Netherlands	pandya@edctp.org	
Laura Scott UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) UK	L.scott@ukcdr.org.uk	
Malabika Sarker Professor and Associate Dean, Research Director, Centre of Excellence for Science of Implementation and Scale up (CoE-SISU), BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University Bangladesh	malabika@bracu.ac.bd	

Margaret M. McCluskey
Senior Technical Advisor, HIV Vaccines,
United States Agency for International
Development (USAID)
USA

mmccluskey@usaid.gov



Maria Bellocchi
Head of Operations, Africa Research
Excellence Fund (AREF)
UK

maria.bellocci@aref-africa.org.uk



Maria Teresa Bejarano
Swedish International Development
Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Sweden

maria-teresa.bejarano@sida.se

Marie-Gloriose Ingabire
Maternal and Child Program, Inclusive
Economies, International Development
Research Centre (IDRC)
Canada

mingabire@idrc.ca

Markus Moll
Research Advisor and AMR focal point at
Swedish International Development
Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Sweden

Markus.moll@sida.se

Marta Tufet
Executive Director, UK Collaborative on
Development Research, (UKCDR)
UK

m.tufet@ukcdr.org.uk



Maxine Caws
Birat Nepal Medical Trust
Nepal

mcaws@hotmail.com



Michael Cheetham
World Report, U.S. National Institutes of
Health (NIH)
USA







michael.cheetham@nih.gov



Nalini Anand
Director, Center for Global Health Studies,
Fogarty International Center, U.S National
Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH)
USA

nalini.anand@nih.gov



Natalie Schmitz <i>GIZ (BMBF Funded Research Networks for Health Innovations in SSA) Germany</i>	natalie.schmitz@giz.de	
Nick Chapman <i>CEO, Policy Cures Research Australia</i>	nchapman@polycuresresearch.org	
Pamisha Pillay <i>Vice President, Research Management, Southern African Research & Innovation Management Association (SARIMA): Director, Research Support, WITS Enterprise, South Africa</i>	Pamisha.Pillay@wits.ac.za	
Pascal Launois <i>Scientist, UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) Switzerland</i>	launoisp@who.int	
Peter Kilmarx <i>Deputy Director, Fogarty International Center, U.S. National Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH) USA</i>	peter.kilmarx@nih.gov	
Rodrigo Correa Oliveira <i>Vice-President for Research and Biological Collections, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz) Brazil</i>	rodrigo.correa@fiocruz.br	
Roger Glass <i>Program officer, Fogarty International Center, U.S National Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH) USA</i>	glassr@mail.nih.gov	
Samia Charfi Kaddour <i>Directrice Générale de Valorisation de la Recherche, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la recherche Scientifique Tunisia</i>	samia.charfikaddour@fst.utm.tn	
Stacy Wallick <i>Fogarty International Center, U.S National Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH) USA</i>	stacy.wallick@nih.gov	

Susan Vorkoper
Fogarty International Center, U.S National
Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH)
USA

susan.vorkoper@nih.gov

Teresa Soop
Research Advisor, Swedish International
Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Sweden

Teresa.soop@sida.se



Tine Rikke Jorgensen
World Health Organization (WHO)
Switzerland

torgensent@WHO.int

Val Snewin
Head of Global Health Research
Partnerships, Department of Health and
Social Care (DHSC)
UK

val.snewin@dhsc.gov.uk



Valentina Picot
Head of Acute Respiratory Infections
Research |
Public Health Initiatives & Expertise Lead
Scientific & Medical Direction
France

valentina.picot@fondation-merieux.org

Vasan Sambandamurthy
DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance
UK

vasan.sambandamurthy@indiaalliance.org



Vishweshwer Rao Perka
Chief Operating Officer, DBT/Wellcome
Trust India Alliance
UK

vishweshwer@indiaalliance.org



Zahidul Quayyum
BRAC James P Grant School of Public
Health, BRAC University
Bangladesh

zahidul.quayyum@bracu.ac.bd

Annex 4 – Virtual roundtable - ESSENCE Members and Programs Update

Agency	Update from Members
<i>European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnerships (EDCTP) The Netherlands</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announced New Global Health EDCTP3 large partnership funded by EU and member countries with late 2021 or early 2022 start date. Additional funding opportunities will likely be available and IR seems to be more prominent. Will consider organizing a webinar for ESSENCE members to further update on EDCTP third programme. For more contact weinberg@edctp.org
<i>Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e. V. (DLR) Project Agency Germany</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DLR health research networks for sub-Saharan Africa will continue – all health areas included. It has been running since 2016 and now preparing for a 2nd phase. There is a letter of intent open now and this would be open to other funders to cooperate by the end of 2021. The team has an information pack they can share with member organizations. Contact detlef.boecking@dlr.de for more on the health research networks.
<i>Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) UK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GACD Implementation Science e-hub recently launched – how to submit a good application and self-taught webinars on implementation science available online or contact a.chase@gacd.org
<i>International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDRC Canada new strategic plan to 2030 launched. Global Health is a main pillar with implementation research and partnerships continuing - includes epidemics and future pandemics. Call for One Health launched (animal, human and environment), please see Collaborative One Health Research Initiative on Epidemics (COHRIE) for more. Priority remains sexual and reproductive health, adolescents and refugee populations. Use of evidence in policy in partnership with Hewlett continues. IMCHA is launching an impact brief series, highlighting success stories from the initiative. IDRC to also support research chairs on forced displacement For more information on IDRC programs contact mkamal@idrc.ca
<i>Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) Canada</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIHR aligns with IDRC as a good partnership. New strategic plan for next 10 years launched. Global health is a priority. Will launch a separate framework for action within the next month. Thirteen different institutes including infection and immunity, will have own strategic plans. Considering building their own networks. Contact jennifer.gunning@cihr-irsc.gc.ca for more update on the work of CIHR.
<i>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) Sweden</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIDA will work with post-conflict countries and one country that is being looked into is institutional research capacity strengthening in Somalia as a new area. Please contact Hannah.akuffo@sida.se
<i>Research Council of Norway (RCN) Norway</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCN New priorities for global health in Norway call: new funding scheme launched, it will run for 10 years at least 50M€. Follows the infectious disease, child health and implementation research themes with more focus on equitable partnerships. Contact btik@forskningsradet.no for more on RCN programs.
<i>Fogarty International Center, U.S National Institutes of Health (FIC/NIH) USA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarized the 12,000 NIH international collaborations including 1,600 in Africa which remains a priority for FIC/NIH; as well as the NIH Common Fund, noting data science and innovation in Africa will fund six hubs collaborating with NIH Institutes. In addition, ethical, social and legal implications will be funded. Climate change and health is part of the President's budget and so there will be new activity in these areas. More info available on FIC website and weekly newsletter. Other funding announcements include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o WorldRePORT which will evolve to a new platform. o Global Forum on Humanitarian health o Funding News from NIH o NIH Data Science for Health Discovery Innovation <p>For more update on the work of FIC/NIH please contact peter.kilmarx@nih.gov or linda.kupfer@nih.gov</p>
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FCDO are looking at creating a handbook for funders for research capacity strengthening. ESSENCE Secretariat will follow up to see how this can link to ESSENCE member organizations.
UK Medical Research Council UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MRC agreed on UK cuts, and mentioned the Applied Global Health Board, Joint Global Health Trials and Health Systems schemes which have been suspended for this year, although it continues to be interested in the other areas including implementation science, maternal and adult health, as well as developing capacity building strategy to work directly with funding partners in low resourced settings. Contact caroline.harris@mrc.ukri.org for more on UK MRC's programs.
Wellcome UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wellcome funding will continue with Discovery Blue Sky's research plus three key areas including infection, mental health and climate and health. Data science and 'research environment/research culture'. Major restructuring continues. DELTASII will start to fund the next phase – announcement 3rd quarter of 2021. India Alliance funding will run to 2024/25. ▪ Wellcome is also developing a new Africa population cohort consortium with other funders. Wellcome African Population Cohort Consortium call for proposals available at https://wellcome.org/what-we-do/our-work/longitudinal-population-studies. For more info on Wellcome's programs and update contact s.kay@wellcome.org
US Agency for International Development USA	<p>USAID announced billions of dollars for COVID. Contact mmccluskey@usaid.gov for more updates on USAID programs.</p>
Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) UK	<p>The UK's Aid Budget has been reduced from 0.7% to 0.5% of Gross National Income (and GNI has decreased due to reduced economic activity). Like other UK ODA research funders (primarily FCDO and UK Research Councils eg MRC) the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) received a reduced budget and are making decisions so this is effectively allocated. Our priority is protecting existing research projects and maintaining funding calls and partnerships where we can. We remain committed to funding high-quality research for the benefit of people in low and middle income countries and building research capacity in low and middle-income countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHSC Global Health Research programme funds in two ways – directly through the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) - which since 2017 has 'gone global' from a UK funder supporting applied health research to underpin the NHS - and also working with Partners such as ESSENCE members EDCTP, GACD, MRC, TDR -in joint and multi-funder activities. • Supporting 'People' underpins everything we do - both individual and institutional research capacity within our NIHR research awards and standalone e.g. through LMIC Fellowships in partnerships with Wellcome. • Our interest in ESSENCE includes cross-funder working, such as research capacity strengthening as well as equitable partnerships, research management and 'levelling the playing field' etc. Interested to follow up on some of the ideas that have come up at this meeting and hope we can continue the conversations in person at some point soon. <p>For more info contact elaina.davis@dhsc.gov.uk and val.snewin@dhsc.gov.uk</p>

Annex 5 - Reports from Breakout Sessions

Future ESSENCE Focus

- ESSENCE Members Annual Meetings have the potential to help accelerate or consolidate dialogue between the funders and national research agencies in the Global South
- ESSENCE Good Practice Documents (GPD) can provide a tool for improving the practices of fund management. The good practice methods developed jointly by ESSENCE Members and partners that can be easily learnt and followed and further developed.
- The importance of ESSENCE members building on the different unique partnerships to better exchange information on what funders are doing and the challenges, their current and future programs.
- ESSENCE taking the role as a catalyst data to speed up the process and to push them forward, as well as building bilateral or trilateral networks with common interests. This could be a way towards corporations and harmonization or alignment in a higher degree or level.
- The impact of the pandemic on research support and ESSENCE role in advocating for capacity strengthening being part of R&D issues. How ESSENCE might be able to share knowledge in resources as well as track this perhaps through World RePORT.
- Environmental impact of health research and climate change - how Covid-19 will factor into the science budget and how ESSENCE could impact the research that is being done on the environment.

Future activities in the areas of IR, RM and EP

- Research Management (RM) is still an area which needs more professionalization even in countries like India. It could be a high priority with work shared across regions and continents.
- The global pandemic has influenced a lot of noticeable changes to the global health architecture, but understanding how it has changed and how research funders can understand how they fit into the new architecture would be valuable to them moving forward in the area of IR.
- An information exchange on evaluation of implementation research (IR) programs would be helpful amongst groups of funders but often not publicly accessible. This could help funders advance their internal effort to continue to strengthen their IR programs in a global health context.
- More support is needed for engagement with government and key stakeholders to help them understand what IR is and how it can help them, given the significant changes to the global health architecture.
- In many countries, including middle-income countries (MICs) like Brazil and India, there is still a need to have improved mechanism and tools to help researchers hear about funding opportunities, engage with funders to shape the opportunities, and apply successfully for research funding.
- The importance of institutional capacity building in addition to the efforts to build the individual researcher capacity; the gaps that currently exists in that space and the value of sharing some best practices and examples of programs that currently exists.

Partnerships and some ways one might attain them

- How networks and cohorts of researchers can be brought together by funders to best effect, like in India and Brazil. For example, in Brazil, Fiocruz is an interesting set up because it has funding from Brazil Government which it then distributes as a funder. There is now a network of genomic surveillance and diagnostics via Fiocruz institutes working with the Pasteur Institute Network (Réseau).
- Funders in the Global North with different research collaborations with institutions in the Global South could find ways to work with each other in order to learn from each other. One example could be through sitting in each other's review committees, which may lead to finding synergies that can enhance the impact of the cooperation of individual funding organisations

*More extensive
discussions on Equitable
Partnerships*

- Further “localization” in the Global South – Examples include agenda setting, decision making, funds management. It is desirable that the demands are increasingly defined by organisations in the Global South.
- For long term impact of the research support, it is imperative that governments in the Global South explicitly provide funding for research/innovation or both in a consistent/predictable fashion. This is happening more and more, but a lot more needs to be done.
- Research for impact - thinking about implementation science and more, researchers working together with others outside of just research in relation to impact, and linking ESSENCE with others.
- The importance of institutional capacity building in addition to the efforts to build the individual researcher capacity; the gaps that currently exists in that space and the value of sharing some best practices and examples of existing programs.
- Women in Science - the need for ‘later career’ support which currently is not supported; as well as gender and women equity and the role ESSENCE can play.
- Co-funding to ensure there is no silent partner between funders and the development of best practice guidance on how to capture co-funding as well as enabling open access to be funded and paid for.
- The issue of decolonization and how much capacity building has been done in institutions’ own country. The role of the leaderships in big research institutes or academic institutes in developing the institutional capacity in the rest of the countries that bring existing partners together. In addition, how to change the mindset of people about decolonization of research.
- The importance of partnerships, how critical it is to build partnerships and what that means for different parts of the world, the different funding and partners coming together on having the right alignment of expectations and intentions. The issue of honesty, openness and transparency with the parties involved from the start generated a lot of discussion in the groups.
- It is important that agencies ensure that their funding calls are more equitable in the way they are designed and awarded, and equity in the time of Covid-19. This has shown the inequitable nature of the changing world in terms of the distribution of vaccines and capacity support.
- There were recommendations for continued and honest conversations around what it means to have equal partnerships, what does win, win really looks like and how can all parties get there; as well as understanding some of the implications of agencies complex history and how it influences actual partnerships.
- The importance of having balance support for individual researchers, institutional partnerships as well as predictability and sustainability of these partnerships.
- The parties involved should each have a stake in the partnership in the form of matching funding built into the partnership on the basis of having mutual benefit or ownership from both sides.
- The approach and difference between partnerships with middle-income countries (MICs) versus partnerships with low-and middle-income countries (LMICs). underpinned by financial resources to contribute to the partnerships, infrastructure and human capacity, as well as the capacity building needs.
- Tracking resources to understand where they are and the trends, as well as be able to share the trends with key stakeholders and the research community.
- The need for the different partnerships to support the use of evidence generated from research, providing dedicated investment in supporting activities and learning from evidence, and sharing good practices.
- With any type of partnership, it is important to frame overarching thinking in terms of “what can you give up?” What are the compromises and adaptations you are willing to make to develop a partnership? Unless there is a joint understanding that all parties observe a universal principle of readiness to compromise, there may be a risk of introducing inequities. Is it time for an Essence “Best practices of partnership” Guidance?
- Successful partnerships share a character of being: flexible, transparent and clear in terms of partners’ roles and responsibilities and applies communication strategically to keep partners together.