

## Theme of the Month

### Research Training - Professional development of researchers in sub-Saharan Africa

The Research Training team, in partnership with the African Academy of Sciences, Institut Pasteur and the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme, recently conducted a cross-sectional online survey administered to African researchers belonging to AAS-administrated and Institut Pasteur research networks. The survey was designed to obtain the information necessary for ensuring effective, needs-based and context appropriate professional development support for African researchers. Over 500 responses were received, of which 58% were male. Below we present extracts of the findings including characteristics of the reported training attended in the past 12-months and preferences for priority training, and also the actual or perceived barriers to training. Further data analysis is still underway, and the final survey report will be released in the near future.

### Characteristics of the reported training attended in the past 12-months and preferences for priority training in the next 12-months

		Training attended in past 12-months (N=716) n (%)	Priority training in next 12-months (N=456) n (%)
Topic <sup>a</sup>	Knowledge & intellectual abilities	427 (60)	300 (66)
	Personal effectiveness	13 (2)	7 (2)
	Research governance & organisation	96 (13)	58 (13)
	Engagement, influence & impact	135 (19)	84 (18)
	Not stated/couldn't classify	45 (6)	7 (2)
Format	In-person training	538 (75)	305 (67)
	Conference/seminar	78 (11)	32 (7)
	Online/distance	80 (11)	28 (6)
	Other	16 (2)	38 (8)
	Any	-	53 (12)
	Not stated	4 (<1)	0 (0)
Duration	Up to 1 day	86 (12)	10 (2)
	Up to 1 week	341 (48)	134 (29)
	Up to 4 weeks	183 (26)	227 (50)
	1 month+	103 (14)	85 (19)
	Not stated	3 (<1)	0 (0)

<sup>a</sup> Participant responses were coded into one of four topic domains prior to analysis. The four domains (listed above) were drawn from the Vitae researcher development framework.

### Reported/perceived barriers to training attendance

	Reported in past 12-months <sup>a</sup> (N=120)		Perceived in next 12- months <sup>b</sup> (N=456)	
	n (%)	Rank	n (%)	Rank
Lack of suitable training opportunities	47 (39)	2	173 (38)	2=
Lack of time to attend training	34 (28)	3	59 (13)	4
Lack of financial support to attend training	70 (58)	1	315 (69)	1
Lack of information about training opportunities available	29 (24)	4	173 (38)	2=
Lack of technical facilities to access training opportunities	6 (5)	6=	49 (11)	5
Lack of qualifications required to take part in the training	6 (5)	6=	13 (3)	7
Lack of encouragement to attend training	7 (6)	5	17 (4)	6
Other	6 (5)	6=	3 (<1)	8
No barriers	-	-	33 (7)	-

<sup>a</sup> As reported by respondents who attended no training in the 12-months prior to survey;

<sup>b</sup> As reported by respondents who reported that a priority training need in the next 12-months.

# DELTAS: Learning Research Programme

The Learning Research Programme (LRP), led by the Centre for Capacity Research, works alongside the DELTAS Africa consortia to produce research-based learning about how to train and develop world-class researchers, foster their careers and collaborations, and promote research uptake. For more information about the LRP research activities and to access the LRP resources (annual reports, in-depth newsletters and all our publications), please visit our DELTAS research page at: [www.lstmed.ac.uk/projects/deltas---learning-research-programme](http://www.lstmed.ac.uk/projects/deltas---learning-research-programme)

For more information about the LRP please contact [justin.pulford@lstmed.ac.uk](mailto:justin.pulford@lstmed.ac.uk)



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Some of the LRP team at the DELTAS Africa AGM 2019

The four LRP themes include:

**Equitable Career Pathways** - This theme is framed within the context of a PhD project, led by Millicent Liani, titled: “Examining barriers and enablers to gender equitable scientific career pathways in African research institutions”. Millicent has employed a qualitative case study design, focusing on three DELTAS consortia, including: **IDeAL** (Initiative to Develop African Research Leaders); **MARCAD** (Malaria Research Capacity Development in West and Central Africa); and **SANTHE** (Sub-Saharan African Network for TB/HIV Research Excellence).

**Research Training** - Currently led by Abiola Aiyenigba, this theme explores the range and quality of professional development opportunities available to African-based researchers as well as the individual and institutional benefits – in terms of professional development – associated with DELTAS Africa membership. Research activities have included a mapping of health-related postgraduate training courses available in sub-Saharan Africa, an online survey of African researchers’ professional development needs, opportunities and barriers, and a qualitative case study exploring the extent, and process by which, researcher training in sub-Saharan Africa may be enhanced through consortia membership. Participating DELTAS Africa consortia include: **CARTA+** (Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa+); **MARCAD**; and **Afrique One-ASPIRE** (African Science Partnership for Intervention Research Excellence).

**Knowledge Translation** - Also framed within the context of a PhD project, led by Violet Murunga and titled: “Exploring the research uptake strategies being used by African researchers to promote evidence-informed decision making”. Phase one of Violet’s research is a qualitative case study of selected DELTAS Africa consortia: **AMARI** (African Mental Health Research Initiative); **THRIVE-2** (Training Health Researchers into Vocational Excellence in East Africa-2); and **WACCBIP** (West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens).

**Consortia Management** - Framed within the context of a PhD project, led by Nadia Tagoe and titled: “Examining the process of establishing and managing health research capacity strengthening consortia”. Nadia is based at KEMRI-Wellcome Trust, Kilifi, Kenya, under the **IDeAL** programme and has employed a mixed methods research design. To date, Nadia has completed key informant interviews with almost all DELTAS Africa consortia Directors and Programme Managers as well as a focused case study in three selected DELTAS Africa consortia including: **CARTA+**; **THRIVE-2**; and **DELGEME** (Developing Excellence in Leadership and Genetic Training for Malaria Elimination in Sub-Saharan Africa).



Millicent Liani



Abiola Aiyenigba



Violet Murunga



Nadia Tagoe