

### Welcome to the 5th edition of the DELTAS LRP newsletter

I hope all is progressing well with your respective DELTAS Africa activities and you enjoy the latest update from the Learning and Research Programme. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

*Justin Pulford* - Deputy PI, DELTAS LRP  
justin.pulford@lstmed.ac.uk

### LRP Case Studies Have Commenced

As part of our commitment to produce robust, learning-based research from across the DELTAS programme, we are excited to announce that we have commenced a series of case-studies in several DELTAS consortia. The initial cases studies will focus on the LRP themes of supporting equitable career pathways (theme 1) and promoting impactful research uptake (theme 3). Subsequent case studies, to commence later this year and early next year, will focus on supporting quality in research training (theme 2) and effective consortium management (theme 4). **Findings from each case study will be reported across the DELTAS network as soon as data are available, we anticipate releasing the first set of findings in early 2019.**

Selection of the case consortia for each LRP research theme are based on pre-determined criteria, some of which are specific to the thematic area and some of which are designed to ensure representation across the network and to minimize the burden placed on any one consortia (i.e. no single consortia should participate in more than one or two of the LRP case studies). Some of the selection criteria we have used include:

- ✓ Regional representation of the geographical locations in which the DELTAS Africa Programme operates - East Africa, Southern Africa, West and Central Africa
- ✓ Consortia with/without previous history of funding on scientific capacity building other than DELTAS, or simply an old/established vs. new consortia
- ✓ Representation of consortia in English and French speaking countries

The response from consortium Directors approached to support each case study to date has been fantastic. We greatly appreciate the positive response and we look forward to working with more of you on an LRP case study over the next 6-12 months. The consortia involved in the first two case studies include:

#### *Theme 1 - Equitable Career Pathways*

- **Initiative to Develop African Research Leaders (IDeAL)**, a capacity building initiative of KEMRI Wellcome Trust Research Programme (KWTRP) that is based in Kenya
- **Malaria Research Capacity Development in West and Central Africa (MARCAD)**, based at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Senegal
- **Sub-Saharan African Network for TB/HIV Research Excellence (SANTHE)** - coordinated from the African Health Research Institute, which is based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa

#### *Theme 3 - Research Uptake*

- **African Mental Health Research Initiative (AMARI)** based at the University of Zimbabwe
- **Training Health Researchers into Vocational Excellence (THRiVE)** based at the Makerere University
- **West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens (WACCBIP)** based at the University of Ghana

## LRP Theme Updates

### Theme 1: Equitable Career Pathways

Millicent Liani has completed a literature review mainly based on studies examining gender inequities in academic career progression within higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. Based on the review, a manuscript provisionally titled 'Towards an integrated conceptual framework for understanding intersecting gender inequities in scientific career progression in higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa' has been developed, to be submitted to the *Gender and Society Journal*.

In-depth interviews with DELTAS supported trainees and research scientists is the main method of data collection for this theme, along with key informant interviews with consortium research leaders/directors (DELTAS principle investigators), programme managers/coordinators, monitoring and evaluation officers, and human resources managers. Where possible, interviews are conducted in person, with Skype/telephone interviews carried out with fellows and staff located at the consortium's partner institutions. To date 46 in-depth interviews and 15 key informant interviews have taken place with two consortia and data collection is expected to take place in the third consortium from October 2018. The overall data collection is expected to come to an end by May 2019.

**Next steps:** For the remainder of year 2 (June 2018 to Nov 2018) Millicent Liani will continue data collection and transcription, validating interview transcripts and data cleaning for theme 1.

### Theme 2: Research Training

The registry of health-related postgraduate training programmes provided by HEIs in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is now [available online](#). The summary report supporting the registry highlights that most postgraduate training programmes are concentrated in a small number of SSA countries and that a large proportion of SSA HEIs do not offer PhD level programmes. The opportunities for certificate or diploma level postgraduate awards are also particularly scarce across all SSA regions. These findings indicate local access to postgraduate training is highly inequitable across SSA. Extending DELTAS postgraduate training opportunities into 'low' access countries therefore, presents as a worthwhile endeavour and, with the application of appropriate indicators, may serve as a measure of programme success (in a research capacity strengthening context).

**Next steps:** The registry of courses reference document will be amalgamated with a complementary dataset(s) for publication purposes and will be broadly disseminated towards the end of 2018. An online survey of research training needs, barriers and opportunities will be launched in October 2018.

### Theme 3: Research Uptake

Violet Murunga is completing a review of existing literature, and a manuscript provisionally titled 'Knowledge translation capacity, practice and support among researchers in low- and middle-income countries: A structured review of the published literature' has been developed and is currently under internal review by her PhD supervisors, awaiting submission for peer-review publication. Once complete, the literature review paper will be submitted to *Implementation Science*. As noted, Violet has commenced her case study in this thematic area having completed a total of 24 interviews to date.

**Next steps:** Violet will continue data collection with 10 more interviews planned in September; data analysis will start towards the end of October and is planned to be completed by the end of November. Development of a quantitative online survey to be administered across the DELTAS network will begin in December.

### Theme 4: Consortium Management

Nadia Tagoe is developing a manuscript based on her literature review, provisionally titled 'Establishing and managing health research capacity strengthening (HRCS) consortia: A systematized review of published literature'. She has almost completed the first phase of her study which focuses on identifying management processes adopted by consortia, and experiences of consortium leaders in implementing these processes. She has conducted a total of 19 key informant interviews with consortium directors, programme managers, and monitoring and evaluation staff. This preliminary work is forming the basis for more in-depth case studies, and the data is currently being analyzed to further focus her study in the next phase.

**Next Steps:** Nadia will select three consortia for the case studies, with the aim of involving a wide variation of consortium characteristics and contexts. Between October 2018 and February 2019, Nadia plans to conduct in-depth interviews with key members of selected consortia, drawing participants from both lead and partner institutions.

### Research Dissemination

- Millicent Liani made a seminar presentation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in July on The Pathway Towards Gender Equitable Scientific Careers: Barriers & Enablers; She will present a poster of her literature review findings at the Fifth Health System Global Research Symposium in Liverpool on 8-12 October 2018. Millicent has been invited by DFID East Africa Research Hub and the Alliance for African Partnership at Michigan State University to moderate a session on “*African Focused Research Excellence Transformational Program for Female Researchers at Higher Education and Research Institutions in Africa*” for the upcoming RUFORUM 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference to take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 in Nairobi. The theme for this conference is “Leadership, Gender and Research Excellence in African Universities: A Conversation with Higher Education Institutions, Science Granting Councils and Funding Partners in Africa”
- Violet Murunga will present a poster of her literature review findings at the Global Health Systems Research Symposium in 8-12 October and will present her literature review paper at the Africa Evidence Network conference in Pretoria, South Africa on 25-28 September
- DELTAS AFRICA 2018 - Imelda Bates, Pierre Abomo, Justin Pulford, Millicent Liani, Violet Murunga, and Nadia Tagoe attended the DELTAS Africa Annual Grantees meeting which provided the opportunity to present on progress and learning during the mid-term review

