

Emerging Pandemic Threats Program

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RESPOND

SUCCESS STORY

One Health Central and Eastern Africa: A Locally Driven One Health Approach

RESPOND is one of four partner projects of USAID's Emerging Pandemic Threats Program. RESPOND seeks to build local capacity of state and non-state actors to manage outbreaks of animal-borne diseases such as H1N1 flu and Ebola virus in hot-spot regions around the world.



OHCEA Country Representatives plot a course for the regional network at the Kigali meeting.

Kigali, Rwanda – On February 11, 2011, 65 representatives of 16 academic institutions from six central and east African countries and the U.S. agreed upon a 10-year strategic plan for an interdisciplinary regional network that will help to lead One Health initiatives in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda – the One Health Central and Eastern Africa Network (OHCEA). OHCEA is a surprising and positive manifestation of local interest in the central and eastern African region for greater capacity to prevent and combat zoonotic disease outbreaks. Its development has been greatly helped by the steady counsel, outreach and relationship building of USAID's RESPOND project.

Since May 2010, RESPOND has worked to connect One Health-related faculties at universities across sub-Saharan Africa through its implementing partners at University of Minnesota (UMN) and Tufts University (Tufts). At a university capacity building and networking workshop October 15 to 16, 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, 36 deans and faculty from the schools of public health and veterinary medicine from six African countries conceived of OHCEA and committed to its creation. Participants identified formative steps to create university-driven, cross-sector linkages between human, animal and wildlife health actors in each member country through the network. Member universities agreed to help form national One Health stakeholder groups in each country, review One Health-related curriculum across their institutions, and conduct One Health national workshops. The OHCEA group requested RESPOND's assistance in various areas to help found and institutionalize this nascent network.

To help local partners establish and implement such an ambitious and collaborative network, RESPOND has provided training and information to OHCEA leaders on practical topics that can be useful in making their vision a reality. RESPOND also has leveraged existing programs to cultivate skills among OHCEA leaders. Through a partnership with the Global Initiative for Food Systems Leadership (GIFSL), seven OHCEA leaders participated in a one-week, intensive leadership training program with the World Trade Organization (WTO),

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OHCEA Members:

DRC

- *Kinshasa University School of Public Health*
- *Faculte de Medecine Veterinaire Universita de Lubumbashi*

Ethiopia

- *Jimma University School of Public Health*
- *Jimma School of Veterinary Medicine*
- *Mekelle School of Veterinary Medicine*

Kenya

- *University of Nairobi, School of Public Health*
- *Moi University School of Public Health*
- *University of Nairobi Faculty of Veterinary Medicine*

Rwanda

- *National University of Rwanda School of Public Health*
- *Umutara Polytechnic School of Veterinary Medicine*

Tanzania

- *Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences*
- *Sokoine University of Agriculture*
- *Doctors without Borders*

Uganda

- *Makerere University School of Public Health*
- *Makerere University School of Veterinary Medicine*

United States

- *University of Minnesota School of Veterinary Medicine*
- *Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine*

World Health Organization (WHO), International Animal Health Organization (OIE), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in February and March 2011.

At a RESPOND-sponsored meeting in Nairobi, Kenya December 12 to 16, 2010, OHCEA deans and university representatives agreed to work within the new regional framework of OHCEA and outlined precisely what the network's regional structure would be. Representatives of member universities and other actors relevant to One Health in each country would form "Country Coordinating Committees" (CCC) that coordinate national One Health strategy with local stakeholders for each of six African countries. The CCCs would nominate two "Focal Persons" to coordinate with the central OHCEA Administrative Secretariat, which is presided over by the deans of the 14 member institutions.

OHCEA Deans, CCCs and RESPOND advisors met again in Kigali, Rwanda to elaborate a 10-Year Strategic Plan that included country-specific inputs from member universities. Following months of debate, participants in Kigali also agreed on a final vision and mission for OHCEA:

- **Vision:** A global leader in One health approaches to sustainable health for healthy productive animals, prosperous communities and productive ecosystems;
- **Mission:** To drive transformational change for continuous improvement of health and well being of humans, animals, and ecosystems through multidisciplinary research, training and community service.

With RESPOND technical support, OHCEA leadership has developed a workplan for activities through September 2011, and CCCs are currently developing country-level work plans. RESPOND will provide grants to the network to implement these planned activities and will continue to empower its local partners to consolidate this regional institution. Through a series of meetings in May 2011, OHCEA representatives achieved the commitments of WHO's African Regional Office (WHO-AFRO) and the FAO to help engage OHCEA member governments to integrate OHCEA activities and One Health strategies into national public health strategies.

RESPOND is dedicated to improving local capacity to manage zoonotic disease threats around the world, but all capacity-building depends on the reliable partnerships and successful collaboration exemplified by OHCEA. More importantly, OHCEA's development ensures that the strengthening of One Health disease outbreak management in central and eastern Africa will be a locally driven process.