



# Researcher capacity building: Supporting the career development of emerging research leaders in Africa

## **Workshop report**

22 November 2022  
Johannesburg, South Africa



The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) was inaugurated in May 1996. It was formed in response to the need for an Academy of Science consonant with the dawn of democracy in South Africa: activist in its mission of using science and scholarship for the benefit of society, with a mandate encompassing all scholarly disciplines that use an open-minded and evidence-based approach to build knowledge. ASSAf thus adopted in its name the term 'science' in the singular as reflecting a common way of enquiring rather than an aggregation of different disciplines. Its members are elected on the basis of a combination of two principal criteria, academic excellence and significant contributions to society. The Parliament of South Africa passed the Academy of Science of South Africa Act (No 67 of 2001), which came into force on 15 May 2002. This made ASSAf the only academy of science in South Africa officially recognised by the government and representing the country in the international community of science academies and elsewhere.



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# Researcher capacity building: Supporting the career development of emerging research leaders in Africa

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# Executive summary

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**In November 2022, the UK Academy of Medical Sciences and the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) held a half-day workshop on researcher capacity building, providing opportunities for participants to discuss ways to support the development of early-career researchers.**

The workshop heard examples of mentoring schemes, leadership development and other career support programmes organised in the UK and Africa. In group sessions, participants reflected on these examples and the lessons they held for capacity development in the UK and countries across Africa. The role that international networks could play in capacity development was also discussed.

The discussions highlighted the multiple approaches available to support the personal and professional development of researchers, including different types of mentoring (developmental mentoring, peer mentoring), technical training, leadership development, and coaching. Individuals will have different needs, based on their background, career stage and personal preferences, emphasising the importance of adopting a researcher-centred approach to development programmes, with bespoke features according to requirements.

## List of asks

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### Mentoring

**Mentoring** can be particularly valuable when mentee-led, mentors are committed, and effective relationships are established. At its best, mentoring provides a 'safe space' for conversations that facilitate self-discovery and personal development. Participants argued that institutions have a duty of care to provide opportunities to all, including formal mentoring programmes, with special consideration of historically disadvantaged and under-represented groups. However, formal mentorship programmes need to balance the organic nature of relationship-building with a systematic approach that creates opportunities and assures quality.



### Contextualisation

Discussions also highlighted the importance of **contextualisation**. A mentoring scheme that works well in one location may not necessarily transfer to a setting with different societal and cultural norms.



### Representation

Given the diversity of the scientific workforce, ensuring sufficient **representation** of minority groups in mentoring programmes is also key, as senior role models can provide a vital 'line of sight' for those at early career stages.



### Regional networking

Additional **regional networking** was felt to be a potentially valuable way to facilitate development – ‘growing stronger together’. North–South networks can be powerful ways to expand expertise and provide opportunities for personal and professional growth, but greater efforts are needed to ensure international collaborations are equitable. This requires structural changes to partnerships and funding mechanisms, including a redistribution of power and resources, respect for the value of research led by local researchers, and due recognition of the mutual benefits of collaboration.



### Institutional strengthening

Capacity needs to be built at all levels, including senior levels, with postdoctoral support seen as a critical gap to address. Capacity strengthening in research and leadership is a necessary foundation to achieve fair and flourishing partnerships. Alongside development of scientific leaderships skills, **institutional strengthening** in research management is also required to ensure that institutions in the global South can operate on an equal footing.



### Existing centres of excellence

There is potential to build on **existing centres of excellence** in Africa and to strengthen their links with historically disadvantaged sites to help level the playing field.



### Interdisciplinary & inclusive collaborations

**Interdisciplinary and inclusive collaborations** will be critical, encompassing groups such as policymakers and people with lived experience.



### National Academies

Many of the issues faced by early-career researchers are similar in countries across Africa and the UK. Collaborations across **national academies** are a fruitful way in which ideas and experiences can be exchanged, to help shape programmes that ensure this vital group have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.



Researcher Capacity Building Workshop participants, 22 November 2022, Johannesburg, South Africa

# Introduction

**Career pathways for researchers in Africa can be challenging to navigate. As well as learning technical skills associated with their specific disciplines, researchers need to learn how academic and other research systems such as industry operate and consider what other knowledge and skills they need in order to thrive and advance their careers.**

Support for researcher development comes from several sources. These include supervisors during early-career stages, as well as peers, colleagues and mentors, and support from host institutions, funders and professional bodies.

In November 2022, the UK Academy of Medical Sciences and the Academy of Science of South Africa held a half-day workshop on researcher capacity building. The aim was to provide opportunities for participants to share and discuss good practices and to identify frameworks that could be adopted on the African continent. The workshop focused on models of mentoring, coaching and peer support, as well as the potential for regional networks to provide an infrastructure for training, learning and support for research excellence.

The capacity building workshop was held after a meeting jointly organised by the two academies on mental health ('Advancing multisectoral and life-course approaches in mental health research'). Many participants from this meeting joined the workshop, alongside Academy award holders and other experts invited to the capacity building workshop.

## Career development



**Dr Rachel Macdonald**, Academy of Medical Sciences, opened proceedings by discussing the Academy's programme of career development support for early- to mid-career researchers, including mentoring, events and training programmes.

Training programmes include the **SUSTAIN – women in research** scheme, a one-year programme through which cohorts of female researchers receive leadership training and support for skills development, including media training, mentoring and peer–peer coaching. The creation of supportive cohorts is particularly appreciated by participants.

The **Future Leaders in Innovation, Enterprise and Research (FLIER)** initiative is a two-year leadership programme open to all UK-based mid-career researchers and aims to strengthen connections between academia, healthcare, industry and policymaking organisations.

The Academy also provides a **mentoring programme**, designed to help early- to mid-career researchers navigate their careers. It has adopted the **'developmental mentoring'** model, which places mentees in the driving seat and aims to empower mentees to act for themselves. Mentees are encouraged to identify the kind of support they would like from a mentor, while mentors play the role of sounding board, provide a safe space for honest and open conversations, and encourage mentees to identify their own solutions to their challenges.

Mentees, who include a range of researchers based in the UK, are encouraged to select mentors outside their own fields and institutions so that they can obtain independent views and a fresh perspective. The value of a mentor lies in their experience rather than their position in a hierarchy, and ideally both mentee and mentor gain from the relationship. The Academy has also developed resources to support mentoring and career development<sup>1</sup>.

**Dr Rina Dutta**, King's College London, UK, described her experience of Academy schemes. Dr Dutta combines multiple roles as a clinician, researcher and institutional leader within King's.



Dr Dutta's significant roles in training and capacity development are: (1) National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Maudsley Biomedical Research Centre Academic Career Development Lead; (2) King's College London NIHR Integrated Academic Training Programme Co-Lead; and (3) King's Clinical Academic Training Office Deputy Director.

In 2014, Dr Dutta was awarded a Clinician Scientist Fellowship by the Academy of Medical Sciences. As part of the award, she was invited to nominate a mentor from among the Academy's faculty. Encouraged to think carefully about what she wanted from the relationship, she prioritised strategic approaches to career development – having a mentor "whose hindsight becomes your foresight" – rather than the research discipline of her proposed mentor. Dr Dutta described her pairing with Professor Andrew Morris and how his pioneering work in diabetic medicine and informatics influenced her own approach to research in mental health, and more importantly how the mentee–mentor pairing was crucial to career decisions she made during her fellowship.

Dr Dutta already had some experience of mentoring, having been involved in mentoring schemes for women at King's and studying their effect on outcomes<sup>2</sup>. She has become involved in other aspects of the Academy's career development work, joining its Mentoring Advisory Group in 2015, being appointed an Emerging Research Leader and Member of Council in 2022, and being a member of the selection panel for the Academy's Springboard scheme from 2020 to 2022.



Breakout group discussions, breakout group chair Prof Danie Brand and Prof Oye Gureje



Prof Melanie Abas, Prof Danie Brand, Prof Adrienne Edkins, Prof Oye Gureje, Prof Makondelele Makatu, Dr Juliet Nakku, Prof Solomon Rataemane, Emily Zerling



Breakout group chair Prof Zukiswa Zingela

- <https://acmedsci.ac.uk/grants-and-schemes/mentoring-and-other-schemes/mentoring-programme>
- Dutta R, Hawkes SL, Kuipers E et al. *One year outcomes of a mentoring scheme for female academics: a pilot study at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London.* BMC Med Educ. 2011;**11**:13. doi: 10.1186/1472-6920-11-13.



**Institutions** have a critical role to play in developing members of their faculty. **Dr Yumna Albertus** discussed a Research Leadership Programme being run by the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa.

Launched in 2022 as a three-year pilot, the programme is based on a scheme organised by the University of Birmingham, UK. Its key aim is to support progression of mid-career researchers to internationally renowned academics.

The programme focuses on female researchers, with the first cohort including 10 women from multiple faculties. Participants spend one year in the programme, with activities complementing existing Human Resources (HR) opportunities. It has five components – leadership skills development, 360° personal assessment and personal coaching, an international visit for networking and to establish collaborations, career guidance, and professional mentorship, drawing on a wide range of scientific leaders at UCT.

Through the leadership skills development component, leading UCT academics share their experience in areas such as research leadership and management, building and sustaining networks, applying for and managing grants, research visibility, and soft skills.

As the programme is new, it is too soon to evaluate its impact. However, Dr Albertus has found multiple aspects beneficial, particularly interactions across the cohort, self-reflection (including the 360° personal assessment), personal coaching, professional mentorship, and having opportunities for conversations with established academics.

Professional societies can also offer opportunities for personal development. **The South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS)** initiative, for example, described by **Professor Makondelele Makatu**, enables promising early-careers researchers to interact with policymakers and public audiences.



Hosted by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), SAYAS was launched in 2011 as a joint initiative between the South African Government and ASSAf. Initially, 20 researchers were selected for the first cohort, with 10 a year subsequently appointed. Selection criteria include age and experience, early signs of academic excellence, evidence of service to society and a willingness to work towards SAYAS's goals.

SAYAS provides a platform to enable early-career researchers to promote the benefit of science to society, for example by gaining access to policymakers and channels of communication with the wider public, including through blogposts.



Participants benefit from wider networking opportunities and the chance to develop interdisciplinary collaborations. SAYAS activities include science policy webinars, public outreach activities, and participation at international events such as the World Science Forum. Young academicians also have the opportunity to become a member of SAYAS's executive committee. At the end of their term, academicians can remain involved with SAYAS as ambassadors and mentors.



Opportunities for career development can also be provided by **international networks**. Assistant Professor **Claire van der Westhuizen**, UCT, South Africa, described how capacity building was integrated within the **African Mental Health Research Initiative (AMARI)**.

A collaboration between four African and three UK universities, AMARI was funded through the DELTAS programme, organised by the African Academy of Sciences with Wellcome Trust support. Its main aim was to develop a critical mass of researchers within an African-led network, thereby building national research leadership capacity in mental health research.

The consortium provided master's, PhD and postdoctoral positions in public mental health to build research skills, as well as training in leadership, management and mentoring. Dr van der Westhuizen was a postdoctoral researcher within AMARI during 2017 and 2018. Being part of AMARI, she suggested, provided an opportunity to make broader plans beyond day-to-day projects. Participants were able to support one another, creating a sense of community that has endured beyond participation in AMARI.

AMARI support complemented that provided by institutions and included different types of mentoring, including peer mentoring and developmental mentoring. Fellows varied in the kinds of input they sought from mentoring, ranging from immediate help with technical challenges through to longer-term strategic career advice.

Dr van der Westhuizen went on to secure funding for the African Research and Innovative Initiative for Sickle Cell Education (ARISE) initiative, which enables clinicians, NGO workers and policymakers to undertake a postgraduate diploma in mental health, so they are better able to use research evidence in their professional lives. Conceived and driven forward by African mental health researchers, ARISE is Africa-focused, globally informed, diverse and inclusive, rights-based and action-oriented.

// Being part of the African Mental Health Research Initiative placed me within a vibrant global mental health network and provided me with the opportunity to build research, leadership, and mentoring skills. I have used this experience and the skills learned, along with our team at the Alan J Flisher Centre for Public Health, to secure funding for the ARISE initiative.



Assistant Professor Claire van der Westhuizen, UCT, South Africa

## Points from discussion

In breakout groups, participants reflected on the presentations and discussed the elements required of a good mentoring scheme, how schemes should respond to race, gender and class differences, and the potential contribution of role models.



### Diverse and inclusive pool of mentors

These discussions highlighted the need for a **diverse and inclusive pool of mentors**, with mentors receiving training to ensure they are equipped to mentor effectively.



### Obstacles to participation

It was recognised there are several **obstacles to participation** in mentoring programmes. Senior academics typically have limited time and many competing priorities. In addition, there are few rewards to incentivise participation. The potential to pay mentors was raised, as was the possibility of recruiting retired academics to act as mentors.



### Institutions

**Institutions** were seen as critical to mentoring. It was argued that institutions should be encouraged to invest in mentoring programmes, which will require evidence of their value. Institutions can create a culture in which researcher development is prioritised and encouraged. This could mean addressing the heavy teaching load faced by many early-career researchers and ensuring that senior colleagues do not exploit junior staff.



### Mentoring needs

Discussions also noted that people's **mentoring needs** differ, and researchers may need help in identifying their requirements. Researchers may need more than one mentor for different aspects of career development. Various forms of mentoring could be considered, including peer-peer mentoring, while those with wider interests might benefit from a mentor in industry.



### Multiple career stages

It was noted that mentoring was potentially valuable at **multiple career stages**. Mentoring of master's students could help them to progress to PhD studies. Mid-career researchers face multiple challenges in becoming independent and reaching principal investigator status. It was argued that even senior researchers could benefit from mentoring in specific areas.



### Flexible

Mentoring schemes need to be **flexible** enough to accommodate career breaks and non-conventional career pathways. They should also be designed to respond to the needs of under-represented and disadvantaged groups.



### Outside one's own discipline

There were felt to be advantages and disadvantages to having a mentor **outside one's own discipline**. A mentor from within the same field may have a greater awareness of specific challenges but cross-pollination from a separate field may provide a beneficial new perspective.



### Across borders

Mentoring **across borders** was seen as potentially feasible, although differing social or cultural norms could be a barrier to relationship development.



### Tension between organic systems

Participants also recognised a **tension between organic systems** in which mentees and mentors come together and find their own ways of working versus embedded institutional programmes. The latter may provide more opportunities, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have the contacts and networks to identify prospective mentors, but may become overly formal or inflexible, or lead to people participating just because they feel they have to.

## Implications

- **Support for personal and professional development can take multiple forms**
- **Individuals will have different needs**
- **Adopting a researcher-centred approach**
- **Creating a safe space**
- **Contextualisation**
- **Representation**

Overall, the discussions emphasised **that support for personal and professional development can take multiple forms**, including supervisor's contributions, mentoring, peer mentoring, role models, life coaches, technical training and integrated programmes incorporating various of these components.

**Individuals will have different needs**, based on their background, career stage and personal preferences, emphasising the importance of adopting a **researcher-centred approach** to development programmes.

**Mentoring** can be particularly valuable when mentee-led, mentors are committed, and effective relationships are established. At its best, mentoring provides a **'safe space'** for conversations that facilitate self-discovery and personal development. Participants argued that institutions have a duty of care to provide opportunities to all, with special consideration of historically disadvantaged and under-represented groups. However, formal mentorship programmes need to balance the advantages of organic relationship-building with systematic approaches that create opportunities and assure quality.

**Contextualisation** is also important. Successful mentoring schemes may not translate to other settings with different societal and cultural norms. **Representation** is also key – senior role models provide a vital 'line of sight' for early-career researchers.

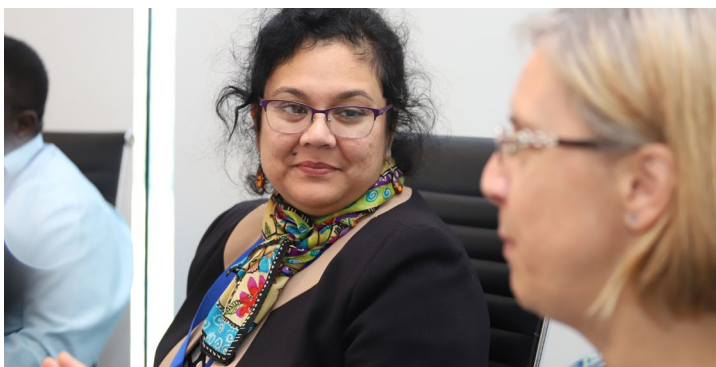


Breakout group chair, Prof Amina Abubakar

// As a Clinician Scientist Fellow at the Academy, having a mentor who understands the use of informatics in a different medical specialty was crucial to the career decisions I made during my fellowship and influenced my own approach to research in mental health.



Dr Rina Dutta, King's College London, UK



Dr Rina Dutta and Prof Charlotte Hanlon

// The Academy's mentoring programme promotes a developmental mentoring model which empowers mentees to take charge of their own development. The value of a mentor lies in their experience and perspectives, and we have found that both mentees and mentors can gain from the relationship.



Dr Rachel Macdonald, The Academy of Medical Sciences, UK



Academy representatives meeting our South African based Newton and Global Challenges Research Fund Networking award holders and alumni. Dr Yumna Albertus, Prof Danie Brand, Prof Kathryn Chu, Simon Denegri, Dr Adrienne Edkins, Dr Mubeen Goolam, Dr Freedom Gumedze, Dr Maia Lesosky, Dr Lisa Micklesfield, Dr Rachel Macdonald, Prof Marlien Pieters, Dr Helen Scanlon, and Emily Zerling

# Networking

**There is an urgent need to build mental health research capacity on the African continent. As discussed by Professor Charlotte Hanlon, King's College London, UK, and Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, regional and wider international networks can provide an infrastructure offering high-quality training and development opportunities for early-career researchers across Africa.**

Professor Hanlon has helped to establish a PhD programme in mental health epidemiology at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. 16 students from Ethiopia have completed the programme; 18 students (including one from Kenya and one from Tanzania) are currently enrolled and study alongside five Ethiopian postdoctoral researchers.

The mental health of low- and middle-income country (LMIC) populations has been low on the global agenda, although the COVID-19 pandemic has both shone a spotlight on mental health impacts and highlighted examples of innovative responses in LMICs<sup>3</sup>. This could reflect an inflexion point at which mental health in LMICs begins to receive the attention it deserves.

Building the research base in Africa to support this shift will be challenging. While international collaborations can provide access to resources and expertise, these partnerships can be unbalanced. Funding is predominantly from high-income countries whose agendas may not match those on the African continent, the region has relatively few academic leaders, and institutions in high-income countries typically place less weight on capacity building when evaluating academic performance of their faculty, requiring them to demonstrate other impacts, such as academic papers. This is reflected in publications, where high-profile authorship – first and last authors on papers – is biased towards researchers from high-income countries<sup>4</sup>.

Developing research leaders faces multiple challenges. There are limited career development pathways, greater opportunities elsewhere risk a 'brain drain', and competing priorities can restrict time devoted to research. Female researchers face particular challenges, leading to a lack of diversity in senior positions. Capacity building therefore needs to focus not just on quantity, ensuring African countries have sufficient researchers, but also on quality – providing opportunities for development of research leaders through a whole-career perspective<sup>5</sup>. More equitable academic partnerships will require commitment of institutions in high-income countries to the long-term development of institutional capacity<sup>6</sup>.

In terms of ways forward, Professor Hanlon highlighted several possibilities. These include promoting 'levelling up' as a long-term goal, supporting Africa-based PhD programmes, strengthening postdoctoral training within Africa, creating more opportunities for collaboration across Africa, enabling early-career researchers to participate in collaborative projects and generate outputs, organising interdisciplinary conferences, and arranging events for dialogue between policy-makers, people with lived experience and researchers.

3. Kola L, Kohrt BA, Hanlon C et al. *COVID-19 mental health impact and responses in low-income and middle-income countries: reimagining global mental health*. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 2021;**8**(6):535-550. doi: 10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00025-0.
4. Hedt-Gauthier BL, Jeufack HM, Neufeld NH et al. *Stuck in the middle: a systematic review of authorship in collaborative health research in Africa, 2014-2016*. *BMJ Glob Health*. 2019;**4**(5):e001853. doi: 10.1136/bmjgh-2019-001853.
5. Langhaug LF, Jack H, Hanlon C et al. *"We need more big trees as well as the grass roots": going beyond research capacity building to develop sustainable careers in mental health research in African countries*. *Int J Ment Health Syst*. 2020;**14**:66. doi: 10.1186/s13033-020-00388-1.
6. Fekadu A, Assefa E, Tesfaye A et al. *Towards effective and sustainable global academic partnerships through a maturity model informed by the capability approach*. *Global Health*. 2021;**17**(1):131. doi: 10.1186/s12992-021-00785-2.

// Regional and wider international networks can provide an infrastructure offering high-quality training and development opportunities for early-career researchers in Africa.



Professor Charlotte Hanlon, King's College London, UK, and Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia



Breakout group discussions, Dr Boladale Mapayi and Dr Victoria Mutiso

## Discussions

During breakout discussions, participants addressed five key questions relating to collaborations and international partnerships:

### How can Africa-led interdisciplinary collaborations in health sciences be strengthened?

- Collaborations can provide additional opportunities for sharing of resources and expertise.
- It is resource-intensive to make collaborations work so funders must be committed to providing the necessary support.
- Institutions need to be strengthened so that collaborations can be African-led.
- Development of a critical mass of researchers will be required, spanning different stages of a research career.

### How can a career pipeline for African health researchers be developed?

- There is a need to focus on all educational levels and career stages, from school to senior level.
- Institutions are critical to the development of research capacity – there is a need to capitalise on existing pockets of excellence.
- Career pathways are currently not well-established.
- Postdoctoral research is a critical stage in a research career but suffers from a lack of funding and dedicated positions.
- Development of both soft skills and technical skills is required.
- Progress will require political will and investment, with national political leaders valuing science and innovation.



Breakout group discussions, Prof Madeleine Duncan, Prof Sharon Kleintjes, and Prof Thashree Marimuthu



## Where can academies and professional associations potentially add value to efforts to strengthen cross-Africa collaboration for health researchers?

- Africa is a diverse region, with great cultural richness and opportunities for productive collaboration across the continent. Academies could help to bring people together and facilitate inclusion of non-English-speaking countries.
- Academies/professional associations can map research landscapes and identify gaps, and make linkages across disciplines.
- They can be seen as elite, and not all researchers engage with them; their role in professional accreditation could provide opportunities to strengthen engagement with clinical academic researchers.
- They could play a key role in interdisciplinary research, bringing together different bodies with similar interests.
- Different countries require distinctive inputs and support to allow their scientific capabilities to be realised. Not all countries have academies but could be better linked to regional academies.
- Digital communication technologies could facilitate collaborations across organisations in different countries, although face-to-face interactions have high value and are needed alongside remote connections.

## How can African partnerships with entities in high-income countries be made equitable?

- Through institutional capacity strengthening, funders should work towards direct disbursement of funds to African institutions as the norm rather than funds being managed by a high-income partner.
- Data ownership agreements are needed that recognise local ownership.
- A sense of entitlement to data among some global North researchers, because of their often greater analytical capacity, needs to be challenged.
- Efforts should be made to avoid global North partners being portrayed as having technical expertise and analytic capacity while global South partners just collect data. Technical expertise from African researchers should be valued and included in global North-based research, and appropriately recognised in South–North partnerships.
- Visa restrictions can impede the mobility of Africa researchers, for example preventing laboratory visits or attendance at scientific meetings in the global North.
- African researchers should be given the chance to demonstrate academic leadership by heading collaborative research projects, which would help to increase recognition of African researchers and build expertise, leadership skills and the capacity to acquire grants funding.

## How can collaborative efforts for health sciences in Africa partner with people with lived experience, caregivers and other key stakeholders?

- Engaging with people with lived experience and caregivers is critical, providing mutual benefits to researchers and those affected by mental health conditions.
- The goal should be that all stakeholders come together at the beginning to shape a study and discuss roles and responsibilities.
- Funders can helpfully require inclusion; building the capacity of peer researchers may also be a mechanism to avoid tokenism.
- It should be possible to learn from and build upon multiple examples of good engagement practice in mental health research in sub-Saharan Africa.

## Implications

- **Additional regional networking**
- **Institutional strengthening**
- **Build on existing centres of excellence**
- **Interdisciplinary collaborations**

Overall, **additional regional networking** was felt to be a way to develop the field – ‘growing stronger together’. North–South networks provide powerful opportunities to expand expertise and provide opportunities for personal and professional growth, but greater efforts are needed to ensure international collaborations are equitable. This will require a shift in the power dynamics and resourcing of collaborations, as well as respecting the value of research led by local experts.

Collaborations should also include a strong focus on capacity building. Capacity needs to be built at all levels, including senior levels, with support at the postdoctoral level a critical gap. Alongside development of scientific leaderships skills, **institutional strengthening** in research management is essential if the centre of gravity of partnerships is to shift to the global South.

There is potential to **build on existing centres of excellence** and to strengthen their links with historically disadvantaged sites to help level the playing field. Within mental health, **interdisciplinary collaborations** will be critical, encompassing key groups such as policymakers and people with lived experience.

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// The Research Leadership Programme run by the University of Cape Town, South Africa, has been beneficial for me by consolidating my research leadership and management skills, grant writing and application skills, and soft skills. It has especially enabled me to build and sustain networks particularly by interacting across the cohort, and has created opportunities for conversations with established academics.



Dr Yumna Albertus, University of Cape Town, South Africa

// Hosted and supported by ASSAf, the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) provides a platform for early career researchers to promote the benefit of science to society by gaining them access to policymakers and channels of networking and communication with the wider public.



Prof Makondelele Makatu, University of Venda, South Africa

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# Conclusions

Throughout discussions at the workshop, it was reiterated that, as well as developing technical skills associated with their chosen discipline, researchers also need support as they acquire the expertise and experience to navigate research career pathways and achieve their full potential.

Individuals from historically under-represented groups are at a particular disadvantage that must be considered in research and career development. They may still be subject to explicit and implicit biases, may lack opportunities to develop professional contacts, and may have a limited number of role models to emulate.

Various kinds of **mentoring and career development support** can benefit early- to mid-career researchers but these need to be tailored to local context, as well as to individual needs.

**Partnerships and international networks** can provide important opportunities for capacity development, exposing early-career researchers to a wider range of peers and international experts, and providing opportunities to take on more responsibilities and experience additional aspects of research, such as travel to conferences and presentation at scientific meetings. These are essential for development of transferable skills.

However, more efforts are needed to shift the centre of gravity of international research collaborations towards the global South, which will require fresh and innovative thinking from institutions and funders in high-income countries. Capacity building needs to become a more integral and routine aspect of international research collaborations, with a long-term perspective that goes beyond the immediate aims of a project and also recognises the mutual nature of benefits (South–North as well as North–South) from international collaborations.

National academies can play an important role in the development of international collaborations – both regionally and globally – to support experience sharing and mutual learning. Contacts between national academies can help to address long-standing North–South inequities but also help to strengthen ties between countries in countries across Africa and promote interdisciplinary collaboration.



Nelson Mandela Square in Sandton, Johannesburg

## Appendix 1: Workshop steering committee

**Both the early scoping work and development of the workshop was informed by a wide range of experts from different countries and sectors**

### Co-chairs

- Prof Louise Arseneault FMedsci, Professor of Developmental Psychology and Mental Health Leadership, Kings College London, UK
- Prof Tholene Sodi, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Limpopo, South Africa

### Members

- Mr Action Amos, Pan African Network of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities, Malawi
- Dr Rochelle Burgess, Associate Professor in Global Health and Deputy Director, UCL Centre for Global Non-Communicable Diseases, Institute for Global Health, University College London, UK
- Prof Lucie Cluver, Professor of Child and Family Social Work, University of Oxford, South Africa
- Prof Charlotte Hanlon, Professor in Global Mental Health, King's College London, Co-director of the WHO collaborating centre for mental health research and training, King's College London, Department of Psychiatry and the Centre for Innovative Drug Development and Therapeutic Trials for Africa at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
- Dr Victoria Mutiso, Clinical Psychologist and head of research at the Africa Mental Health Research and Training Foundation (AMHRTEF), Kenya
- Prof Sarah Skeen, Co-Director and Associate Professor, Institute for Life Course Health Research, Department of Global Health, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- Prof Mark Solms, Professor in Neuropsychology, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Prof Leslie Swartz, Professor of Psychology, University of Cape Town, South Africa

## Annex 2: Participant list

**Prof Melanie Amna Abas**, King's College London, UK

**Dr Mohammed Abdulaziz**, Africa CDC, Ethiopia

**Prof Amina Abubakar**, Aga Khan University, Kenya

**Dr Aishatu Abubakar-Abdullateef**, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria

**Dr Jibril Abdulmalik**, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

**Dr Yumna Albertus**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

**Prof Atalay Alem**, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

**Mr Action Amos**, Pan African Network of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities, Malawi

**Prof Louise Arseneault**, King's College London, UK

**Mr Ephrem Bekele**, Erk Mead media and communications, Ethiopia

**Pro Arvin Bhana**, South African Medical Research Council, South Africa

**Prof Danie Brand**, University of the Free State, South Africa

**Dr Fern Brookes**, The Academy of Medical Sciences, UK

**Dr Rochelle Burgess**, University College London, UK

**Prof Yahya Choonara**, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

**Dr Eugene Lee Davids**, Varsity College, South Africa

**Mr Simon Denegri**, The Academy of Medical Sciences, UK

**Dr Sumaiyah Docrat**, South Africa

**Dr Anusha Lachman**, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

**Prof Madeleine Duncan**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

**Dr Rina Dutta**, King's College London, UK

**Dr Julian Eaton**, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK

**Prof Adrienne Edkins**, Rhodes University, South Africa

**Dr Mubeen Goolam**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

**Dr Freedom Gumedze**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

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