

MicroResearch Strategic Thinking Workshop

November 29, 2021

We are planning a virtual workshop to discuss the future of the MicroResearch program. This Strategic Thinking Workshop will be held on November 29, 2021. For those in East Africa this will start at 17:00 and last a maximum of two hours. Please adjust time zone if you are not in East Africa.

Due to ongoing public health restrictions and limitations to international travel, the workshop is going to take place on a virtual platform. This will allow MicroResearch partners, supporters, and participants from Africa, Asia, and the Americas to contribute to the discussion.

The Strategic Thinking approach will focus on action-oriented collaboration and measurable outcomes. The focus of this session will be to discuss priorities and outline the action plan. This is not your typical strategic planning – it has an interactive and participatory format where we will consider what action we can take. The two themes that the workshop will focus on are:

- **Research Education:** *Imagine what it would look like if the MicroResearch curriculum was fully embedded in undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare education in Africa and other countries.*
- **Sustainability:** *Imagine if MicroResearch projects and infrastructure were fully sustainable within your country.*

To ensure for a lively discussion and to have a broad range of perspectives, we invite attendees from all our MR sites to join us for the meeting.

Ahead of the workshop, all registrants will receive pre-recorded keynote talks, preliminary information, and will be asked to provide opinions through a survey before November 29th.

For more information about the Strategic Thinking workshop, please contact us at MicroResearch@dal.ca.

To register for this workshop, visit the News page on our website: www.microresearch.ca/news.



Hats off to all the MR reviewers, coaches, teachers, advisory committee members, and volunteers from the past 6 months!

Anchilla Banegura
Annie Chauma Mwale
Asasira Shinah
Audrey Steenbeek
Beatrice Katusiime
Beth Cummings
Bives Mutume
Bob Bortolussi
Bob Faque
Bob Hilliard
Catherine Abaasa
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Charles Tushabomwe-Kazooba
Claire Seaton
Clare Kyokushaba
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Corrie Young
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Suzanne Zinck
Taremwa Ivan Mugisha
Teddy Kyomuhangi
Tony Otley
Towela Maleta
Vicky Price
Winnie Chilemba

IMPORTANT DEADLINE!

MicroResearch
International grant
application deadline:
November 1, 2021



Connect With Us!

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MicroResearch Virtual Forum

With plans to host two in-person forums in Uganda and Kenya in 2020 and 2021 halted due to the global pandemic, the MicroResearch Forum was adapted for an online platform. The Virtual Forum was held on June 23 and 24, 2021 via Zoom videoconference. Although in-person forums are preferable for networking and building relationships, the virtual format allowed a wider audience to join, with attendees from Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Canada.

The Forum was organized into four sessions, three of which were based on the themes of *Research Ethics*, *Research Education*, and *Knowledge Translation*, with the fourth session devoted to gaining MR participant and facilitators' perspectives through Focus Group Discussions. Each of the themed sessions contained a panel discussion and presentations on concluded and ongoing MicroResearch projects. Thank you to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada for providing support for this Forum.

Forum Session: Research Ethics

Objective: The first session of the forum, "Research Ethics," was intended to stimulate discussion on the challenges faced by Research Ethics Committees (REC), its members, and by researchers during the research ethics review process in eastern Africa.

Panelists: Michael Bowen (Leader REC, Daystar University, Kenya), Charles Tushabomwe-Kazooba (Vice Chancellor Finance and Administration, MUST, Uganda) and Gladys Nakalema (Research Ethics Committee, MUST, Uganda) and Robert Bortolussi (Chair).

Discussion: The issue of costs to the researcher for REC processing generated the most debate. The panel agreed that running an REC properly does incur costs. The question therefore was "Who should pay?" Strategies to improve the process so that roadblocks for researchers are minimized were proposed.

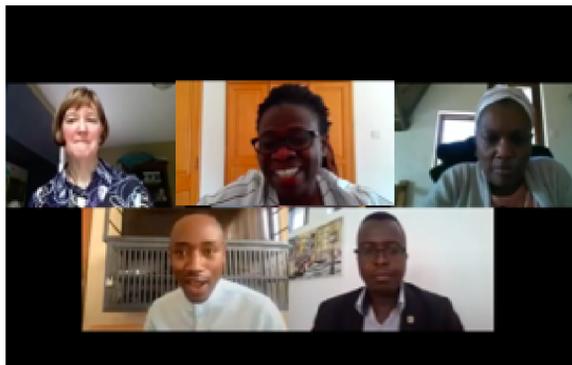
Next steps: A working group should be formed to review REC practices and policies from other sites regarding time for processing requests and charges to researchers. The task of the working group will be to draw up recommendations that may help to address the challenges faced by researchers.



"I think developing countries, we have a long way to go in this. We need a [ethics] policy document."

- MR Forum participant

Forum Session: Research Education



"The interaction we have had are the seeds that will grow their roots and impact on others and the cycle will continue. The problems we have globally can be solved if everyone has a mentality of inquiry for new solutions."

- Jonathan Nthusi,
Forum Panelist

Objective: To discuss the importance of inquiry and research in the education and day-to-day-work of health care professionals in eastern Africa. To foster exchange of ideas on challenges and ways forward to achieve and grow sustainable research education in eastern Africa.

Panelists: Towela Maleta (Research Manager, Africare, Malawi); Anchilla Banegura (Head of Research and Development of Mildmay Uganda); Jonathan Nthusi, (Head of Family Medicine, Kabarak University, Kenya); Beth Cummings (Chair)

Discussion: The panel discussed ways to address challenges of MR-style research education, ways to foster communities of scholars or research networks and how to implement effective cascade training. MR was seen as having very positive effects on individuals and participating institutions injecting enthusiasm, willingness to ask questions, and a desire to make change. Challenges include time to participate in research once HCPs are on the job and a theme that emerged was that starting this training early in undergraduate programs would be beneficial.

Next steps: A working group has been formed to make more detailed recommendations about integrating MR training into undergraduate and postgraduate HCP training.

MicroResearch Virtual Forum

Forum Session: Knowledge Translation

Objectives: This session aimed to stimulate discussion on the challenges faced by MicroResearchers in knowledge translation and foster exchange of ideas on challenges and ways to move knowledge translation education and enterprise forward in order to improve impact of project research.

Panelists: Isha Grant (Ministry of Health, Uganda); Taremwa Ivan Mugisha (Senior Laboratory Technologist, Uganda); Lisine Tuyisenge (Pediatrician, Rwanda); Teddy Kyomuhangi (Healthy Child Uganda, Uganda); and Noni MacDonald (Chair).

Discussion: The panelists made recommendations for how to adapt the MR workshop to better engage participants with the knowledge translation component. This included a suggestion to hold the introduction sections on what is MicroResearch and how to develop a research question to before the workshop to allow time to engage with the community. Another suggestion was to hold separate short KT workshops to help teams “flesh out” their KT plan after their project is completed.

Next steps: A KT Working Group has been formed to help determine how to offer more KT training that meets the needs of the researchers. An outcome of all three forum sessions was the development of "networking groups" based on particular themes that would help researchers connect to others in their field, including: malnutrition, menstrual health, mental health, and COVID-19.

"For KT to succeed at different levels is to include the gate keepers during the initiation to completion of research. At least with the different projects that ended up in policy included key people like policy makers, district management team, religious leaders, cultural leaders"

- MR Forum participant



Focus Group Discussions

Selected participants were invited to take part in a focus group discussion led by Dr. Schola Ashaba on the morning of June 24th. The participants were chosen to provide a range of perspectives (both senior and novice) and countries of eastern Africa. Twelve participants joined virtually from Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania.

The questions revolved around how to grow MicroResearch, how to get more people involved, and what future directions MicroResearch should consider. The discussion will help shape what is explored at the Strategic Thinking workshop.

"This has really been very informative forum. Hearing from different experiences is a good learning process. Thank you to all the presenters and panelists for the fantastic ideas."

- MR Forum participant

MicroResearch Project Presentations

Jean Pierre Gafaranga (Rwanda): “Cervical cancer screening: Why do Rwandan women go for cervical cancer screening?”

Bives Mutume (Uganda): “Factors associated with relapse among patients with severe mental illness at Kampala International University Teaching Hospital Mental health and Psychiatry ward”

Michael Chifundo Manonga (Malawi): “Exploring adherence to newly introduced oral drugs for TB drug-resistant patients”

George Mwenye-Phiri (Malawi): "Exploring knowledge and practices of Covid 19 preventive measures among secondary school teachers in public schools within Lilongwe City, Malawi"

Elizabeth Kemigisha (Uganda): "Voices of young adolescents regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and prevention measures"

Polyphile Nthihinyurwa (Rwanda): "Cascade training for medical residents in Rwanda following a MR workshop"

Sifora Fanta Chaleabo (Kenya): “Perceived factors influencing adherence to standard operating procedures among laboratory personnel”

Calorine Natuhwera (Uganda): “Knowledge, experiences, challenges faced by adolescents with disabilities in handling menstruation and forms of support by caregivers in Mbarara District, Uganda”

Elizabeth Kemigisha (Uganda): “Evaluation of menstrual hygiene training among adolescents in Nakivale refugee settlement”

Catherine Abaasa (Uganda): “Healthcare providers’ and caregivers’ perspectives on malnutrition of children”

Janeth Bulemala (Tanzania): “Exclusive Breastfeeding: Assessment of attitudes among mothers attending Ifakara Reproductive & Child Clinic”

New MicroResearch Publication

Abaasa, C.N., Rukundo, G.Z., Ayesiga, S. *et al.* Healthcare providers and caregivers' perspectives on factors responsible for persistent malnutrition of under 5 children in Buhweju district, South Western Uganda; a phenomenological qualitative study. *BMC Public Health* 21, 1495 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11432-1>

Background: Unacceptably high levels of childhood malnutrition have been registered in all regions of Uganda over the years. Buhweju district alone contributed 46% prevalence of childhood malnutrition to the 47.8% estimated national prevalence for the whole of western Uganda in 2014. This study assessed health provider and caregiver opinions on factors responsible for persistent malnutrition among under five children in Engaju and Nyakishana sub counties.

Methods: In this phenomenological qualitative study, we conducted two key informant interviews and six focus group discussions with Village Health Team members and care takers of under five children in Engaju and Nyakishana sub-counties respectively to explore their opinions on the factors responsible for persistent malnutrition in Buhweju District in May 2018.

Results: Historical and geographical challenges, poverty and economic occupation, parental alcoholism and domestic violence as well as inadequate childcare services were identified as factors responsible for persistent malnutrition among under five children in Engaju and Nyakishana sub counties.

Conclusion: Persistent malnutrition in under five children is mainly due to historical and geographical challenges and its associated factors that include poverty and economic occupation, parental alcoholism and domestic violence and inadequate childcare services. Thus literacy education for mothers and young adolescent boys and girls through engaging local leaders, local nongovernmental organizations and Companies operating in the district to contribute to social services provision would limit the domestic violence and increase sensitization on male responsibilities in the children care in Buhweju district.

MicroResearch in Malawi: Research Education in Health Care



MicroResearch Workshop in Mangochi, Malawi

We have an exciting update on MicroResearch in Malawi. The College of Medicine at the University of Malawi in Mangochi is making headway on implementing the MicroResearch concept within the institution. This comes after the recent MicroResearch virtual workshop for Mangochi, Malawi in February, 2021. Using MicroResearch educational materials, there are two research training workshops planned for October and November.

We are happy to see MicroResearch growing in various sites and growing research education opportunities within their institutions.

Upcoming MicroResearch Workshops 2021-2022

Kabarak University, Kenya
Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda
Mildmay Uganda
Georgetown Regional Referral Hospital, Guyana
Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA), India

"I have learned how to always improve on what I do, I mean not to always stop at identifying different problems but go ahead and do something to see the situation."

- MR Participant from Uganda

Thank you to all our partners and supporters!



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