

Productive 5th TCRP symposium – a big step forward

The city of Mwanza in Tanzania's Lake Zone was the location of the fifth annual symposium of the Tanzania-Canada Research Partnership (TCRP). The event was co-hosted by the Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS) and the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR). Thirty five participants discussed the overall theme of *"Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration"*. The two-day event (March 6 – 7, 2019) included selected presentations, small group discussions and informal "networking". The event was supported by a grant from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) program on "Innovation for Maternal and Child Health in Africa (IMCHA), facilitated by the University of Calgary. IDRC was represented by Dr. Sana Naffa, Senior Program Specialist.

This fifth symposium had several special features:

- Six (6) universities were represented, reflecting the feedback from previous TCRP symposia that more could be done to facilitate collaboration and networking among Tanzanian universities. The universities were: Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences-CUHAS (Mwanza); Nelson Mandela-African Institute for Science and Technology – NM-AIST (Arusha); Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University and College KCMUCo (Moshi); University of Dodoma, University of Dar es Salaam (Institute of Development Studies); and the Sokoine University of Agriculture-SUA (Morogoro). Also participating were representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including the Ifakara Health Institute (IHI), the Helen Keller Foundation and the Tanzanian Training Centre for International Health (TTCIH).
- Additional participants included a consultant representing the Canadian High Commission (Dr. Rutasha Dadi) and an Ottawa-based representative from the Tanzania desk in Global Affairs Canada (GAC) – Dr. Tommy Eugene Roberts. We were also joined by three project officers from the Canadian Society for International Health (CSIH).
- During the week of the symposium, a contingent from the Mbarara Institute of Science and Technology (MUST), Uganda were in Mwanza participating with a CUHAS team in a workshop on qualitative research methods, supported by an IMCHA Synergy grant. This group (both CUHAS and MUST, with support from the University of Calgary) has pioneered an innovative communication strategy known as "digital stories in knowledge translation". In a joint session with ten delegates from MUST, we viewed several examples of these stories, and spoke with Ugandan colleagues who are using this distinctive method of research.

Reflecting areas of interest from previous TCRP symposia, participants divided into four groups (clusters). During "Round 1" discussions on the first day, the groups shared experiences related to knowledge sharing and collaboration- evaluating why examples were successful, and what were the challenges. During Round 2 the following day, each group identified and presented specific actions for the coming twelve months. Summarized below are the key actions in each 12-month work plan:

- Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH): This group will develop a Tanzania "road map" for future consideration, including both the generation of new knowledge and the application of knowledge (knowledge translation).
- One Health: With a particular focus on anti-microbial resistance (AMR), this group will build upon an existing inter-university grant, and conduct further research

concerning infection prevention and control in three regions involving three levels: health facilities, schools and colleges, and communities.

- Environment and Health: With a focus on mining and health, this group will explore issues of nutrition and toxic exposure. The goal is to engage Masters students from several institutions to build cross-institutional relationships.
- Health Impacts of Climate Change: Building upon the work of the past year during which it produced a module: *Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in Tanzania*, this group will explore various ways of disseminating and using the module. The group will also conduct a scanning exercise to identify other groups in Tanzania with similar interests. Finally, the group will develop a research plan, beginning with identifying current gaps in knowledge.

The final session deliberated on the questions: *What could a sustainable mechanism look like? Is the TCRP still useful? What could be the features of a “Tanzania driven and managed arrangement?”* It was agreed that a new **Steering Committee** will be created to facilitate the actions of the working groups, and to plan the way forward.

It was concluded that the TCRP platform has matured and is facilitating productive relationships for research and networking. The symposium organizers acknowledged all those participants who traveled from across Tanzania to attend. Participants also gave special thanks to CUHAS for hosting this event.