



Uganda National Health
Research Organization



Uganda Virus Research Institute

Experiences and challenges of collaborative Research

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What is collaborative research

- Most critically important scientific issues or innovative technologies can often be solved by working together of team of researchers from different backgrounds.
- The merging of different fields can make possible achieving of incredible goals.
- Collaborative research can be defined as research involving coordination between the researchers, institutions, organizations, and/or communities.
- This cooperation can bring distinct expertise to a project.

Classification of collaborations

Collaboration can be classified as voluntary, consortia, federation, affiliation, and merger and can occur at different levels:

- mentor–mentee
- within disciplinary, (team of researcher within the same department),
- interdisciplinary, (team of researcher of different departments but different background)

Classification of collaborations....

- multi-disciplinary, (team of researcher of different background)
- national vs international

Benefits of collaboration

- Exchanging of ideas across disciplines
- Bringing strengths for better funding opportunities e.g.
 - Access to methodological and technical expertise
 - Access to populations of research interest
 - Increase sample size and reduce sampling bias; results may be more generalizable
 - Access to facilities
 - Higher quality of results
- Access to training/ learning new skills

Advantages of collaborative research

- Collaborative research acts to stimulate the dissemination of research information across the world.
- Access to valuable new data sources, as well as opportunities to increase both the academic and “real-world” impact of research findings.
- Individual academics can also gain “a sense of competence and confidence by interacting with international colleagues

Advantages....

- It is encouraged more and more by funding bodies e.g EDCTP south-south; south-north. For the applications need different countries and institutions

Challenges of collaboration

- Collaborations can be a frequent source of problems.
- This takes away valuable time !!
- A number of challenges relate to equity.
- The inequitable nature of some research collaborations is not simply the result of oversights or bad habits; it is the product of entrenched structural factors that produce, and reproduce, imbalances of power

Challenges of collaboration...

- Disagreements on the sharing of credit including publications
- Disagreements on sharing resources and other benefits e.g funds, training
- Difficult people

Challenges of collaboration...

Different expectations

- How important is the research?
- What are the professional benefits of this research for me in my career and/or my colleague's career?
- What is the financial benefit to me, my team and institution?
- Do I and my colleague have sufficient time and energy to devote to the project?
- What is the long-term potential of this research to result in meaningful science?

Challenges of collaboration..

Expectations

- While it was believed there was clear and agreed commitment to the project across the researchers at the start
 - Priorities might be different and hence commitment
 - Some abandon, no communication
 - They don't play their roles

Challenges of collaborations...

- Different cultures and regulations
- Long reviews, ethics, even publications depending on the country or institution

Some solutions

- Small collaborations: trust, fairness and transparency
- Agree on some rules or the nature of partnership from start e.g thru MOU
 - Define of roles and responsibilities
 - How to resolve and manage disagreements and tensions in the collaborative process
 - Include areas like authorships who will be lead author, senior author, but now co-lead authorship and co-senior authorships

Solutions

- Face-to-face meetings improve trust, openness of interpersonal communication, which is a core to successful collaborative research.
- Honour and respect each member's individual and organizational contribution.
- Collaboration requires ethical conduct, maintaining honesty, integrity, justice, transparency, and confidentiality.

Solutions....

- Build good/strong relationships among partnership members
- The aims of the partnership should have been specified and the collaborators should be committed to these and are ready to cooperate;
- Recognize that the capacities of collaborators complement each other;
- Collaborators should have reasonable expectations of the research process and its outcomes;

Solutions ...

- The key to successful collaboration is good interpersonal connections

THANK YOU