

## Strategies for integrated knowledge translation: the African-German CEBHA+ research network

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### Integrated knowledge translation in CEBHA+

The *Collaboration for Evidence-based Healthcare and Public Health in Africa* (CEBHA+) is a research consortium focused on non-communicable diseases (NCD) that seeks to engage policy-makers and practitioners throughout the research process in order to build lasting relationships, enhance evidence uptake, and build long-term capacity. This integrated knowledge translation (IKT) approach includes the formal development and implementation of country-specific engagement strategies for key stakeholders.

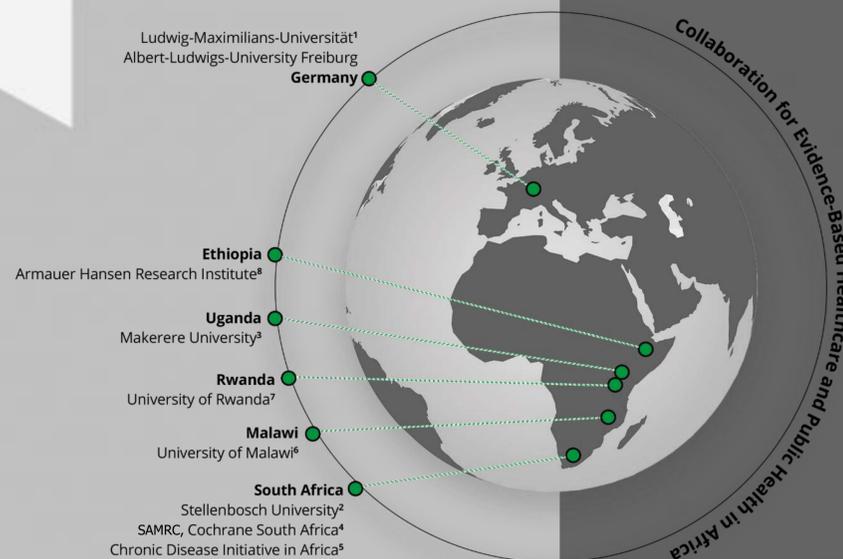


Figure 1: CEBHA+ affiliations

### Methods

The early-stage evaluation of the IKT approach in CEBHA+ was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, to highlight some preliminary experiences and lessons learned, we present case studies of the IKT setting at two CEBHA+ sites as examples of our approach. In addition, we describe common challenges in implementing an IKT approach.

### Case study 1 – Malawi

**Main research focus in CEBHA+:** Diabetes and hypertension screening approaches, integrated models for healthcare delivery, and population-level preventative interventions

**Stakeholder engagement goals:** i) Build mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders, ii) enable access to and support use of evidence on NCDs, iii) invite contextual input to strengthen the applicability and relevance of the research.

**Stakeholder engagement:** Key stakeholder: NCD Unit at the Ministry of Health (MoH). The engagement is facilitated by the MoH Knowledge Translation Platform. CEBHA+ interaction includes project updates, prioritisation exercises, and collaboration on research synthesis.

**Factors facilitating IKT:** Pre-existing relationships with stakeholders and their proximity and affiliation to the University of Malawi College of Medicine

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### Case study 2 – Uganda

**Main research focus in CEBHA+:** Improved implementation of road safety interventions to reduce pedestrian injuries and deaths, complemented with an IKT strategy to facilitate uptake of research findings by relevant stakeholders.

**Stakeholder engagement goals:** i) Keep stakeholders informed about the research, ii) collaborate on data collection, and iii) strengthen the existing relationship with the stakeholder.

**Stakeholder engagement:** Continuous formal and informal engagement with key stakeholders in the Uganda Police and road sector. Engagement includes project updates, stakeholder “buy-in”, stakeholder input in project design, co-implementation of project activities, and dissemination of research findings.

**Factors facilitating IKT/stakeholder engagement:** Pre-existing relationships with stakeholders, addressing stakeholders’ immediate research needs, and shared goals between stakeholders and researchers.

### IKT implementation challenges

High staff turnover (researchers and stakeholders)

Lack of IKT training

Alignment of timelines (for research and IKT activities, between researchers and stakeholders)

Research taking priority over time dedicated to IKT

Figure 2: Common IKT implementation challenges as reported across multiple sites

### Preliminary conclusions

- 1) Despite having a common overarching IKT approach, different contexts and a variety of enablers and facilitators influence site-specific IKT implementation. Thus, the IKT strategies and resulting partnerships vary markedly across sites and are situated across the “continuum of research co-production” (Beckett 2018)
- 2) Pre-existing relationships between researchers and partners from policy and practice are central to IKT, but capturing these within the IKT approach as well as monitoring and evaluating them remains challenging.

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