

Fostering Equitable Collaboration: A G11 Grant Partnership Between Makerere University, Uganda and Northwestern University, USA

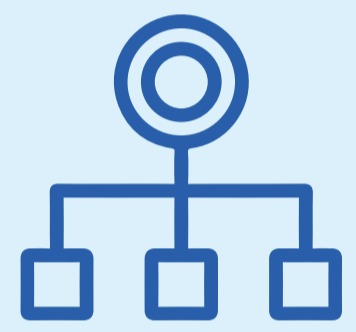
Harriet Nambooze¹, Elizabeth N. Christian², Bethany Ekesa², Mordecai Tayebwa¹, Kate Klein²
1. Makerere University College of Health Sciences, 2. Northwestern University, US

An Example of an Equitable Partnership For Strengthening Research Management at LMIC Institution



The Partnership

- Makerere University CHS's growing research enterprise
- Northwestern University's long-standing global health collaboration
- Aim was to share knowledge and best practices to support the growth of research management capacity and infrastructure at Makerere.



The Partnership Structure & Governance

- Joint leadership team with 5 Co-PIs from MakCHS/NU
- Project Advisory Committee for oversight (5 Members)
- Bi-weekly team meetings
- Mechanism for conflict resolution
- Clear communication pathways



Joint Research Management (RM) Capacity Strengthening Activities

- Bi-weekly calls to discuss project status and advance project aims
- Exchange visits and mentorship: MakCHS and NU
- IRB approval (MakCHS and NU)
- Training: 2 Senior MakCHS RM at NU; 4 day RM workshop MakCHS
- Developed SOPs to streamline RM processes at Makerere University
- Developed and Implemented surveys:
 - To RMs assessing knowledge and skills of pre-award and post-award management (53 questions)
 - To Faculty assessing awareness and utilization of Research Administrators capacity, gauge baseline knowledge of grants, and identify any unmet needs in RM (35 questions)

NU visit (March '25)

- Best practices
- Shared learning
- Creation of networks with experts in research management at NU and IREX fellows (Ghana, TZ)
- Clear roadmap of project implementation



SOP's Development

- Collaboratively developed 20 SPOs for routine Pre & Post award grant management processes.
- Guided by the NW SOP templates/resources
- Each of 6 Mak U/NW RM assigned 4-12 SOPs as 1st author and reviewer.

MakCHS RM Workshop (July '25)

- Facilitated by senior RM from MakCHS/NU
- Attendance: 150 Participants from 10 Uganda research institutions
- Benefits: RM boosted their skills, connected with experts, obtained insights into latest RM tools.
- Launch of the MakGAP: A platform that brings together RM from 10 institutions.



Achievements

- 150 RM/PIs from 10 institutions trained in RM
- 20 SOPs developed (7 preaward and 13 postaward) <https://gamsu.mak.ac.ug/resources>
- 5 Poster presentations: NU Global Health Day 2024&2025, NCURA 2025, SRAI 2025
- 1 Publication under peer review
- Establishment of MakGAP Network
- Strengthened relationship: MakCHS and NU



Success factors

- ✓ South led partnership
- ✓ Reciprocity in learning/teaching
- ✓ Transparent communication
- ✓ Clear deliverables and milestones
- ✓ Trust and relationship building
- ✓ Compliance and proactive risk management
- ✓ Flexibility and adaptability
- ✓ Sustainability and long-term vision

Acknowledgement

- NIAID Grant Number: G11AI183231
- Makerere University Grants Administration & Management Unit (GAMSU)
- Northwestern University
- Project Advisory Committee