



Uganda Virus Research Institute

Plot 51-59, Nakiwogo Road, Entebbe
P.O. Box 49, Entebbe-Uganda
Tel: +256 414 320 385 / 6
Fax: +256 414 320 483
Email: directoruvri@uvri.go.ug



How seed funds from IANPHI spurred self-sufficiency and health research growth at Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI)



Outline of presentation

- Background of UVRI & objective of IANPHI seed funding
- Methodology
- Cascade of results, outcomes, impact
- Some challenges encountered
- Conclusion & future perspectives
- Acknowledgements

UVRI background & IANPHI mustard seed

- Semi-autonomous NPHI in the Ugandan MoH for research & reference on viral & tropical diseases of public health importance (e.g NCDs, NTDs etc)
- Legal entity under a national research coordinating agency-the Uganda National Health Research Organization (UNHRO)
- Research & capacity dev't done through international partnerships e.g IANPHI, EDCTP, Wellcome Trust, on-campus programs and others
- Objective: To use seed funds from IANPHI to attain self-sufficiency & research growth at UVRI for human and economic development

The UVRI Family

- **Core Departments/Divisions:**
 - Arbo-virology/Emerging/Re-emerging Diseases
 - Entomology
 - General Virology
 - Immunology
 - Reference laboratory on Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI)
 - Epidemiology, Data & IT Management
 - Administration & Clinical Unit for Research
 - Training & Capacity Building
- **Collaborating partner programs/Units:**
 - Rakai Health Sciences Program(RHSP) by John Hopkins
 - MRC/UVRI Research Unit on AIDS & Wellcome Trust
 - CDC-Uganda
 - UVRI-IAVI HIV Vaccine Program
 - African AIDS Vaccine Partnership (AAVP) secretariat

Methodology

- Technical visit by IANPHI experts in 2007 to assess UVRI strength & gaps as an NPHI
- Participatory Rapid Appraisal (Key informant interviews, document review, FGDs with senior staff & direct observation checklists)
- Seed funds in 2008 from IANPHI
- Skill development workshops e.g bio-ethics (2008) & grant writing/management (2009)

Five IANPHI Technical experts with the UVRI team during visit on 10th January 2007



Grant writing & management workshop in Kampala for 60 trainees of UVRI & its regional partner institutions, March 2009



Result-1: Empowering Strategic Plan of UVRI (2009/10-2014/15)

- *Vision: To be a world class centre of excellence in health research*
- *Mission: To conduct scientific investigations on viral and other tropical diseases so as to contribute to knowledge, policy, practice and build capacity while promoting institutional sustainability*
- **Became a key reference document linked to Uganda Health Sector Strategic & Investment Plan*
- *A reference model for developing UNHRO Strategic Plan*

Results-2: Selected from a litany of subsequent achievements

- Stronger Science & Ethics Committee from 2008 with secretariat, SOPs, PABIN accreditation & handling at least 7 protocols per month
- Active Research Support Office (2008-) with Senior Administrator, 2 Capacity Dev't Officers, IT Officer & Finance Officer (using NAVISION) -EDCTP co-funding
- Equipped & functional IT office with resource centre (used by regional trainees), Wi-Fi, LAN, CISCO intercom, 2 websites, video conference etc
- Multiple awarded grants with >16 million USD leveraged by end of 2011 (e.g **EACCR***, **AAVP***, THRiVE, IDEA, **CAPTAN*** & several research grants) *Regional hubs @ UVRI
- Tiered training/mentorship opportunities for effective career pathways (IANPHI newsletters, Sep 2011 & 2012)
- Developing capacity in Biotechnology

Results-3: Power boost & molecular lab



250 KVA UVRI generator & house co-funded by CDC & IANPHI

Part of the centralized Bioinformatics & Molecular Laboratory co-funded by IANPHI, EDCTP & Wellcome Trust

Results-4: Networking

- UVRI is now a partner in a number of networks & multi-center studies e.g ALPHA network, EDCTP Networks of Excellence, AAVP Collaborating Center, MDP, DART, IAVI networks, PEPFAR networks
- A member of IANPHI network, IDEA consortium
- Polio, Measles & Influenza regional laboratories
- A member of the Regional Steering Committee for the East Africa Health, Science & Exhibition Conference of the East African Community

Some challenges encountered

- Rapid growth→high pressure on overstretched RSO & space. Plans underway to expand IT office with yr 2 IANPHI funds; use IT interns & get an IT manager
- Run-away electricity & generator fuel expenses. Recommend increase in grant overheads to 15% or +
- ?Attract/retain young scientists & RSO staff→90% donor funding. Lobbying Gov't/UNHRO to fund more posts in approved structure; go for more competitive donor research fellowships
- Varied numerous 'scripts' (grant regulations) of funders. Suggesting more bi-annual reporting & more harmonized 'scripts' & reporting format e.g WHO's experience with ESSENCE

Conclusion, way forward, acknowledgement

Conclusion

- This model of capacity building is a powerful success story for further replication. Replicable elsewhere

Prospects

- Acquired strength & networking platform will be used to secure more funding to address remaining gaps
- Plan to go video conferencing, digital library, webinar
- Translate RSO into a stronger Grant Management Unit with M & E services & more communicative in regular newsletters and in national/regional/global matters

Acknowledgement

- We thank IANPHI, CDC, all other partners, visionary UVRI leadership & UVRI team for this success