



Pooling together for an effective One Health system in Cameroon



One Health is a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach—working at the local, regional, national, and global levels to achieve optimal health outcomes that recognizes the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment.

Successful public health interventions require the cooperation of human, animal, and environmental health partners. - Centre for Disease Control (CDC)

Africa One Health University Network. In 2015, One Health Central and Eastern Africa (now Africa One Health University Network (AFROHUN)) was introduced in Cameroon through the University de Montagne (UdM). University of Buea and University of Ngaoundere have since joined the network. This document shares the journey of AFROHUN in Cameroon and the value of strategic partnership in strengthening One Health.

In Cameroon, like many parts of the world, the health of people is interconnected to the health of animals in a shared ecosystem. Animals play an important role in people’s lives, whether for food, fibre, livelihoods, travel, sport, education, or companionship. This interrelationship has led to the spread of existing and new zoonotic diseases, affecting both animals and people. Understanding and dealing with these emerging complexities require coordinated partnership.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

AFROHUN strategically and intentionally designed a four-pronged approach to partnership (see figure 1). They include:

1) This was a two-phase project

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its convening power brought together partners under the EPT2 and GHSA mechanisms along with stakeholder agencies. Under this partnership, partners hold periodic consultative meetings and share work plans, progress and identify areas of synergy. These meetings enabled initial mapping of the key actors and collaborative areas of interest.

2) Ongoing partners mapping

AFROHUN has continued to identify new partners with new expertise to join the network. This has been strengthened through joint planning activities or collaboration based on external expertise including from the government and

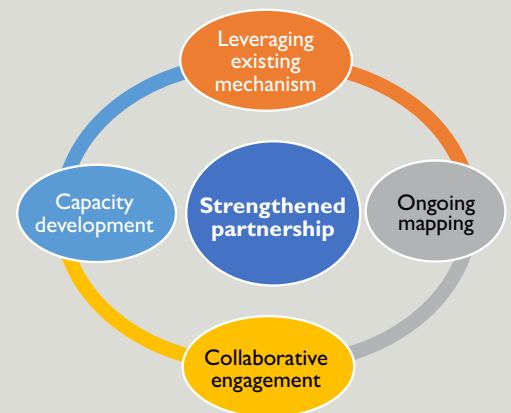


Figure 1: Sustaining partnerships and collaborations

nongovernment sectors. For example, AMR related work benefits from engaging the National Platform on AMR in the country where United Nations agencies like

World Health Organization (WHO) participate. Through working with partners with expertise in community engagement, like Breakthrough Action in RCCE work, AFROHUN has expanded reach and influence.

3) Collaborative engagement (i.e., through the OH-SMART process)

In 2017 under the OHW project, AFROHUN Cameroon engaged in the One Health Systems Mapping and Analysis Resource Toolkit (OH-SMART) process. The OH-SMART tool provides a standardized process for strengthening agency and stakeholder interactions around prevention, detection and control of infectious disease threats including antimicrobial resistance. During this process, AFROHUN worked with MINSANTE and used the opportunity to identify more

agencies to engage. Many partners participated in the human resources assessment.

4) Capacity development

AFROHUN organised an all-staff training to strengthen partnering competency and improve practice. The training enhanced staff confidence to approach and engage more partners including IDDS and MTaps who are key to One Health.

One health is driven by the need to bring together professionals in **human health** (doctors, nurses, public health practitioners, epidemiologists), **animal health** (veterinarians, paraprofessionals, agricultural workers), **environment** (ecologists, wildlife experts), and other areas of expertise such as **government and communities** to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate activities.

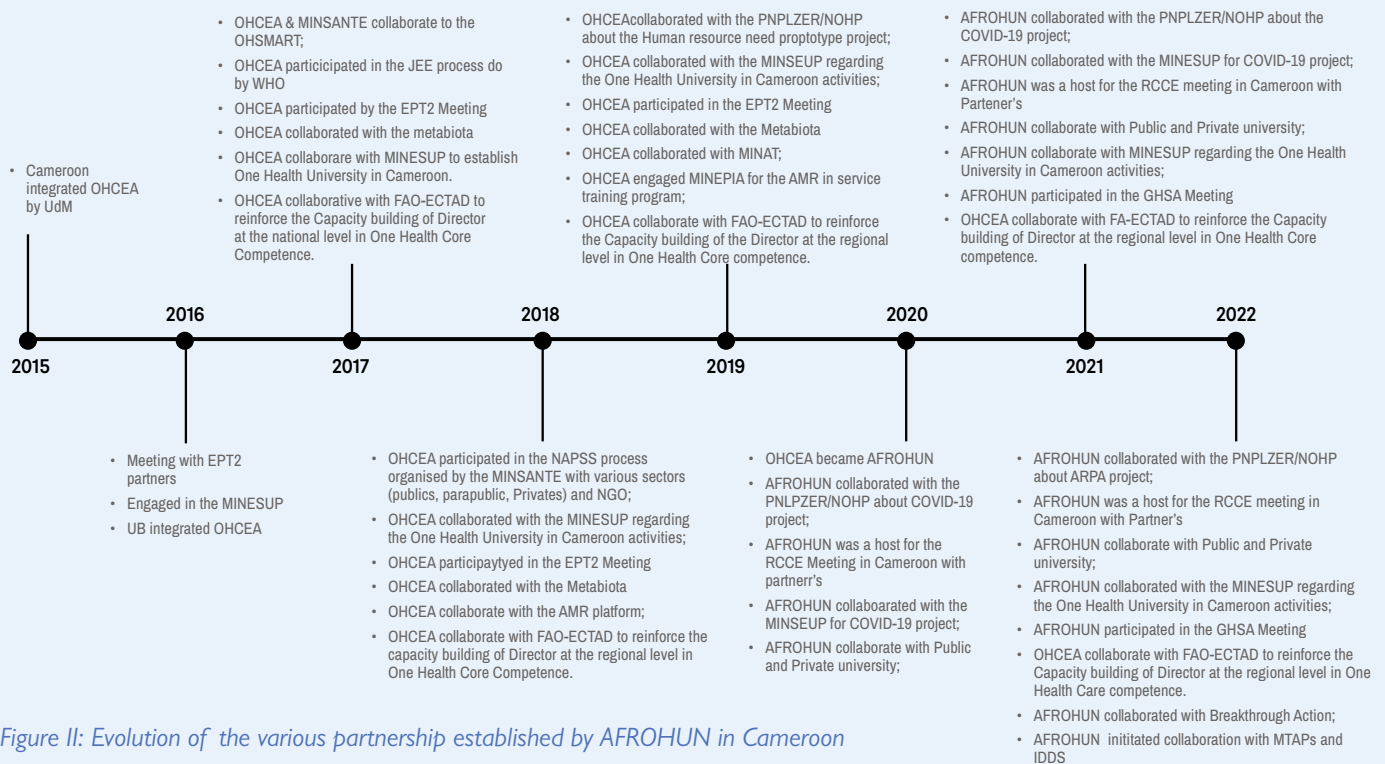


Figure II: Evolution of the various partnership established by AFROHUN in Cameroon

KEY RESULTS

To strengthen partnerships, AFROHUN targeted two outcomes – (1) the growth of partners in number, and (2) their evolution. They worked with the public sector, private, bilateral and funding partners. The section shares some gains.

PROCESS RESULTS

1) Public sector partnership development

AFROHUN Cameroon worked with public sectors such as the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP) and the Ministry of Health to undertake curriculum review and develop academic programs. This process highlighted the benefits of collaboration leading to establishment of a One Health (OH) focal point at the

MINESUP, and joint identification of workforce development needs. This has ensured sustainability of OH initiatives through the national processes.

Beyond curriculum development in universities AFROHUN has participated in outbreak responses and developed manuals and capacity building resources for in-service practice. This has been achieved through collaboration with sector oversight authorities. For example, engagement with MINEPDED supported the development and uptake of the Biosafety and Biosecurity manual. AFROHUN also worked with Ministry of Health to design COVID-19 response within the required standards. The public sector engagement as continued to grow in partnership and mutual engagement.

The leadership provided during The One Health–Systems Mapping and Analysis Resource Toolkit (OH-SMART) was strategic in demonstrating the value added to workforce development processes in the country. The University of Minnesota and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, supported mapping out of key organizations involved in outbreak preparedness and response teams. By positioning this process as critical for improving communication and coordination within partners in the country, AFROHUN demonstrated its capabilities as a convenor and a provider technical expertise.

The workforce development, JEE 2017 report recommendations

- Develop and implement a national human resource development plan, taking into account the evaluation of existing plans and the “One Health” approach, and incorporating a capitalization strategy.
- Map human resources according to the “One Health” approach and put in place a mechanism for deployment mechanism for the staff.
- Strengthen the training of surveillance actors at the different levels (central, intermediate and peripheral) in FETP-type field epidemiology.
- Continue and expand the project to retain specialized health personnel involved in the implementation of the IHR (2005).

In alignment to the workforce recommendations, the government has collaboratively developed a national health security action plan (NAPSS). AFROHUN and the national public health

observatory (ONSP) developed the plan in a holistic manner with the sectors, para-public agencies, the private sector and bilateral partners.

2) Bilateral partnership development

AFROHUN has worked with the FAO-ECTAD as a key stakeholder to tap into its technical and financial resources and trained 120 staff working in the administrations at both central and decentralised levels. Additionally, Breakthrough Action (BA) contributed to the second phase of elaboration of the materials of sensitization including vaccination aspects regarding COVID-19.

3) Private sector partnership development

The COVID-19 pandemic provided AFROHUN with the opportunity expand its engagement with the private sector. AFROHUN member institutions do not have competency in designing and executing RCCE programs, skills within the private sectors. AFROHUN identified and engaged organizations with competency in RCCE to jointly implement RCCE programs supported with USAID funding. Breakthrough Action led the designing, reviewing and preparing RCCE materials. Journalists and students were also trained to engage communities on COVID-19 vaccination and protection against infection.

OUTCOME RESULTS

Institutionalization of One Health in Cameroon. Working closely with public sector agencies, AFROHUN has contributed to the institutionalization of One Health. Its engagement with MINESUP led to the creation of a One Health network of universities in Cameroon. Such a move by the government ensures sustainability of initiatives.

Scaling impact of interventions. AFROHUN has delivered more through partnerships. PNPLZER/NOHP has supported outreach and engagement activities with the university and surrounding community with USD 10,000 funding for COVID-19 awareness. AFROHUN has worked with Ministry of Health in the design of the communication materials and the Vaccination Program (PEV, worked with Breakthrough Action to adapt the tools by including the aspect of vaccination. AFROHUN and FAO-

ECTAD collaborated to support the government by strengthening the One Health capacities of 120 public staff at both the central and deconcentrated levels. Harmonization for the Vet program through collaboration with MINESUP. Young graduates received competence skills that aligned with the referential mandates of WOHA. MINEPIA has increased the number of participants in the first in-service training cohort of AMR.

Increased Network visibility. The AFROHUN brand has increasingly become stronger and valued thus attracting more partnerships and achieving more.

Sustainability through institutionalization. Some of the initiatives, processes and programs such as the Global Health Case Competition as an effective experiential learning workforce development approach has been now been taken up by the National Program for the Prevention and Control of Zoonoses (PNPLZER). In addition, AFROHUN Cameroon has been designated as a member of the Risk Communication Task Force within the PNPLZER, to ensure continuity of AFROHUN's work and contribution to national priorities in Cameroon even when project funding may not be available.



“AFROHUN is a privileged partner of the One Health platform in Cameroon. We accompany this partner in the implementation of their activities.

Moreover, the report of the activities clearly shows the role of AFROHUN in the technical and financial support to promote the One Health concept. We hope that this collaboration will go even further.”

- Mr Saly Ballo

AFROHUN Cameroun is on a sustainable growth path. With the intentional design of institutional partnership and expanded collaboration a lot has been achieved to build foundation of disease prevention, and preparedness to pandemic emergencies. As a learning network, AFROHUN is constantly reflecting on its engagements, approaches and adapting to new innovating and efficient ways of delivering One Health.

ABOUT AFROHUN

Africa One Health University Network (AFROHUN) is an international network, currently in 28 higher education institutions of public health, veterinary medicine, pathobiology, environmental sciences, medicine and global health, in 10 countries in Africa. The countries are *Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda.*

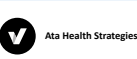
AFROHUN is working to transform the training environment and approaches in universities and allied institutions in Africa, to develop a One Health workforce: a workforce with no disciplinary boundaries. AFROHUN is building a workforce with competency to predict, detect and respond to the kind of complex health challenges we are witnessing today. To achieve this transformation, we are reviewing curricula, designing new and exciting experiential learning multidisciplinary training programs, re-tooling teachers and trainers, educating communities on existence and transmission of zoonotic and infectious diseases, while engaging national and sub-national governments to integrate One Health into national policy and strategic planning.

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