



The AFROHUN contribution to pooling together for an effective One Health system in Cameroon



AFROHUN (OHCEA, then) was officially launched in Cameroon in 2016. Here, the President of the University des Montagne, the late Professor Lazare KAPTUE speaks at the launch ceremony.

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 requires coordinated partnership.

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. - Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

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 and impact of AFROHUN in Cameroon and the value of strategic partnerships in institutionalizing One Health.

Partnership development approach

AFROHUN strategically and intentionally designed a four-pronged approach to partnerships (see Diagram I). They include:

1) USAID partner funded collaboration

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its convening power brings together partners under the EPT2 and GHSA mechanisms along with other implementing agencies. Under this arrangement, partners hold periodic consultative meetings and share work plans, progress and identify



Diagram I: Sustaining partnerships and collaborations

areas of synergy. These meetings especially, enabled initial mapping of the key actors and collaborative areas of interest.

2) Ongoing mapping of partners

AFROHUN has continued to identify new partners with new expertise to join the network. This has been strengthened through joint planning and collaboration based on external expertise including from the government and non-government 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, as well.

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 through the secretariat, 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 and sectors such as **government and communities** to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate activities.

The diagram below illustrates the evolution of OH in Cameroon

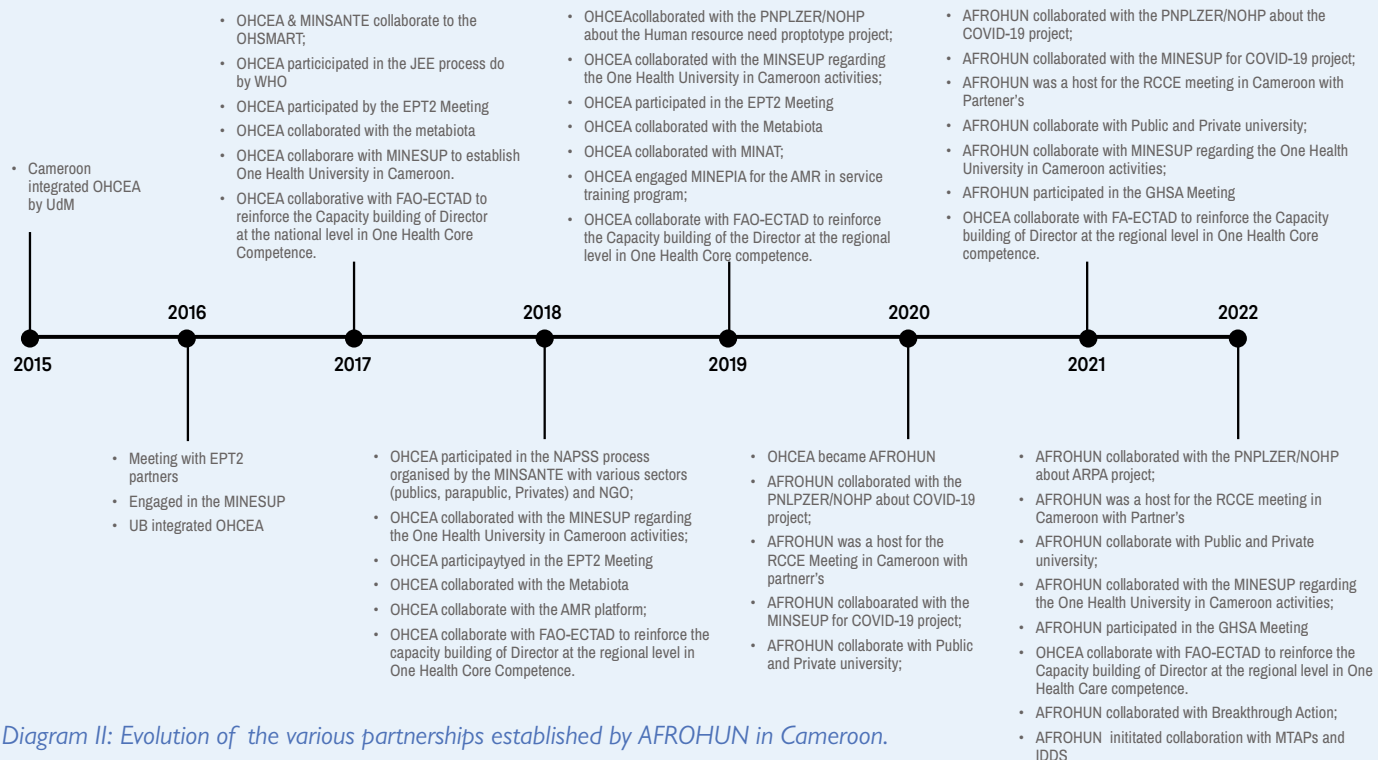


Diagram II: Evolution of the various partnerships established by AFROHUN in Cameroon.

Key Outcomes

To strengthen partnerships, AFROHUN targeted two outcomes – (1) the growth of partners in numbers and categories, and (2) their evolution. The section below has highlights of the two outcome categories.

PROCESS RESULTS

1) Public sector partnerships and their outcomes

AFROHUN Cameroon worked with public sector actors 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 in the national processes and development agenda.

Beyond curriculum development in universities, AFROHUN has participated in outbreak response 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 partnership and engagement has continued to grow through mutual engagement.

The leadership provided during The One Health–Systems Mapping and Analysis Resource Toolkit (OH-SMART) was strategic in demonstrating the value added by AFROHUN 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 of 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 partnerships and outcomes

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 development of the materials for sensitization on COVID-19 including vaccination. For these processes, AFROHUN brought on board the OH expertise.

3) Private sector partnership development

The COVID-19 pandemic provided AFROHUN with the opportunity to expand its engagement with the private sector. AFROHUN member institutions do not have competency in designing and executing RCCE programs. 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. Through this work, journalists and students were also trained to engage communities on COVID-19 vaccination and protection against infection.

Outcomes

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 up the impact of interventions. AFROHUN has delivered more through partnerships. For instance, PNPLZER/NOHP under ARPA supported outreach and engagement activities with the university and surrounding communities with USD 10,000 funding for COVID-19 awareness. This enabled AFROHUN to deliver above what its budget was capable of. AFROHUN had worked with Ministry of Health for the design of the communication materials and worked with Breakthrough Action to adapt the tools by including vaccination messaging. AFROHUN and FAO-ECTAD collaborated to support the government by strengthening the One Health capacities of 120 public staff at both the central and decentralized levels.

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

Sustainability through institutionalization.

Some of the initiatives, processes and programs such as the Global Health Case Competition, an effective experiential learning workforce development approach have 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 work with this partner in the implementation of 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, Coordinator Technical

AFROHUN Cameroon is on a sustainable growth path. With the intentional design of institutional partnerships and expanded collaboration a lot has been achieved to build a strong foundation for disease detection, prevention, and preparedness. As a learning network, AFROHUN is constantly reflecting on its engagements, approaches and adapting to innovative 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*. AROHUN is formerly OHCEA.

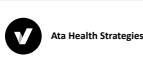
[AFROHUN](#) is working to transform the training environment and approaches in universities and allied institutions in Africa, to develop a One Health workforce: a workforce with no disciplinary boundaries. [AFROHUN](#) is building a workforce with competency to predict, detect and respond to the kind 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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