

Network to boost health policy work
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Researchers: Some members of the Consortium for Health Policy and Systems Analysis in Africa attended workshop recently.

The School of Public Health & Family Medicine's Health Policy and Systems (HPS) programme has secured R18 million for an Africa-Europe network to support capacity development in health policy and systems analysis.

The activities will include curriculum development, staff development and engagement with policy makers at national and regional levels, as well as building a network among the organisational partners. Capacity development in the field was highlighted as critical for the future at the First International Symposium on Health Systems Research in Montreux late last year.

The new network, the Consortium for Health Policy and Systems Analysis in Africa (CHPESAA), builds on earlier activities funded by the Ford Foundation. It brings together 11 organisations from South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, UK, Sweden and Switzerland for the period 2011 to 2014, and is funded by the European Commission.

Given the lack of other similar initiatives, CHEPSAA is set to be a trailblazer.

"The development of sustained African health policy and systems research capacity requires the consolidation and strengthening of relevant research and educational programmes, as well as the development of stronger engagement between the policy and research communities," said HPS director, Professor Lucy Gilson.

"CHEPSAA's goal is to extend sustainable African capacity to produce and use high-quality HPS research by harnessing synergies among universities with relevant expertise."

The first CHEPSAA activity for partners will be to carry out a needs assessment that supports HPS research capacity development. Following this, partners will develop staff and training capacity in each African organisation and develop organisational and country networking strategies.

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