

Fellows and Friends: Strengthening a new generation of applied multi-disciplinary health systems researchers in Liberia

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REDRESS: Reducing the Burden of Severe Stigmatising Skin Diseases through equitable person centred approaches to health systems strengthening in Liberia (RIGHT Call Round 2)

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OUR APPROACH

REDRESS is evaluating, developing and adapting health systems interventions for the management of severe stigmatising skin diseases (SSSDs) in Liberia.

Central to REDRESS is building a strong and sustainable research infrastructure for person centred health systems research in Liberia. Through multiple interconnected strategies:

- 1) At the **individual** level by developing the skills of a cohort of multi-disciplinary research fellows (4 Liberia-based and 3 UK-based)
- 2) At an **organisational** level by strengthening institutional infrastructure for the management of health systems research and the facilitation of equitable research partnerships to develop a multi-disciplinary research hub focused on generating applied evidence
- 3) At an **environmental** level working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health Research Division and other implementing units to facilitate dialogue between research users and creators to establish ongoing working relationships and evidence informed practice.

REDRESS also works with people affected by SSSDs to strengthen their skills in research to support them in communicating their own needs and priorities.

PROGRESS TO DATE

We have conducted virtual training and monthly webinars covering topics identified by fellows during our inception workshop including: innovative research methods, ethics, safeguarding and research uptake.

Mentorship process established between research fellows and thematic experts.

Participatory webinars and workshops undertaken with fellows, affected persons and broader research teams to strengthen cross disciplinary dialogue and engagement.

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR FELLOWS

'We are still at an early stage in REDRESS, but we have already begun to benefit from the project's capacity strengthening activities'

'From an early stage, responsibilities have been delegated to us in a way that has allowed us to gain hands-on experience in a range of different roles while benefitting from the support and experience of our theme leads'

'We look forward to continuing to develop both as individuals and as a team of research fellows as REDRESS progresses'

'We will lead in collecting data using research instruments that we have helped to design, ensuring that the skills we have developed are strengthened and solidified throughout the research process.'

'by training us to work with new concepts, methods and data, REDRESS is also working to strengthen capacity on other levels.'



Photograph of REDRESS Fellows (left to right: Wede Tate, Rosalind McCollum, Hannah Berrian, Jack Jenkins, Jerry Kollie, John Solunta Smith Jr, Jenny Falconer (absent from photo).

NEXT STEPS

Creating personal development plans with each of our fellows to guide support provided throughout the project.

Conducting participatory institutional assessments to identify capacity needs for facilitating applied health systems research projects.

Continuation of our capacity strengthening webinar series to address emerging training needs-adapting to in-personal facilitation when possible.

