

Research integrity in Africa:

Perspectives from the African Research Integrity Network (ARIN)



Presentation at the UKRIO Annual Conference 2021:
Good research practice in a changing world
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Research integrity in Africa

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 - Research integrity in Africa – emerging perspectives
- Research integrity in and for Africa
 - The African Research Integrity Network (ARIN)
- Research integrity in, for and from Africa
 - The next World Conference on Research Integrity (WCRI)

About Africa



- Has 54 sovereign countries (2 disputed regions)
Most borders drawn during era of European colonialism
- Rich in linguistic, cultural and religious diversity
- Knowledge systems influenced by different intellectual traditions and indigenous knowledge
- Second largest continent in terms of land area; second most populous with 60% under the age of 25 (2020)
- Approaching 20% of the world's population; scientific output in the region of 2% of global production

Research and research capacity in Africa

- Limited and diminishing levels of funding for research
- Postcolonial era: Growth in establishment of, and enrolment at, universities
 - Still relatively low levels of university access compared with global average
 - Primary purpose of university – development, training
 - Only a few research-intensive universities
 - Uneven quality of teaching and research
- Also a few non-university institutes or centres dedicated to research
- Collaboration, mobility and exchange
 - Student, researcher and lecturer mobility relatively high between African countries
 - Research funding and co-authored publications appear to be more prevalent between African and non-African countries, strongest in biomedical sciences

Research integrity in Africa – emerging perspectives

Prevalence and types of misconduct?

- Very little information – no formal reporting systems or structures
- Exploratory study on retracted articles involving authors from Africa
 - Retraction ≠ misconduct, but can provide some insight
 - Levels of retraction seem to be on par with other countries and regions
 - Reasons for retraction similar to other countries and regions
 - Most prevalent – plagiarism, duplicate publication
 - Implications for training, awareness raising and access to resources
 - Questions around communication, due process, power relations
 - Recommendations for national governments, funding agencies, academic publishers, research and academic training institutions, individual researchers

Rossouw, Matsau & Van Zyl (2020)

Research integrity in Africa – emerging perspectives

Systems, structures and support?

- Lack of national, regional or continental guidelines
- Very few instances of institutional structures or support systems
- More instances of compliance and awareness around research ethics
- “Pockets” of initiatives:
 - National – guidelines (Uganda)
 - Institutional – training or degree programmes (South Africa)
 - Professional bodies – training and awareness raising (Nigeria)
 - Project-driven – becoming institutionalised (Ghana, Kenya)
 - Individual champions – workshops, conferences, publications

Research integrity in Africa – emerging perspectives

Research Ethics (RE) and Research Integrity (RI)

- Culture and structures for RE knowledge and compliance – more mature
- RI and RCR often seen as related, similar, or less important
- Pressure on REC structures and officials to also cater for RI
- But RI officials or champions do need special skills, resources and support
- Some observations:
 - Vital to have support and understanding on the side of senior management
 - Special skills, knowledge and experience needed by RIOs or “named persons”
 - Policies and procedures to be borrowed, but also adapted and “workshopped”
 - Training and awareness raising – all steps of the career ladder
 - Broaden the pool of skilled individuals to serve as RI officers, champions, advisors, investigation committee members
 - Need for inter-institutional and international collaboration, mentoring and networking

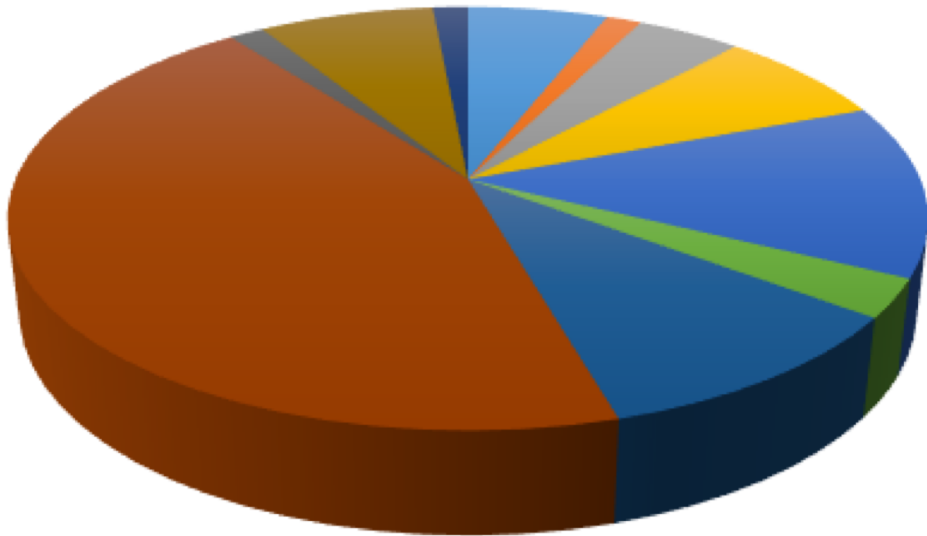
The African Research Integrity Network (ARIN)

- Conceived during 4th WCRI in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, in 2015
 - Very few delegates from Africa, did not know each other
 - Apparent lack of data and initiatives on RI in Africa
- Still informal, entirely voluntary and unfunded
- Bringing together individuals
 - Different parts of the continent, different roles
 - Shared interest in research integrity
 - Learning from and about each other
- Growing to communicate, coordinate, promote, activate
 - Newsletters, webinars
 - Working towards constitution and formal launch in 2022



The African Research Integrity Network (ARIN)

Membership as at May 2021



- 68 member from 11 African countries
- 9 “Friends of ARIN” from USA & Europe

The African Research Integrity Network (ARIN)

Slogan:

Promoting research integrity in Africa and for Africa

Proposed Goal:

To nurture a culture of integrity for African researchers, institutions, and decision makers, guided by African perspectives and focused on groups and inclusive thinking



The African Research Integrity Network (ARIN)

Proposed Objectives:

- To sustain dialogue, engagement and networking among African role-players and stakeholders of Research Integrity (RI)
- To develop a better understanding of – and sensitise people about – the conditions for RI in African scholarship
- To share relevant information and resources on RI
- To create and nurture capacity building and leadership in RI

The next World Conference on Research Integrity (WCRI)

World Conferences on Research Integrity – Influential, leading to (e.g.)

- Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010)
<https://wcrif.org/guidance/singapore-statement>
- Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations (2013) <https://wcrif.org/montreal-statement/file>
- Hong Kong Principles for assessing researchers (2019)
<https://wcrif.org/guidance/hong-kong-principles>

Seventh WCRI – in Cape Town, South Africa!

Conference theme: *‘Fostering Research Integrity in an Unequal World’*





7th World Conference on Research Integrity

Cape Town, South Africa
29 May – 1 June 2022

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Dr. Lyn Horn

Director, Office of Research
Integrity, University of Cape Town



Prof. Lex M Bouter

Prof of Methodology and Integrity,
Vrije University, Amsterdam and
Chair of WCRI Foundation Board



Dr. Sabine Kleinert

Senior Executive Editor, The
Lancet.



- We, the 7WCRI Co-Chairs would like to invite you to attend the **FREE** bridging Digital event of the **7th World Conference on Research Integrity 2022**

- **When: 31st May – 2nd June 2021**

- Register online at <https://wcri2022.org/digital-event-2021/>

- 12 webinars on 6 topics, with excellent speakers from across the globe.
- Session topics duplicated but speakers mostly different.

Webinar Sessions: 10:00 am and 8:00 pm EET

- 1 & 3 What is Research Integrity?
- 2 & 4 Carrot or a stick? How might funders and publishers respond to new challengers for research integrity
- 5 & 7 Towards a Cape Town Statement on Fostering Research Integrity through equity, fairness and diversity
- 6 & 8 Implementation of the Hong Kong principles in Low and Middle Income Countries
- 9 & 11 What can Research Producing Organisations (RPOs) do to Foster RI?
- 10 & 12 Research interpretation and data use with integrity in the COVID pandemic

The next World Conference on Research Integrity



7th WCRI in 2022

Fostering Research Integrity in an Unequal World

Plenaries:

- Data, research, and integrity in the time of a global pandemic (COVID-19)
- Towards a Cape Town statement on fair and equitable partnerships
- How enhanced data quality can boost innovation
- Fostering research integrity: perspectives from African researchers (**official launch of ARIN!!**)
- Important work by early and mid-career researchers
- Impact of research assessment and institutional ranking on research integrity

Focus Track:

- Cape Town Statement on diversity, equity and fairness in research contexts

Pre-conference Workshops, Symposia, Concurrent Sessions Doctoral Forum,
Meet-the-Experts Sessions, Poster Sessions

More information relevant to this presentation

7th World Conference on Research Integrity: Events to be hosted in 2021 and 2022 <https://wcri2022.org/>

African Research Integrity Network (ARIN) – newsletters 1 (August 2018), 2 (November 2019), 3 (May 2020) and 4 (February 2021), more information available from <https://africarinetwork.wixsite.com/website> and africarinetwork@gmail.com

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Asante
Dankie
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Thank you
Zikomo

