Promoting Research Integrity in Africa

A Call to Build Capacity, Create Awareness and Empower Research Stakeholders

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African Research Integrity Network

Introduction

"The Scientific Research Enterprise Is Built On A Foundation Of Trust:- *Trust that the results reported by others are valid; and trust that the source of novel ideas will be appropriately acknowledged in the scientific literature***" Bruce Alberts and Kenneth Shine, 1994**

Bad Science Makes for Bad Ethics

"Poor quality of research design, poor quality of data analysis, and poor quality of reporting of the research all lessen the ethical justification of any type of research project" **Robert Rosenthal 1994**

Research Ethics

Moral problems that arise in the course of pursuing research

- *Moral challenges eg Risk vs Benefits, Informed consent of participants*

- *Involves overarching values eg respect for persons, justice, beneficence*

- ***Norms and regulations that guide the response to moral challenges***
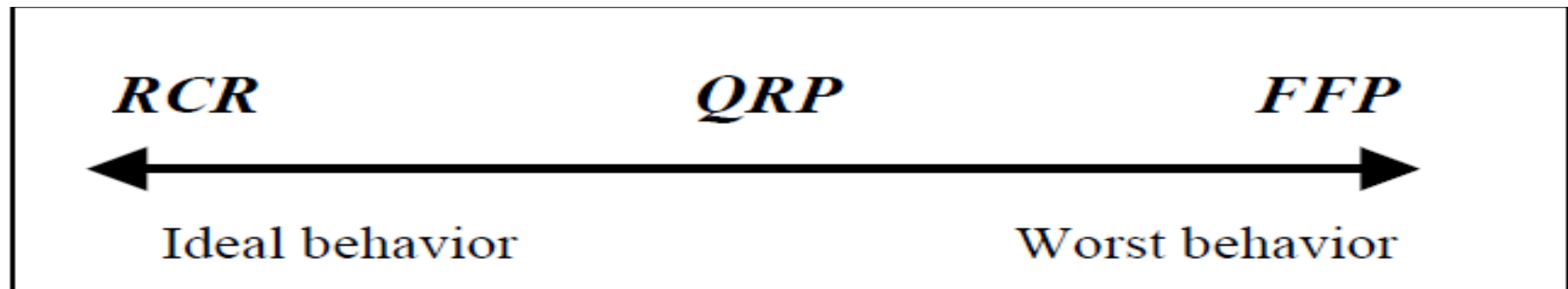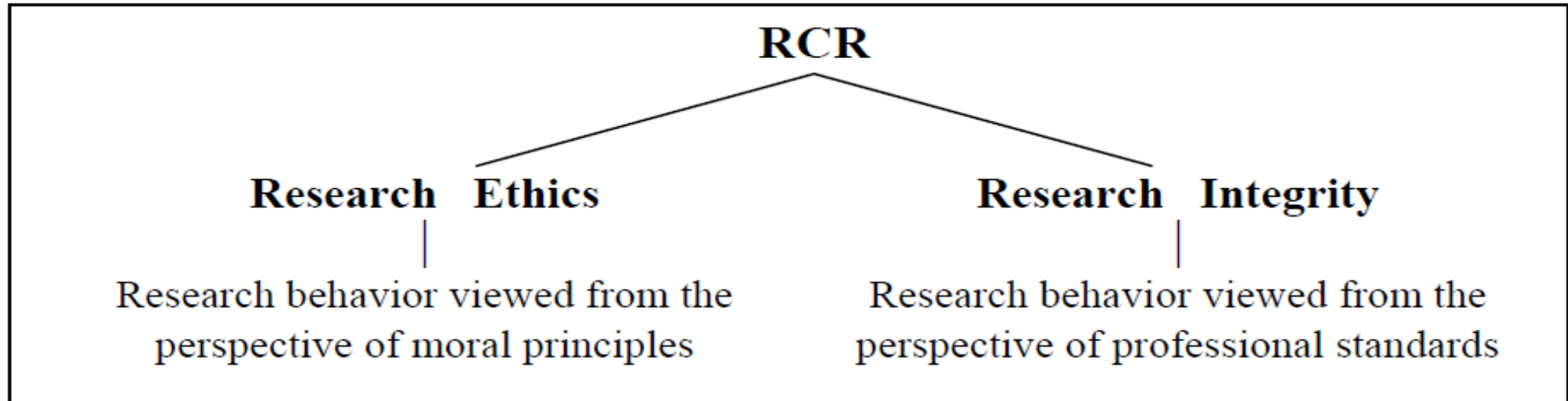
Steneck (2006)

Research Integrity

- **Processing and steadfastly adhering to professional standards**
  - Professional standards (values) of scientific research eg responsibility, transparency, honesty, accountability, trustworthiness

  - Clear norms which should be obeyed eg scientific misconduct and QRP

  Steneck (2006)

Responsible Conduct of Research
A normative framework

(*Steneck (2006)*)

Research Integrity- Have we made progress?

- World Conference on Research Integrity Foundation (2007)
  - Singapore statement on RI (2010)
  - Montreal statement on RI (2013)

- *Office of Research Integrity-(ORI) USA*
- *UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO)- UK*
- *Canada Panel of Responsible Conduct of Research*
- *Australian Council Policies and codes on Research Integrity*

- *Asian Pacific Research Integrity Network (APRIN)*
- *European Network Research Integrity Offices (ENRIO)*
- *Netherlands Research Integrity Network (NRIN)*
- *Asia Pacific Research Integrity Network-Japan*

Research Integrity in Africa

- Millions of Dollars invested in R&D in Africa annually
- Limited knowledge, data or publications on RI
- Limited Institutional structures and support for RI
  - Many undocumented cases of research misconduct Inequitable collaborations and partnership
  - Distorted authorship practices (authorship hoarding)
  - Unfair research practices-eg parasitic research,
  - High level of plagiarism in African journals (Anke Rohwer et al 2018)

- Why this apparent neglect?

- What are the risks?

Introduction to ARIN

- **African Research Integrity Network (ARIN)**

- **Conceived during 4th WCRI in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, in 2015**

  - Apparent lack of data and initiatives on RI in Africa

  - Many questions, but very few answers

  - **Someone had to do something; Africa by Africa**

What's ARIN's Main GOAL?

To promote RI and RCR in Africa through sharing, alignment and leveraging of available resources and ideas and engagement of individuals, institutions, governments as well as policy makers in Africa
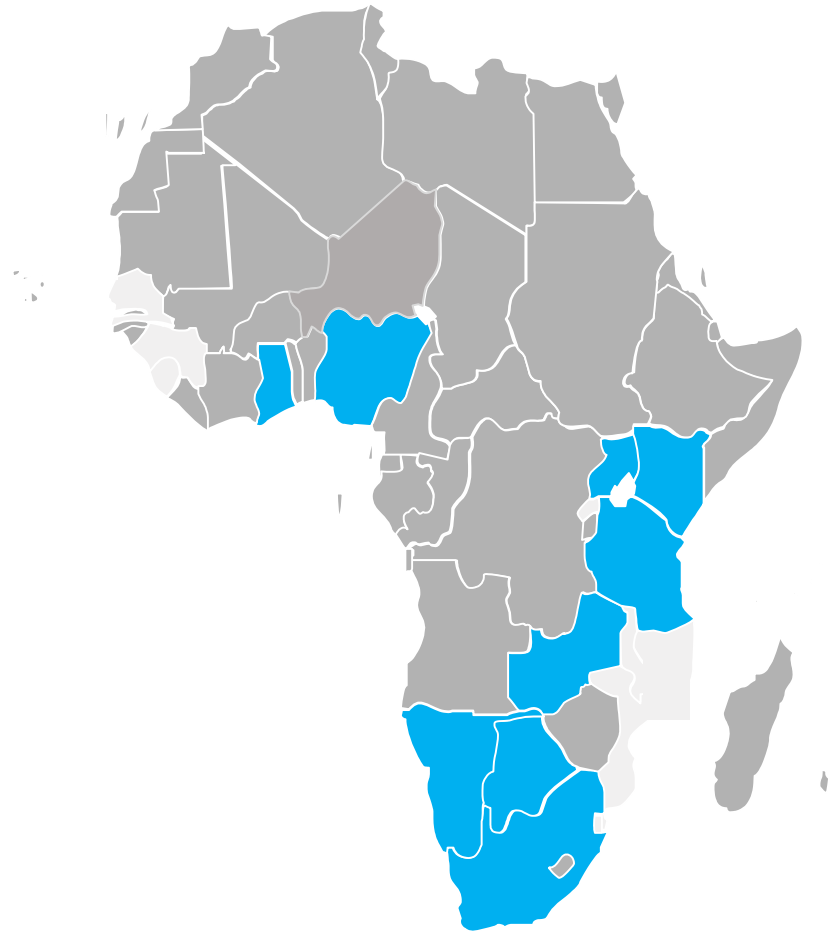
ARIN's Specific objectives

- To develop a better understanding of – and sensitise people about – the local environment, conditions and context that affect African research integrity practices

- To create awareness and improve access to relevant information and resources

- To create and nurture leadership in responsible conduct of research in Africa.

- To enhance dialogue, engagement and networking among African policy makers, stakeholders and practitioners of RI.

How will the objectives be achieved?

- Networking, dialogue and information sharing

- "Informal" mentoring, "twinning", professional friendships

- Organizing meetings, workshops, conferences

- Student training for higher degrees

- Developing and sharing guidelines and resource materials

- Collaborative projects and publications

- Activism, creating awareness and celebrating champions

Progress to date: Membership

Countries
1. Botswana
2. Ghana
3. Kenya
4. Malawi
5. Namibia
6. Nigeria
7. South Africa
8. Tanzania
9. Uganda

- 52 members from 9 African countries
- Friends of ARIN from USA and Europe

Activities Involved

- Attend and present in conference
  - SARIMA pre-conference workshop- Namibia
  - SFSA 2017
  - SFSA 2018
- On-going virtual networking and communication
- Grant application
- Newsletter and blogs to share resources

Mid & Long term activities

- Establishing a Formal entity – Constitution and registration (takes time)

- Organize face-to-face meeting

- Inventory of available resources and activities

- Finding and responding to funding opportunities

- Branding / identity

Conclusion

- Research Integrity is an integral part of bioethics

- Stakeholder engagement is key in creating awareness on RCR

- African stakeholders must work together to shape and inform RI practices in Africa

- The debate on RI and bioethics remains incomplete without the voice and contribution from Africa

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THANK YOU