



**HSRC**  
Human Sciences  
Research Council



# Developing research integrity capacity through training and networking in Africa

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# About Africa



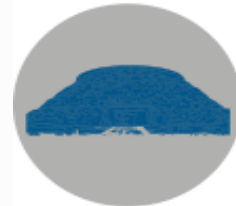
## LAND AREA

Second largest continent



## PEOPLE

Second most populous, youngest continent



## HISTORY, CULTURE

Cradle of humankind, also crucible



## EDUCATION, RESEARCH

Limited resources, boundless opportunities

# Research Integrity in Africa

- 🌍 Some unique contributions and perspectives to offer
- 🌍 Many common themes, issues and opportunities

# Developing RI capacity in Africa

- ❁ Much can and is being achieved, even in resource-poor settings
- ❁ Capacity development involves individuals, institutions, systems and structures



# Specific initiatives to build capacity

## Training and workshops

- 🌍 Individuals and institutions

## Policies and guidelines

- 🌍 Systems and structures

## Networks and professional bodies

- 🌍 Synergies and shared learning

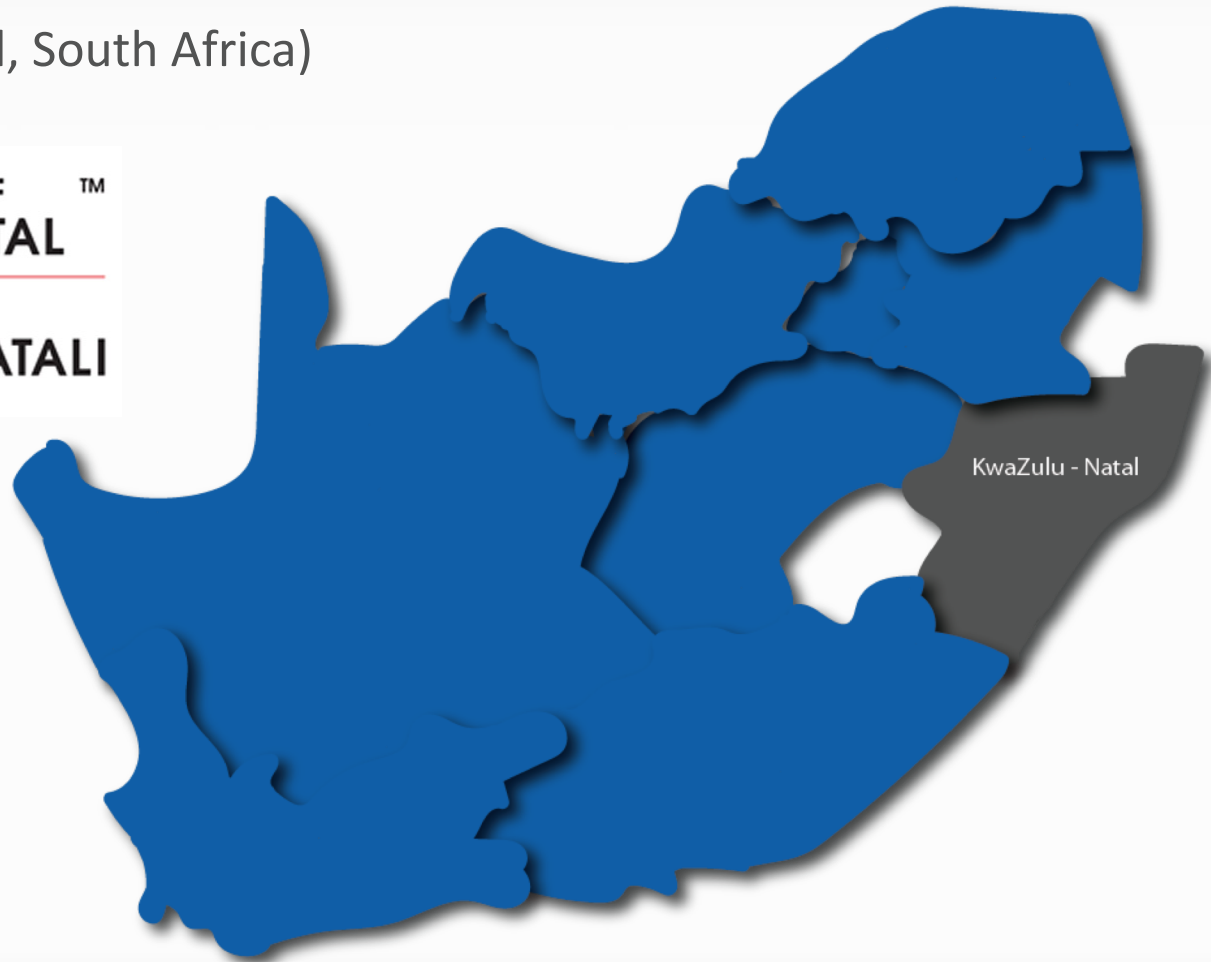


# Training and workshops

# Formal academic programmes

## SARETI

(University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa)



# Institutional initiatives



## University of Malawi

College of Medicine (COM)





# Workshops



Nigerian Young Academy  
(NYA) workshops

# NYA workshops to promote integrity

## Starting point

- 🌍 A number of cases of plagiarism brought to attention of NYA
- 🌍 Decided to get involved to help change

## Programme of work, and efforts to date

- 🌍 Started a series of workshops dealing with plagiarism, across the country
- 🌍 Conducted an online survey to assess the extent of consciousness of plagiarism among academics

# NYA workshops to promote integrity

- Workshops across the country well attended, with positive feedback received
  - 🌍 February 2018: A record 350 participants showed up for a daylong plagiarism workshop
  - 🌍 Six more for 2018, one per geopolitical region in Nigeria



*Speakers and participants at the Anti-Plagiarism Workshop held at Covenant University, Ota on 5 February 2018*

# NYA workshops to promote integrity

- Universities encouraged to make greater efforts to detect and prevent plagiarism, e.g.
  - 🌍 using similarity checking software
  - 🌍 making plagiarism a punishable offence
- Acknowledgement and broader awareness
  - 🌍 Article by Linda Nordling in the Science Magazine (June 2018)  
<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/06/nigeria-battle-against-academic-plagiarism-heats>
  - 🌍 Follow-up piece on plagiarism in Africa with a comment from NYA: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07462-2>

*For more information: Dr Tope Olomola, NYA*

*Also: WCRI poster presentation by Dr Idowu Kazeem, NYA publicity secretary*

# Policies and guidelines

# National initiative



Uganda National Council for  
Science and Technology  
(UNCST)





# Institution-initiated project

**Specific example:**  
Moi University, Kenya





# Project at Moi University, Kenya



## Starting point

-  No national guidelines for research and academic institutions: How to prevent, identify and manage research misconduct
-  Lack of policies and clear guidance at Moi University

## Approach to project

-  Initiated at institutional level
-  Involves national stakeholders and international counterparts


## Funding:

-  USA National Institutes of Health (NIH) through Fogarty International Center (FIC)
-  Funded for 3 years; currently in 2nd year of implementation




# Role players and stakeholders involved


## Moi University:

-  PI and co-PI; Research Ethics Committee (REC) of Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital; Senior academic and research leadership

## Other (Kenya)

-  HIV researchers in Kenya; Administrative leads of 28 accredited RECs; National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI); Commission for University Education



## International

-  Research integrity experts from South Africa (University of South Africa); the Netherlands (University of Amsterdam); USA (Indiana University), Retraction Watch


# Project deliverables

## Research-based policy development

- Documenting




-  occurrence of research misconduct from the perspective of HIV researchers in Kenya
-  perceptions of RECs and researchers on current capacity to prevent and manage research misconduct

- Developing, through national stakeholder engagement (forum)

-  *A model institutional framework for prevention and management of research misconduct in Kenya*





# Progress and impact to date

## National forum (February 2019)


-  Developed and made recommendations on *a consensus model institutional framework*
-  National regulator (NACOSTI) pledged to incorporate recommendations from forum in ongoing amendment Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 of Kenya
-  Commission of University Education also pledged to implement recommendations

# Next steps?


## At institutional level

-  Process and framework to be adopted
-  Championed by Directorate of Research
-  Establishing infrastructure to promote research integrity
-  Focus on prevention of misconduct through training on responsible conduct of research

## At inter-institutional level

-  Sharing of lessons and resources: Providing access to framework and recommendations

## At national level






-  If implemented by NACOSTI, compliance with (statutory) framework will be required of all academic and research institutions in country

*For more information: Prof Edwin Were, Moi University, presenter at WCRI*




# Emerging trends, themes, issues

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## General trends

-  Often short- to medium term initiatives
-  Generally in isolation from each other
-  Informed by consultation and/or research
-  Important, positive role of international funders and guidelines
-  Research integrity tends to be treated as an “add-on” to research ethics

## Common needs emerging

-  Awareness raising, promotion of RI through training and clear guidelines – to reduce risk of “punishable offences”
-  Institutional and national policies, guidelines, support
-  Training to be institutionalised, recognised .... and shared

# The value of networking

# The value of networking

- 🌍 To learn from, about, with each other
- 🌍 Sharing of resources – to achieve more with less
- 🌍 Encourage, inform, reflect, challenge, activate!
- 🌍 Involvement of relevant role players and stakeholders – improves legitimacy, likelihood of sustainability

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“ If you want to go fast, go alone;  
if you want to go far, go together ”

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# African Research Integrity Network

🌍 Still informal

🌍 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



*For more information: Meeting of 5 June – “African interest group”*

# Concluding remarks

# “Solutions that make a difference”?

## “Connected” solutions – more meaningful and sustainable

- 🌍 Connected to a need or purpose
- 🌍 Connected to a committed champion
- 🌍 Connected to international guidelines and support
- 🌍 Connected to research and/or reflection
- 🌍 Connected to decision makers or influencers
- 🌍 Connected to an overarching policy
- 🌍 Connected to funding
- 🌍 Connected to a network

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Do not underestimate small beginnings








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To blend together ... with time



# Acknowledgements

## Co- contributors

-  Kenya, Moi University – Professor Edwin Were and Ms Jepchirchir Kiplagat
-  Malawi University – Ms Limbanazo Matandika
-  Nigeria, NYA – Dr Tope Olomola
-  South Africa, SARETI – Prof Douglas Wassenaar and Ms Carla Pettit
-  Uganda, UNCST – Ms Hellen Opolot
  
-  WCRI – Prof Lex Bouter as panel convenor and chairperson
-  ARIN – co-steering committee members Francis Kombe and Limbanazo Matandika



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Asante  
Dankie  
Ke a leboga  
Ngiyabonga  
Thank you  
Zikomo

謝謝

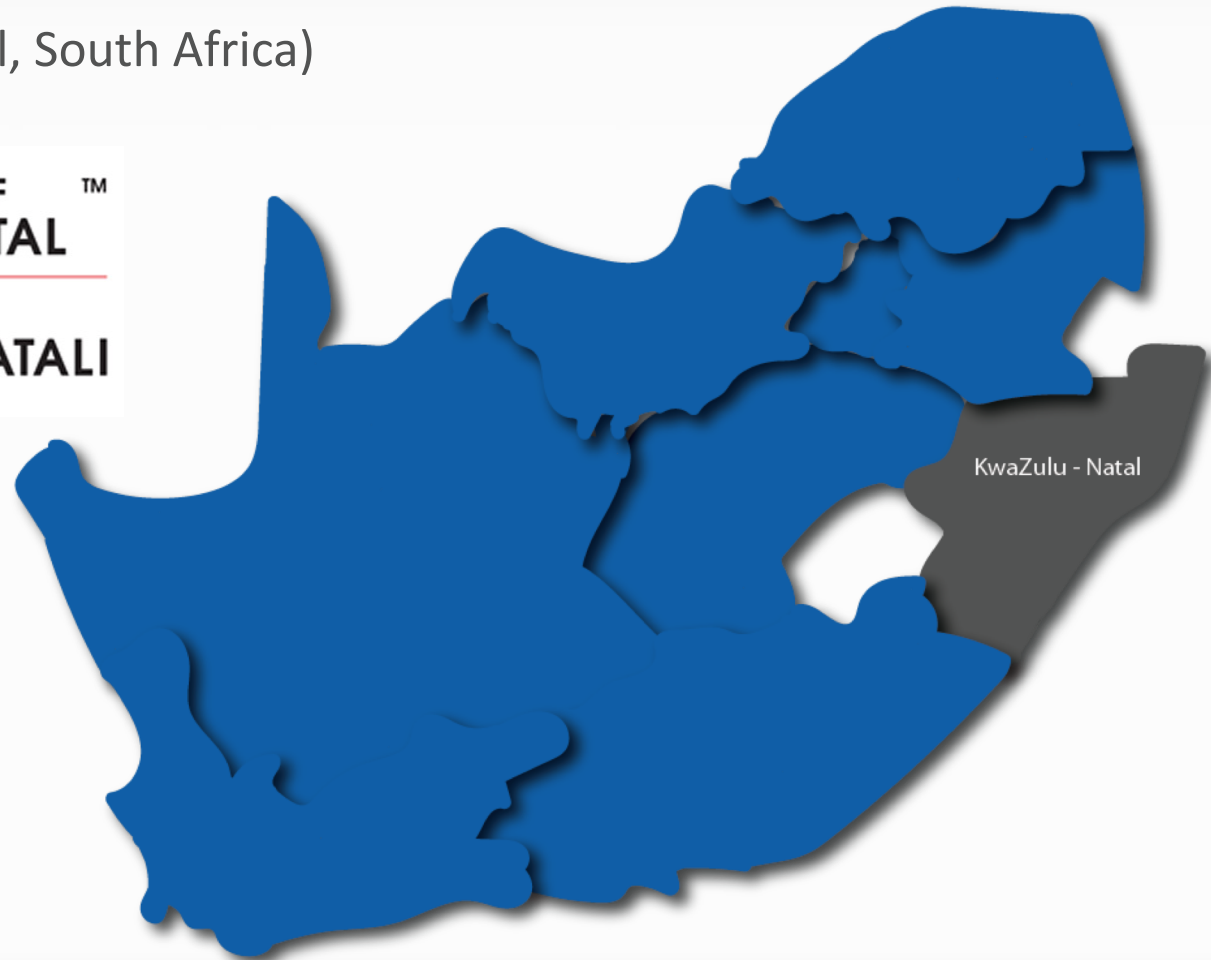


# More information on selected initiatives

# Formal academic programme

SARETI

(University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa)






# The South African Research Ethics Training Initiative (SARETI)




## Master's degree programme in Health Research Ethics

-  Effective 2002-2019
-  PI: Professor DR Wassenaar

## Funding

-  US National Institutes of Health (NIH) through the Fogarty International Center




## Target group

-  Scholars from African continent, various backgrounds
-  Competitively-selected students: Full scholarships
-  Also externally- or self-funded students

# The South African Research Ethics Training Initiative (SARETI)

## Programme of work

### First year:




-  Face-to-face coursework
-  Modular approach – week-long modules, 160 notional hours, compulsory, full-time, SAQA accredited
-  One of the modules covers responsible conduct of research (RCR) and research integrity (RI) – facilitated by PI

### Thereafter




-  Return to home base to complete research project (dissertation)

# The South African Research Ethics Training Initiative (SARETI)

## Outputs and impacts

-  One RI/RCR paper of >100 papers by SARETI students listed at <http://sareti.ukzn.ac.za/StudentPublications.aspx>
-  More outputs on RI by the same and other students after completing studies
-  Impact of alumni students taking RI further through networks, publication and training





## Future plans

-  Applied for NIH funding to take the initiative to the next level – PhD training, also requiring RI/RCR training (2020-2026)
-  No link to national funding
-  No plans (as yet) to replicate or expand elsewhere




*For more information: Professor Douglas Wassenaar, UKZN*

# Institutional initiatives to raise awareness

## Various academic institutions across the continent ...

-  Operate at different levels of maturity
-  Some have a dedicated or designated person or unit to promote research integrity
-  Some have developed policies and/or procedures
-  Some policies are publicly available and can serve as best-practice guidelines

## Training and workshops ...

-  Some have a stronger focus on academic staff, some more on students, some on both
-  Many on plagiarism and authorship issues, some on other aspects
-  Seldom part of compulsory on-boarding or induction

# Institutional initiatives






## University of Malawi

College of Medicine (COM)









# Example: University of Malawi COM

## Target group – limited to COM



-  Postgraduate students
-  Undergraduate students required to submit research projects
-  Young and emerging researchers

## Programme of work





-  Training on research integrity to postgraduate students
-  Information literacy course by Library department
  -  Focus on plagiarism and similarity checking software
-  Young researchers' forum (YRF)
  -  Aimed to nurture upcoming research leaders
  -  Mentoring on good research practice, publication ethics

# Example: University of Malawi COM

## Funding

-  Institutional funds, YRF supported by membership fees
-  In collaboration with ARIN, COM-CEBESA submitted proposal for workshop funding in 2017 (unsuccessful)

## Reflection, challenges and opportunities

-  No overarching institutional policy on RI
-  Lack of standards and procedures to prevent and detect misconduct
-  No resources and communication for RI at institutional level
-  Lack of feedback mechanisms to evaluate and improve existing initiatives

*For more information: Ms Limbanazo Matandika, UNIMA COM*

# National initiative







Uganda National Council for  
Science and Technology  
(UNCST)








# About UNCST

An agency of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI)



-  Established by the UNCT Act of 1990 (Chapter 209)
-  Purpose: To support and regulate scientific research, technological innovations and product commercialization for socio-economic transformation
  -  Developed National Guidelines for Research involving Humans as Research Participants (2014) – currently being revised
  -  Accredits research ethics committees (RECs) in the country

# UNCST work on research integrity (RI)

## Regarding RI, UNCST found:







-  Only a few universities and research institutions have developed research misconduct policies
-  Coordinated efforts to address the problem of research misconduct were lacking, nationally and at institutional levels
-  There was no national policy for the promotion of responsible conduct of research (RCR) in Uganda

## Against this background, UNCST responded by:

-  Developing a National Research Integrity and Code of Conduct Policy
-  Incorporating a chapter on research integrity in the revised Guidelines to provide guidance to everyone intending to conduct research

# UNCST work on research integrity

Areas addressed in new national research integrity guidelines:

-  Definition of “research misconduct”
-  Definition of “research misbehaviours”
-  Provision for research institutions to develop their own policies, reporting and management mechanisms for research misconduct
-  UNCST will establish a Research Integrity Liaison Office (RILO), to
  -  Respond to allegations of research misconduct
  -  Oversee enquiries and investigations initiated by researchers and research institutions

*For more information: Ms Hellen Opolot, UNCST, Uganda*