



UCL supporting Healthcare Leadership and Innovation capacity building in Africa

In late 2018, UCL's [Academic Careers Office](#) (ACO) and [Translational Research Office](#) (TRO) along with UCL partner the [Africa Health Research Institute](#) (AHRI), were successful in applying for a UKRI Global Challenge Research Fund Impact Acceleration Award (GCRF IAA). The GCRF vision is to strive for equitable access to sustainable development, sustainable economies and societies, human rights, good governance and social justice in developing countries. An aim of the GCRF IAA initiative is to support cutting-edge research and mechanisms of support that address the challenges faced by developing countries in moving innovation into societal benefit. The ACO and TRO organised two events in South Africa open to participants from across the African continent; 1) the Ignite Medical Summit (ACO led); and 2) a Workshop in Translational Research, Health Innovation & Commercialization (TRO led).

These events were aimed at promoting discussion and sharing knowledge of the challenges faced by innovators, entrepreneurs and business in developing products, therapies or interventions taking into account the local and regional context.

Ignite Medical Innovation Summit



The [Ignite Medical Innovation Summit](#), organised by the ACO in partnership with the [Collaboration for the Advancement of Medical Innovation](#) (CASMI), is an immersive and challenging experience that positions participants to drive change in medical innovation. By bringing together leaders in medical innovation to challenge each other, learn from other's sectors and develop new ways of thinking and working, it is envisaged they will be inspired to personally participate in changing the future of medical innovation and accelerate progress.

The summit took place in Stellenbosch, South Africa on 26th - 27th March 2019 with debate sessions that gave participants a 360 degree view of medical innovation in a discussion format. The sessions were led by speakers from organisation across Africa and beyond, the full summit was chaired by Professor Sir John Tooke (Chair of CASMI). Participants addressed issues that arise when bringing new innovation into a healthcare setting. The perspective from South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Madagascar and the UK were brought to the discussions.

Speakers included Glaudina Loots (Director of Health Innovation, SA Dept. of Science & Technology); Professor Richard Gordon (Director, SA MRC Executive Director); Dr Alphonsus Neba (Deputy Director Programmes & Science Support, African Academy of Sciences); Dr Elena de Angelis (Global Health

Director, GSK); Khilona Radia (CEO, Antrum Biotech); Dr Simani Gaseitsiwe (Deputy Director, Botswana Harvard AIDS Institute); Dr Frasia Karua (Project Director; Amref Health Africa); Dr Maryam Atakhorrani (Chief Operating Officer, UCL Health Data Research UK); Professor Keertan Dheda (Head of the Division of Pulmonology; University of Cape Town).

Participants are encouraged to maintain the networks forged through the summit and to the wider Ignite Alumni, and some quotes from the participants are given below.

"Thank-you very much for a really informative, thought provoking meeting. Very well run, expertly chaired." [Ignite Participant]

"It was a pleasure to participate and I look forward to keeping in touch and working with many of the fellow attendees going forward." [Ignite Participant]

UCL Workshop in Translational Research, Health Innovation & Commercialization



The TRO, in partnership with AHRI, and in collaboration with the [University of KwaZulu-Natal](#) (UKZN), organised a two day Workshop in Translational Research, Health Innovation & Commercialization, which was hosted at the AHRI Nelson Mandela Medical School in Durban, South Africa on 19th - 20th March. This two day Workshop was targeted at early stage researchers and/or innovators who work in the field of health and life sciences. The aim was to introduce participants to the concepts and tools available to plan the translational pathway of their research towards healthcare delivery and social impact, including discussion around the issues of intellectual property and downstream commercialization and adoption.

A total of 63 people, both speakers and participants, attended the Workshop with representation across six African countries (South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Botswana, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe) and Europe. African participants had affiliations to AHRI, UKZN, [University of Cape Town](#) (UCT), the [Sub-Saharan African Network for TB/HIV Research Excellence](#) (SANTHE) and the [African Academy of Sciences](#) (AAS) amongst others. The event showcased many excellent talks by experienced speakers from a variety of backgrounds in research, innovation, regulation, and policy making and provided an opportunity for multidisciplinary networking and potential future collaborations in the field of health and life sciences.

Speakers at the workshop included: Dr Sibongile Gumbi (iVacBio, CEO & Founder), Ms. Aarti Panday (Technology Innovation Agency, Business Development Manager), Dr Blessed Okole (South African MRC, Senior Programme Manager), Dr Kerry Faul (National IP Management Office, Head), Dr Alethea Cope (UCL TRO, Translational Research Manager), Ms. Charlotte Mashaba (UKZN InQubate, Head), Dr Marta Ribeiro (UCL TRO, Senior Business & Innovation Manager), Mr. Saberi Marais (UCT Technology Commercialisation, Manager), Prof. Deenan Pillay (AHRI, Director), Ms. Khilona Radia (Antrum Biotech, CEO), Dr Jane Kinghorn (UCL TRO, Director), Dr Valerian Turbe (UCL, Post-doc researcher), Dr Oluwafemi Adeagbo (AHRI, Senior Scientist), Prof. Tulio de Oliveira (KRISP, Director), Dr Caroline

Crehan (Neotree, UCL Co-lead investigator), Dr Simbarashe Chimhuya (Neotree, Neonatal Consultant), Mr. Tim Hull-Bailey (Neotree, Team Lead) and Dr Kaelo Seatla (SANTHE, PhD student).

Overall, 93% of participants rated the workshop as good or excellent, while 90% plan to connect with other speakers and participants to discuss their work outside of the Workshop. Some feedback is given below.

“Opened a window of opportunity to make local and international collaboration, which is very important for research development and grant applications”

“It provides a fantastic venue to establish intra-African and European-African networks focused on establishing and fostering translational research infrastructure and collaborations.”

“It gave researchers comprehensive insight into the technology transfer process and the reinforcement from the various organisations was great.”

“Educating and a pointer in the right direction for doing research and getting research support in South Africa.”

“The networking opportunity was excellent. The presentation of the TRO as a major resource was extremely valuable”.

Future developments:

UCL is providing further support to Ignite participants and workshop attendees by offering places in a high-profile executive coaching scheme. This online training programme will provide one-to-one sessions during a period of six months and support the participants in developing resilience and leadership skills.

Additionally, all Ignite summit delegates were offered Fellowship of [CASMI](#), which is hosted by UCL but deliberately involving a network of individuals drawn from various institutions and industrial as well as academic sectors. The organisation exists to improve medical innovation productivity and efficiency such that unmet clinical need can be addressed faster and more affordably. By connecting people, CASMI will be a vehicle to support Ignite participants in their ambitions and help them build capacity within their communities.

The TRO are following up directly with participants from the translational workshop linking them to additional support to enhance the development of their innovations. In addition discussions are continuing with our partners AHRI and UKZN as well as UCT on future requirements for enhancing local support for innovations as well as discussion with potential funders for this activity.

We wish to thank the UKRI GCRF IAA for providing the funding for the Ignite Summit and the UCL Workshop in Translational Research. We would also like to thank our partners and collaborators at CASMI, AHRI, and UKZN for working with us and helping us to organise these events.

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