Introduction

Participants in this facilitated dialogue will explore strategies to foster and scale-up initiatives that work towards the engagement of francophone communities in evidence informed health policy-making, sharing lessons learned and lived experiences. This session will further focus on issues surrounding multilingualism in evidence-informed policy-making, by discussing other experiences (e.g. ePORTUGUÊSe-EVIPNet, PAHO's work with Spanish speaking countries, challenges and opportunities in China).

Authors

Isabelle Wachsmuth and David Yondo.
1 - Presentation of HIFA-EVIPNet-French is a global forum with a focus on French-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa

Background

HIFA-EVIPNet-French was launched on 13th October 2010 at the 12th AHILA Congress in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in collaboration with the World Health Organization/EVIPNet

Concept

It brings together producers, intermediaries and users of health research to explore the information needs of policymakers, researchers and high-level health professionals. HIFA-EVIPNet-French will promote access to all relevant French sources of information and evidence for policymaking.

Outcomes

HIFA-EVIPNet-French policymakers and other health professionals from 270 members, from 29 countries, with 364 contributions from 18 countries. Including 22 francophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Profile:

- 50% of policymakers
- 45% of researchers
- 5% others
Why it is important

HiFA-EVIPNet-French is a key platform of exchange to discuss, learn and share on different topics and take decisions about development, policy or research:

- to compile all relevant knowledge and information with very high quality level
- to improve the visibility of skills, competencies and knowledge at individual level
- to link groups of researchers with the same interests and to improve the access to the knowledge and information as well all institutions work in research and policy
- to share the results of research under synthesis format with different groups of researchers to have good validation."

From Robert Marie, Centre for the Development of Best Practices in Health (CDBPH), University of Yaounde, Cameroon. Member of EVIPNet Cameroun

- Access and share of last information and evidence in French to improve policy briefs and to inform policymakers
- Sharing between different francophone countries
• Remove the barriers of language

• **Free space** of expression

• **Motivation** very high because information receive or give to others are useful

• Framework of **training**, self and collective learning between the members

• Relevant tool to create sustainable **South-South Cooperation**

Functioning today

• Moderator at global level

• Dgroups discussion platform

• Include to HIFA2015 Family networks

• Funding from WHO

Type of members contribution

• Dissemination of local research results

• Request for evidence (Global, National like thesis & memory)

• Reference and access to source of evidence in French (Minimum abstract in French)

• Debate on priority topic for the country

• Sharing of experiences, perceptions and lessons learned

Following the presentation of results of HIFA-EVIPnet-Fr discussion forum, the francophone group established the situation analysis of global francophone community which focus on evidence informed policy-making.

Situation analysis of African francophone countries community

1 – African francophone countries work today still continue to suffer from isolation and is one main factor of the lack of visibility of health research in Africa. African francophone countries need to develop strategies to be sure countries will be able to sit together more frequently to share and to discuss about their experiences, lessons learned and context. With this way, it will be easier to create effective and relevant linkages between them to appreciate from each other the diversity but also their common realities and values.
2 – The francophone community as well as the others native speakers need to be part and more well integrated to the global community because their competencies, experiences and human potential are here and tangible.

3 – The francophone African community had already established but sub-regional network seems to be relevant as well in the African context through the common interest to have focal point by sub-region.

4 – The francophone community needs to be lead and drive as group and evaluate where it is the most relevant for her to contribute.

In this framework, David Yondo suggested to the francophone group to do SWOT analysis to define where and how the group can contribute through the analysis of their strengths and weaknesses.

This method allowed establishing also the list of opportunities for the group and survival strategies of this group at the global level. The unit of analysis has been identified and used was the group and the goal was to establish the strategies to have more effective group cohesion.

Civil society appeared as one key element of the network as well as rapid response mechanism for researchers and others relevant stakeholders have influence on policymaking. The results and data of civil society where not visible in research but in general in enquiries, surveys and case studies need to consider in the establishment of evidence-based.
The question to the audience was what are the strategies to strength the global francophone community?

The results of SWOT analysis to answer to the question were:

- The use of global francophone discussion forum HIFA-EVIPNet-Fr
- The engagement of focal point at sub-regional levels
- The French evidence based like French Cochrane network and others sources of evidence in French (journals and others networks)

These strategies will be used to improve or create:

- The competencies and skills, the most important element
- The functioning of the francophone African community and their networking
- The rapid response mechanism
- The local research evidence- based
- The sharing and values and rules
- The leadership and appropriation
- The feedback culture

**Method to open the discussion with the audience**

**Key questions asked by audience to open the debate**

- How to value the local research results?
- How to disseminate the local research results and what type of format?
- How to assist the members to have access to global evidence?
• How to be sure the abstract of articles will be available in French?
• How to design rapid response mechanism for researchers?
• How to create bridge between different African sub-regions?
• What are the topics are relevant for the members?

Key features

• Synthesis of discussion
• Moderators/Focal points of discussion by sub-region to have sustainable implementation
  – Focal point for Western Africa
  – Focal point for Central Africa
  – Focal point for Arabic Africa
• Framework for best practices and lessons learned dissemination
• SKYPE session every 2 months with members of the network
• Annual forum for francophone network
• Strategic plan for francophone network for 3 years

Impact of the network

• Human capital development
• Empowerment of members: one researcher had the opportunity to share the result research from remote area to the MoH and was hired by MoH to become adviser
• Fostering the sustainable bridge between south-south countries through trust relationships and win-win collaboration

Lessons learned

• Assistance need to access and find evidence
• Sharing and value local research results
• Benefits of south-south collaboration through the sharing of practices, perceptions, tools, call proposal, expertise and evidence references
  – Partnerships between African francophone countries
  – Partnerships between African francophone and non francophone countries (Portuguese and English speakers)

References about HIFA-EVIPNet-Fr and HIFA2015 concept

• Dr Najeeb Al Shorbaji, WHO talks about HIFA2015
• People are dying for lack of knowledge by Neil Pakenham-Walsh, HIFA2015