Our experience of collaborative research between the Universities of Southampton, Ghana, Kenya, Nairobi, Malawi, MMUST and Technical University of Kenya, and organisations including, AGROHYMET, Waternet, SARIMA and Vitae offers particular insight into capacity building and the professional development of young, budding academics.

It is generating insights on learning from the global South that benefit the global North, i.e.
- How to engage with local stakeholders and communities with local researchers
- Understanding of broader issues affecting research, such as gender, the use of local resources
- The benefits of working in an international and interdisciplinary team such as appreciating the value of local knowledge
- Recognising the variation between ‘enabling environments’ and the assumptions held in UK Hils

We are collectively defining capacity development in the GCRF context and have identified two issue areas.

GCRF presents three challenges:
1) The concept of capacity development – these projects typically begin with researchers, not organisations
2) Perceived institutional readiness to undertake such ventures – both in the UK and our partner institutions
3) Human Resources Development, especially Researcher Development, because GCRF demands high levels of workplace transfer

GCRF requires new skills in addition to the traditional skills, which in turn requires different methods of design and modes of delivery

For ECs and by ECs
- We are providing every ECR with a Mini PI experience through leading a "Small research project" to enhance their skill set
- Creating networks of researchers in food and water security – within and beyond BRECcIA
- Encourage self-development with
  - An online resource of short CVs of team members for research and networking purposes
  - A database of expertise that everyone can access
  - Mentors – ECRs are encouraged to approach and seek advice from external experts
  - Online training resources, webinars, and literature
  - Vitae Researcher Development Framework planner
- Making connections
  - Between people, projects and countries
  - Creating internal Champions, Supersurers/consultants and Mentors
  - Sharing experiences of capacity building i.e. the issues involved in recruiting first postdocs at MMUST and TUK (similar to some smaller UK Universities)
  - Learning from each other e.g. a research managers/mentors – ECRs are encouraged to approach and seek advice from external experts
  - Online training resources, webinars, and literature
  - Vitae Researcher Development Framework planner
- Building Research Capacity for sustainable water and food security In drylands of sub-saharan Africa (BRECcIA) which is supported by UK Research and Innovation as part of the Global Challenges Research Fund, grant number NE/P021093/1

Project Activities

Four pillars of activity & support
Our model of capacity development is based on four areas of activity – these four pillars of enhancing capability taken collectively and alongside structural support from within BRECcIA, such as training and networks, and support from outside of BRECcIA.

We are leveraging the research experience itself to create learning experiences and opportunities i.e. internal funding applications that include impact and theories of change.
- Summer and winter schools and Annual Research meetings for training and relationship building
- Recognizing that each researcher’s needs and context is different – so we need to respond to these in an iterative way

In 2020 we will focus on
- Enabling environments

Sustainability & Synergies

For ECRs and by ECRs
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- Encourage self-development with
  - An online resource of short CVs of team members for research and networking purposes
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