Author’s response to reviews

Title: Experiences of Capacity Strengthening in Sanitation and Hygiene Research in Africa and Asia: the SHARE Research Consortium

Authors:

Belen Torondel (belen.torondel@lshtm.ac.uk)
Emily Balls (Emily.balls@lshtm.ac.uk)
Caroline Cleopatra Chisenga (Caroline.Chisenga@cidrz.org)
Save Kumwenda (skumwenda@poly.ac.mw)
Elialilia Okello (elialilia.okello@mitu.or.tz)
Sheillah Simiyu (sheillahshie@gmail.com)
Tracy Morse (tracy.thomson@strath.ac.uk)
Kyla Smith (KylaSmith@wateraid.org)
Jane Mumma (jnmumma@gmail.com)
Joseph Banzi (JosephBanzi@wateraid.org)
Erik Harvey (ErikHarvey@wateraid.org)
Kondwani Chidziwisano (kchidziwisano@poly.ac.mw)
Jenala Chipungu (jenala.chipungu@cidrz.org)
Heiner Grosskurth (Heiner.Grosskurth@lshtm.ac.uk)
Amani Beda (amani.beda@mitu.or.tz)
Saidi Kapiga (Saidi.Kapiga@LSHTM.ac.uk)
Joanna EstevesMills (Joanna.EstevessMills@lshtm.ac.uk)
Oliver Cumming (Oliver.Cumming@lshtm.ac.uk)
Sandy Cairncross (Sandy.Cairncross@lshtm.ac.uk)
Roma Chilengi (Roma.Chilengi@cidrz.org)
Author’s response to reviews:

Reviewer answers:

Reviewer #1:
1. Abstract
   - The background talks more about what SHARE is. I would like to know more about the capacity building activities that are being carried out in the SHARE approach.
   - The method sounds more like the aim of your research or the reason why this paper was written.
   - The results sound more like the method used in the research.

Response: Following the advice of Reviewer 2, we have reformatted the manuscript to be submitted as a Commentary piece. Therefore, the aim of the paper will be to describe the capacity building activities conducted under SHARE programme and identify strategies which proved successful and might help guide future projects. We hope that the relevant sections are now better aligned with this new objective.

   - Line 34 page 1: replace the word 'strageies' with 'strategies'
Response: We have made the suggested changes.

   - Some figures to back the successes would be interesting. Are the results different from those researches which were not supported, did not have mentorship or not funded. Perhaps you are trying to say that SHARE provided the opportunity for these researches to be done. Please clarify.
Response: In this article, we aim to describe the capacity development strategy of the SHARE programme. Rather than providing evidence of the success of the programme, we aim instead to highlight those aspects which might be useful for future programmes.

   - To support your conclusion it would have been helpful if your results showed evidence of capacity building programs not being tailored to local context and planned without the partner research institutions fail.
Response: We have included some other references and examples in the discussion section.

   - The recommendations sound familiar and a bit too obvious
Response: We have edited the recommendations and tried to be less generic and more specific to our programme and experience.

2. Introduction
   - Under the sub heading 'Sanitation and Hygiene' I suggest you define sanitation and hygiene to guide the reader on exactly what you are focusing on.
Response: We have included these definitions.

   - You can also include some reasons why sanitation and hygiene are lacking in some countries: eg poverty, illitarcy, ineffective policies, civil unrest etc. You can then narrow down on how the SHARE program comes in to try and solve these causes of poor sanitation and hygiene
Response: We have made the suggested changes as background to the SHARE Consortium.
- Under the sub heading 'Introduction to the SHARE program' I am curious to know which countries you are referring to when you say 'Southern Researchers and institutions' line 20 page 3. Response: Thank you for flagging this. In reflection, we feel that “Low and Middle Income Countries” researchers is more precise and appropriate.

3. Methods
- Line 34 page 3 replace the word 'learned' with 'learnt'
- Line 36 page 3 replace the word 'about' with 'on'
- This section is too brief. Most of the information that is supposed to be here is under the 'Results' section
Respond: We have corrected these errors.

4. Results
- Consider removing the first paragraph 'The capacity ....... in each phase.' As this point has already been made.
Respond: We agree that this is repetitive and have removed the first paragraph.

- Under the sub heading 'Capacity building during SHARE phase 1': consider presenting the aims and activities in tabular form
Response: We thank you for your suggestion but after discussion we feel that the current format is clearer.

- Line 7 page 4: There should be a space between the words 'Diarrheal' and 'Disease'
- Line 29 page 4: add a 'u' to the word 'contry'. This should read 'country'
- Line 34 page 4: add a 'd' to the word 'balance'. This should read 'balanced'
- Line 36 page 4: replace the word 'countries' with 'country'
- Line 46 page 4: The sentences 'All the students .... PHD training period' and 'During phase 1 ..... research outputs'. Should be put under the results sub heading
Response: We have addressed all these spelling errors. Regarding your last suggestion, these sentences are part of the result section, and are part of phase 1 activities.

- Under the sub heading 'Capacity building SHARE phase 2: Line 12 page 6 add an 's' to the word 'other'. This should read 'others'
- Line 20 page 6: add a space between the words 'summarize' and 'key'
- Line 27 page 6: add a 'd' to the word 'encourage'. This should read 'encouraged'
- Line 44 page 6: add a space between the words 'to' and 'organise'
- Line 38 page 7: add a space between the words 'quarterly' and 'reports'
- Consider adding those paragraphs on pages 4 and 5 to this section
Response: We have addressed all these spelling errors. We have also restructured this section to hopefully make it clearer.

- It would be great if you could add the numbers of policies that have been influenced by papers published under the SHARE program and the networks formed that are addressing the issues affecting sanitation and hygiene
Response: Whilst the SHARE programme has been influential at policy level, in this paper, we focus specifically on our capacity development strategy and its successes. However, we have included some information about the policy networks that have been formed during the programme as these were directly supported by capacity development activities.
5. Discussion
- The first sentence in the discussion best sums up what the paper is about. It should be brought out in the introduction
Response: We have made several amendments to this section following your suggestions and also following those of Reviewer 2 who suggested reformatting as a Commentary piece.

- Line 14 page 8: replace the word 'santiation' with the word 'sanitation'
- Line 26 page 8: add a space between the words 'complaint' and 'form'
- Line 33 page 8: add a space between the words 'universities' and 'is'
- Line 39 page 8: replace the word 'currently' with 'current'.
Response: We have addressed all these spelling errors.

Reviewer #2: This is a well written manuscript centred on a topic of increasing academic interest; namely, health research capacity strengthening. However, the manuscript is something of an anomaly in that it is drafted according to the conventions of an original research submission (intro, methods, results, discussion), yet does not present research findings. It is primarily for this reason that I do not believe the manuscript is suitable for publication in its present form. The manuscript content, consisting of a description of the capacity building components of the SHARE consortium and some relatively uncritical (arguably highly biased) reflection on them, appears better suited to a commentary-style submission. I would encourage the authors to redraft and resubmit the manuscript in this more appropriate style, although a substantial reduction in word count would probably be required. With that in mind, I would focus the commentary on the specific elements of the capacity building programme which may be considered most innovative. In my opinion, this would include the structured mentoring programme built into Phase 1 and the capacity development plans built into phase 2. Thus, the focus of the commentary could be innovative programme features that have 'added value' to standard capacity building activities such as training, learning by doing and scholarship provision.

RESPONSE: We thank the reviewer for this feedback and have decide to act on her/his proposal that we reformat as commentary piece. The manuscript is now reformatted accordingly and the aim of the paper is to describe the capacity building activities conducted under SHARE programme, in order to identify successful strategies that can be used in future projects. We have focused on the specific elements of the capacity building programme which we believe are more innovative and produced good results. Thank you for this good advice.