Strengthening Global Health Security: AFROHUN's Network-wide Contributions and Achievements

BACKGROUND

In an increasingly interconnected world, the spread of infectious diseases poses a constant threat to global health, economies, and livelihoods. The Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), launched in 2014, aims to help countries prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats, including zoonotic diseases. As a collaborative multi-country initiative, GHSA provides support to nations in building robust health security systems. Countries receiving GHSA support are encouraged to conduct a Joint External Evaluation (JEE) to assess their core capacities as outlined in the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations (IHR). The JEE identifies strengths and gaps in each core capacity and sets indicators in the technical areas of prevention, detection, response and enabling environment for achieving health security targets. GHSA activities are designed to improve these indicators. These indicators guide countries in achieving measurable progress toward strengthening public health systems and ensuring rapid, coordinated responses to health crises.

The Africa One Health University Network (AFROHUN), a flagship program supported by USAID, is dedicated to strengthening integrated health security systems in eight high-risk countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Liberia, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. AFROHUN provides both financial and technical assistance to help these nations enhance their capacity to detect, monitor, and manage health threats, preventing them from escalating into public health crises.

As the program approaches its conclusion in September 2025, AFROHUN is on track to leave behind robust health security systems and improved compliance with the International Health Regulations (IHR).

This learning brief presents: 1) An evaluation of network countries based on IHR Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) components since their first JEE and 2) Key achievements of the network countries under the OHW NG project since 2019.

By mapping contributions across the AFROHUN network, this brief highlights progress and identifies opportunities to further align efforts with GHSA goals.

The JEE framework assessment areas to enhance global health security

Prevention: Strengthening systems to prevent zoonotic diseases, ensuring biosafety and biosecurity, and improving immunization programs.

Detection: Enhancing real-time surveillance, laboratory systems, and reporting to identify and monitor health threats efficiently.

Response: Building emergency response systems, including risk communication and health workforce capacity, to manage outbreaks effectively.

Enabling Factors: Ensuring political commitment, financing, and a robust legal framework to sustain health security systems.

International Health Regulation AFROHUN countries capacity assessment, monitoring, evaluation and planning update

COUNTRY	Date of 1st JEE	Date of 2nd JEE (3rd Edition)	Development of National Action Plan of Health Security	Date of Risk Profiling	Simulation Exercice (SimEx)	After Action Review (AAR)	ONE HEALTH including the Ots (National Bridging Workshop/Joint Risk Assessment)
Côte d'Ivoire	December 5-9, 2016	December 03 –08,2023	October 07 – 12,2024	2016, 2017, 27-31 May 2024	February 3-5 & November 30 2016 (EVD FSX) 30 April 2021	EVD (1-16 September 2021	NBW : 23-25 March 2021
Senegal	November 28 - December 2, 2016	July 17-21, 2023	TBC	2016, 22-28 September 2023	PHEOC SimEx May 8-9 2018, 9-13 May 2022 Emergency Medical Teams (EMT 7-14 May 2022) Cross-border TTX on viral haemorrhagic fever 06-09 August 2024	Dengue March 5-9 2018, Dengue Fever June 11-15 2019	NBW : November 14-16 2017 JRA : 15-18 December 2019, May 7-10 2020, 28-31 August 2021, Regional workshop for West Africa (Senegal, 29-31 March 2023) The Gambia and Senegal sub-regional JRA (01-03 October 2024)
Liberia	September 5-9,2016	September 4 – 8, 2023	TBC	November 11-17 2018	Liberia/ Sierra Leone joint cross border test/ simulation exercise at Kenema/ Bo-Waterside (October 19 – 23, 2020 (Ebola FSX) 28-30 April2021	Meningitis Mar 08 – 09 2018	JRA : 29-31 March 2021, 9-13 April 2024 NBW : November 26-30 2018
Cameroon	September 24-29, 2017	TBC	TBC	10 – 14 April 2023	September 7-15 2017; Multisectoral collaboration for zoonotic diseases: October 28-29 2019; (Airport PoE Drill for the African Nations Cup, 27 December 2021) (TTX 7 - 8 November 2022), (TTX Marburg virus disease 16-18 August 2023)	30 March – 1 April 2022	NBW : 10 – 12 August 2021 JRA : November 19 – 22 2019 ; 16-20 August 2021, 29-31 March 2021 ;
DRC	March 11-16, 2018	October 22 – 27, 2023	TBC	Subnational: 24 September- 9 October 2022	(EVD SimEx) June 28, July 25 2018	Goma - EVD (10-12 March 2022 Kisangani) – Meningitis (22-25 March 2022 **2024 TBC**	NBW : 25-27 June 2024 JRA : 19-22 January 2021, 17-20 April 2023

Country						
Kenya	February 27-March 3,2017	TBC	TBC	October 22-26 2018, 5-9 June, 2023	EAC Cross border SimEx: June 11-14 2019; Regional Table-Top Exercise for 19 African countries on COVID-19 response on board an aircraft and international airport TTX (15 February and 20 February 2020 ; EVD TTX 23-27 January 2023	25 -27 June 2024 Cholera (31 October – 4 November 2023	JRA : 13 – 16 August 2019, 2-4 June 2021,
Tanzania	April 23-28,2017	August 14 – 18, 2023	13 – 17 March, 2024	23-27 October 2023	March 30-31, EVD SimEx) August 13-17 2018; National COVID-19 incident management system 14-15 December 2021) PoE FSX 6 May 2022) EVD TTX & Drills in Dar es Salaam:16-18 January 2023 Kagera (EVD Simulation Exercise & Drills) 31 January – 2 February 2023	MVD (5-7 July 2023) Leptospirosis (13-16 December 2022)	NBW : October 16-18 2017 JRA : March 25-29 2019 ;
Uganda	June 26-30,2017	October 22 – 27,2023	23 – 27 September, 2024	18-22 March 2024 (District level) 4-7 June 2024 (Kampala City)	EVD preparedness April 11-12 2019, TTX Cholera 27 July 2023; EVD Functional Exercise 26 June 2024	EVD (August 28-30 2019) Uganda - Sudan Ebola Virus Disease (SUDV) (Sub-national 8 - 9 February and national 13 – 16 February 2023 Mass Gathering (29-30 August2024)	NBW : September 25-27 2017 JRA : December 2-6 2019

Strategic Approach

AFROHUN's initiatives are strategically tailored to address the specific needs of each country while aligning with three key outputs. These efforts have significantly contributed to improving indicators across key technical areas outlined in the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR) and the Joint External Evaluation (JEE).

OUTPUT 1: Countries achieving targeted progress towards an established mechanism to Develop, deliver, and institutionalize training and educational offerings in alignment with prioritized OH core competencies and technical skills in compliance with JEE and WHO Benchmarks to improve SPAR scores

Strategy: Strengthening International Health Regulation Compliance Through Training and Empowerment

The State Party Assessment Report (SPAR) provides an annual evaluation of National Action Plans for Health Security (NAPHS) implementation, offering a snapshot of progress in achieving International Health Regulation (IHR) core capacities. While all AFROHUN-supported countries report on IHR implementation through the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended systems, AFROHUN is playing a key role in strengthening these core capacities, particularly in Human Resources (HR) development.

To support countries in meeting IHR goals, AFROHUN leverages WHO reference documents such as the IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, Joint External Evaluation (JEE), and WHO Benchmarks. The network has developed targeted interventions enabling countries to design, deliver, and institutionalize training programs aligned with prioritized One Health (OH) core competencies and technical skills. These initiatives also help track progress toward NAPHS targets.

Each AFROHUN country has tailored its approach to implementing these strategies, drawing from the AFROHUN logframe to define activities and tasks at a granular level. In every initiative, Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles remain central, ensuring that programs are inclusive and equitable.

Key AFROHUN initiatives include:

- **One Health Content Curation and Development** - Creating and disseminating training materials tailored to country-specific needs.

- **One Health Academy** - Establishing platforms for advanced learning in health security and interdisciplinary collaboration.

- **Empowerment and Career Development** - Providing capacity-building opportunities for professionals to enhance technical and leadership skills.

- **Experiential Learning** - Offering hands-on learning experiences to bridge knowledge gaps and build practical competencies.

- **Policy Engagement** - Supporting governments in integrating One Health approaches into national policies and action plans.

OUTPUT 2: Countries achieving targeted progress towards establishing systems, policies, and procedures to assess and track multisectoral workforce placement, performance, and impact in compliance with JEE and WHO Benchmarks to improve SPAR scores.

Strategy: Assessment and Tracking of Workforce to Strengthen Human Resources Development

AFROHUN-supported countries have implemented robust systems, policies, and procedures to assess and monitor the placement, performance, and impact of their multisectoral health workforce. These efforts aim to enhance workforce-related capacities critical to meeting International Health Regulation (IHR) standards.

Key initiatives under this pillar include:

- **Establishing a Regional Knowledge Management System** - Facilitating information sharing and best practices across countries to strengthen health workforce strategies.

- **Supporting Trainee Databases and Dashboards** - Enabling real-time tracking of workforce development and deployment, ensuring alignment with national health security priorities.

- **Engaging National One Health Workforce (OHW) Coordinating Bodies and Summits-** Promoting multi-sectoral collaboration and alignment of workforce development activities with national health security goals.

- **Conducting National Workforce Assessments** - Identifying workforce gaps, training needs, and areas for improvement to address health security challenges effectively.

- **Developing an Online OH Competency Self-Assessment Toolkit** -Empowering health professionals to evaluate their skills and identify areas for professional growth in One Health core competencies.

OUTPUT 3: Strengthen the functional and organizational capacities of the regional One Health university networks to ensure they are capable of acquiring and managing direct donor funding in compliance with JEE and WHO Benchmarks to improve SPAR scores

Fostering Organizational Sustainability for Long-Term Health Security

AFROHUN is committed to ensuring the sustainability of its initiatives by empowering governments, universities, researchers, and students, and communities to achieve their ambitions in health security. This approach enhances the likelihood of institutionalizing and financing activities for the long term, leaving behind resilient and self-sustaining systems.

To achieve this, AFROHUN aligns its efforts with the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) strategic framework and adopts a multifaceted approach that includes:

- **Assessment, Benchmarking, and Strategic Planning** - Guiding organizations to evaluate their capacities, identify gaps, and plan for sustainable improvements in health security systems.

- **Building Network Organizational Capacities** - Strengthening institutional structures and fostering a collaborative One Health approach among stakeholders.

- **Developing New and Diversified Partnerships** - Expanding collaborations with a wide range of stakeholders to enhance resource mobilization and strategic alignment.

- **Implementing Pilot and Scaled Revenue-** Generating Mechanisms - Establishing innovative financial models to support long-term sustainability of health security initiatives.

By integrating these strategies, AFROHUN ensures that its programs are not only impactful but also enduring, creating a solid foundation for strengthened health security systems across its network countries.

Key achievements per country

Countries	Activities	Deliverables	GHS/JEE Tech Areas
Côte d'Ivoire	Assess the Human Resources requirements for the implementation of the IHR at the level of all sectors	Human resources mapping of key OH ministries Creation of a OH HR Technical working group Interactive Human Resources mapping tool	**Human Resources**
Cameroon	Training of Trainers' session on the OH concept for teachers and researchers at the Garoua Wildlife School Develop AMR short courses for in-service professional (animal health workers, environmental health workers, Human health workers, lab agents' workers) Develop a national short course of biosecurity and biosafety targeting waste management.	20 teacher-researchers trained in the OH approach AMR short course developed Biosecurity and biosafety code of conduct developed National short course of biosecurity and biosafety developed	**Human Resources Antimicrobial Resistance Biosafety and biosecurity**
DRC	Organize a 6-week training program targeting Veterinary Doctor on community surveillance integrating Risk Communication, Community Engagement. Equip Territorial Administrators heads of the territorial entities and in charge of local leadership and their technical teams with the skills and knowledge needed to detect, prevent, and respond to zoonotic disease outbreaks.	15 Veterinary Doctor trained on community surveillance and RCCE integrating Risk Communication, Community Engagement (RCCE) Curriculum tailored for Territorial Administrators 60 Territorial Administrators trained Strategic partnership with the National School of Administration (NSA)	**Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Surveillance**
Kenya	Develop six modules for online training targeting frontline workers to strengthening pandemic preparedness and response, as well as AMR surveillance and management at the grassroots level. Organized a Write shop on One Health approach targeting experts from public health, environmental science, animal health, sociology, nutrition, agriculture, and beyond	MSc Infectious Disease and Global Health program jointly developed with the University of Nairobi and Moi University. 21 experts from public health, environmental science, animal health, sociology, nutrition, agriculture, and beyond trained on OH approach	**Human Resources**

Senegal	Organization of a multidisciplinary OH training focusing on epidemiology and risk management Online orientation session on MPOX and RCEE for professionals and in-service organized by AFROHUN in collaboration with the National OH platform risk communication and community engagement (RCCE), with the support of ECHO Project organized	21 professionals from 8 regions received a multidisciplinary OH training focusing on epidemiology and risk management at Dakar. Targeted people are members of the Decentralized OH committees 111 persons participated in this multisectoral orientation on MPOX and RCEE	**Human Resources Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)**
Tanzania	Integrate OH content into existing university curricula in human health, environmental health, animal health (including wildlife), and agriculture A collaborative venture between AFROHUN, FAO, WHO, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Livestock, Kilimanjaro regional leadership and Kisarawe District leadership and other stakeholders responded to rabies outbreaks in these areas by conducting mass dog vaccination campaigns using the student learning and service model.	70% of diploma and certificate-level training programs integrate OH Vaccination of more than 8,000 pets in Kilimanjaro and 2,000 pets in Kisarawe	**Human Resources Zoonotic Diseases**
Uganda	Capacity-building initiatives to strengthen the frontline response Conduct RCCE training in six sub counties on rabies transmission and access to post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) among vulnerable targeting vulnerable groups in response to the Rabies outbreak in Bukwo district Organization of awareness campaign in the context of anthrax outbreak response in Ibanda district	Eighty-five frontline workers were trained in various essential skills such as disease investigation, sample collection, and reporting 1500 vulnerable groups trained on access to post-exposure prophylaxis and (PEP)equipped with essential information and fostered a deeper understanding of RCCE principles 718 households actively involved in decision-making processes and are informed about the outbreak response efforts, and therefore better prepared to comply with public health measures and recommendations on Anthrax.	**Human Resources Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)**
Secretariat	Develop a guiding resource document for trainees, trainers, and practitioners involved in delivering experiential learning and training programs to facilitate competency-based training in various fields using a OH approach	Mentored Experiential Learning and Training (MELT) program document developed and validated More than 3,000 people in over 90 countries who enrolled in our competency-based One Health courses	**Human Resources Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)**

CONCLUSION

AFROHUN has significantly advanced global health security by addressing critical gaps in workforce capacity, risk communication, and organizational sustainability across its eight member countries. By aligning its interventions with International Health Regulations (IHR) and Joint External Evaluation (JEE) indicators, the network has improved SPAR scores and strengthened the implementation of National Action Plans for Health Security (NAPHS).

Key achievements reflect country-specific needs and priorities. Côte d'Ivoire developed a human resources mapping tool, Kenya introduced pandemic preparedness training modules, Tanzania integrated OH concepts into academic curricula, and Uganda strengthened frontline response to outbreaks through capacity-building initiatives. AFROHUN's strategic focus on sustainability through partnerships with governments, universities, and communities ensures that its impact endures beyond the program's conclusion. These initiatives collectively position AFROHUN as a catalyst for building resilient health systems capable of effectively addressing emerging health threats and achieving long-term compliance with IHR obligations.

ABOUT AFROHUN

Africa One Health University Network (AFROHUN) is an international network, currently in 28 higher education institutions of public health, veterinary medicine, pathobiology, environmental sciences, medicine and global health, in 10 countries in Africa. The countries are *Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda.* AROHUN is formerly OHCEA.

AFROHUN is working to transform the training environment and approaches in universities and allied institutions in Africa, to develop a One Health workforce: a workforce with no disciplinary boundaries. AFROHUN is building a workforce with competency to predict, detect and respond to the kind of complex health challenges we are witnessing today. To achieve this transformation, we are reviewing curricula, designing new and exciting experiential learning multidisciplinary training programs, re-tooling teachers and trainers, educating communities on existence and transmission of zoonotic and infectious diseases, while engaging national and sub-national governments to integrate One Health into national policy and strategic planning.

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