



ReAct 10
AFRICA *Years*

The Evolution of **ReAct** Africa & South Centre Annual **Antimicrobial Resistance** Conferences Over the Years

A decade of catalyzing
action on **AMR** in Africa



The Evolution of ReAct Africa and South Centre Annual Antimicrobial Resistance Conferences Over the Years- A decade of catalyzing action on AMR in Africa

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List of abbreviations

AMR	- Antimicrobial Resistance	NAP	- National Action Plan
AMRCC	- Antimicrobial Resistance Coordination Committees	RAN	- ReAct Africa Network
AMU	- Antimicrobial Use	SC	- South Center
CSO	- Civil Society Organizations	SDG	- Sustainable Development Goals
FAO	- Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	UHC	- Universal Health Coverage
GAP	- Global Action Plan	WASH	- Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product	WHO	- World Health Organization
HIC	- High Income Countries	WOAH	- World Organisation for Animal Health



From Inaugural ReAct Africa Annual Conference, October 2016, Limuru Kenya

Executive Summary

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a global threat that affects all countries. AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines, including antibiotics. As a result of AMR, antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines become ineffective and infections become difficult or impossible to treat, increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness, disability and death. Responding to the AMR problem, the World Health Assembly adopted the Global Action Plan (GAP) on AMR in 2015, and subsequently most countries have prepared their own National Action Plans (NAPs). ReAct Africa, as part of ReAct network, is one of the pioneer organisations fighting tirelessly against this menace for several years in the African context. As part of this effort, it has been organising the annual ReAct Africa - South Centre conferences since 2016. It was started on the principles of knowledge sharing, capacity building and more importantly with the aim of increasing the visibility of AMR in the region. The main purpose of this evaluation was to review the various conference themes over the past 8 years and to assess how it had contributed towards the development of NAPs on AMR in the African region. The report is not only meant to guide ReAct in terms of strategic direction for its future conferences, but will also inform other organisations - national and international, governmental and non-governmental

– in understanding regional challenges and developing inclusive strategies. For this evaluation, a mixed method approach involving desk reviews of the previous conference reports and quantitative analysis of the participant feedback was adopted. During the analysis, it was noted that the conference themes were consistently aligned with the development of the NAPs in the region. Some of the key challenges highlighted through the conference included poor surveillance leading to the absence of reliable data for decision making, lack of political commitment and insufficient investments and sub-optimal governance structures. Building on the principles on multilateralism, it highlighted the need for innovative funding strategies by aligning with existing policies such as universal health coverage, strengthening parallel programmes such as Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), and adopting a one health approach. The participants were equivocal in agreeing that the conference had contributed positively towards acquiring knowledge and developing skills. The conference contributed to south-south learning, and provided significant networking opportunities for researchers and policymakers in the region. It has been concluded that a better dissemination strategy and sustainability measures should be identified for the conference outcomes, besides adopting methods for greater community engagement.



Over the past decade, ReAct Africa has been at the forefront of making change and bringing people together to tackle AMR. ReAct Africa exemplifies collaboration and gives us hope of a future where AMR is not one of the most fatal threats facing Africa

Professor Dame Sally Davies
UK Special Envoy on Antimicrobial Resistance

Brief Background

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a significant global threat to public health and development. It was directly responsible for 1.27 million deaths and associated with 4.95 million deaths in 2019 alone¹. AMR is expected to shave-off 1.1% of the Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2050, besides costing the world more than \$1 trillion a year after 2030, even in a low impact scenario². Therefore, it has the power to derail the attainment of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is a threat to our shared future.

Some of the key drivers of AMR are the misuse and overuse of antimicrobials in humans, animals, and plants. Besides undermining the effectiveness of modern medicine, making infections harder to treat and medical procedures riskier, AMR brings in substantial healthcare costs. The impact of AMR is felt in agriculture and animal health sectors too, and it is projected to result in a fall in agricultural productivity by 11% by 2050. It affects all countries, with low- and middle-income nations being particularly vulnerable due to poverty and inequality. However, countries do not really have to re-invent the wheel. There are many best practices and support systems out there which can be adopted or modified into country specific settings to tackle this universal menace, provided there is sufficient political capital, resource mobilization and scientific capacity.

In this spirit, since 2016, ReAct Africa Network (RAN) has been leading an annual conference that brings together key people from multiple governments, academia, resource partners, intergovernmental organizations and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to support each other in advancing the implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on AMR. This conference is meant to leverage the strength of partnerships and knowledge sharing and was aimed at fostering south-south collaboration in tackling a wicked problem. Since 2018, South Centre (SC) has partnered with ReAct Africa in this endeavour to co-host the event. The year 2024 is special for RAN as it marks the 10th anniversary of its inception. On this occasion we are looking back to see how RAN conferences have evolved over the years specifically highlighting the support that have been provided to the implementation of AMR NAPs in African context.

Approach and philosophy

Enabling access to effective treatment for infectious conditions, while ensuring appropriate use of antimicrobials, has been a foundational principle for RAN to organize the annual conference. Africa faces an access challenge with regards to high quality treatment for infectious diseases, and it has been shown that antibiotic consumption in sub-Saharan Africa has been significantly lower than consumption in High Income Countries (HICs), despite having higher communicable disease burden than HICs³. The NAPs and the associated interventions should be able to ensure that such equity considerations find prominence.

¹ Antimicrobial Resistance Collaborators. Global burden of bacterial antimicrobial resistance in 2019: a systematic analysis. *Lancet*. 2022 Feb 12;399(10325):629-655. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(21)02724-0.

² World Bank. 2017. "Drug-Resistant Infections: A Threat to Our Economic Future." Washington, DC: World Bank

³ Browne AJ, Chipeta MG, Haines-Woodhouse G, Kumaran EPA, Hamadani BHK, Zarea S, Henry NJ, Deshpande A, Reiner RC Jr, Day NPJ, Lopez AD, Dunachie S, Moore CE, Stergachis A, Hay SI, Dolecek C. Global antibiotic consumption and usage in humans, 2000-18: a spatial modelling study. *Lancet Planet Health*. 2021 Dec;5(12):e893-e904. doi: 10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00280-1.



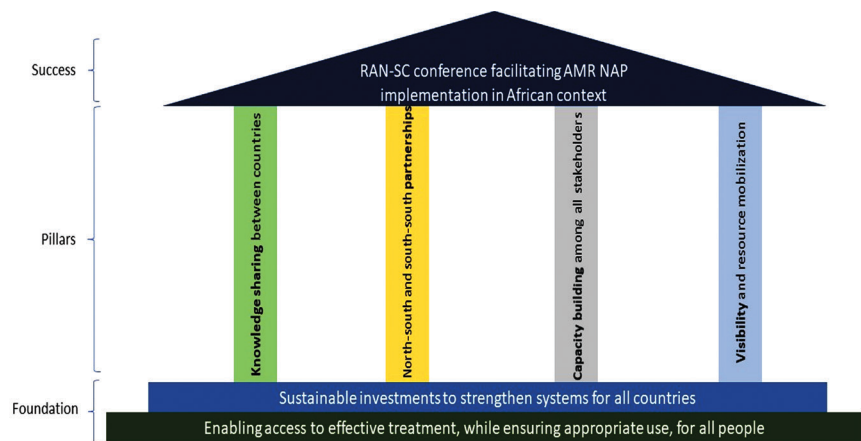
Looking back at 10 years of ReAct Africa, it was in 2016 that the first RAN conference took place with a theme of supporting LMICs in developing NAPs. This was before any African country had yet developed an AMR-NAP. I had a dream and desire to create a unique platform that would not only create opportunities for cross-learning but contribute immensely to building professionals equipped to address today's and future challenges. Over the years, our themes have highlighted the challenges and needs unique to the continent thereby becoming a platform for unified African voices. Though it has been a difficult journey, I must admit that it has been an incredibly rewarding experience, and I am just glad that our team and partners have managed to sustain the momentum.

Prof Mirfin Mpundu
Executive Director
ReAct Africa

Most countries in the continent have suboptimal systemic capacity for preventing and managing infectious conditions - in human and animal health sectors. This is evident from Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) facilities, health worker - population ratios, biosecurity provisions in farms, biomedical waste management in hospitals etc. Steady investments in improving the systemic capacities should also be highlighted as a priority, to facilitate the successful implementation of AMR NAPs.

RAN - SC annual conferences are meant to leverage the foundational principles in a continental perspective to increase knowledge sharing among countries, facilitate partnerships, build capacity, and increase visibility for AMR in the continent. [Figure 1]

Figure 1: Strategic framework for RAN-SC conference



Continuing need for continental convening on AMR

RAN-SC conference has been instrumental in catalyzing and accelerating AMR NAP implementation in the African context. This is evident from the presentations made by AMR focal points of various countries in the RAN-SC conferences. The conference has facilitated sharing of best practices and enabled the participants to objectively look at the challenges they face and find opportunities to advance their country's AMR agenda. The conference has also played a role in Africa fairing better than many other regions of the world in launching NAPs, despite resource constraints. [Figure 2]

Figure 2: Country Progress with development of National Action Plans on AMR



(Source: Global Database for Tracking AMR Country Self-assessment Survey (TrACSS) 2023)

There has been a challenge with the allocation of financial resources for NAP implementation in national budgets for most African countries. Most of the AMR-specific interventions are still operational through donor funding. This creates sustainability challenges, and many countries are forced to work on certain areas of the NAPs that are donor priorities. This shows the continued need for a continental gathering on AMR, so that the NAP agenda receives the political and programmatic attention it requires.

RAN-SC conferences have created several AMR champions, particularly among the national AMR Coordinating Committees (AMRCCs), youth and scientific community. Multiple youth advocates have had their capacity built in AMR, been given international exposure and linkages with key AMR experts and potential donors through the RAN-SC conference over the years. The scientific community in the continent is also getting a platform to present their research and find appropriate regional collaborators. The process of nurturing such champions should continue through the conferences.

Purpose, Scope and Target Audiences of the Review

One of the main **purposes** of this review is to evaluate the progress of NAP implementation in the African context and assess the contribution of the conference in catalyzing it. In 2016 when the conference was first initiated, AMR NAPs were at its nascent stage in the region, starting with development. A review through various conference themes can help us to assess its progress, and the role of ReAct in identifying the challenges in its implementation and suggesting solutions. It is also meant to facilitate knowledge sharing among stakeholders about key issues in the AMR landscape in Africa and help in planning future events. In addition, it can support policy making and decision-making process by highlighting key issues that have evolved over the years. Another objective of the review is to highlight areas that require additional training and resources.

The **scope** typically includes examination of the themes discussed at each conference, including their relevance, significance and alignment with broader goals and objectives. Participant engagement in terms of representation of various countries within the sub-Saharan region and presence of international partners were assessed. One of the key questions was on tracking the progress of NAP implementation in the region, challeng-

es faced, and possible solutions identified.

The **target audiences** of this review included the following:

Government Agencies: National and regional government agencies responsible for public health, research, or policy development who can use the review to inform their strategies and decision-making processes.

Partners and Donors: The partners of the conference such as South Centre and other major donors of conference will have an interest to understand its merit and improve accountability.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): NGOs can use the review to evaluate their programs, advocate for policy changes, or mobilize resources for interventions.

International Organizations: Multilateral organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), World Bank, World Health Organisation (WHO) may utilize the review to inform their global initiatives, guidelines, and capacity building efforts.

Academic Institutions: Research institutions and universities may use the review to inform their academic programs, research priorities, and collaborations with other stakeholders.

Private Sector: Healthcare providers, and other private sector entities may have an interest in the review to understand market trends, regulatory developments, and opportunities for collaboration or investment in the field.

Methodology

The methodology has two parts; in the first part a desk review of conference reports from 2016 was done to investigate the progress in NAP implementation in the African continent. It particularly focused on identifying key challenges in NAP implementation in the region and possible solutions that came up during the proceedings. The conference reports available on the ReAct website were retrieved, and content analysis was done to identify the key themes under challenges and solutions for each year. In the second part, quantitative analysis of the participant feedback collected via a questionnaire during the last RAN-SC conference was done and necessary univariate and bivariate analysis were conducted. The descriptive feedback by the participants was also assessed and key points in terms of what was good about the conference and what could be improved in future was identified.



Leave no one behind! Let us remove barriers to health services and strengthen primary health care. Community engagement, and enhancing access to prevention, diagnosis and appropriate treatment for drug-resistant infections is critical. We are proud to collaborate with ReAct Africa to implement a people-centered approach for addressing AMR.

Dr Anand Balachandran

Unit Head, AMR National Action Plans and Monitoring.
WHO-HQ

Presentation of Findings

The findings are presented in two parts. The first part contains the findings from the desk review and the second part includes results from analysis of participants' feedback.

Part 1: Desk Review

The Sequential Progression of RAN Conference Themes

Over the years, RAN conferences have acted as critical platforms for ensuring the prominence of AMR NAPs within the African context. These conferences have consistently identified themes that were contextually relevant, tracing the evolution of NAPs from conceptualization to implementation across the region. From supporting the initial development to navigating the diverse stages of implementation in the sub-Saharan African region, RAN-SC conferences have provided a comprehensive overview of the progress and challenges surrounding NAPs in Africa. Image 1 below lists out, in chronological order, the various themes of RAN-SC conferences since 2016.

Image 1: Themes of ReAct Africa-South Centre Conferences from 2016 – 2023



An analysis of the agenda of the conferences yielded rich insights on the remarkable progress that were made over the years. The RAN-SC annual conferences facilitated discussions among stakeholders from around the world, including policy-makers, researchers, healthcare professionals, and community representatives, to address the complexities of NAPs. They gave a forum for young researchers, practitioners, academicians and managers from the sub-Saharan region to interact with global experts in the field of AMR. Through panel discussions, workshops, and keynote presentations, it motivated participants to dive deeper into the opportunities and challenges related to NAP implementation in their respective countries. Case studies and success stories from different countries showcased effective strategies for addressing AMR and strengthening healthcare systems. This atmosphere of dialogue and knowledge sharing also opened room for fostering partnerships and resource mobilisation to implement NAPs thereby contributing towards improving health outcomes in Africa.

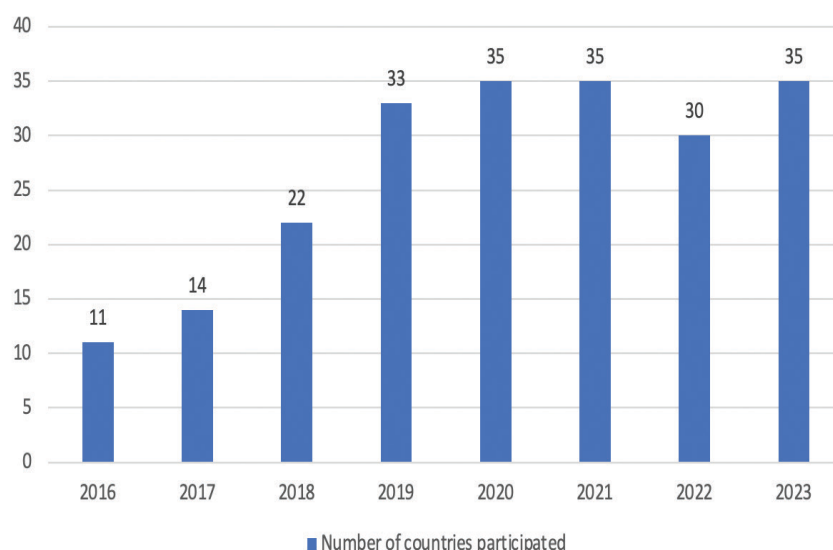
It was also worth noting that RAN-SC conferences always emphasised on examining the alignment of AMR NAPs with global agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and pandemic preparedness frameworks. These discussions highlighted the interconnectedness of national and global health priorities and underscored the importance of integrating NAPs into broader health and development strategies. For the past few years, the conferences focused primarily in bringing all actors together for the integration of One Health agenda into the implementation of NAPs. Acknowledging how intricately human health, animal health and environment were linked, RAN conferences took initiative in bringing experts from these diverse fields to collectively address the challenges posed by AMR. The conferences gave participants an opportunity to witness how interventions in one sector had their impact across various domains. It also highlighted the need for multisectoral collaboration, enhancing collective efforts and developing integrated approaches to NAP implementation. These efforts exposed participants from African region to the multifaceted challenges posed by AMR and the need to safeguard both human and animal health while promoting environmental sustainability.

In summary, the RAN-SC conferences were responsive to the needs of AMR NAPs in the region. It was also instrumental in facilitating its implementation by fostering collaborative and action driven efforts in reducing or slowing down AMR in the African context. By bringing together diverse stakeholders with a focus on One Health, they provided a platform for dialogue and exchange across sectors.

Being one of the most sort after AMR conferences in the region, the RAN-SC annual conferences had enjoyed good participation from countries across the African region.

Figure: 3 The number of countries represented at the RAN-SC conference each year



Over the years, taking part in annual conferences and other activities organized by ReAct Africa has been an enriching experience. ReAct has provided a platform for participants from many countries and partners to share their successes and challenges in implementing national actions plans on Antimicrobial Resistance. ReAct also ensured alignment of AMR with important global health agendas such as Universal Health Coverage. Congratulations ReAct Africa and all the best!

Dr Laetitia Gahimbare

AMR Technical Officer –
Surveillance & Laboratory
Strengthening
Assistant Regional Director (ARD) Cluster
WHO Regional Office for
Africa

Summary of NAP Challenges addressed in each RAN Conference

The following table summarises the key NAP related challenges that were specific to the African context and the possible solutions that came out of each year's conference.

Table 1: Year wise AMR NAP related challenges and solutions that were highlighted through RAN conference

Year	Key challenges	Possible solutions
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient national AMR surveillance and Antimicrobial Use (AMU) monitoring systems leading to poor data regarding antibiotic use and consumption patterns • Incomplete understanding about the root cause and cost of AMR in the African context • Knowledge gap regarding changing demand for animal protein and antibiotic use in aqua culture • Lack of evidence based policy making in the continent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in strengthening laboratory capacity, especially bacteriology diagnostics, in the continent • Strengthen antimicrobial stewardship to reduce overall antibiotic consumption, target antibiotic use, and minimize transmission of genetic determinants. • Focus on infection prevention and control, including handwashing and ward hygiene. • Invest in data collection and management to support evidence based policy making and to understand the socio-economic impact of AMR. • Promote responsible antibiotic use through multi-pronged strategy that include behavior change and advocacy by healthcare workers
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor intersectoral co-ordination between human/animal health, agriculture and environment. • Resource intensiveness and absence of legal framework required for NAP implementation • Poor integration into SDGs hampering political will and resource mobilisation • Gaps in comprehensive surveillance programs and comprehensive stewardship efforts • Lack of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) programs beyond the human sector. • Neglecting the Research and Development (R&D) needs for new antibiotics, vaccines, and diagnostics and poor investments in R&D by African governments. • Poor mechanisms to ensure the quality of available antimicrobials. • Absence of comprehensive performance indicators that align with global recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the multisectoral AMR Coordination committees at the country level • Measures to harness global support that include setting up a conservation fund and engaging high income countries and multi-lateral partners • Measures to strengthen stewardship, develop legal framework and align with existing global agendas • Expand the scope of AMR strategies to include other sectors in an attempt towards one health approach • Invest in strengthening existing medicine regulatory system, infrastructural and institutional capacities and R&D for newer molecules • Align indicators with global policy and plan that will ensure uniformity and allow comparison

2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructural deficiencies in terms of necessary diagnostic and laboratory equipment and adequate bio-medical waste management. • Poor regulatory mechanism, insufficient legislative and legal framework and inadequate political commitment and leadership primarily due to poor awareness. • Bureaucratic hurdles and delays affecting intersectoral co-ordination within countries • Difficulties with respect to changing existing cultural and behavioural practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase investment in laboratory capacity, including in robust supply chains for lab consumables • Expand the scope to incorporate media and civil society engagement to support awareness raising and behaviour change efforts. • Resource optimisation by creating cross sectoral integration and alignment with existing country guideline and global goals for sustainable development. • Developing and maintaining political momentum to enhance coherence and accountability through engagement of international organisations such as FAO, WHO etc and alignment of messages with the national and global action plans • Widen the scope to include all ages groups and streams of medicine, and to encourage discussion around AMR, by investing in education and research.
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAP implementation not uniform across Africa due to lack of resources with respect to monetary and technical support • Insufficient funding towards infrastructural development such as strengthening IPC components • Reduced focus on strengthening water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems • Inadequate access to quality medicines and diagnostic tools • Absence of mechanism to integrate AMR with evolving international focus such as universal health coverage. This lead to failure on capitalising on the commonalities of different policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of UHC frameworks to address AMR effectively and efficiently • Identify sustainable financing mechanisms such as pledging budgetary allocation specifically for AMR • Strengthen governance structures to ensure collective engagement on diverse areas of importance thereby forming a common platform for all stakeholders and ensuring quality improvement. • Strengthening primary healthcare systems by attracting more investments in preventive measures and focusing on healthcare workforce capacity building. • Investing in quality-assured medicines for effective treatment outcomes thereby reducing the risk of resistance development.
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No headway in assuring a fixed budgetary allocation earmarked for implementing NAP • Diversion of funds for pandemic which may happen with future pandemics as well if appropriate systems are not put in place. • Absence of common platforms that promote intersectoral interaction hindering effective implementation of NAPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue lobbying to prioritize budgetary allocation for AMR • Align AMR strategies with the strategies identified for pandemic response such as improving hand hygiene and strengthening infection prevention and control measures • Developing a common platform for strengthening intersectoral collaboration for effective implementation and co-ordination of AMR strategies. Develop methods for effective data sharing that will support funders and policy makers in informed decision making • Invest in capacity building at all levels including general public through youth engagement and students movement to harness on their creativity to drive behaviour change in the society.

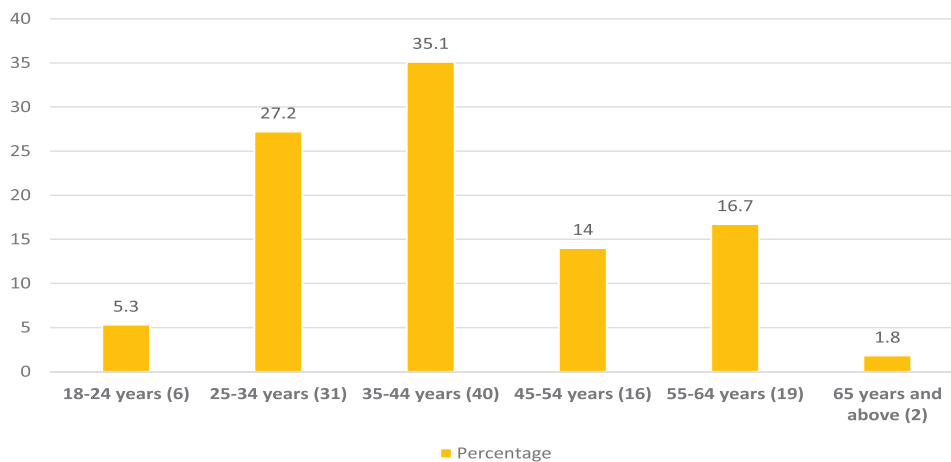
<p>2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy reliance on individual expertise rather than established governance structures, leading to inconsistencies and fragmentation. • One health approach has not yet received the attention and the momentum that it requires, often causing one sided focus on human health and poor multi sectoral engagement resulting in blame shifting and inadequate solutions. • The pandemic made already challenging resource acquisition for NAP implementation more complex by diverting attention and draining resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise NAPs to prioritize One Health approach, ensuring balanced attention to human, animal, and environmental health, thereby creating a platform for multi-sectoral engagement. • Strengthen governance structure for AMR through capacity building, lobbying and awareness creation to ensure coordinated efforts and accountability. • Riding on the lessons from pandemic to integrate NAPs with health systems, enhance surveillance and promote rational use of antibiotics. • Lobbying with government for fixed budgetary allocation to ensure sustainable financing. • Simplify communication around AMR for greater penetration
<p>2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In countries with poor economic situation, budgetary allocation alone will not help, other financial resources need to be identified for sustainable funding. • Poor political commitment and local ownership prevent the NAP from moving into implementation phase in many countries. • Inaccurate reporting affecting the development of tailored approaches, context-specific implementation strategies impeding AMR prevention and control efforts. • Inadequate funding towards research in AMR which is essential in understanding region specific challenges such as supply chain issues, quality assurance of antibiotics and identifying sustainable solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and engagement through awareness creation among political leadership, policy makers, community leaders and local champions to attract funding and drive policy changes to NAP implementation. • Invest in improving surveillance systems and standardizing data analysis and information management across human, animal, food, and environmental sectors. • Capacity building of healthcare workers and general public through health systems strengthening and awareness campaigns Promoting responsible antibiotic use and raising awareness about the implications of AMR are essential components of effective NAP implementation. • Strengthening international collaborations - South-South and North-South exchanges - to facilitate knowledge sharing and resource mobilization.

2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funding and non-prioritization of AMR in national agenda continue to be the major challenge for NAP implementation. • Poor adoption of one health approach • Insufficient and poor-quality data affecting evidence-based decision making and planning. • Despite existing interventions, community engagement is often neglected with efforts being concentrated more at higher levels and are not effectively reaching the grassroots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative funding strategies such as integrating AMR into other programs like Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and vaccine programs, can help address the funding gap for AMR activities. Adopting pooled procurement models and engaging with private partners are also suggested to ensure sustained availability of resources. Multi-stakeholder collaborations and harmonization of NAPs between different countries can facilitate coordinated efforts to combat AMR effectively. • Investing in robust surveillance systems and improving data quality are essential for evidence-based policymaking and resource allocation. Strengthening partnerships with international research institutions can support the generation of quality data on AMR in the region. • Community empowerment through awareness and engagement can bridge the gap between policy interventions and grassroots implementation. Empowering community health workers and leveraging the faith sector as entry points to communities are suggested approaches.
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Participant Feedback

Characteristics of the participants

Figure 4: Age-wise participant distribution



Nearly two thirds of the participants were aged less than 45, showing that the conference is managing to attract early-career researchers from the region.

Figure 5: Sector-wise representation

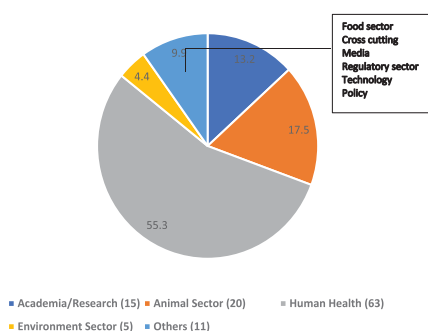


Figure 6: Region-wise participation frequency

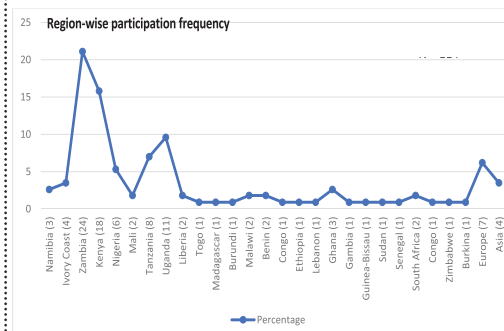
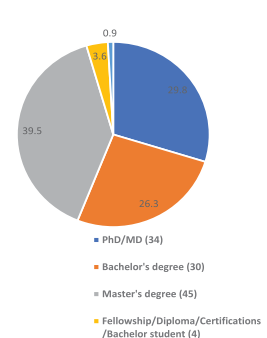


Figure 7: Participants' educational qualifications



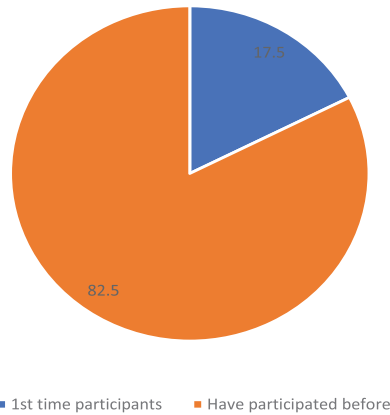


AMR Action plans and implementation story in Africa cannot be told without ReAct Africa. This organization catalyzed most country AMR activities and set up the innovative annual RAN conferences as peer review mechanism as well as learning for most countries. ReAct Africa had become the thought leader harnessing great minds, building capacity, and making champions for the cause of AMR in the region. The Youth in AMR initiative is one great inter-generational action worth replicating continentally. We are proud of ReAct Africa and congratulations on this milestone. Keep leading.

Dr Martha Gyansa-Lutterodt

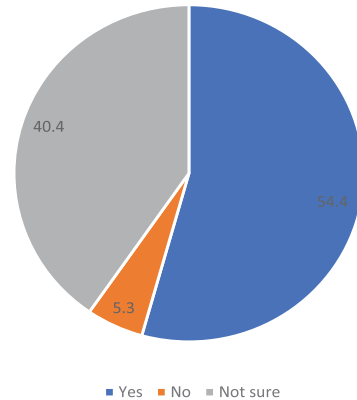
Former Director,
Technical Coordination
Directorate
Ministry of Health

Figure 8: Proportion of participants attending RAN conference for the first time



Only around one fifth of the respondents were first time participants, showing that the conference manages to retain participants over time.

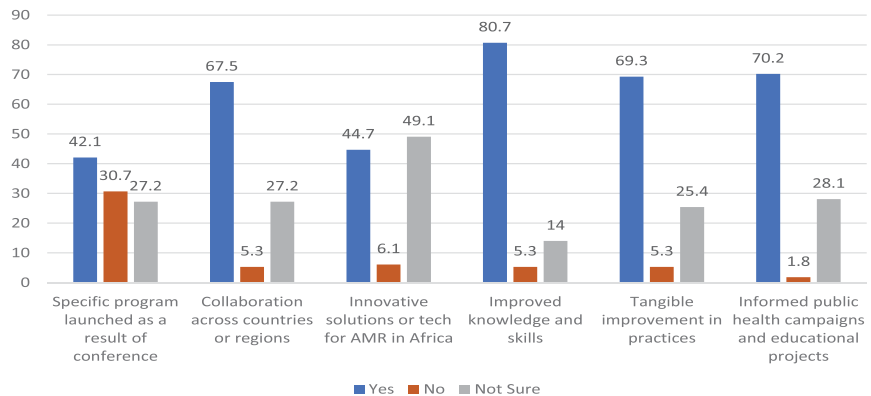
Figure 9: Proportion of participants who feel that there are mechanisms in place to sustain momentum between annual events



More than half of the participants (54.4%) felt that there were mechanisms in place to keep the momentum going, while 40.4% felt that there were no systems available.

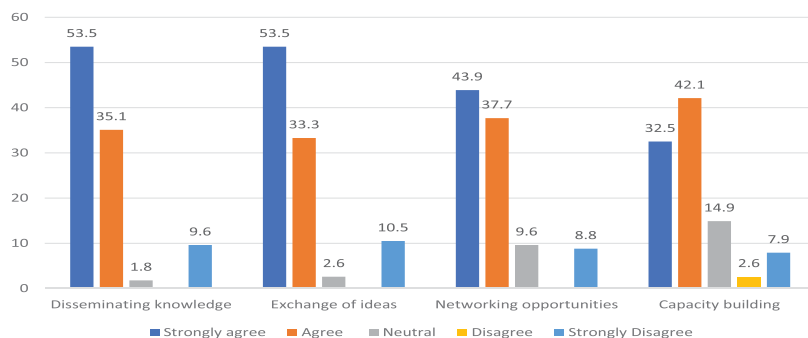
In this section, we were looking at participants take on how the annual conference have supported them.

Figure 10: Benefits of attending the conference



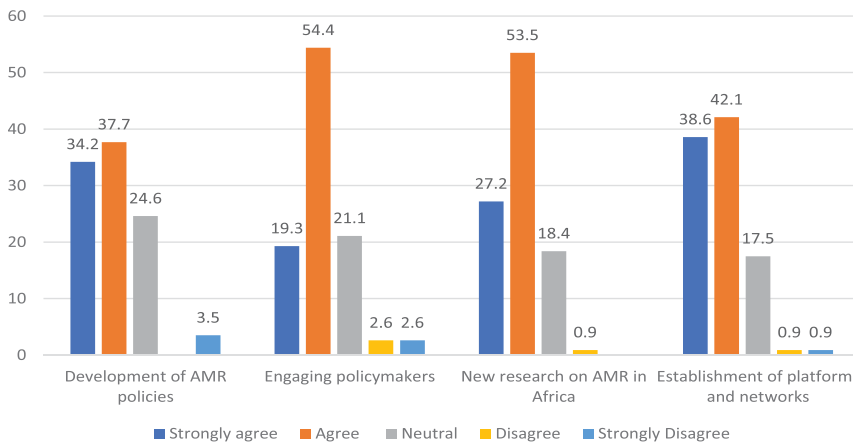
About 80% of participants felt that participation improved knowledge and skills. More than two thirds felt that conference supported collaboration, improving their practice and development of informed public health campaigns. Nearly 45% felt the conferences provided a basis for innovative solutions and specific launch of new initiatives.

Figure 11: Proportion of participants who agreed the conferences provided a platform for knowledge dissemination, exchange of ideas, networking opportunities and capacity building.



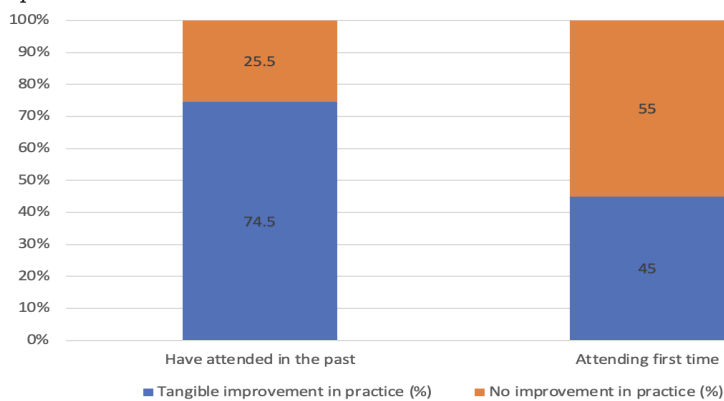
More than 50% agreed that conference was a platform for disseminating knowledge and exchange of ideas. About 43% felt that it provided networking opportunities, while 42% felt that it supported capacity building.

Figure 12: Proportion of participants who agree RAN conference is a platform that encourages the development of AMR policies, , developing new research on AMR in Africa and establishing platforms and networks.



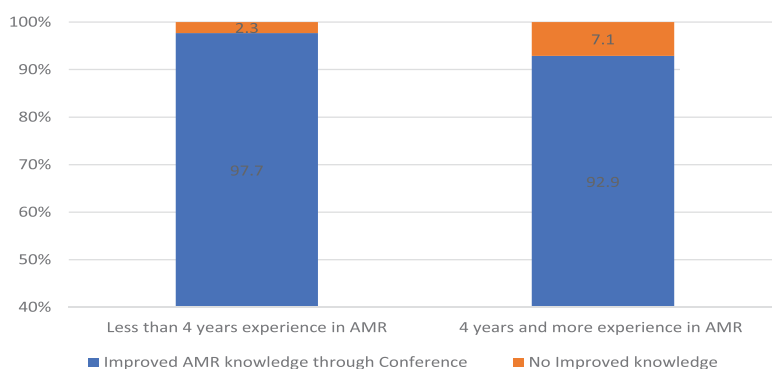
About 75% of the participants agreed that the conferences provided a platform for policy development, research and networking.

Figure 13: Association between recurrent participation and improvement in practice



We looked at the utility of repeated participation on the respondents' practices. Nearly 75% of the participants who had participated in the past felt that attending RAN-SC conferences made a tangible improvement in practice, while only less than half of the first-time participants had felt that way. This difference appeared to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 14: Association between years of experience in the field and gain of knowledge from the conference



ReAct Africa has been at the forefront supporting efforts towards the containment of AMR in the continent. By rallying the voices of civil society and the youth in championing the AMR agenda; they have spearheaded AMR awareness and facilitated AMR-NAP implementation by sharing the ReAct toolbox while engaging the quadripartite.

Dr. Jane Lwoyero
AMR Technical Officer-
WOAH SRR/EA

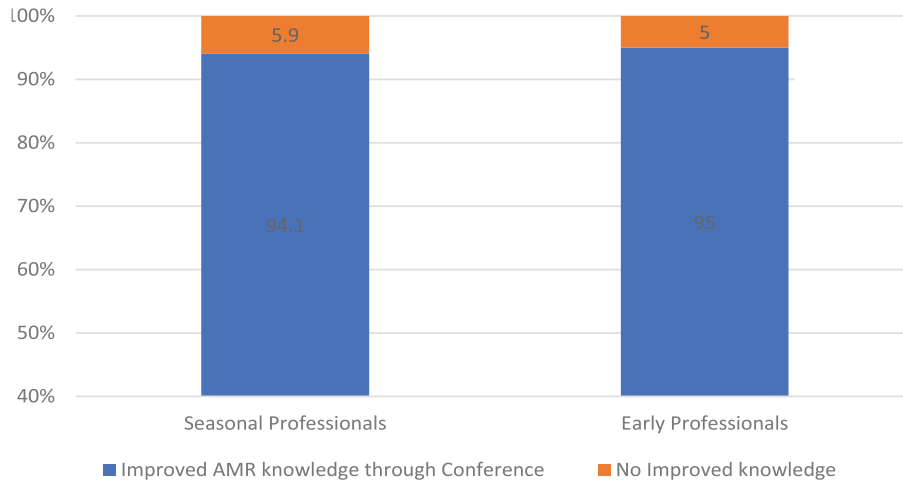


The ReAct Africa Conferences have given unparalleled support for knowledge sharing and inspiration to implement change towards mitigating antibiotic resistance on the African continent. These creative conferences through ReAct Africa's visionary leadership continue to motivate us to greater heights.

Prof Marc Mendelson
Director, The Trinity Challenge on AMR. Professor of Infectious Diseases, University of Cape Town

We looked at whether the conference was more useful for early-career researchers. Among participants with less than 4 years' of professional experience, 97.7% felt that attending conference contributed towards knowledge improvement while 92.9% with 4 and more years of experience felt that conference participation improved knowledge and this difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 15: Association between educational background and gain of knowledge from the conference



Similarly, nearly 95% each of seasonal professionals (who had doctoral degrees) and early professionals (those were still pursuing their bachelors), felt that the conference was contributing towards improving their knowledge and skills.

The following were a few points identified by the participants as what stood out and what can be improved.

What stood out in the conference

1. Good overall organization
2. Presence of speakers from diverse backgrounds and countries; and diversity of participants
3. Conducive environment for discussions and pleasant venues
4. Great networking opportunities with others in the same field
5. Stories being told by the local participants about realistic & successful initiatives.
6. Participant enthusiasm and organizer resilience.

What can be improved

1. The deliberations were still skewed towards human health; involve other sectors.
2. Improve focus on community engagement.
3. More opportunities to allow sharing/dissemination of research on AMR in the continent.
4. Need to share the discussion topics and agenda with the participants earlier.
5. Moving forward, the conference should lead the way to get commitments from country representations by developing a case around AMR.
6. Give platform for youth to share their contributions.
7. Gender balanced panelist and presenters.
8. Need to focus on observed or anticipated impact of intervention.
9. Early promotion to maximize participation and better time management with proper breaks during the proceedings.
10. Should provide platform for engagement with regulatory bodies.
11. Should provide room for converting innovations and solutions identified into actionable items.

Limitations

This report provides valuable insights into the RAN conferences; however, it has several limitations as well.

Selection Bias: Conference reports would not give a real picture about the ground-level reality. Many a times speakers and the other presentations were chosen based on criteria such as expertise, positions held etc. which would invariably bring in biases in the information presented.

Incomplete Information: Some of the conference presentations lacked some methodological details in comparison with peer reviewed publications that were more scientifically sound, which would make it difficult to check the veracity of the content. The presentations might or might not be reviewed by the organisers or sessions chairs, thereby lacking scrutiny and feedback, raising the possibilities for data inaccuracies.

Publication Bias: Many a times reports were prioritized towards publishing positive findings and success stories thereby inherently skewed against negative results.

Participation bias: Not all who had participated in the conference might have given feedback. So, it would be difficult to generalize the findings from the feedback to the overall conference review.

Conflict of Interest: The presenters might have conflict of interest such as government representations, focus area of donor institutions etc. with specific interest in particular intervention or technology. It would be difficult to identify them while reviewing the report retrospectively.

Conclusions

This report primarily investigated the evolution of RAN-SC conferences and how they had supported AMR NAP implementation in the region. The following were the main conclusions.

- The themes identified over the years were in alignment with AMR NAPs implementation progress in the region. As the implementation efforts progressed, the conferences were quite successful in highlighting the key challenges and potential solutions in the region.
- Though the conferences came up with innovative, context-specific solutions, more efforts are needed with regards to adopting these solutions in NAP implementation on the ground. Many challenges such as identifying sustainable funding, strengthening governance structures etc. kept re-appearing over the years.
- Looking at the participant feedback, RAN conferences had a pan-continental appeal with representation from a wide range of countries. Majority of the respondents were recurrent participants, though the number of students were quite limited. However recurrent participation contributed towards tangible improvement in practice.
- Majority of the participants concur that the RAN-SC conferences were successful in keeping the momentum going in the region.
- The conferences were instrumental in improving knowledge and skills. Irrespective of the years of experience in the field of AMR or educational background, all participants felt that the conference had contributed positively towards knowledge acquisition and skill development in AMR.



Tackling antimicrobial resistance requires concerted action at the national level, over the past decade ReAct Africa has played a really important role enabling this, both advocating for change and providing technical support that enabled it. I hope they continue this vital work for a long time to come, the world is a safer place because of it.

Anthony McDonnell

Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Global Development's Global Health team



Through its world class Annual conferences, ReAct-Africa has proved to be truly an African inspiration, bringing together stakeholders relevant to tackling the silent pandemic that is AMR in our settings. The presentations are a catalyst to south-south partnerships that are delivering practical solutions in the fight against the AMR scourge.

Prof Samuel Kariuki

Eastern Africa Director, Drugs for Neglected Disease initiative



ReAct Africa's work on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is impactful and appreciated, especially at a time when AMR is not in focus, yet deadly. I participated in the 2019 Nairobi conference which effectively united AMR experts, fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration to combat AMR in Africa. Your continued efforts are invaluable!

**Aboagye-Nyame,
Francis**

Program Director,
Management Sciences
for Health
Arlington, Virginia,
United States

Recommendations, lessons learnt and good practices

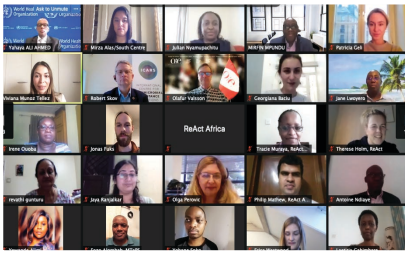
After critically reviewing RAN-SC conferences from 2016 to 2023 and evaluating participant feedback, the following recommendations, key lessons and good practices can be identified.

- ▶ Identify ways to improve the visibility of solutions that evolve out of RAN-SC conferences through innovative dissemination strategies to increase its adoption in the regional context. Future conferences should specifically target persistent challenges that come up such as sustainable funding, strengthening of governance structures etc.
- ▶ The conference should broaden its scope to include students and grass root organizations to increase its reach and impact.
- ▶ It is important to build on the momentum developed by these conferences by organizing workshops, knowledge sharing events for the stakeholders informing the latest developments in NAP implementation.
- ▶ Building on the positives like knowledge and skills development should be continued, with emphasis on providing targeted capacity-building initiatives that are tailored to the specific needs of participants, regardless of their educational background or experience in the field of AMR.
- ▶ The conference should serve as a platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned in NAP implementation. Case studies and success stories from different countries can inspire others and inform decision-making processes at the national and regional levels.

The RAN-SC conferences:

- Are instrumental in keeping up the momentum.
- Are always able to provide something new irrespective of the level of experience or education, enhancing the knowledge of participants
- Contribute towards improving practice.
- Provide a platform for networking and engagement.

By considering the above, the RAN-SC conference can be considered as an instrument to strengthen NAP implementation in the region, facilitate south-south learning and contribute to the global efforts to combat AMR effectively.



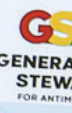
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