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International Collaborations on Health, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS

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Session F: International Collaborations in Gender and Science





OBJECTIVES

- Describe some observations about STEM
- Share some meanings about collaboration and some drivers
- Illustrate a few examples of my own work in international collaborations
- Indicate a few assumptions and challenges
- Provide some tentative concluding remarks









STEM AND SOCIETY

- STEM investments are deeply embedded in society
- STEM work should ideally also relate to valuable work in the social sciences and humanities - both are critical to understanding of the world, cultures, knowledge of and relationships within society
- Society is not neutral; highly gendered as divisions are deeply embedded
- "Glass obstacles" capture unequal gendered processes
- Representation of untapped talent enables participation as it ensures growing an economy while simultaneously promoting social justice







COLLABORATION

Has a telos – a necessary purpose

- Value add
- Cornerstone of academic and scholarly life that is key to moving the science system
- Enables sharing of resources and expertise
- Donor driven at times
- Working together produces better teaching and research & might even enable better value for money
- Enables researchers to participate in a network of cutting-edge and innovative activity
- Key to cultural, economic and developmental importance

- Creating jobs and livelihoods
 - Expanding infrastructure
- Transitioning to a low-carbon economy
 - Transforming urban and rural spaces
 - Improving education and training
 - Providing quality health care
 - Building a capable state
 - Fighting corruption and enhancing accountability
- Transforming society and uniting the nation

(All of the above is also about improvement of social life with social consequences → have policy and programmatic implications and are also knowledge-driven)

South African National Development Plan Vision for 2030 (2011)







COLLABORATION ctd

- More than just coming together for data collection, conferences, technical support, also about strategic and political ends (Wagner 1997)
- Collaboration can itself be viewed as a resource, offering access to skills, knowledge, techniques, and intellectual diversity and companionship (Katz, J.S., and Martin, B. R. (1997)
- What determines when one might collaborate? What are the motivations for building, maintaining, or dissolving collaborative network relations? What determines with whom one collaborates?
- Collaboration is an iterative process reflecting various activities, stages, and contextual features (Sargent and Waters 2004; Sonnenwald 2007).
- Is dependent on the ways in which research is organised, conducted, and located, i.e., on the culture and organisation of science (Fox and Mohapatra 2007; Wagner 2008; Drori et al. 2003).

- Collaboration process requires attention to work groups, practices, and climates that might stimulate or depress collaboration and productivity
- Collaborative relationship is shaped by the resources that any individual scientist brings to the process
- Intellectual capital includes both codified and tacit knowledge (Zucker et al. 2007).
- Codified knowledge typically operationalised as publications – provides the means by which collaborative productivity has largely been measured.
- Tacit knowledge, however, refers to individual skills and experience, and the way in which it is engaged is through collaborations (Zucker et al. 2007; Hicks and Narin 2001).
- Collaboration is in effect not a neutral process
 but rather a social process







DRIVERS OF COLLABORATION

About Science Capital

KNOWN DRIVERS

- Promote diversity of perspectives to enhance knowledge production (multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary toolboxes)
- Stimulate capacity building
- Stimulate and increase research funding
- To develop solutions that resonate around the world
- To enhance prestige, visibility, reputation, development of a brand and have global import

POLICY DRIVEN:

- the competitiveness and sustainability of the domestic research system Boost domestic economic growth;
- a commitment to work together on common problems, from climate change to poverty;
- and a commitment to internationalisation and a global citizenry more generally.

LESS KNOWN DRIVERS

- Collaboration between academics and scholars with different epistemic and ideological perspectives (a barrier but also a source of creativity)
- Quick delivery of capacity/research and low costs through project-specific collaborations (temporary alliances)







INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

- HIV and Sexual Risk Among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Tshwane (HSRC with Columbia University, OUT LGBT; NIH Funded; 4 years)
- MAC AIDS Fund leadership initiative: HIV
 Prevention in South Africa (HSRC Columbia University and UCLA, 3 years; MAC Funding)
- Raising the visibility of Lesbian, Bisexual and Other Women who have Sex with Women (WSW) in relation to HIV & AIDS: A Crosscountry project addressing health and community building for advocacy (4 Countries in Southern Africa; Columbia University; Funders)
- African Same-Sex Sexualities and Gender Diversity (HIVOS funded; Kenya, New York; Amsterdam & South Africa)





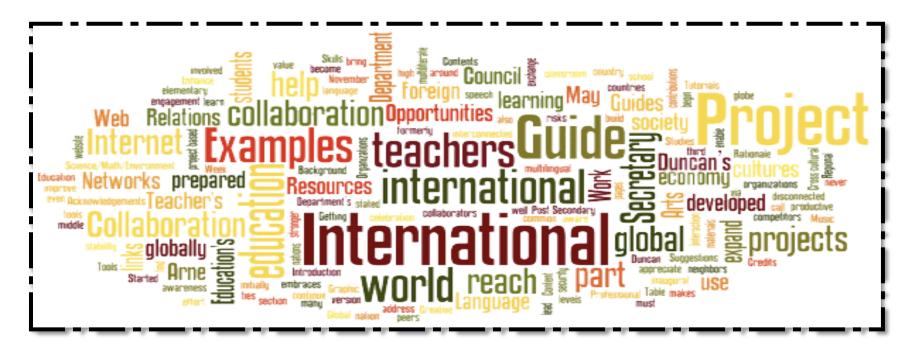




BIG MEASURES

- Research Outputs citation data suggest that the quality gain is strongest
- Research Awards

Are these the only two measures?









SOME CONCLUSIONS

- Long-term alliances are contingent on building trust in both personal and professional relations to yield good results
- Beyond research excellence, you also gain knowledge of other research systems and over time build strategic partnerships
- Joint development and sharing of datasets
- Sharing infrastructures

HOWEVER, based on experience we might also need to consider that:

- Scientific collaboration is complex and when gender issues added to the mix – another layer of complexity also added (gender but one critical determinant within a complex web of other dynamic processes)
- Power relations (race, gender, geography, class) are of equal importance in the broader context of network diversity
- Processes that lead to collaboration and productivity outcomes need further analysis

- Co-authorship, institution, country AND
 Citations are not the only determinants of quality (Katz and Martin, 1997)
- WHAT WOULD be good indicators/measures for assessing collaborations?









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- Thank You!
- Ke a leboga!
- Ngiyabonga!
- Baie dankie!







