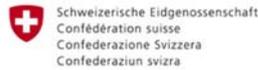


## 2<sup>nd</sup> ESTHER Switzerland Forum



Supported by



Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

The 2<sup>nd</sup> ESTHER Switzerland Partnership Forum was held on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Bern (Hotel Kreuz). Building on a successful 1<sup>st</sup> ESTHER Partnership Forum, held in November 2017, this second forum brought together representatives of partner organizations and involved stakeholders to exchange about “the transformative impact of ESTHER projects” in order to highlight the added value of Institutional Health Partnerships (IHP).

The forum was open to everyone interested in the ESTHER approach and over 60 persons of various organizations took part, including international partners of the *ESTHER Alliance for Global Health Partnerships* (<https://esther.eu>), of which ESTHER Switzerland is a member.

The forum was also an occasion to show the various on-going ESTHER supported projects and the developments of ESTHER Switzerland, now in its second year of concrete implementation. The discussions included exchanges about the importance of IHP, present and future activities of the renamed *ESTHER Alliance for Global Health Partnerships*, an exercise on applying the ESTHER EFFECT Tool, and a panel with project coordinators exchanging on partnership experiences. To inform and exchange on the ESTHER Switzerland supported projects a speed-dating sessions was organized.



Figure 1: Luciano Ruggia (ESTHER Switzerland Secretariat) opens the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESTHER Switzerland Forum.

## ESTHER Switzerland – Swiss excellence in Institutional Health Partnerships: the SDC perspective

Working in health partnerships, is demanding. Switzerland has an outstanding track record in building up and maintaining such partnerships. This mainly originates in the capacity to build long-standing and unique friendships. Plenty of examples exist between Swiss hospitals and partner hospitals based in low- and middle-income countries. Aside from the essential outcomes of personal commitment and experiences made through the professional exchange, ESTHER Switzerland gives the best possible frame for an IHP.



Figure 2: Jacques Mader (Co-Head of the Global Programme Health, SDC) is happy to collaborate with ESTHER Switzerland and the ESTHER Global Alliance. As funding agency of ESTHER Switzerland, the SDC acknowledges the organization as an important player with an increasingly strategic approach, in line with SDC's objectives.

The vision of the ESTHER Global Alliance is to contribute towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which is a response to the needs of the United Nations 2030 Agenda on the Sustainable Development Goal *Good health and well-being* (SDG 3). Furthermore, building up and supporting IHP is strongly linked to *Partnerships for the Goals* (SDG 17). This is in line with the objectives of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), which is funding ESTHER Switzerland, and which strongly supports the promotion of Swiss expertise.

A rapid evidence review on the effectiveness of IHP<sup>1</sup> showed that partnerships are effective. However, there is a need to better define and differentiate IHP in order to measure and compare effectiveness across such a diverse group, as there are many different ways to build partnerships.



Figure 3: Matthias Egger (Chair of ESTHER Switzerland) presents his own personal partnership experiences and reflects on how to move from classical capacity building and short-term projects towards long-term institution-to-institution partnerships that can achieve a permanent change and contribute to strengthen the health systems.



Figure 4: David Weakliam (President of the ESTHER Alliance) puts an emphasis on the diversity of ESTHER projects and presents the current and future activities of the alliance.

<sup>1</sup> Kelly et al., A rapid evidence review on the effectiveness of institutional health partnerships, Globalization and Health (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-015-0133-9>

Several projects and initiatives of the ESTHER Alliance for Global Health Partnerships were presented during the forum.



**ESTHER project’s Database**

The new webpage of the ESTHER Global Alliance provides an online database of all ESTHER supported partnership projects (<https://esther.eu/index.php/partnership-projects>).

The project’s online database can be searched by country, more than 40 now, or by intervention areas. This makes it easier

to locate other ESTHER projects in the same country or having the same approach and thus promote exchanges across projects. The new database will expand and include more projects over time.

**The ESTHER EFFECT Tool**

The online version of the ESTHER EFFECT Tool will be launched soon on <https://esther.eu/index.php/effect-tool>. This monitoring and evaluation tool specifically focuses on assessing implementation best practice, embedding change and added benefits to individuals and institutions of using a partnership model. It is a self-assessment tool for partners to assess current practice and looking at how to really embed change, so that projects sustain beyond project funding. This tool also aims to address ownership issues, to view the effectiveness or the added value for the “Northern” side and to evaluate projects on project level, to mention just a few examples on its applicability.



Figure 6: Claudia Aguirre (ESTHER Global Alliance for Health Partnerships Deputy General Secretary) explaining the EFFECT-tool-reflection-exercise to participants of the forum.

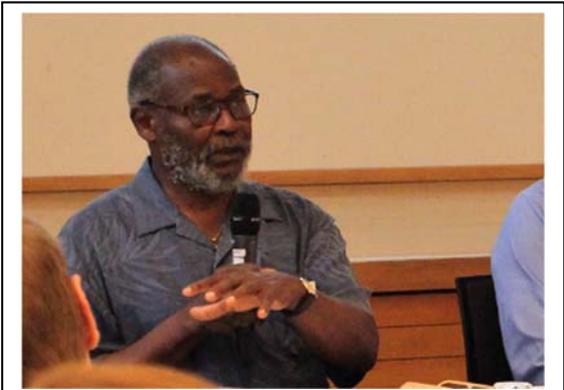
**ESTHER Switzerland Projects: Panel discussion – what works and what not?**

An important moment of the forum was the panel discussion around key elements that work well or are obstacles for an IHP. The panel was composed of four experienced experts, all of them leading an ESTHER Switzerland supported project (panelists on figure 7, f. l. t. r.): Dr. Vincent da Silva (Verein SUPPORT), Dr. David Beran (Geneva University Hospitals), Dr. Gilles Wandeler (University Hospital Bern), Dr. Nicola Low (Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Bern).



*Figure 7: Dr. Nicola Low commenting on her experiences with partners in Papua New Guinea.*

Following the panel talk, during the discussion with the public, one key feedback from a Southern partner was that at the end of the day, trust and ownership are the most important elements needed to overcome barriers and challenges and build effective partnerships.



*Figure 8: Dr. da Silva quoting an African saying: “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together”.*

**ESTHER Switzerland Projects**

During the forum's afternoon, several ESTHER Switzerland projects were presented by project representatives in an engaging speed-dating event with the participants. A description and a factsheet



*Figures 9 & 10: A speed dating experience: A vivid exchange between presenters of ESTHER Switzerland projects and participants.*

of all ESTHER Switzerland projects (2017 and 2018) are available on <https://www.esther-switzerland.ch/partnerships>.

### Critical reflections on training activities

Aims of this session were to better understand potentials of training activities and the working landscape for international health cooperation, which is changing. A critical reflection helps to effectively use produced knowledge collectively and to faster adapt to international trends and dynamics. Lessons learned in terms of training highlighted culturally tailored trainings and trainings based on local needs, an ensured knowledge transfer (e.g. in consideration of employee turnover) and distant learning possibilities after face-to-face learnings. The post-Ebola era increased the consciousness and readiness to react not only in terms of humanitarian crises, but also emphasizes on other important landscape changing events, for instance globalization, paradigm shifts on all levels (change of aid and policy makers mentality, access to generics), new diseases like NCDs, migration and climate change.



*Figure 11: Martin Leschhorn (Medicus Mundi Schweiz) challenged the participants with some brain-teasers on training activities to reaching transformative impact of ESTHER projects.*



*Figure 12: An interview with Katthyana Geneviève Aparicio Reyes (Program Officer, UHC and Health Systems, WHO) widens the critical thinking during the session.*

### Wrap Up of the 2nd ESTHER Switzerland Forum



*Figure 13: IHP ways can be various and complex.*

In an IHP, different institutions and persons with various backgrounds from completely different contexts come to work together. The partners may have divergent perspectives but should collaborate on a base of equality and respect. Therefore, to build up a partnership means to establish a dialogue and to find out what are the interests and needs of each partner. It is important to find the same junctions and the same (rail)ways to finally move dynamically into the same direction with a suitable pace.



Figure 14: Thomas Vogel (University Hospitals of Geneva) astonished the audience with humorous statements on partnerships: "We all agreed, but we don't see it the same".



Figure 15: Luciano Ruggia is "part of the hype"



Figure 16: The maraca playing heats and speeds up the speed dating session.



Figure 17: Susanne Amsler (SDC/ESTHER steering group) and Luciano Ruggia in heavy observation of the speed daters.

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**Photos:** Benedikt Christ, © ESTHER Switzerland