



GENERAL INFORMATION



University of Rwanda, College of Medicine and Health Sciences building on the Butare Campus (Southern Province).

The [Rwanda Journal Series F: Medicine and Health Sciences](#) (RJMHS) is a medical and health sciences journal published by the University of Rwanda (UR) and its College of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS), a higher education institution which was formed through a merger of Rwanda's previously independent public higher education institutions in 2013 ([Wikipedia](#)). The journal was launched as Rwanda Journal of Health Sciences, published by the former Kigali Health Institute, and was later merged to the Rwanda Journal Series F: Health Sciences, published by the former National University of Rwanda.

In 2016 RJMHS joined the [African Journal Partnership Program](#) (AJPP) and after Juliana Trajano I was the second volunteer to work with this journal.

The journal aims to publish two issues per annum digitally on the African Journals Online Platform (AJOL) as well as in print. RJMHS is not yet indexed in any abstracting database. Given the prior work accomplished and feedback by Juliana Trajano and talks with Trish Groves and Navjoyt Ladher from BMJ (mentor journal) it was agreed that raising the journals visibility the following goals were proposed:

- Raise the online visibility of the journal and its brand.
- Hold an editorial board meeting during the first week of July to enable me to meet the journal's key stakeholders and work with them to raise awareness about the journals plans.
- Holding weekly author workshops at UR's CMHS in Kigali/Butare to do skills building in the editors direct community of faculty and students—and to raise awareness about the journal within the university.

RJMHS EDITORIAL TEAM AND OTHER CONTACTS

The main contacts are:

- Prof. Dr. Jean Bosco Gahutu (jbgahutu@yahoo.com), acting EiC
- Prof. Dr. Kato Njunwa (njunwakato@gmail.com), (pro forma) EiC
- Malachie Tuyiziere (malaschie@gmail.com), Assistant Editor.

Prof. Kato Njunwa mentioned to me that he was still acting as EiC since he initiated the inclusion of RJMHS into AJPP and wanted to allow for a period where Prof. Gahutu can get to know all stakeholders involved. Prof. Kato is planning on stepping down as EiC from the journal in the near future.



Students & Academic Staff attending one of the author & reviewer publishing workshops.

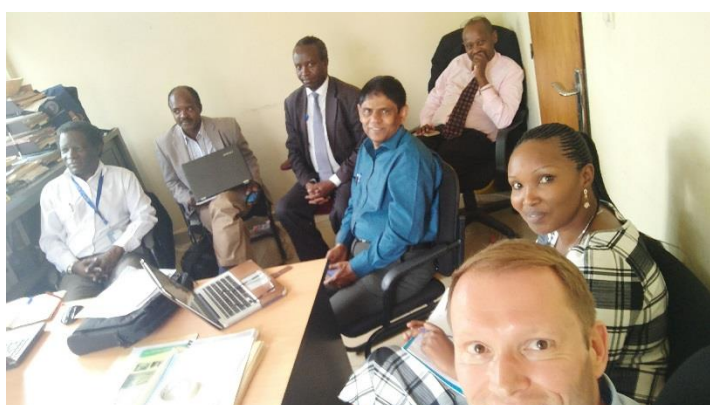
Both, Prof. Kato and Jean Bosco, are very busy and involved in many different projects evolving around their positions at the UR. However, they see that the journal, as one of currently nine published by different colleges of the UR, can make a great contribution to the overall visibility of the institution. It is also in their interest to increase the profile of RJMHS and develop it towards a journal has enough content to publish four issues per year.

As agreed upon during preparation of my visit an editorial board meeting was arranged on July 19, 2017. Main goal was

to give an update of where the journal is standing and what are the challenges that need to be overcome. With this in mind the main focus was to activate editorial board members to support the journal.

The RJMHS editorial board meeting was attended by the following members and therefore contact made with:

- Brenda Asimwe-Kateera (bkateera@gmail.com)
- David K. Tumusiime
- Pierre Claver Kayumba (pclaver.kayumba@gmail.com)



I was asked to join and observe a **meeting of all Editors-in-Chief** from journals of the UR Rwanda Journal Series. The meeting took place with representatives of five out of the nine journals and the director of UR's research department, Prof. Kato Njunwa. In this meeting the first steps were taken to determine an easier navigation through the journals published by UR as well as a name

change for all journals was introduced: *Rwanda Journal of ... [Medicine and Health Sciences]*.

During one of the first meetings with Prof. Jean Bosco Gahutu and Prof. Dr. Kato Njunwa it was mentioned that a the [Rwanda Medical Journal](#), loosely affiliated with the Rwanda Biomedical Center, was seeking a new "home" to get administrative support. The journal publishes regularly four issues per year and has a higher uptake as the RJMHS. At this point it is uncertain how this will look like as well as how this will play out for the RJMHS. I was encouraged to meet with the current Chief Editor,

Leon Mutesa (lmutesa@gmail.com), Assoc. Professor at the Center for Human Genetics of the UR, a well-respected scientist with a significant research output. In the meeting it came to light that he will be relocating to Brussels but will still be at the UR to finish a research project funded by the NIH.

I was introduced to the Vice Chancellor of UR, Philip Cotton (vc@ur.ac.rw), and explained the reason for my visit and what I was trying to achieve. He offered me his full support and emphasized the importance of research publication for the UR. Furthermore, he invited me to debrief the university's CMHS senior management staff about my visit, accomplishments, suggestions and ideas for further developments. Debriefing took place on Friday, July 28 and was well received and an invitation was extended to stay involved.



From L-R: Daniel Staemmler, Pierre Claver Kayumba, Kato Njunwa, Marie Providence Umuziga, Jean Bosco Gahutu, Stephan Rulisa, Philip Cotton

Additionally, I was invited to a meeting by the organizers of the [2nd International Nursing Conference](#) focusing on the *“Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for Better Health and Improved Quality of Life – Shifting Perspectives and Transforming Care”*. The organizers:

- Donatilla Mukamana, Dean of School of Nursing, CMHS, UR, (donatillamu@gmail.com),
- Oluyinka Adejumo, School of Nursing, University of the Western Cape, South Africa (oa18@nyu.edu),
- Oluyinka Adejumo, Assoc. Professor, Department of Nursing Science, College of Health Sciences, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria (oi7@nyu.edu), and
- Lilian Omondi, Training specialist: Human Resource for Health - Rwanda New York University, Rory Meyers College of Nursing (liliathis@gmail.com)

wanted to explore the following opportunities for Elsevier to get involved:

- (1) Facilitate a session on scientific writing and publishing for participants at the conference
- (2) Have an Exhibition Stand at the Conference
- (3) Facilitate the publication of peer-reviewed conference papers.

I am in the process of looking into how these opportunities can be accommodated by Elsevier by reaching out to various colleagues to see if there is an interest.

Outside of the UR and CMHS I had the pleasure to meet with Youssef Travaly (Director, Programs & Content of the **Next Einstein Forum**, An AIMS initiative in partnership with the Robert Bosch Stiftung; ytravaly@nef.org) to follow up on a visit from Iris Kisjes that took place in March 2017. Here are the notes from this meeting:

- Wish for ELS to step up their game and get more actively involved.
- Highly interested in the capacity building done in conjunction with the AJPP and ELS Foundation for UR, CMHS and RJMHS (FYI: the EiC of RJMHS, Prof. Jean Bosco Gahutu, is on the NEF scientific advisory board).
- The current program framework for the NEF in March 2017 was presented and we discussed the following ideas:
 - Pre-NEF workshop (WS) on capacity building (1 day interactive author & reviewer publishing workshop); potentially coordinate with www.SviDev.net since they are planning to do a pre-forum WS as well
 - Plenary theme 3: Building Africa's Scientific Capacity – ELS taking part; capacity building for African scientists to publish
 - Thematic Dinners: ELS to host one dinner with more senior academics, policy makers etc. to talk how publishing can contribute to a sustainable development of African research
- Overall idea: Create outlet (EJ & Marc's initiative for an African Journal) from Africans for Africans to showcase that capacity building and international financial support finds a high quality outlet (journal). Once the journal gained traction it will be recognized by the "rest of the world", who will also start to contribute.
- Youssef was inclined to use NEF as the launch of the African Journal (even mentioned the plenary opening session to do so) to get a big audience and media coverage, plus offer capacity building session to elaborate on the journal (what does the journal cover, who can publish, how much does it costs etc.); idea of implementing the journal as a sustainable development to create a track record of African research
- Plan to write a white paper that will be introduced at the beginning of NEF in March 2018 that describes research, policy and funding for the same (it all needs to come together) to show a sustainable way how this can be implemented. Paper will be adapted throughout the forum and updated with discussion results etc. and published as the Kigali Declaration at end of forum (I promised to send Youssef the Berlin Declaration that Richard Horton put out at the last APE conference in Berlin (<http://thelancet.com/BerlinDeclaration2017>))
- Youssef will put me in touch with Sarah Lawan who is working at the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (<http://sdgcafrica.org>)

I met with the Lead Manager, Program Partnerships & Innovation of the **Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa** (SDGCA), Sarah Lawan (slawan@sdgcafrica.org). I introduced the Elsevier Foundation, AJPP and my volunteer work at UR and for RJMHS.

We spent some time to introduce the African Mega-Journal which sparked great interest. Sarah made a connection to the Conference Mobilizing African Intellectuals Towards Quality Tertiary Education. In the session held by her Center on Research – Scholarly Works tied in nicely into the idea of launching an African Mega-Journal.

The SDGCA and Sarah in particular working on a database that will showcase innovation projects across Africa, incl. projects, publications, experts, startups etc. She mentioned a database from the University of Pretoria where they already linked over 600 articles from Africa to the UN SDGs (<http://www.sasdkh.org/>). Maybe a nice idea for the Africa Journal to categorize accepted articles by

SDG.

The following next steps were agreed upon:

Sarah will run the main points of our talk by the director of SDGCA to evaluate if the launch of the journal (potentially at the NEF) can become part of their timeline.

I'll introduce Marc and EJ to Sarah to follow up on the journal idea.

MAIN OBJECTIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE VISIT

The main **objectives** set prior and fine-shaped in the first week of my visit were:

- Raise the visibility of the journal and its brand.
- Hold an editorial board meeting to report on RJMHS current status (editorial speed, article flow, successes, and challenges). Engage key stakeholders and work with them to raise awareness about the journal.
- Holding weekly author workshops at UR's CMHS in Kigali & Butare to do capacities building in the editors direct community of faculty and students—and to raise awareness about the journal within the university.

What was **done** in July 2017:

- It was determined that the journals information on various online website is not coherent and need to be aligned.
- A dedicated website for the journal was found to be the best solution to broadcast the journals and to offer potential authors and readers a “one-stop-shop”. This needs the sign-off from the UR administration which still needs to be obtained. Question of financing the design and upkeep of a designated website remains unclear.
- Due to the publication schedule (2 issues/annum) accepted manuscripts can for up to 7-8 months nit get published. It was decided to inquire with AJOL if *articles in press* can be published right after acceptance.
- To simplify the publication on the AJOL platform the Editorial Assistant, Malachie Tuyiziye, will investigate how articles can be uploaded online instead of send in via email.
- ScholarOne workflow and challenges faced by Malachie reviewed and solutions suggested.
- Explored reporting from ScholarOne and how to generate a report to be send to editors fortnightly to remind them of open tasks.
- A review of the latest published journal issue in print was conducted and suggestions for improvements were given.
- Mentoring of Editor-in-Chief, Jean Bosco Gahutu, on how to involve and engage editorial board members continuously to work with and for RJMHS.
- Clarification of what the tasks of the EiC and the EA are and what this means regarding their degree of involvement.
- Introduction to marketing measures to broadcast RJMHS as a publication outlet with the support of all stakeholder involved.
- Author & reviewer publishing workshops (WS) took place (one full day):
 - 1. WS – Thursday, July 13 UR CMHS Campus Butare (academic staff & students; 20 participants)
 - 2. WS – Monday, July 17, UR CMHS, Campus Kigali (Dept. of Nursing and Midwifery graduate students; 60+ participants)
 - 3. WS – Friday, July 21, UR CMHS, Campus Kigali (students and academic staff from CMHS; 70+ participants)

- 4. WS on research design & methods – Thursday, July 27, UR CMHS, Campus Kigali (students & academic staff from campus Butare & Kigali; 30+ participants) + one-on-one review of abstracts and manuscripts
- RJMHS Editorial board held on Wednesday, July 19 and report given on status of journal and what is needed from them in the future.
- EiC, Jean Bosco Gahutu, presented in the last days of my visits an action plan that incorporated short- and mid-term goals for RJMHS on how to increase visibility, engage stakeholders and increase copy flow.

The following suggestions were made:

- EiC needs to take time on a weekly base to decrease editorial time. Currently manuscripts get stuck in the system due to the lack of reviewer assignment and more so finding them in the first place.
- Difficulty of assigning reviewers from within the CMHS, since the circle is too close to many of the submitting authors. It was suggested to invite at least one reviewer from outside CMHS.
- Explore the option of posting articles in press, either on the AJOL platform or on the to-be-created RJMHS website.
- Engaging the editorial board by keeping them informed about everything evolving around the journal.
- Suggestion to hold at least one face-to-face editorial board meeting and one online. The latter since not all board members are based in one area.
- Align with other Rwanda Journal Series editors to work on a better support through the UR administration when it comes to typesetting, marketing and other activities.

PRACTICAL TIPS & TRAVELLING

La Posh Hotel

Located within a 15-minute walk from the campus, it is a regular business hotel, surrounded by small markets and different stores. Staff is really friendly and the manager is always available to help. The first volunteer, Juliana, reported that for long stays they can provide you with a fridge and/or microwave in your room. I did not make use of these possibilities but did take them up on a portable air-condition. Airport shuttle is provided for free; just need to book it with the staff.

Manager contact: Dixit Kumar Kanda (+250 784 119 855)

USD 85-90 per night (including breakfast and airport shuttle)

Please double check of the research office where Malachie and Jean Bosco have their office as has moved from the CMHS campus in Kigali. The plan was that the office moves to a different location within Kigali and reaching the new location might not be possible by foot anymore from La Posh Hotel.

Visa

Please check for country-specific requirements. The easiest way to get a visa prior to arrival is [online](#). You need to obtain an official invite letter from the UR (ask Jean Bosco Gahutu to arrange for one) and an employee letter of guarantee (HRDesk@elsevier.com) that states financial support and purpose of visit. Also ensure that you have proof of yellow fever vaccination upon entry into Rwanda.

Tourism

I used the contacts given from Juliana to arrange for a national park visit.

Johnbosco (Bosco): kayitana61@gmail.com – 0788 504 954

Emmanuel: 0785 220 831

Phone & Internet

It is recommended to visit an MTN store (cell phone provider) and get a SIM card for 1.500 RWF plus whatever package one needs to be reachable via phone and more importantly get a data plan to connect to the internet an being able to retrieve and send emails when no internet connection is available. Passport is required to get a SIM card.

ATTACHMENTS

Workshop photos





