ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL: PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS FOR BIO-MEDS
Workshop Review

At the end of 2015, THET organised a Needs Assessment workshop in Johannesburg for Professional Associations for Bio-medical Engineering professionals in Sub-Saharan Africa.

These Professional Associations have great potential, since the needs related to networking, continuous professional development and advocacy at the international level is needed to advance the profession, retain competent people, and improve healthcare delivery; however, these associations have no connection or recognition within and outside of their countries.

The workshop was an opportunity to discuss successes, challenges, and for participants to network with other BMET professionals. The event included training on leadership, running a successful association, financing, action planning, and the value of association standards. It was generously supported by GF Foundation.

The salary of an average BMET in the public sector is £5,000, so make it if they’ve got a diploma or cert. No pay-scales based on qualifications exist. Rwanda’s association was founded in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A BOARD</th>
<th>LACK:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The challenges at association level:

1. Lack of financial resources
2. CPO, activities, lack of participation of members
3. Organization and strategic planning
4. Lack of staff and office

The participating countries:

Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, DRC, Ghana, Gambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda

The opportunities based on needs assessment workshop:

2. Sharing expertise one-to-one, between institutions, through online platforms or webinars.
3. Financial Management – Recruit an expert such as an accountant to partner with your association or several associations to help you set up a financial management system with a clear budget and audits.
5. Website – Get together with people in your association and others to find the right people to help you set up a website, present appropriate information, and how to use it effectively.
7. Continuous Professional Development. Associations should offer regular training on diverse topics to their members. It’s a way to show commitment and value to the members and it enhances the professionalism of the BME community.
8. Quality Assurance for BMET. Associations can play a role in the creation of curricula and QA of training materials for example. They can deliver training and be a consulting body for the training institute.
9. External Relations: How to approach the MoH, how to approach funders, the private sector, the interest of collaborating with other professional associations.
10. Connecting to Northern bodies like membership of AAMI, IFMBE. Associations can get discounted memberships of international bodies for finding resources contacts conferences.

Sixty percent of Sub-Saharan African countries have no association or BMET training.