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UCT academics scoop prestigious prize in The Trinity Challenge on antimicrobial resistance

The University of Cape Town (UCT) academics have won a prestigious £500 000 prize in the [Trinity Challenge](#) on antimicrobial resistance. The [AMRoots](#) team from UCT secured the third prize, which they will use to implement their groundbreaking research on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in small-scale farming communities.

AMRoots is a subgroup of the multidisciplinary research group – Rural Livelihoods One Health Research – supported by the National Research Foundation through a South Africa-Sweden University Forum seed grant. This achievement highlights UCT's commitment to addressing critical global health challenges through innovative research and community engagement.

The Trinity Challenge has recognised four winning teams in its second competition aimed at creation of data-driven solutions to help protect against global health threats. The projects receiving funding are focused on bridging significant data gaps in communities and lower-income countries disproportionately affected by antibiotic-resistant infections. The project aims to generate new data on the development and transmission of antibiotic resistance in livestock farming communities, which are vital for future food security in sub-Saharan Africa. This project will address critical gaps in understanding AMR in these communities, and supporting food security and health outcomes in the region.

AMRoots member and UCT's Clinical Pharmacology Professor Helen McIlleron said she was happy that their efforts were recognised. "I am delighted to receive the support for our multidisciplinary team to work with community towards the health and improved livelihoods of small-scale community farmers who are marginalised but essential for future food security. For this project, we focus on antimicrobial resistance, which is a growing and critical health concern globally. We think there is an opportunity to link community benefit to addressing the global concern."

The UCT team's dedication to pioneering research and community engagement makes impactful contributions to health security and innovation, solidifying its reputation as a leader in global health research.

Trinity Challenge Director Professor Marc Mendelson said: "In order to protect the power of antibiotics now and in the future, we decided to focus this challenge on a major gap in data at the community level, across One Health, and in low- and middle- income countries where the burden of bacterial infections is highest. As a One Health Challenge, I am delighted that our winners have solutions to mitigate antibiotic resistance and improve our understanding

in both human and animal health. I am excited to work with these teams as their innovations come to life.”

Chairperson of the Trinity Challenge and UK Special Envoy on Antimicrobial Resistance, Professor Dame Sally Davies, praised the winners. “The vision and hard work of our winners have been inspiring. They each show that everyone can make a difference and be part of the solution to the antibiotic emergency. For example, our grand prize winner's platform for farmers to access diagnosis and treatment advice for their animals is creating a powerful solution that can generate data to fill our knowledge gaps and inform decision-makers.”

McIlleron said the award recognises the importance of working with community in a multidisciplinary way, the interconnectedness of health of humans, animals and the environment, and the key role that marginalised communities such as small-scale farmers can play in challenges of global concern. She said academia and UCT have a key role to play in initiating sustainable change. “The award funds a proof of concept project and will support further multidisciplinary research applications seeking one health solutions to a variety of health and livelihoods issues,” she concluded.

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