

A Three-Year Cohort Study Tracking the Career Pathways and Practice Locations of University of Rwanda School of Public Health Graduates

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| Abstract

Sub-Saharan Africa faces a critical shortage of public health professionals, especially in rural and underserved areas. Tracking postgraduate public health graduates' career trajectories is necessary to evaluate their contribution to the health workforce and to inform education and policy. Longitudinal data on these career pathways in Rwanda are currently lacking. This study aims to map the career pathways and practice locations of graduates from the University of Rwanda School of Public Health. Its primary objectives are to determine their employment sectors and geographical locations, identify factors influencing career and location decisions, and assess the alignment between graduate competencies and professional roles. A prospective cohort study will be conducted. All graduates from the Master of Public Health and Master of Science in Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Management programmes across a specified graduation cohort will be invited. Data will be collected annually using a mixed-methods approach, comprising an online survey and in-depth interviews with a purposively selected sub-sample. The survey will capture quantitative data on employment sector, location, and roles. Interviews will explore influencing factors and professional experiences. Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. As a study protocol, no empirical findings are available. The research is designed to produce evidence on employment sectors, geographical

distribution, and factors shaping career paths. This study will generate novel longitudinal evidence on the career destinations of public health graduates in Rwanda, providing a basis for understanding their impact on the health system. Findings will inform recommendations for the School of Public Health's curriculum development and student support. Evidence-based policy recommendations will also be made to relevant government ministries regarding health workforce retention and distribution. public health, graduates, career pathways, workforce tracking, Rwanda, medical education This protocol outlines a study designed to produce systematic evidence on graduate outcomes, which is intended to inform academic programming and health workforce policy in Rwanda.
