



On 26 May 2020 we welcomed over 160 guests to our online event to provide an update on progress on our five-year strategy, launched in 2017.

It is the mid-point in this ambitious strategy which set a new vision to save lives and improve health around the world.

Before launching the strategy two and a half years ago, we consulted widely with our members, Fellows and networks including receiving survey responses from 200 people and interviews with more than 100 people.

The strategy focused our attention on three key priorities:

1. Improve our infrastructure
2. Strengthen our relationships
3. Deliver better impact

We have achieved an enormous amount in such a short time. This was thanks to everyone involved and I would like to thank the following people who helped us along the way:

- The RSTMH Team, to Adriana, Amelia, Claire, Emma, Kat and Sarah for all they do to keep us moving and delivering so much for such a small team
- The RSTMH Board of Trustees, for all their support in a period of great change.
- Our volunteers. We are fortunate to have the help of around 1,000 volunteers including members of the Board and our 6 Committees, also Ambassadors, Reviewers, Editorial Board Members, Global Assessors and more. We could not have achieved so much without their dedication, time, and energy.
- Our Members and Fellows, who we thank for supporting us and being on this journey with us.

## **Infrastructure**

*Securing a new team, strong governance, effective systems and sustainable finances.*

Over the last two years we have restructured our team to ensure we have the capacity to deliver our work, for example having dedicated roles for membership and meetings and events management. We have improved our governance by creating the International Members Committee and strengthening the Policy and Advocacy, and Education and Training Committees. We also made some improvements to our Articles which included amending the President role to clarify the term and role of the President, including the year as President Elect and also of Past President. We created the roles of Country Ambassador, which is similar to the previous role of 'Local Secretary', and of Early Careers Trustee. We hope this provides greater oversight and input to these two important groups.

To make RSTMH more accessible and to better protect our data, we have updated our IT, phone and office systems. We recently launched our new website and database, to be more joined up and efficient, and to ensure finding information and taking action is as easy for members, Fellows and networks as possible.



In our financial review, we focused on becoming cost effective and sustainable. Prior to 2017 our income streams did not cover our operational costs without using our savings, this is the aim by the end of the five-year strategy in 2022. Over the last 2 years we have strengthened our current systems for generating income and have launched a new legacies programme for people to ensure future generations of researchers and professionals in our field are supported by RSTMH. We have also started looking into new ways to raise funds, including relaunching our donation function, which you may have seen in the newsletter.

## **Relationships**

*Improving our relationship with our members, partners, and networks.*

We have reviewed and improved our member engagement channels. We have developed tailored communications, held events outside of the UK to support our international members and introduced the early careers membership and other benefits for early career researchers and professionals.

We strengthened our existing partnerships with academia and existing partners, for example starting the Hemingway Award with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). We have developed new partnerships across all sectors in India, Brazil, Thailand, Tanzania and Kenya.

During the first half of the strategy we have strengthened our work with existing networks, including the Federation of European Societies of Tropical Medicine, through which we delivered the European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health to over 1,000 participants. We have also become part of new networks, including the UK Coalition on NTDs, the Snakebite Funders Group, and the NGOs NTDs Network. We have started to engage with new communities, including nursing, to ensure the voices of the broad range of disciplines in global health are represented in our work and impact.

We continue to work to expand our partnerships with other regions and communities in the global health sector.

## **Impact**

*Delivering impact for members, RSTMH and the global health community.*

There are three ways we deliver our impact to bring change to policy, funding, and research:

1. Directly improving our members' careers
2. Bringing together their collective knowledge to bring change in awareness, policy, funding or research
3. Utilising our own experience and outcomes to bring change in awareness, policy, funding or research

To enhance the careers of our members, we have expanded our Small Grants programme with the help of new funding partners, such as Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the Wellcome Trust and International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) –



now awarding 8 times as many grants as in 2017. We have introduced mentorship opportunities at our events and started to look into a more comprehensive mentorship programme. We now prioritise travel scholarships for early career members from LMICs, have reinvigorated the Student Essay Competition and introduced the role of Student Ambassadors.

To raise the profile of snakebite globally we worked with partners to launch the International Snakebite Awareness Day (ISBAD) on 18 September 2018, and are now part of a funders forum, encouraging research on snakebite as part of our small grants programme.. This year we are focusing on mycetoma and other skin NTDs, which we believe require greater profile. In 2020 we are also working with the World Health Organisation to raise the profile of NTDs through our new blog series, [Ending NTDs: Together Towards 2030](#), and a special issue of our journal *Transactions*, due later in the year.

To translate our activities to impact, we are capturing the learnings and outcomes from our activities, and have started with events including those on NTDs, One Health and Planetary Health. We are now planning our [Annual Meeting 2020](#), focusing on Emerging Diseases and Outbreaks and will do the same at that event. These learning form the basis for our soon to be unveiled policy positions, the development of which are supported by the recruitment of Policy Advisors.

Over the second half of the strategy period, we will continue to improve the value we provide to Members and Fellows, and the global health and tropical medicine community. We know that the next few years will bring new challenges as we work towards tackling COVID-19, and learn the international, national, and local lessons from it. We hope to end this strategy as a financially sustainable organisation that delivers impact through its work directly and indirectly and is working in strong partnerships to deliver our ambitious vision.