



Initiative to  
Develop  
African  
Research  
Leaders



## **Initiative to Develop African Research Leaders (IDeAL)**

**Cross-African collaboration against  
current and emerging health challenges**



## WHY IDEAL?

As evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa is heavily reliant on externally developed healthcare solutions, which exposed its vulnerability to international medical supply systems. A key factor contributing to this problem is the continent's need for more high-quality research in biomedical, social, and health systems.

Furthermore, a substantial proportion of health research in Africa is externally led. However, Africa has a burgeoning pool of talented individuals, as seen in countries like Kenya, which have used innovative approaches to address socio-economic challenges using mobile telephony solutions. Thus, to enhance its self-reliance on health solutions, Africa

needs to nurture and harness this promising talent to build a strong science, technology and innovation ecosystem. At the core of this nurturing is the establishment of high-quality postgraduate and research training programs with a focus on cultivating African researchers capable of offering local solutions while being globally competitive.

Therefore, the Initiative to Develop African Research Leaders (IDeAL) was established in response to these challenges. IDeAL's goal is to empower young Africans to become influential health research leaders who can shape the continent's research priorities and provide sustainable solutions to health-related issues.

## VISION, MISSION AND VALUES



### VISION

**African-led research  
solving African and  
global health problems**



### MISSION

**To create a critical mass  
of African research  
leaders**



### VALUES

- Long-term horizon
- Quality over quantity
- Inclusivity and equity





## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

IDeAL, the Initiative to Develop African Research Leaders, was established in 2008 as a research training platform at KEMRI-Wellcome with funding from the Wellcome Trust; it was subsequently designated IDeAL in 2015 with further funding from Wellcome and UKAID. Since then, IDeAL has acquired a broader national and regional focus culminating in the formation of a formal consortium that includes KEMRI-Wellcome, Pwani and Strathmore universities in Kenya, Center for Infectious Disease, Zambia, Epicentre in Niger, University of Oxford and Glasgow, UK.

The consortium constitutes the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of IDeAL, which is planned to run until 2027

IDeAL aim is to develop sustainable health research capacity by establishing a critical mass of local research leaders across all domains of health research, including laboratory sciences, epidemiology, clinical research, social sciences, health systems, and implementation research. The Initiative employs a comprehensive framework for attracting recent graduates to health research through a graduate research

internship scheme, offering high-quality Masters and PhD training, and retaining those trained in Kenya, the region, or research that is relevant to Africa. IDeAL ensures quality through financial support, operational assistance, a vibrant training environment, technical and leadership development, and post-training support. This framework is underpinned by core values that include diversity, inclusivity, equity and long-term horizon.

IDeAL's standards are well-recognized, with several universities delegating many responsibilities related to recruiting, training, and tracking the progress of students to IDeAL's secretariat. Since 2008, the initiative has trained over 800 students, with more than 90% of them completing their training within the stipulated time. Furthermore, many of them have gone on to lead their research groups and contribute to health knowledge, policy, and practice both in Africa and globally. Some have received local and international recognition and are playing leadership roles in key health areas, such as universal health coverage, malaria vaccine development, and COVID-19 pandemic response.

## OUR SCHEMES

**Postdoc Programme:** This is a defined career path, beginning with early postdocs and continuing through mid- and senior research fellows to principal research Fellows.

**PhD Programme:** We offer a 4-year training program offered in collaboration with leading local and international universities. It provides high-quality supervision and advisory.

**Master's Programme:** We offer a high-quality master's program in Immunology in collaboration with Pwani University. This program provides a first-class foundation for further research in collaboration with project leads and universities.

**Postgraduate Diploma (PGD):** This learning program,

offered jointly by KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme and Pwani University, equips graduates with theoretical and practical knowledge of the philosophy and practice of research.

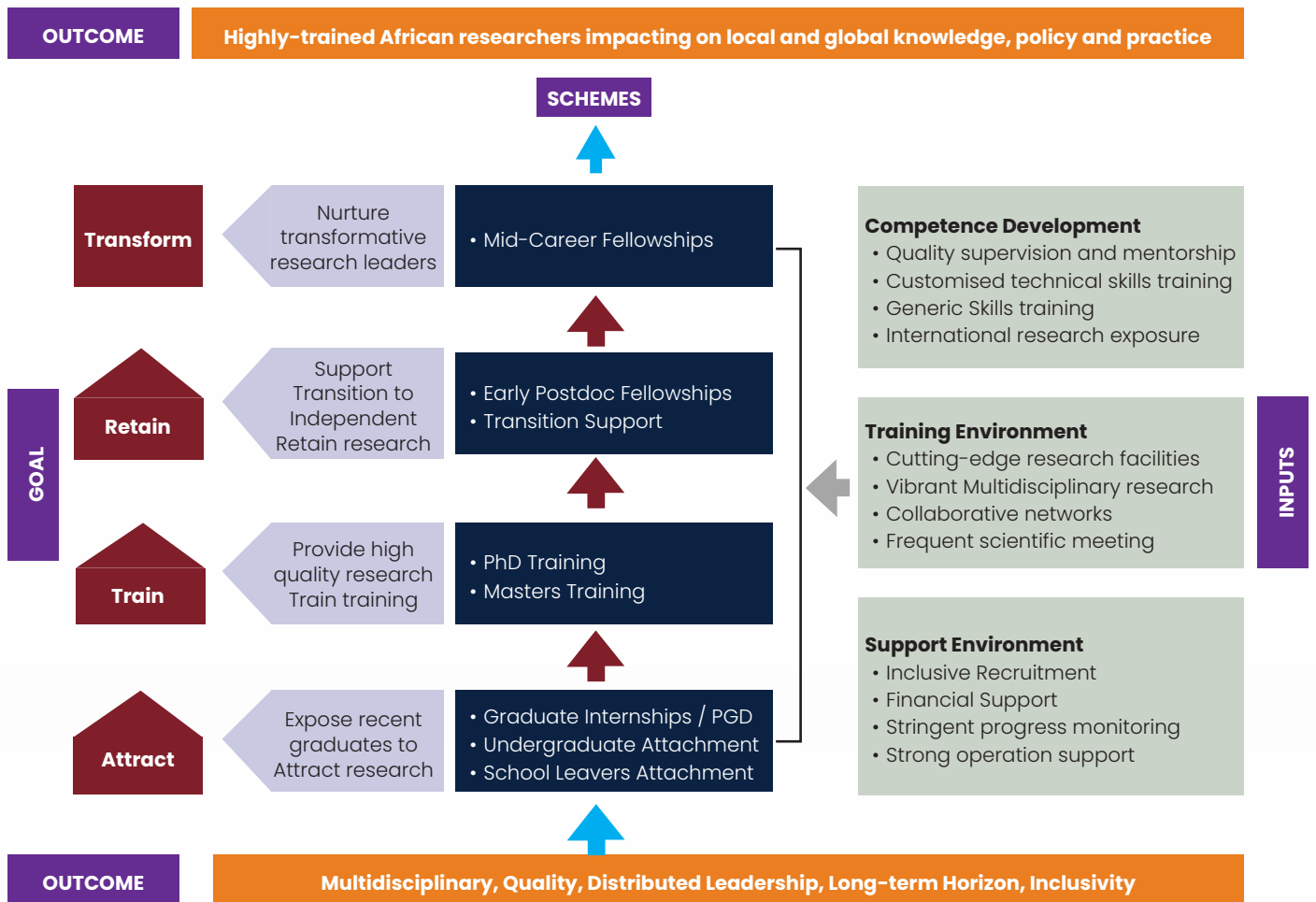
**Undergraduate Attachment:** Attachments are offered to students in their third or fourth year as part of their university training. This programme provides a platform for students to interact with infrastructure, researchers, and scientists under quality supervision.

**School Leavers' Attachment Scheme (SLAS):** We offer 3 months of quality career guidance and mentorship targeting Kilifi's top students who have just completed their high school studies.





## IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK





## SOME KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AS OF 2023



**60+**

Number of  
postdoctoral  
training offered



**127+**

Number of PhD  
Completed



**220+**

Number of  
Masters'  
studentships  
awarded



**276+**

Number of  
graduate  
internships  
offered



**300+**

Number of  
undergraduate  
and school  
graduate  
attachments  
awarded.



**17+**

Number of PhD  
graduands who  
have progressed  
to Associate or  
full professors



**15+**

Head of  
institutions/  
departments



**\$60+m**

The approximate  
number of grants  
during and post-  
training IDeAL  
fellows has been  
raised.



**2000+**

Number of  
peer-reviewed  
publications  
and conference  
presentations  
by IDeAL fellows  
during and post-  
training



**100+**

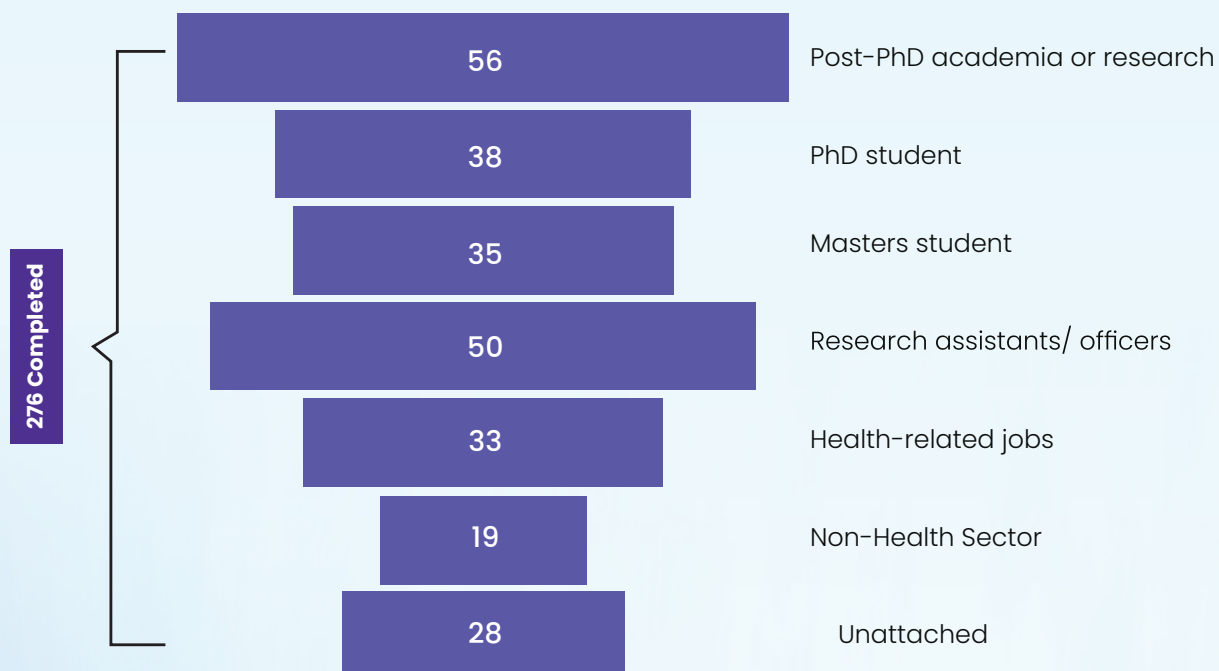
Policy briefs,  
particularly those  
written by IDeAL-  
trained fellows  
& students, was  
at the core of  
Kenya's COVID-19  
response





# Tracking The Progression Of Trainees

## Current Position on internships/postgraduate diploma since 2008



**154** have won international Masters; PhD scholarships or research grants







## PARTNERSHIPS: WE GO FURTHER TOGETHER

KWTRP, IDeAL's lead institution, is a top research programme in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Programme hosts over 800 personnel, including over 80 PhD-holding research scientists, who are involved in over 150 ongoing multidisciplinary research projects covering many of the major causes of morbidity and mortality in Africa. The programme generates between 150-200 peer-reviewed publications, book chapters, and policy briefs annually.

Over the last three decades, the Programme's research has had a significant impact on knowledge, prevention and treatment policies and guidelines for malaria, pneumonia, malnutrition, diarrhoea and severely ill children in general. The Programme's work was key to COVID-19 response in Kenya. Strathmore University and Pwani University offer significant expertise in developing and managing postgraduate training programs and pedagogical methods. They are involved in bioscience and health systems research, hosting IDeAL postgraduate programs and organising short courses in areas such as immunology, bioinformatics, statistics, and health systems leadership and management. Strathmore University has a strong track record in leadership and management training across Africa, with a main campus in Kenya and regional academies in Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda, as well as global partnerships. IDeAL will exploit this capacity to enhance transformative leadership culture in the African research ecosystem. In Zambia, the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in

Zambia (CIDRZ) combines HIV control programs with cutting-edge research. It boasts a robust network of field sites and well-equipped laboratories, positioning it as a leader in conducting clinical trials for HIV and enteric diseases in Africa. Epicentre, established in the wake of the 2005 nutritional crisis in Niger, provides vital support to both governmental and non-governmental organisations in addressing disease outbreaks and nutritional crises. It also engages in laboratory and implementation research. Furthermore, it offers valuable opportunities for fellows to gain insights into conducting high-quality research in resource-constrained environments and participating in outbreak investigations and emergency-related health evaluations across West Africa.

Collectively, these research centres feature advanced research platforms in the region, including GCP/GCLP accredited and Biosafety Level 3 laboratories, enabling the use of state-of-the-art basic biology techniques. These centres are also affiliated with regional hospitals and health facilities, allowing for clinical research and disease surveillance. The Kilifi Health Demographic Surveillance System, the largest in Africa, covers nearly 300,000 individuals and enhances research by providing high-resolution spatial-temporal tracking of health parameters. Finally, IDeAL aims to harness the collective expertise and cutting-edge resources availed by Oxford and Glasgow to design and advance new research and training programmes.





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 | @IDeAL\_KEMRI\_WT

**KEMRI** | Wellcome Trust

 **UK International  
Development**  
 Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

**W**  
 wellcome

**epicentre**  
 EPIDEMIOLOGIE • EPIDEMIOLOGY

 **CIDRZ**  
 for a healthy Zambia

 **UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD**

 **Pwani**  
 UNIVERSITY

 **Strathmore**  
 UNIVERSITY  
 BUSINESS SCHOOL

 **University  
of Glasgow**

PARTNERS