



FPD

Association for Health Professions Education and Leadership



AHPEL
Leading HPE

Building Leadership Capacity for Nurse Educators in Sub-Saharan Africa

Project Report

*A partnership to strengthen leadership,
education and collaboration
across the region*



Project period:
October 2022 – April 2024



Johnson & Johnson

Johnson & Johnson supported this project
through an unrestricted educational grant

Building Leadership Capacity for Nurse Educators in Sub-Saharan Africa

Project Overview

The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD), in partnership with the Johnson & Johnson Foundation and the Association for Health Professions Education and Leadership (AHPEL), implemented an 18-month fellowship to strengthen the leadership capacity of nurse educators in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The programme responded to the need for nurse educators who can improve teaching practice, lead institutional change and contribute to stronger nursing education and healthcare systems across the region. Sixteen fellows representing seven Sub-Saharan African countries were selected for the programme.

Project period: October 2022–April 2024

Geographic reach: Seven Sub-Saharan African countries

Participants selected: 16 nurse educators

Funding partner: Johnson & Johnson Foundation

Implementing partners: FPD and AHPEL

Respective Role of Partners

FPD coordinated the partnership and provided:

- Programme administration and logistical support
- Participant coordination
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Support for the delivery of contact and online learning activities
- Oversight of project reporting and evaluation

AHPEL developed and delivered the educational programme, while the Johnson & Johnson Foundation provided an unrestricted educational grant .

Programme Approach

The fellowship combined leadership development with practical skills in health professions education, research and project management. Delivery included:

- Two three-day contact sessions in Cape Town
- Synchronous online learning and webinars
- Participation in a virtual conference
- Mentoring by experienced health professions educators
- Development and implementation of an institutional quality-improvement project

Each fellow was supported to identify a challenge within their institution and design, implement and evaluate a practical improvement initiative.

Key Results

Participants who completed the programme reported improvements across all major competency areas:

Competency area	Before fellowship	After fellowship
Education	3.8/5	4.3/5
Research	3.6/5	4.1/5
Leadership	3.4/5	4.1/5
Academic citizenship and collaboration	4.1/5	4.4/5

The perceived value of engaging and collaborating with other nurse and midwifery educators in Sub-Saharan Africa increased from **3.25 to 4.25 out of five**.

Particularly strong improvements were reported in:

- Leading teams confidently
- Understanding and working within organisational cultures
- Resilience during challenging periods
- Conflict resolution
- Communication across organisational levels
- Research design
- Collaboration with regional colleagues

The quality-improvement projects also produced tangible changes within participating institutions and created opportunities for continued professional and institutional growth.

Challenges and Lessons

Six of the 16 selected fellows completed the full programme. Participation was significantly affected by factors outside the direct control of the implementing partners, including:

- Difficulties obtaining passports and visas
- Limited funding for regional travel
- Family and professional responsibilities
- The practical demands of participating in a long-term regional fellowship

These experiences highlighted the importance of addressing travel documentation and funding requirements early, providing additional remote participation options and establishing stronger institutional support for fellows.

Lasting Impact

The fellowship demonstrated the value of bringing together a funder, a private higher education institution and a professional community of practice. Participants developed stronger leadership identities, established mentoring and research relationships and became part of a growing regional network of nurse educator leaders.

The project provides a foundation for future partnerships aimed at strengthening nursing education, leadership and health systems across Sub-Saharan Africa. It also demonstrates FPD's ability to coordinate complex, multi-country capacity-development programmes and translate learning into measurable individual and institutional change.

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