

THE AFRICAN PAEDIATRIC FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME



Strategic workforce development
to strengthen paediatric health care for Africa, in Africa



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Department of Paediatrics and Child Health

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

ABOUT THE APFP



Mobilising a New Generation of Paediatric Health Professionals with Skills to Catalyse Long-Term Changes in Child Health in Africa.

The African Paediatric Fellowship Programme (APFP) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) aims to transform Africa's capacity for child health care by reducing its gap in human resources for paediatric health.

We do so by training and providing ongoing support to a growing continent-wide network of highly-skilled, strategically-selected paediatric clinician-leaders who are able to optimize paediatric health systems, shape policy, lead on clinical service developments, build an evidence base for paediatric care in low-resource settings, and increase the continent's capacity to train more paediatric health professionals.

Long-term strategic collaborations with tertiary teaching hospitals

and universities across Africa are at the centre of our approach. These partnerships ensure that we do not just boost individuals, but rather build paediatric departments and professional associations, transforming paediatric service provision and supporting the development of independent in-country clinical service, health systems and training capacity.

While such partnerships are not new, limited (albeit growing) training capacity in Africa results in provision often being led by high-income countries, with different disease burdens, resource access and education models. A solution designed and delivered in Africa, APFP leverages (and seeks to maximize) African skills, expertise, context and resources. The approach keeps content aligned with local health priorities, and retention of expertise in Africa high.

APFP IN 2024 | THE PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE



APFP GROWS THE PAEDIATRIC HEALTH WORKFORCE

Since 2007, the APFP @ UCT has trained **218** specialist and sub-specialist pediatricians and allied health workers from Africa, with a further **30** mid-training at the end of 2024.



APFP TRAINS FOR AFRICA

91% of APFP graduates are working to strengthen child health care and training in 16 sub-Saharan African countries (excl. those displaced by conflict).



APFP TRAINS MULTIDISCIPLINARY CLINICAL TEAMS

64 fellows enrolled for training in **20** diverse specialty areas in **2024**.



APFP FILLS CRUCIAL HEALTH WORKFORCE GAPS

Growing the list of firsts for child health in Africa, 2024's **28** APFP graduates include (among others) the **1st** Malawian developmental paediatrician, paediatric nephrologist and paediatric rheumatologist, **1st** Ghanaian paediatric allergist and the **1st** Zambian paediatric infectious diseases specialist.



APFP TRAINS CHILD HEALTH LEADERS

70% of alumni who completed their training 1 or more years ago hold leadership positions in their institution, many of these as Heads of Department, and office bearers in local, regional and international professional associations.



APFP TRAINS CLINICIAN EDUCATORS

Over **80%** of alumni are involved in undergraduate & **75%** in postgraduate medical teaching, improving the paediatric skills of future clinicians.



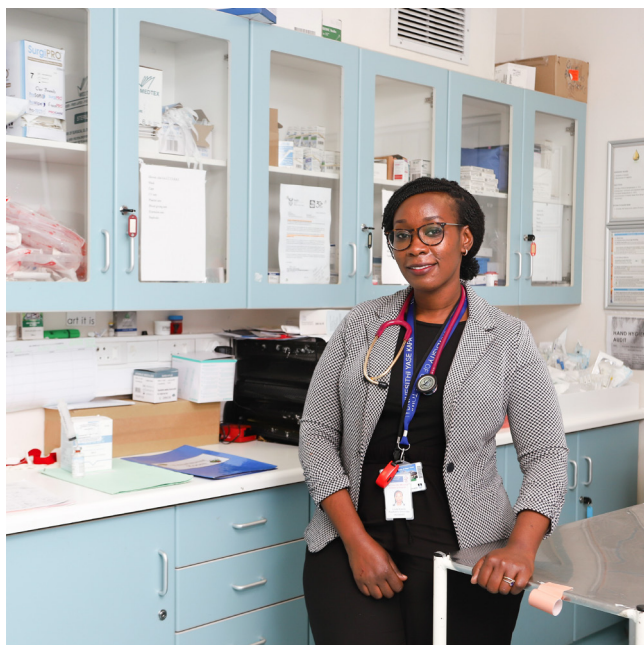
APFP TRAINS LEADING AFRICAN CLINICAL SCHOLARS

Over **850** scientific articles have been published in the medical literature by fellows and alumni, adding crucial African evidence to clinical science.

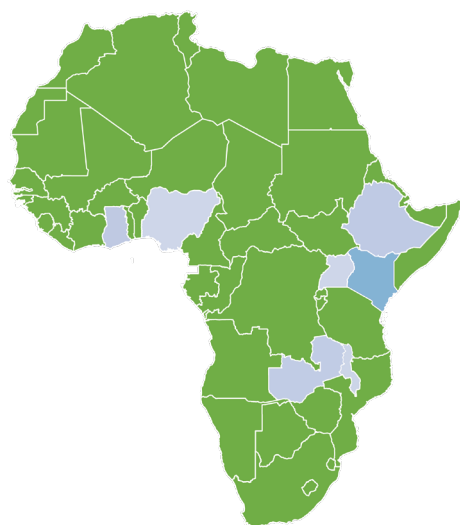


APFP FOSTERS NEW (SUB)SPECIALTY TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN AFRICA

11 new (sub)specialty programmes led by APFP alumni have been supported, through assistance with curriculum development, rotations for trainees at UCT, and regular online training sessions; with more to follow in the coming years.



EXPANDING PAEDIATRIC CARE | WHERE ARE APFP ALUMNI NOW?



218 paediatric specialists trained.
Excluding 7 displaced by conflict,
in December 2024:

- 91% are working in Africa.
- 86% are working in their home country.
- 73% are working with their referring employer.

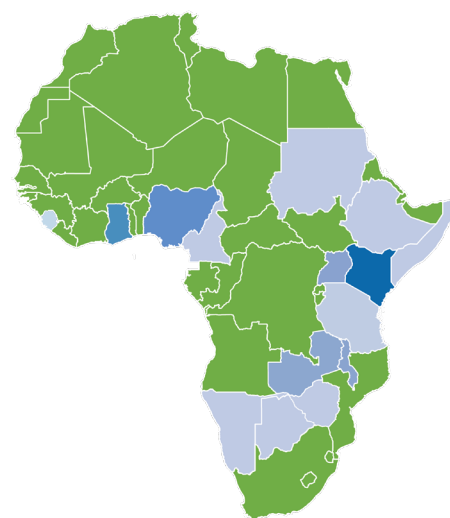


NUMBER OF ALUMNI IN EACH COUNTRY

Dec 2013

Dec 2024

Dec 2018



Ghana 38

Subspecialty services established:

Paediatric Allergy, Anaesthetics, Cardiology, Dermatology, Emergency & Critical Care, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Infectious Diseases, Neonatology, Nephrology, Neurology, Oncology, Palliative care, Physiotherapy, Pulmonology, Radiology, Rheumatology, Surgery, Urology.

Specialty training established:

Paediatric Infectious Diseases, Nephrology, Emergency & Critical Care & Neonatology. Paed Pulmonology, Cardiology & GIT in preparation.

Nigeria 21

Subspecialty services established: Paediatric Allergy, Emergency and Critical Care, Gastroenterology, Infectious Diseases, Nephrology, Oncology, Physiotherapy, Pulmonology, Rheumatology.

Specialty training established:

Paediatric Infectious Diseases.

Botswana 4

Namibia 8

Subspecialty services established: Paediatric Cardiology & cardiac surgery, Critical care, Nephrology, Pulmonology.

Mali 1

Sierra Leone 1

Ethiopia 5

Somalia 1

Somaliland 1

Kenya 28

Subspecialty services established:

Paediatric Allergy, Anaesthetics, Emergency & critical care, Gastroenterology, Infectious Diseases, Neonatology, Nephrology, Neurodevelopment, Neurology, Oncology, Physiotherapy, Pulmonology, Rheumatology, Surgery.

Specialty training established:

Paediatric Emergency & Critical Care, GIT, Nephrology, Neurology, Pulmonology. Paed ID in preparation.

Uganda 17

Subspecialty services established:

Paediatric Anaesthetics, Cardiology, Infectious diseases, Neonatology, Nephrology, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Oncology, Psychiatry, Pulmonology.

Specialty training established:

Paediatric Anaesthetics, Oncology. Neonatology underway.

Tanzania 15

Subspecialty services established:

Paediatric Allergy, Critical Care, Neonatology, Nephrology, Neurodevelopment, Neurology, Oncology, Palliative care, Physiotherapy.

Specialty training established:

Neonatology. Paed Neurology in preparation.

Malawi 16

Subspecialty services established: Paediatric Critical Care, Neonatology, Nephrology, Neurodevelopment, Oncology, Physiotherapy, Rheumatology, Surgery.

Specialty training established:

General Paediatrics.

Zambia 10

Subspecialty services established: Paediatric Anaesthetics, Cardiology, Critical care, Infectious Diseases, Neonatology, Nephrology, Surgery.

Specialty training established:

Paediatric Anaesthetics, Neonatology diploma. Paed Nephrology in preparation.

Zimbabwe 10

Subspecialty services established:

Paediatric Anaesthetics, Emergency, Neonatology, Neurodevelopment, Neurology, Oncology, Physiotherapy.

SPOTLIGHT | ON FOCAL COLLABORATIONS IN 2024



Subspecialty Development

The 64 trainees enrolled in APFP in 2024 hailed from over 20 partner institutions across Africa. Here we highlight a few key collaborations that progressed this year.

GHANA COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS (GCPS) – APFP PARTNERSHIP

With 33 APFP subspecialty trainees now back home in Ghana, in-country subspecialty training programmes are being developed apace, with APFP's role shifting to support these new training programmes until such time as the full training can be offered in-country.

In 2024, we hosted four trainees subspecializing in Paediatric Nephrology for 6-month exposure at UCT and in Red Cross Children's Hospital's long-established service. Rotations will expand to include trainees from the Paediatric Infectious Diseases and Neonatology GCPS training programmes in 2025.

MUHIMBILI NATIONAL HOSPITALS (MNH)- MUHIMBILI UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES (MUHAS), TANZANIA

Building specialised paediatric teams takes years. These allied centres - at which 8 APFP alumni are today a driving force with impressive achievements for child health under their belts - are gaining momentum in their paediatric services. In 2024, 6 trainees joined the APFP programme in Cape Town, in a move to broaden multidisciplinary subspecialist skills in Dar Es Salaam, strengthen general paediatrics training, and to work towards setting in place the minimum numbers of trained experts required to establish in-country subspecialty training.

KAMUZU UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH & ALLIED SCIENCES (KUHeS) AND QUEEN ELIZABETH CENTRAL HOSPITAL (QECH), MALAWI

One of the APFPs longest standing partnerships, KUHeS and QECH have sent a number of paediatricians to APFP for subspecialty training in recent years, in a focused effort to build subspecialty expertise and further improve local general paediatrics training. In 2024, four trained paediatric subspecialists and two paediatric physiotherapists (each identified by alumni in specialties heavily reliant on this allied discipline) returned home to grow services and share their knowledge with Malawian medical undergraduate and post-graduate students.

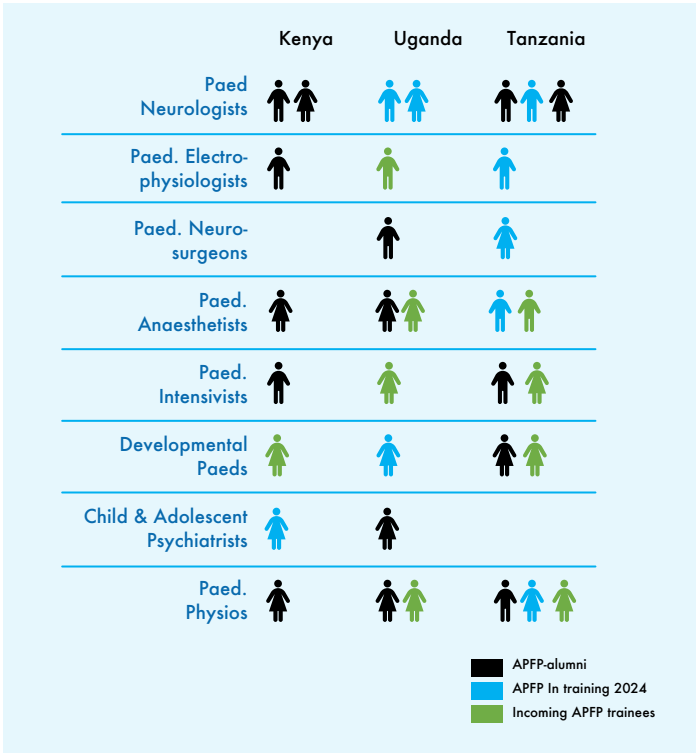


East Africa Child Brain Health Initiative

Children in sub-Saharan Africa face a disproportionately high burden of neurological disorders, with epilepsy occurring at twice the global prevalence due to factors like neuroinfections (malaria, TB, HIV), birth-related injuries, and neurotrauma. Limited access to prevention and treatment, compounded by co-existing challenges such as malnutrition and socioeconomic hardship, makes management complex.

In close collaboration with our partners in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, we are working to set in place a critical mass of paediatric clinical leadership to strengthen child brain health services, particularly in epilepsy care, in order to bridge the gap in treatment and improve outcomes for affected children.

This includes specialized training in key subspecialties (see figure), collective support to develop new fellowship training programmes, and equipping healthcare workers across the system to identify and manage priority neurological conditions. These efforts continue into 2025.



SNAPSHOT | OF ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

Local Subspecialist Training

APFP Alumni consistently reach new milestones that drive improvements to child health services. Here are just some of their accomplishments that we're celebrating in 2024.

Kenya graduated its first locally trained paediatric gastroenterologist, its 7th paediatric neurologist, and enrolled its first paediatric pulmonology resident, all in subspecialty training programmes established and taught primarily by APFP alumni (Dr Juliana Muiva & paed GIT trainee pictured below in the Endoscopy suite)



The inaugural cohort of three trainees was enrolled in the newly established paediatric emergency and critical care training programme in Ghana.

Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences graduated its fifth neo-natologist for Tanzania.



From 2024, instead of traveling to Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, trainees in the Paediatric Anaesthesia Training in Africa (PATA) programme now complete their Intensive Care training rotation at Ghana's Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, in the intensive care service set up and run by APFP alumni. This is a proud development for the APFP, as our long-standing partner steps seamlessly into mentorship roles previously occupied by Red Cross Hospital and UCT.

University of Ibadan graduated its first two fellows in Paediatric Infectious diseases, taught by two APFP alumni. Additionally, the programme received accreditation from the National Postgraduate Medical College to expand beyond University College Hospital, Ibadan, allowing for broader regional training and accelerating the development of future specialists.

SNAPSHOT | OF ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

Patient Education & Health Worker Training



APFP paediatric neurology alumni facilitated Malawi's first-ever Paediatric Epilepsy Training (PET) course, equipping frontline healthcare workers with essential skills to diagnose and manage epilepsy—one of the most common neurological disorders in children. Courses were also facilitated in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania, expanding regional capacity for effective paediatric epilepsy care.

University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ithuku-Ozalla (UNTH) initiated training on insertion of central lines and intubation for all its residents, following the return of APFP-trained paediatric critical care specialist.

World Asthma Day was marked by paediatric pulmonology alumni with patient education, health worker training, and media engagement in Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana.

A widely-circulated, alumnus-led health advocacy video initiative for the Paediatric Association of Zimbabwe delivered a clear, compelling message on the dangers of the widespread practice of feeding babies cooking oil.

A week-long kidney disease awareness campaign at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Malawi, included staff training on kidney disease management, public education, and screening nearly 600 children for hypertension and kidney issues.



APFP paediatric allergy alumni led prestigious World Allergy Organization training sessions—one in Kenya and one in Nigeria—expanding expertise in identification and management of allergies across diverse healthcare sectors. Pictured – Alumni Drs Odusote, Andoh & Kiragu in Nigeria.



The first Paediatric Acute Kidney Illness and Dialysis, and Paediatric Tracheostomy trainings for healthcare workers were hosted by alumni in Namibia.

SNAPSHOT | OF ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

New Guidelines, Services and Infrastructure

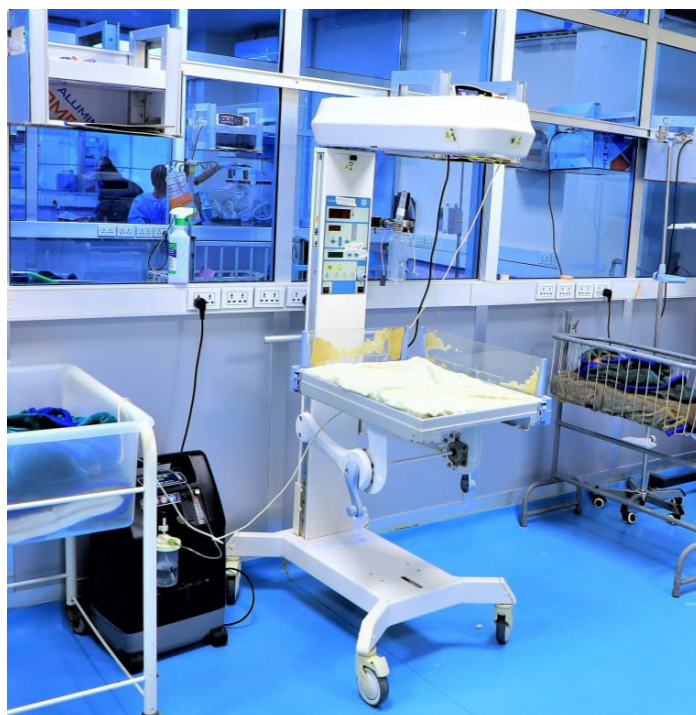


Huge strides were made in growing paediatric palliative care in Ghana, including training of health workers from across the country and the development of the country's first ever Palliative Care policy. (Pictured: Health workers marking #HatsOn4CPC day to raise awareness of childhood cancer in Ghana, Oct 2024)

The National Heart Hospital in Lusaka, Zambia successfully performed cardiac surgeries with an entirely local specialist team. (Pictured: Paed Cardiology alumnus Dr Evans Mulendele)



The University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH) marked important firsts, including its first paediatric peritoneal dialysis catheter insertions for kidney failure and the launch of paediatric trauma care, driven by returning emergency care trainees. Additionally, a new lung function testing lab, established by alumni, is enhancing respiratory disease management.



A new purpose-built and fully equipped 14-bed NICU was inaugurated at Hawassa Comprehensive Specialised Hospital, Ethiopia, providing hope for further improved quality of care of its neonates.

Kenyan paediatric allergy alumni led the development of national allergy testing guidelines, published in 2024

Ghana's Bolgatanga Regional Hospital introduced laparoscopic surgery, a minimally invasive technique using small incisions and a camera-guided scope.

HALALA
TO OUR REMARKABLE
COLLEAGUES!

IMPACT | FOCUS ON AN APFP ALUMNUS



NIGERIA

INTRODUCING DR OLATUNDE ODUSOTE HEAD OF PAEDIATRIC ALLERGY, DERMATOLOGY & PULMONARY MEDICINE, LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

It was dermatology that brought Dr Odusote to the world of paediatric allergies. Based at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) in Nigeria, he noticed that many of his patients were presenting with atopic dermatitis (eczema) and linked co-morbidities — but that they were not receiving optimal care.

Determined to address the problem of inadequately managed allergic conditions, in 2015 he travelled to South Africa to complete a two-year fellowship with the APFP. Returning home as the country's first specialist paediatric allergist, he felt confident he had the foundations he needed to improve patient care and start building a network of allied health professionals.

■ A HOLISTIC TRAINING PACKAGE

With such an important mandate, Dr Odusote knew his time with the APFP would be about more than clinical skills. It was a chance for him to grow as an educator, build his research and leadership skills, and learn how to advocate and fundraise for children with allergies.

They were essential tools to have. Dr Odusote works in a country (and continent) where awareness as to the burden and impact of paediatric allergies is low. To move forward, he had to make sure that the surrounding environment was set to deliver.

“The APFP is the whole package. It helped me to get buy-in outside the hospital space, so that I can do exactly what I need to do.”

■ THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHANGE

The first step was to set up a national allergy society. Recognised by the World Allergy Organization (WAO) in 2023, he knew that ACIS (the Allergy and Clinical Society of Nigeria) would give him the face and credibility he needed to bring paediatric allergy care home. It worked.

That June, the group secured funding to host Nigeria's first national Allergy Congress. Bringing together over 50 professionals from allied specialties, the event created an important opportunity to explore current trends in paediatric allergies, advocate for improved resources, and build professional skills and capacity.

■ A CRITICAL MASS OF EXPERTISE

In addition to his work with ACIS, Dr Odusote has been working hard to embed paediatric allergy into the undergraduate and post-graduate curriculums at LASUTH and the Lagos University Teaching Hospital. He is proud to have achieved both — with the evolution of these curriculums showing a new level of recognition for paediatric allergy care in Nigeria.

Building on this, and the success of the recent Congress, Dr Odusote has seen an increased level of interest in both short and long-term training. The perfect example of the APFP pan-African network in action, Dr Odusote is using this momentum to work with another APFP alumnus to develop a regional curriculum for a diploma in paediatric allergies. He has also joined forces with alumni from Kenya and Ghana to deliver the World Allergy Training School's first event in West Africa, held in September 2024. Affiliated with the Emerging Society Program (a unit of the WAO), this two-day workshop created space to close identified skills gaps and empower practitioners to support children and adults with allergies.

“It's a domino effect. When you do one thing credible, others come. With all this training and awareness, I know that when it comes to policymakers, we will get it done.”

■ DRIVING LOCAL AND REGIONAL ALLERGY CARE

Dr Odusote is also an active researcher. Diving deep into the Nigerian context, his studies reveal that 70% of children with asthma here also suffer from allergic rhinitis, a secondary condition that often goes untreated. His research has also led him to discover a new driver of paediatric asthma (a dust mite called *Blomia tropicalis*) found in the coastal regions of Africa.

Both findings highlight the importance of local research and have major implications for the management of paediatric allergies in Nigeria and across the continent. After all, change comes from within. By harnessing the power of local practitioners, networks and data, Dr Odusote and his colleagues are making sure paediatric allergies get the recognition and resources they deserve.

OUR VISION | A PAN-AFRICAN NETWORK

Of Clinician Leaders Driving Change in Child Health

GRATITUDE

2024 saw the largest number of fellows ever enrolled in clinical training under the APFP in a single year. The growing contingent of trainees undertaking rotations with us towards their degrees elsewhere in Africa is challenging but rewarding, not only because our collaborations enable us to grow paediatric capacity in the continent at a greater rate, but also because these developments are a testament to the success of our programme's long-term approach towards establishment of local training programmes. Long-standing collaborations with universities and teaching hospitals, together with the unprecedented retention rates of alumni working on the continent attest to the success of our training model.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our fellows and alumni, along with the unwavering support of our donors. During their training, our fellows go above and beyond - contributing to teaching and training, strengthening our healthcare services and making a lasting impact on children's health in the Western Cape.

Their collaboration with supervisors and colleagues at UCT, both during and long after their training, has fostered a strong, pan-African network of academic and clinical expertise. Their commitment to expanding services, training future healthcare leaders, and improving child health systems across Africa is the inspiration behind everything we do. We appreciate you all.

MANY THANKS TO OUR DONORS IN 2024

Canadian Pediatric Anesthesia Society (CPAS)
Children's Hospital Foundation
Children's Hospital Trust SA
Global HOPE
Green Leaves Education Foundation
Harry Crossley Family Foundation
International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)
International Society of Nephrology (ISN)
Intl. Paediatric Nephrology Association (IPNA)
Mauerberger Foundation
Peter Gilgan Family Foundation
The ELMA Foundation
UCB Health Equity Fund via King Baudouin Foundation

And the generous individuals who support the programme.





January – December 2024

Programme expenditure in 2024 fell within budget, with a variance of 23% (or R4,6 million) at financial year end. As usual, medical and other fellowships are the most significant areas of underspend (together totalling R3,5 million) – a result primarily of delays beyond our control with professional registration and visa approvals. In all instances, trainees who were not able to join the programme in 2024 are re-scheduled for 2025.

Budget by Line Item (ZAR)	Approved Budget	Actual Spend	Variance
Personnel	R3,663,769	R3,253,776	R409,993
Medical Specialist fellowships	R12,179,516	R10,334,580	R1,844,936
Child Rehabilitation fellowships	R638,433	R661,347	-R22,914
Paediatric Clinical Technologist Fellowships	R676,500	R345,392	R331,108
Multidisciplinary Clinical Attachments	R608,829	R0	R608,829
Rotations for in-country specialist trainees	R1,296,110	R587,934	R708,176
Regional Travel	R774,520	R301,434	R473,086
Programme costs	R632,030	R352,760	R279,270
Total	R20,469,707	R15,837,222	R4,632,484

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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