



African Population and
Health Research Center



2022 – 2026

APHRC STRATEGIC PLAN



A
**Bold New
Vision**

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am proud to present the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. It is the first plan after a major transition in the Center's leadership and reflects the unbroken momentum APHRC has enjoyed since then.

Through a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning process, we are pleased to see how far we have come and how much farther we can go. We have learned that we are on the right track with our strategic initiatives and that some nascent initiatives have the potential to be impactful if expanded and streamlined into our strategy. Building on a strong program portfolio, and learning from our past and ongoing initiatives we will strengthen our approach to Evidence-Informed Decision-Making (EIDM) while exploring new ways to achieve policy and programmatic impact by taking a systems thinking approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic that took place in the last two years of the previous strategic plan was unprecedented and disruptive. Still, it also provided opportunities to re-imagine a better future. A future where Africans and African institutions take their place at the table to define the continent's problems and develop the needed solutions.



The gross inequity experienced by Africans in accessing diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics, and the neglect by the rest of the world are a wakeup call to strengthen the continent's research and development (R&D) ecosystem as we strive for self-sufficiency.

After 20 years of successful independent operations, the Center has come of age as a credible, impactful African institution. APHRC has played a leadership role on the continent in designing and leading research and research capacity strengthening programs and executing successful policy outreach interventions. We have grown from strength to strength in all areas of work, in our geographic reach, the network of partners and stakeholders at different levels of decision-making and in our impact.

I am, therefore, particularly proud of the bold vision we have set ourselves to be a trans-formative force on the African continent. We are confident that the time is right to take the next step to tackle the systemic challenges in the African R&D ecosystem. The Center will take a leadership role in shaping the environment within which we work, not just for our benefit but also for the continent's research and policy institutions.

This plan was developed – as so much of APHRC's work is – through an inclusive, participatory, and extensive process of discussion and deliberation. It embodies the hopes, dreams, and ambitions of a determined, diverse, multi-disciplinary team of African professionals committed to the continent's future. Our vision to transform lives in Africa through research is as relevant as before. As we enter into another 5-year strategic plan period, we remain steadfast in pursuing this vision.

I am grateful for the support of the Board, APHRC staff, partners, and funders during the last strategic plan period and in developing the new plan. I count on your support as we write the next chapter of the Center's story - together.



Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi Ph.D.
Executive Director



WHO WE ARE



APHRC is a premier research-to-policy institution, generating evidence, strengthening research and related capacity in the African R&D ecosystem, and engaging policy to inform action on health and development.

As an African-led global research Center invested in creating legacy impact, our work is focused on three programmatic areas:

RESEARCH

Our teams orient their research agendas to global and continental development priorities. We bring independent evidence to the forefront of decisions to support policy and program development and implementation in Africa. To achieve this, we draw on a wide range of academic skills and disciplines, working together to discover, refine and apply new interventions to improve population health and well-being.

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RESEARCH CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING

Through strategic partnerships, the Center strives to nurture African research leadership by strengthening institutional and individual capacity, and by building a critical mass of researchers to engage meaningfully with policy actors in devising, reviewing and implementing policies and programs relevant to the continent's development.

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POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Center builds relationships with key decision-making bodies and individuals at the local, national, regional, and global levels to ensure the evidence provided is timely and relevant. We also engage with government and non-government entities, academic and research institutions, and civil society organizations to ensure locally contextualized knowledge drives transformational change.

The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan period starts a little after the Center's 20th anniversary. The Center has matured as a leading African institution in health and development issues, a trusted evidence broker, and a go-to partner for African-led, EIDM.

The Strategic Plan articulates the Center's vision to be a trans-formative force on the continent, building on 20 years of experience in evidence generation, and promoting its use to guide decision-making for Africa's development.

APHRC remains committed to producing scientific evidence relevant to the African context, developing strong African research leadership, and promoting EIDM while addressing systemic challenges that have stifled Africa's path to self-sufficiency in R&D.

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INTRODUCTION

Agenda 2030



Less than ten years before the target date for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Agenda 2030, many countries in Africa are off track. Our work has demonstrated gaps in achieving health-related targets in reproductive, maternal, adolescent, newborn and child health, as well as targets in nutrition and non-communicable diseases. In areas where progress has been made, equity (or lack thereof) is a major factor.

Gross inequities persist in health and other outcomes for populations in different regions of the world, as well as between and within countries on the African continent. The Center's evidence-based work has contributed to understanding the drivers and magnitude of priority issues on the SDG agenda, and has helped track progress towards specific SDG targets.

As an African institution, the Center is also well-placed to help achieve the African Union's Agenda 2063. The Center's work is well-aligned with national and regional priority areas including human capital development, employment generation (especially among youth and females), social protection, gender/women's development and youth empowerment, and science, technology and innovation.

Although these global and African regional agendas have made progress, significant events and movements in the last two years will shape Africa's destiny in the next five. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the external environment in which the Center operates. In addition, other global movements have taken hold and shaped the discourse about equity in global health. The pandemic and these movements, among other events, have influenced the funding landscape because of new priorities and funding approaches in the global health community.

Agenda 2063 The Africa we Want

- Human capital development
- Employment generation (especially among youth and females)
- Social protection
- Gender/women's development and youth empowerment
- Technology and innovation



The COVID-19 pandemic has been, and may continue to be, characterized by cyclical disruptions in the next few years, directly and indirectly affecting the Center's long-term financial health and impacting staff health and well-being. However, the pandemic's long-term impacts on the way we work also present opportunities for the Center to expand its infrastructure for virtual learning, remote data collection, and remote working that may lead to greater reach and impact, efficiency in operations, and better work-life balance. COVID-19 has also opened up new areas of research to understand the short and long-term direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic on other health and development issues.



Building equitable partnerships

Furthermore, new opportunities for public and policy engagement on national and global issues have been created by the greater appreciation of science and evidence in designing national responses, the limits of EIDM notwithstanding.

In light of global movements with a diversity, equity and inclusion focus, the Center will continue to advocate for and play a leadership role in designing and implementing programs with Africa-based partners and in supporting a movement towards equitable partnerships at all levels.

Opportunities in the funding environment



ALTERNATIVE FUNDING MODELS

Alternative funding models such as social impact, development impact and green bonds, and increased funding to digital-based innovations coupled with continued growth of the start-up scene in Africa;



COST REDUCTION OPPORTUNITIES

Cost reduction opportunities in program delivery and efficiency in producing the same outputs, creating more cost competitiveness;



AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY

Growth and maturity of African philanthropy and more awareness by African governments of the value of investing in R&D. This has been supported by growing interest in Africa's self-sufficiency in R&D for innovations and technologies needed for health and well-being;



CORE SUPPORT

Shifts towards more funding for local organizations by the major foundations and greater willingness to provide core support. There is also increased interest in meaningful partnerships and collaborations

FAIRNESS



We are impartial, and committed
to equity and inclusion

THE ROAD MAP TO THE 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

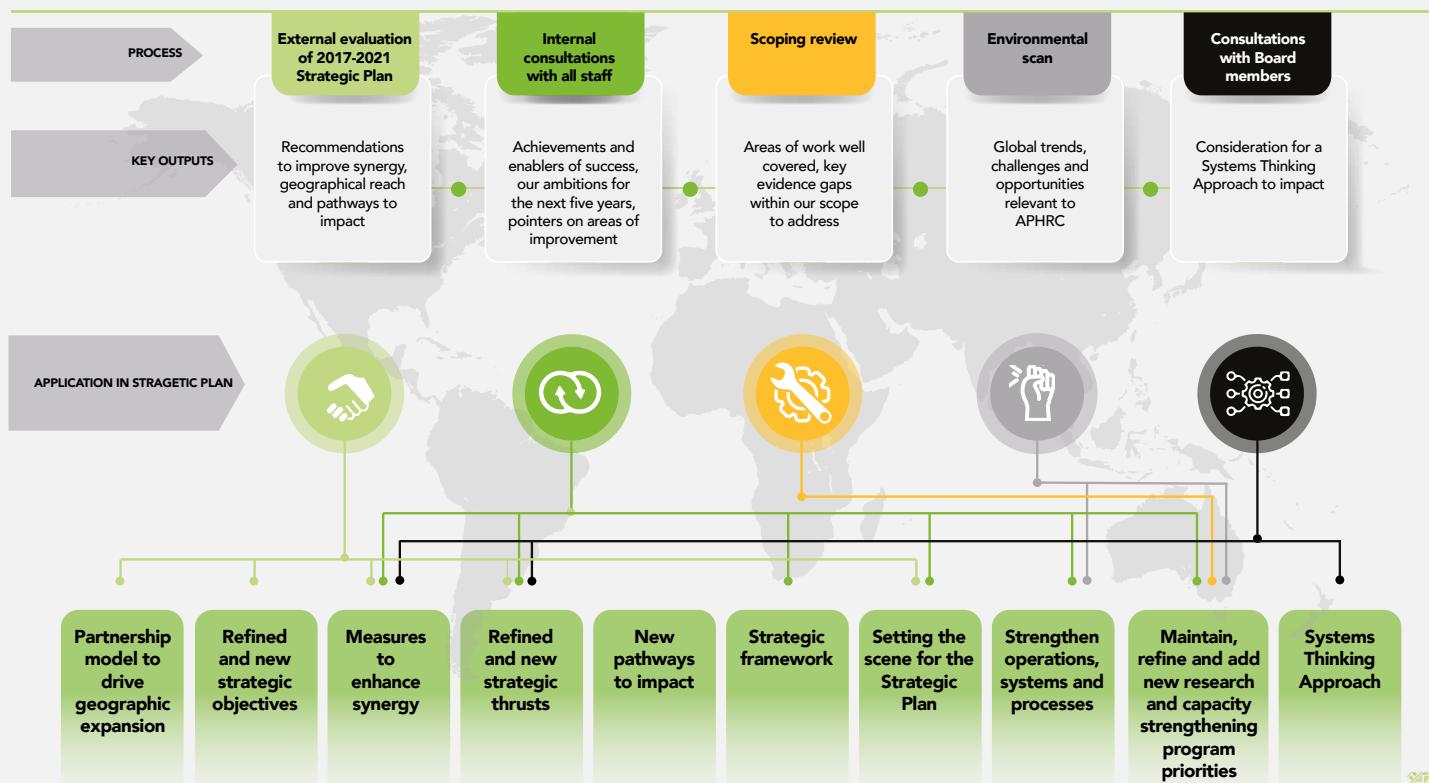
Development of the Strategic Plan involved a review of what APHRC had achieved in the last strategic plan period, a scoping review of literature on the Center's priority research areas, an environmental scan, and a future dreaming exercise that envisioned how much more successful we can be in the next period.

As we did this, we recognized areas where we could have done better. We used the Appreciative Inquiry and the Balanced Scorecard frameworks to turn these dreams into goals for the next five years. External stakeholders were asked to describe the values they associate

with the Center, the areas we had done well in, and which priorities to address in the next five years.

The development process was highly consultative and involved facilitated sessions with all staff and board members. A steering committee consisting of staff from each of the Center's departments synthesized the input to create an ambitious, forward-looking strategy. In the figure below, we illustrate how we incorporated different inputs into the final strategy.

STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Center celebrated its 20th anniversary as an independent organization in 2021

After 20 years, the Center has matured in its operations and governance while its stature and profile have grown significantly. APHRC is now a well-established and respected leader in research and policy influence in Africa.

The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan was thus developed in the context of great achievements, some gaps and enablers that will lay the foundation for success in the coming years.



ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST 5 YEARS



The Center, in its 20th year of operations, has achieved great success as a stable, productive institution striving to achieve tangible policy impact in Africa.

The last five years have solidified the Center's place as a credible and trusted evidence partner and a leader in research capacity-strengthening, though there have been some gaps in achievement.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1 Expanded partnerships with both African and non-African institutions and bodies.

2 Expanded geographical reach, including establishing an office for the West African region in Dakar, Senegal.

3 Global recognition, including being ranked by the University of Pennsylvania Go To Think Tank Index as the best African think tank influencing domestic health policy, and being the runner-up in the Eighth Global Healthy Workplace Awards in the small and medium enterprise employer category.

4 Completed the Research Leadership and Training Center - The Ulwazi Place.

5 Published more than 400 Peer-reviewed articles, over 250 Reports, and more than 250 blogs.

6 Developed capacity-strengthening models for the world and continued to be a strong African voice in the global arena.

7

Produced more than 100 graduates from its capacity-strengthening programs at the masters and doctoral levels, bringing the total number of graduates to 290.

8

Established training hubs in critical areas of the Center's work and embraced virtual learning spaces.

9

Developed in-house models for EIDM, including the Signature Issues Approach and innovative tools for policy engagement and advocacy.

10

Strengthened our engagement with regional bodies by supporting the East African Community (EAC) Sexual and Reproductive Health Bill; developed the capacity of the Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF); provided technical assistance to the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) to develop and mainstream sanitation guidelines on the continent; and piloted prototypes that can be scaled up, including a highly successful human milk banking concept.

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Transitioned seamlessly to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to significant investments into systems and processes to enhance operational efficiencies.



GAPS

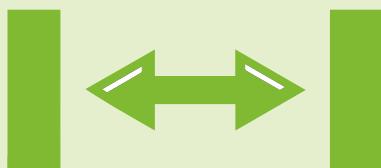
A gap analysis of the current strategic objectives and an external evaluation of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan highlighted areas of improvement in the way we design and implement programs, as well as in our systems and processes. We identified gaps in our approach to evidence generation and use, our pathways to impact, our capacity-strengthening models, and the way we do business.

Our evidence generation and use has been geographically limited, with little reach and influence in most areas within and outside Kenya. Furthermore, we did not achieve the desired evidence-to-policy impact, partly due to failure to sustain program achievements and continuity between research projects, policy engagement and scaling projects for impact.

Little progress has been made in research-related innovation and in taking advantage of existing digital technology in areas such as Big Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and advanced Over-The-Top services (OTTs).

Other gaps in our programming indicate a silo mentality that inhibits synergy in the way projects and programs are conceptualized, developed and executed. Greater synergy is needed within and across the three programmatic areas.

The Center's long-running research capacity-strengthening initiatives still rely heavily on the Center for resource mobilization and strategy. However, these initiatives are also primarily outward-looking and do not fully support the Center's staff development goals. Furthermore, the Center has not maximized the potential for a robust internship program to address pipeline issues, especially for hard-to-find expertise and for entry into research careers.



The Center operates under a restrictive funding model that limits our capacity to respond to a rapidly-changing world and to meet the needs of stakeholders outside funded initiatives. This has hindered us from contributing more significantly to the COVID-19 response in Kenya and elsewhere. It has also

led to failure to invest in poorly-funded but strategic areas for the Center, resulting in missed opportunities and less impact.

We have identified system gaps in the speed of human resources mobilization, causing delays for new initiatives to take off, reduced burn rates, and work overload for existing staff. Our knowledge management and impact tracking systems are also weak.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NEW STRATEGY

We need to conceptualize and implement multi-country programs with greater relevance and impact beyond Kenya and Senegal, and to reorient our program design approaches towards longer-term strategic engagement with policy actors.

Project and program design should be guided by co-creation and co-implementation, and should consider consistent engagement before and after project-imposed timelines. This calls for more human and financial resources for sustained policy engagement, renewed efforts to enhance synergy, and investments in strategic initiatives that may initially fall outside funding priorities.

New approaches are needed that harness the potential of our vast network of partners and alumni to broaden our geographical reach. We need to strengthen our pathway-to-impact models by reducing barriers to implementation in the current EIDM approach, while rethinking the over reliance on evidence as the lever for change. There is therefore a need to create greater ownership for programs among our research capacity-strengthening partners and thus a higher chance of impact and long-term sustainability, and to design programs to support the Center's internal capacity needs.

We need to diversify funding sources and develop new relationships that support investments in strategic initiatives and long-term commitment to systemic change. A more proactive and rapid mobilization of human resources is needed to meet the demand for new skills and staff for new initiatives and opportunities; this calls for a rethink of our talent acquisition procedures. We need to strengthen our knowledge management and M&E/impact tracking systems.



DRIVERS OF SUCCESS



Integrity and Accountability

The Center has embraced a culture of integrity and accountability that has driven continual improvement of systems and processes in finance, HR, procurement, and internal auditing, as well as a focus on accountability for results with our partners and the communities we work with. These have forged greater trust among partners, including funders, leading to financial stability and stronger partnerships with communities and policy actors. Our systems and processes are regularly reviewed, prompting updates to policies and structures that support the Center's growth and learning.

People-centered Approach

We have also adopted a people-centered approach that invests heavily in staff training and growth opportunities, talent management, and on an enabling institutional culture. These have led to greater stability and growth driven by increasingly capacitated and highly motivated staff. In addition, our organizational culture promotes respect for all, encourages openness, and upholds

excellence and commitment, while ensuring a work-life balance. This was demonstrated in the consultative and participatory approach during the review of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, and in the development of this Plan. This culture has deepened staff engagement and motivation, which is key for organizational growth and health.

Learning mind-set

Our growth and learning mind-set in internal and external engagements has meant that we are continually innovating to become better at what we do and have successfully worked with diverse partners, learning from them while supporting their growth. This has been critical in expanding our reach as we work with better-capacitated partners in different countries.

INTEGRITY



We are open, authentic, transparent,
and accountable

CHOICES MADE

We will maintain, amplify and strengthen aspects of our current strategy and its implementation while initiating new shifts.

We will maintain:

Our vision to **transform lives** in Africa, our mission, our values, and our guiding principles. These have been invaluable in fostering an institutional culture for our continued success and in designing and implementing programs with impact.

- Most program priorities because they are still relevant and aligned to national, regional and global priorities for health and development in Africa.
- Our approach to impact through research and EIDM. We will also maintain the Signature Issues Approach as an organizing framework for EIDM.
- Our capacity-strengthening ethos that focuses on individuals and the institutional environments they need to grow and thrive. We will also maintain our partnership-driven capacity-strengthening approach, which relies on the collective resources of institutions inside and outside the continent.
- Current systems and processes that have served us well and proven responsive and fit for purpose even in the hardest of times during the COVID-19 pandemic.





We will improve, strengthen or expand:

- Our approach to EIDM by:
 - Strengthening our partnerships with governments, regional bodies, and other policy actors.
 - Anchoring our EIDM work on the Signature Issues Approach to guide prioritization and strategic investments.
 - Taking a long-term view to change by establishing long-lasting relationships with policy actors that operate outside the confines of project timelines.
- Our operations systems to include business development, monitoring & evaluation, impact tracking, knowledge management, succession planning, and governance.
- Our capacity-strengthening approaches to be all encompassing and to go beyond a focus on researchers to all research-related professions.
- Our institutional capacity-strengthening initiatives and mainstream them, thus positioning ourselves as a champion for capacity-strengthening of critical partners across the EIDM spectrum.



The new shifts are:

- Taking a Systems-Thinking Approach towards impact by considering all the systems (political, economic, financial, knowledge, social-cultural) at play in policy and decision-making.
- Going beyond evidence as the main lever of change.
- An explicit focus on strengthening the R&D ecosystem in Africa to ensure that the system in which we operate is enabling for everyone across the EIDM spectrum.
- A research and learning agenda for our policy engagement work to document how our in-house models and innovations perform in the achievement of EIDM.
- A reorganization of our research work to encourage synergy and multi-disciplinarity in conceptualizing initiatives that create greater impact.
- Increasing our geographical reach by implementing a partnership model that entails formalized relationships with individuals and institutions in different countries.
- An organizational structure to support the ambition and new shifts in the Strategic Plan, promote synergy, improve efficiency, and support succession planning.



What we gave up:

- Some programs in which we do not have a competitive advantage, which are misaligned with our expert-driven growth, and which have gained little policy traction.
- Our approach to enhancing geographical reach by establishing physical offices outright.
- The way our research was organized in smaller units. Although the units were cohesive and functional, a persistent lack of cross-unit collaboration and synergy warranted a change.



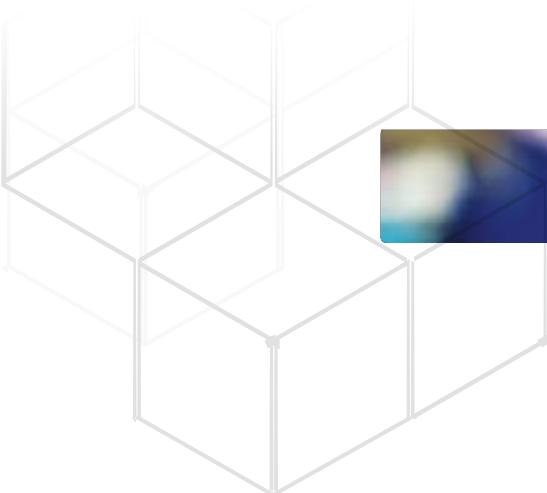


RESPECT

**We treat all people with courtesy,
kindness and thoughtfulness**

2022-2026 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

We will maintain our vision, values, guiding principles, and some of our strategic objectives. We have strengthened our mission and formulated new strategic objectives to reflect the shift towards a Systems-Thinking Approach.





OUR VISION

Transforming lives in Africa through research



OUR MISSION

Generating evidence, strengthening research and related capacity
in the African R&D ecosystem, and engaging policy to inform action
on health and development

OUR VALUES

FAIRNESS

We are impartial,
and committed to
equity and inclusion

INTEGRITY

We are open,
authentic, transparent,
and accountable

RESPECT

We treat all people with
courtesy, kindness and
thoughtfulness

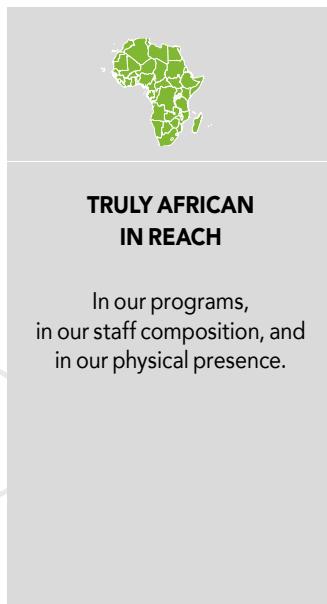
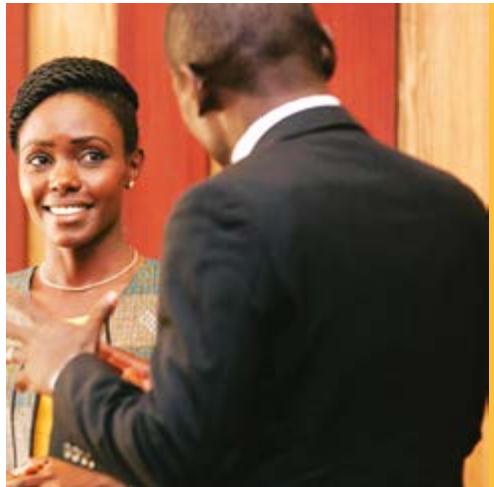
EXCELLENCE

We pursue and deliver
quality consistently,
efficiently and effectively

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



The guiding principles in the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan have served APHRC well and have been retained. They have been improved to be both internal and external facing.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Generate scientific knowledge aligned to local and international development agendas that affect health and development in Africa.

Develop capacities to strengthen the research ecosystem in Africa and contribute to the development and implementation of a blueprint for Africa's self-sufficiency in R&D.

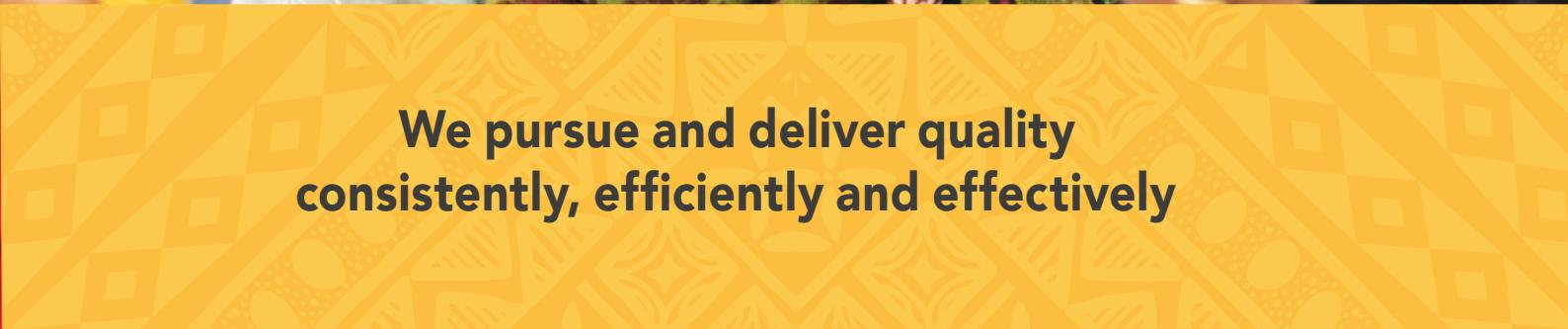
Use research evidence and engage policy actors for trans-formative change.

Strengthen operational efficiencies in systems and processes for maximum programmatic impact.

EXCELLENCE



We pursue and deliver quality
consistently, efficiently and effectively

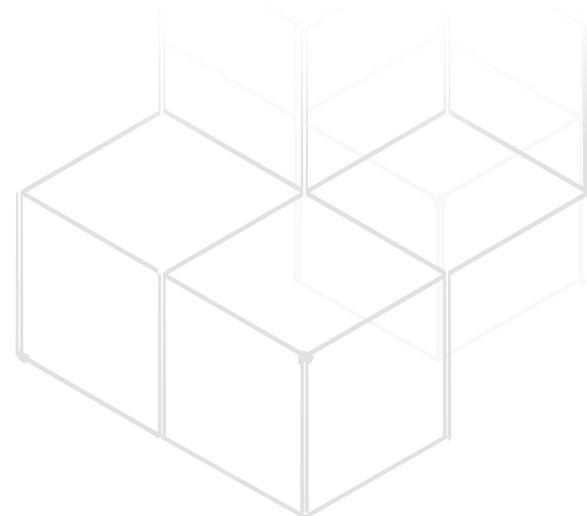


STRATEGIC THRUSTS

The Center's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan will maintain its core programmatic focus. To meet its second strategic objective, however, the Center will shift its approach to impact significantly. From our current approaches, which focus on the primacy of evidence as a lever of change, we will take a systems approach that examines how financial, economic, social, cultural, political, and knowledge systems interact in decision-making. In addition, we will develop and enact outward-facing initiatives aimed at transforming the R&D ecosystem in which the Center operates, as a strategy for achieving greater impact.

1

A set of strategies to deepen and strengthen our programmatic work grounded in the existing EIDM approach;





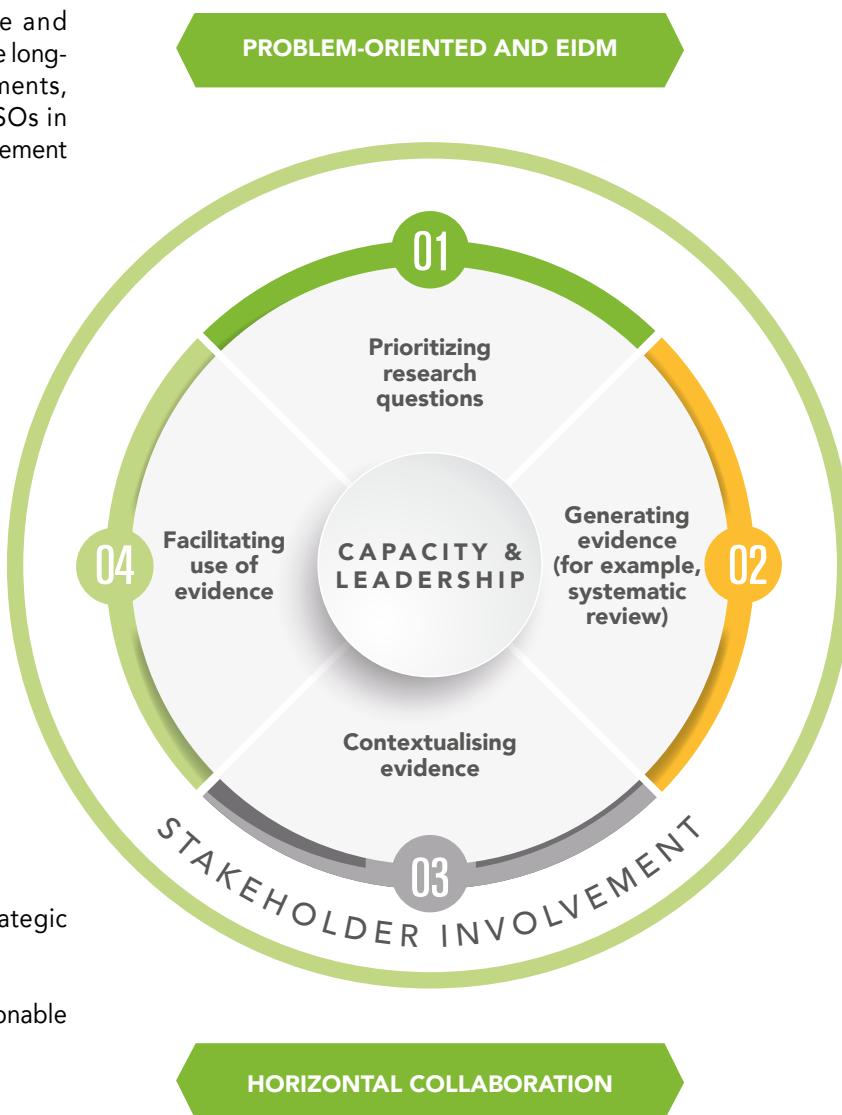
Deepening our Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Work

APHRC will amplify its research-to-evidence and evidence-to-action initiatives. Critical to this aim are long-term and sustained engagements with governments, academic institutions, regional bodies, and CSOs in Africa, as well as sustained public and policy engagement and advocacy.

a) Greater & Sustained Engagements with Institutions in Africa

Leveraging our existing networks for research capacity-building (e.g. CARTA, ADDRF) and experiences with decision-makers in Kenya and Senegal and with regional bodies, we will strengthen our approaches to EIDM by:

- Formalizing partnerships with selected government entities, policy and advocacy organizations, and academic/research institutions;
- Developing mechanisms to identify research priorities for strategic partners in government and civil society, and how these priorities can be incorporated into the design of new initiatives;
- Mainstreaming co-creation/co-design and co-implementation of programs with strategic policy and academic partners;
- Designing strategic initiatives that are actionable outside the constraints of project funding;





- Establishing government liaison positions to facilitate our engagements with various government entities in Kenya and Senegal;
- Establishing full-time policy engagement and outreach staff positions aligned to the signature issues, hence increasing our presence and participation in relevant national, regional and global technical working groups.

b) Sustained Public & Policy Engagement & Advocacy on Signature Issues

This will be guided by the Signature Issues Approach (SIA) developed and rolled out during the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. The SIA analyzes the policy architecture around a specific issue to identify entry points for engagement, the development of strategic policy engagement plans, and their execution. By design, it requires the identification of long-term policy objectives, key stakeholders, and a co-designed plan to achieve the policy objective. By doing this, we will rally stakeholder ownership for sustained policy engagement and advocacy beyond project life.



Adopting a Systems-Thinking Approach towards Impact



In the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, we will infuse Systems Thinking Approach into our current approach to policy engagement and advocacy. We will achieve this first by mainstreaming implementation research (IR) into our project design and delivery. By taking a systems approach to IR, we will incorporate an assessment of all the critical systems that influence decisions – namely the political, social-cultural, financial, economic, and knowledge systems to determine where the barriers to change lie. We will then design interventions to address those barriers.

This marks a significant shift from our current focus on knowledge and evidence as the driver of decision-making.

Strengthening research and development ecosystem in Africa

In addition to the shift in our impact model, the Center will engage in initiatives that have an impact on the R&D ecosystem in Africa in which the Center operates. Such initiatives will revolve around:

- Sustainable capacity-strengthening for research, evidence use and IR;
- Institutionalization of existing capacity-strengthening interventions (CARTA-specific, virtual platform, digitization);
- Establishment of research hubs in partnership with and within academic institutions as platforms for training and policy-relevant research;
- Developing models and prototypes for linking academic institutions with policy actors in their jurisdiction for mutual learning and impactful IR;
- Capacity-strengthening for partners in technical aspects, as well as in institutional systems and processes, by adopting Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) as a standard for all APHRC partners to aspire to;
- Developing a blueprint for Africa's self-sufficiency in R&D that recognizes the multiple systems at play in the current global environment;
- Developing connector platforms that provide cross-cutting value to researchers, scientists and decision-makers in Africa;
- Enhancing our position as a facilitator in fund management and a technical thinking partner for IR in Africa.

This shift in strategy requires a significant change in the skills profile of the Center and a need to collaborate effectively with organizations that have expertise in applying a systems lens to Research-Policy-Action. The organizational structure has been reviewed to ensure that the right individuals are appropriately placed in teams that will take a multi-disciplinary approach to actualize this strategic shift.

Strengthening Systems, Processes and Practice

The Center will strengthen and streamline existing systems and processes, and establish new ones, to support our new program-related shifts, sustain our highly successful operation, and uphold our institutional culture. The new cross-cutting areas where we will change the way we do business include:



Internal Capacity-Strengthening

We will strengthen capacity across the entire Center's programmatic and operations areas – a shift from the singular focus on research Capacity-Strengthening.



Prioritize Cross-Cutting Expertise

To support our EIDM and systems-thinking work, we will strengthen our recruitment model to target individuals with cross-cutting expertise in research, policy engagement and advocacy, with diverse experiences in both the public and private sectors.

Expanding the Center's Geographical Reach and Impact



A provision in the new organizational structure allows for the office of international programs to ensure that our geographical expansion is strategic and more efficient. We will also strengthen our global networks of partners by formalizing relationships and streamlining our engagements in research and capacity-building for mutual benefit.

We will adopt a partnership model to amplify the impact of our work in different geographical areas. Building on our vast network of alumni and partners in academic and research institutions, we will establish different models to design and implement programs to meet mutually beneficial objectives.

This will range from APHRC country liaisons and affiliates (individuals) to hosting arrangements and alliances (institutions). This model will drive our future expansion plans, whereby highly successful liaison offices may evolve into additional regional offices.

Establish Systems to Promote Greater Synergy



Lack of synergy remains one of the Center's biggest challenges. In the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, we will create new structures and positions to enhance synergy by shifting support functions to a synergy unit, establishing an office of research governance, and by including synergy and collaboration in the reward system for senior management.

Synergy will further be enhanced through a shift away from perfect alignment of strategic objectives to each of our Divisions to a situation in which the achievement of one specific objective (#2) depends on the contribution of all three Programs.



We will mainstream the co-design, co-creation, and joint implementation of programs with key stakeholders

PROGRAM PRIORITIES



The APHRC 2022-2026 Strategic Plan outlines a bold agenda predicated on four strategic objectives and supported by six guiding principles to enhance our impact in the region. It reflects our ambition to engineer change in policy, practice, program development and delivery, and individual behavior on the continent, as well as the R&D ecosystem in Africa.

To enhance our position as a connector and a facilitator in the African R&D ecosystem, we will strengthen internal capacities and in partnership with other organizations, and develop initiatives to promote Africa's self-sufficiency in R&D for vaccines, therapeutic, diagnostics and system innovations. These initiatives will catalyze the debate and establish the basis of alternative R&D sustainability models that will improve population and public health on the continent. Our programmatic strategy will be characterized by:

- **Continuity and consolidation**

Building on our successes of the last 20 years, we will sharpen our focus in niche areas where we have a strong record of accomplishment. We will leverage on our successes to fill any evidence gaps, answer new questions, and provide global, regional and national thought leadership.

Our capacity-strengthening initiatives will build on existing ones, which are aligned with the priorities of the other two programs. We will maximize our use of newly-established virtual learning platforms to expand our reach.

- **Multi-disciplinarity**

We will bolster evidence generation and IR for policy impact using existing tools and models, while developing new approaches that take a holistic approach to understanding how different systems interact to drive change. We will design initiatives that demand synergy and collaboration across disciplines within and across programmatic areas.

- **Cross-program coherence**

We will generate evidence, strengthen capacity, and conduct policy engagement and advocacy within the same defined set of priority areas to better position the Center for impact.

Below we describe the program priorities for our three main areas of work: Research, Research and Related Capacity- Strengthening, and Policy Engagement and Communications.

Our program priorities have been largely retained with a few new areas added in response to COVID-19 and other trends. A few areas have been dropped due to lack of progress in developing programs over the last 10 years and to limited policy traction. To allow for more synergy with the research teams, we will introduce four themes under which multiple work streams will be integrated to maximize cross-program fertilization and to concentrate skills from different disciplines within fewer units. The Center's work in policy engagement and advocacy as well as the West Africa Regional office will be aligned to these priorities. The four themes are:



Human Development (HD)

We will consolidate the work in the area of human development previously done in different units to generate evidence that will promote stronger, more inclusive policies and practices for early childhood development, education and youth empowerment systems in Africa. A new area of work will be Education and Technology, to understand how African countries could leverage technology to solve existing and emerging educational challenges.

Health and Well-Being (HaW)

We will consolidate work previously done under three units, and explore new areas to improve/contribute to the evidence base for effective intervention strategies and policies to promote the health and well-being of all people in Africa. The theme will have five programs of work: Nutrition and Food Systems; Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (SRMNCAH); Chronic Diseases Management; and Health Systems Strengthening. A new area of work will be in Emerging and Re-emerging Infections (ERI) to respond to the COVID-19 and AMR challenges.





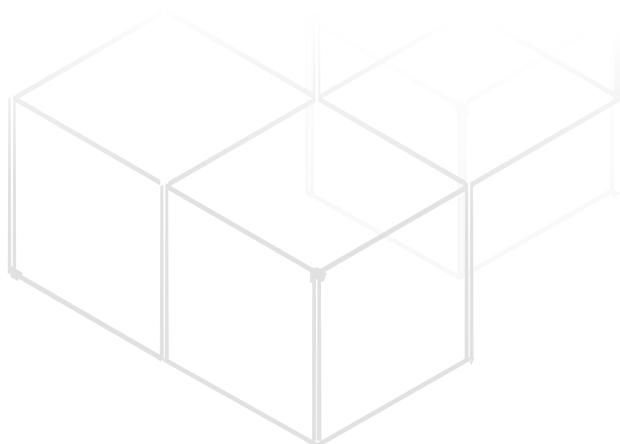
Population Dynamics and Urbanization in Africa (PDAU)

We will consolidate and expand on work in urbanization, fertility, and aging and development to address issues that will help understand migration and urbanization trends in Africa and their implications for developing sustainable and resilient cities. This theme will have four programs of work on urbanization and sustainability, fertility and aging.

Data Science and Evaluation (DSE)

We will consolidate and expand on these research areas to address issues that will promote the field of measurement. The programs under this theme will include measurement and impact evaluations, “big data”, and the use of data science tools in robust data systems.

The West Africa regional office will implement priority programs within the four research themes but which respond to regional and national agendas. These are Urbanization and Sustainability (PDUA), Health Systems Strengthening (HAW), Environmental Sustainability (PDUA), and Fertility (PDAU).



RESEARCH

In the last 20 years, the Center has generated knowledge that has local, national, regional, and global relevance. The evidence generated during the last strategic period was delivered through six research units: Aging and Development; Education and Youth Empowerment; Health and Systems for Health; Population Dynamics and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; Urbanization and Well-Being in Africa; and Maternal and Child Well-Being. A seventh unit on Data, Measurement and Evaluation provided cross-cutting support to the other units and led our work in impact and other evaluations.

In the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the research program will address all the priorities in the four thematic areas described above, with an emphasis on the continuity of existing programs and on gradually developing the new areas of work. The West Africa regional office will implement a few priority programs which respond to regional and national agendas.



POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Our policy engagement and communications work will build on the successes and tremendous growth of the program during the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. For greater impact, we will mainstream the co-design, co-creation, and joint implementation of programs with key stakeholders. Given the challenges of this resource-intensive approach, we will prioritize programs aligned to the signature issues for this approach.

As part of our strategy to enhance impact tracking, we will embed research and learning into our program design and document how our models and tools perform in achieving EIDM.

The PEC program priorities will be closely aligned with the research ones. We will strengthen our work in existing areas of SRMNACH (HAW), Nutrition and Food Systems (HAW), UHC (HAW), and WASH (PDAU). New areas of work will be guided by the Signature Issues Approach.



RESEARCH AND RELATED CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING

We will continue to deliver on our successful initiatives and expand our reach to support the development of research leaders as well as support our partners to institutionalize some of the innovations developed in the last five years.

We will co-design capacity-strengthening initiatives that take a systems-thinking approach, exploring the interactions between social, technical, economic, environmental, and political forces to inform decision-making and shape strategy.

We will achieve this through the following three approaches:

- Capacity-strengthening at the individual level
- Capacity-strengthening at the institutional level
- Strengthening the R&D ecosystem





We will implement green and eco-friendly initiatives to reduce the overall impact our work has on the environment

OPERATIONS

We have already described some cross-cutting strategies for strengthening our systems, processes and practices under the section on Strategic Thrusts. In this section, we outline the changes in our systems and processes that reside under corporate services.

We will implement green and eco-friendly initiatives to reduce the overall impact our work has on the environment. To boost efficiencies, we will enhance service delivery and re-engineer business processes to strengthen governance structures; improve talent management and succession planning; plan for financial sustainability; and strengthen business development.



Strengthen Governance Structures

Recruit a professional company secretary, establish an audit committee, and designate an office to coordinate risk management and compliance.

Talent Management

Better forecast human resources requirements for new and ongoing initiatives, and develop systems and processes that enhance team cohesion and staff engagement in the context of working remotely.

Succession Planning

Institutionalize and demystify the succession planning process and its rationale, and cascade it to progressively lower levels in the institutional hierarchy.

Enhancing Financial Stability

Strengthen our business development function to respond to anticipated growth in programs, diversify our funding sources to include the private sector, and take initial steps towards establishing an endowment fund.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Operationalization of the Strategic Plan will be supported by an Implementation Plan, an M&E framework, and a resource mobilization strategy.



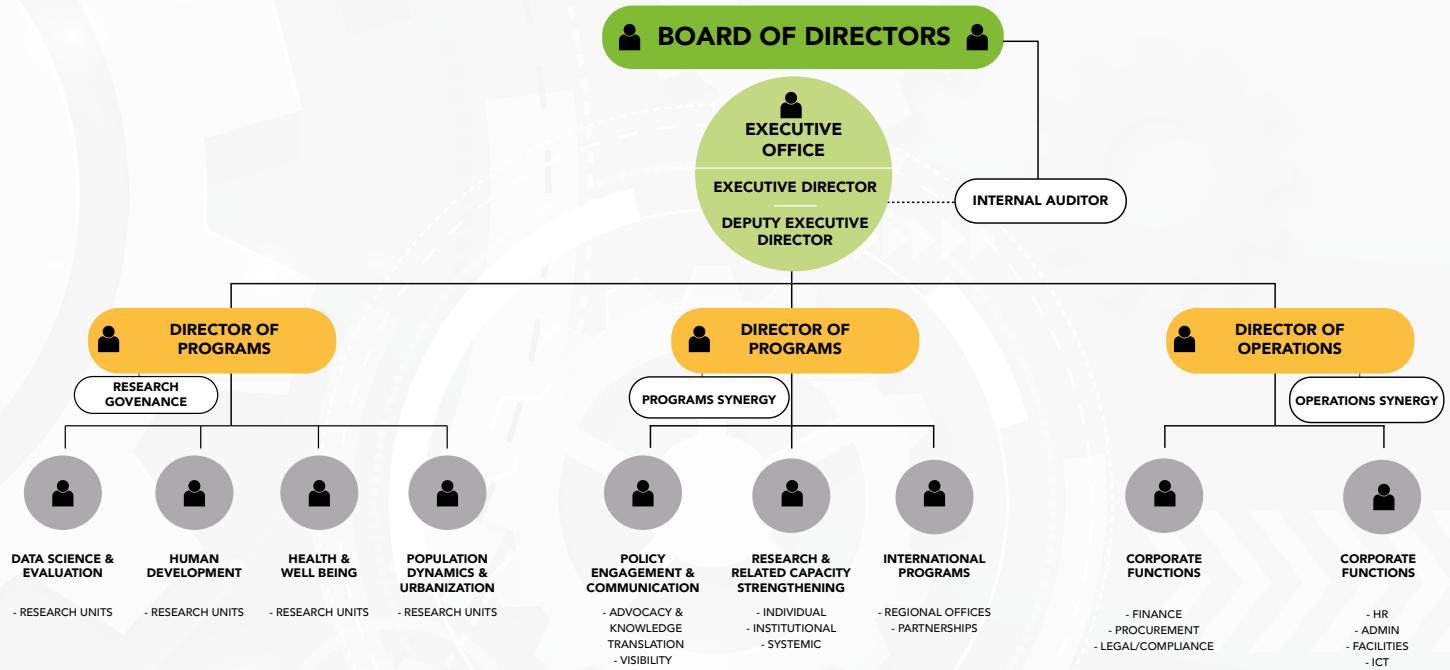
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

We will overhaul our organizational structure to support the objectives of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The rationale behind the change includes the need to:

- Support the delivery of newly-defined program priorities;
- Address challenges in the current structure (imbalance, leadership pipeline, appropriate oversight and reporting line for regional offices and any future offices outside Kenya);

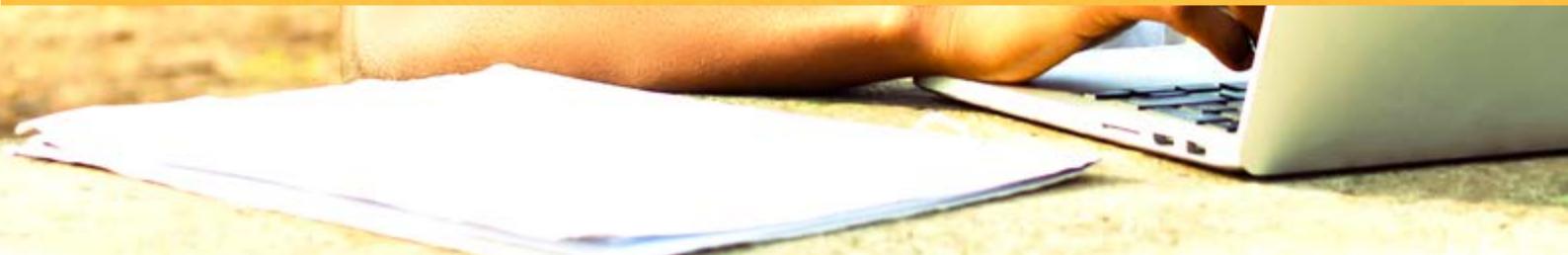
- Improve performance and impact in geographical areas outside Kenya and Senegal, and operationalize the partnership model; Strengthen existing networks and partnerships (including alumni);
- Address long-standing challenges with internal synergy (within and across programmatic divisions);
- Support cascaded and orderly succession planning.

ORGANOGRAM





We will take a systems approach that examines how financial, economic, social, cultural, political, and knowledge systems interact in decision making



LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAD - Aging and Development

ADDRF - African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship

CARTA - Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa

DEI - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DME - Data, Measurement and Evaluation Unit

EAC - East African Community

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

EIDM - Evidence-Informed Decision-Making

EYE - Education and Youth Empowerment Unit

GFGP - Good Financial Grant Practice

HSH - Health and Systems for Health Unit

HD - Human Development

IR - Implementation Research

MCW - Maternal and Child well-Being Unit

NICRA - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

PDRH - Population Dynamics and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Unit

PEC - Policy Engagement and Communications Division

RCS - Research Capacity-Strengthening Division

R&D - Research and Development

SADC-PF - Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF)

SIA - Signature Issues Approach

SRMNCAH - Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health

UWB - Urbanization and well-Being in Africa Unit

WARO - West Africa Regional Office

WASH - Water Sanitation and Hygiene



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