



## ALF-A

# Africa Leadership Fellowship-AMS Insights on mentorship experiences

### Background

As part of the second phase of the Commonwealth Partnership for Antimicrobial Stewardship (CwPAMS2) programme, the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association is hosting the Africa Leadership Fellowship Antimicrobial Stewardship (ALF-A). This year-long, bespoke fellowship programme is designed to address identified gaps in antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) capabilities and strategies within the African context. ALF-A currently supports 45 early- to mid-career pharmacists in 8 sub-Saharan African countries (Fig 1). Each fellow was assigned two mentors (in-country and UK-based) with expertise in health leadership, AMS, and/or One Health; mentors are responsible for supporting the assigned fellow for the year, focusing on role and leadership development, including the leading of an AMS improvement initiative project.

### AIM

Evaluate the mentorship experience of CwPAMS2 ALF-A fellows.

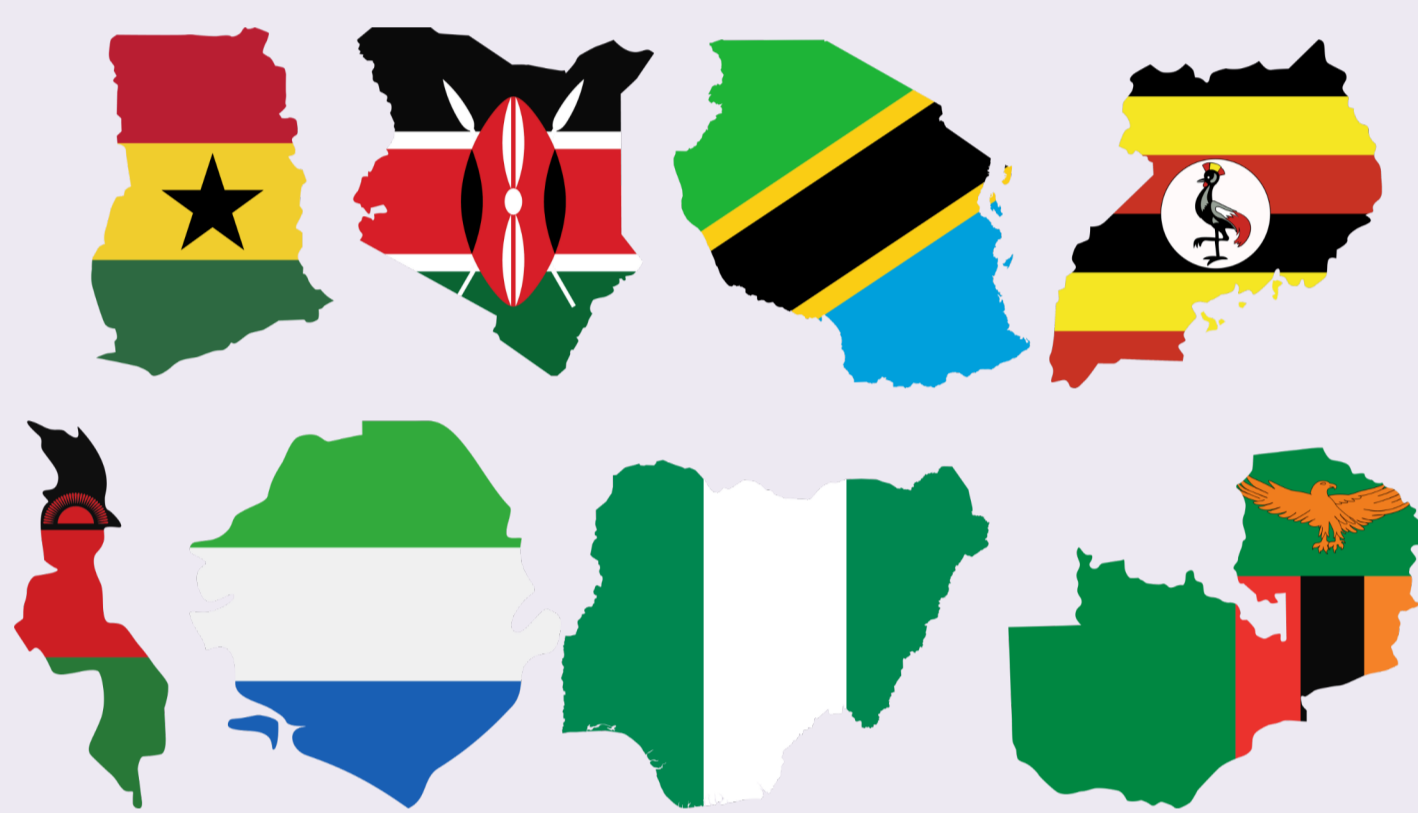


Fig. 1 Flags and borders of Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Nigeria & Zambia.

### Method

**Data collection:** An online survey was developed and disseminated to all 45 ALF-A fellows in May 2024. The survey was designed using Google Forms to gather information on demographic variables and general mentorship experience, both in-country and UK-based, including the perceived advantages and barriers associated with mentorship, and recommendations for improvement.

**Data analysis:** Excel was used to perform descriptive statistical analysis; and open-ended questions were thematically analysed using N-Vivo.

### Results

A total of 40 fellows completed the survey (89% response rate)

70% were between under 40 years old. 32% (20-30) and 38% (30-40).

Just over half (55%) reported that they had no mentorship experience before ALF-A to support their professional development (Fig. 2).

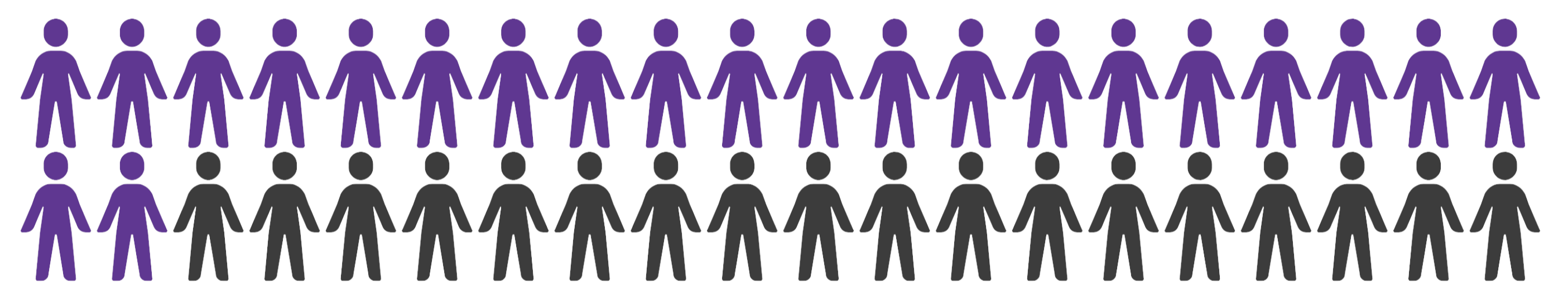


Fig 2. Visualisation of how many respondents had no prior mentorship experience (purple).

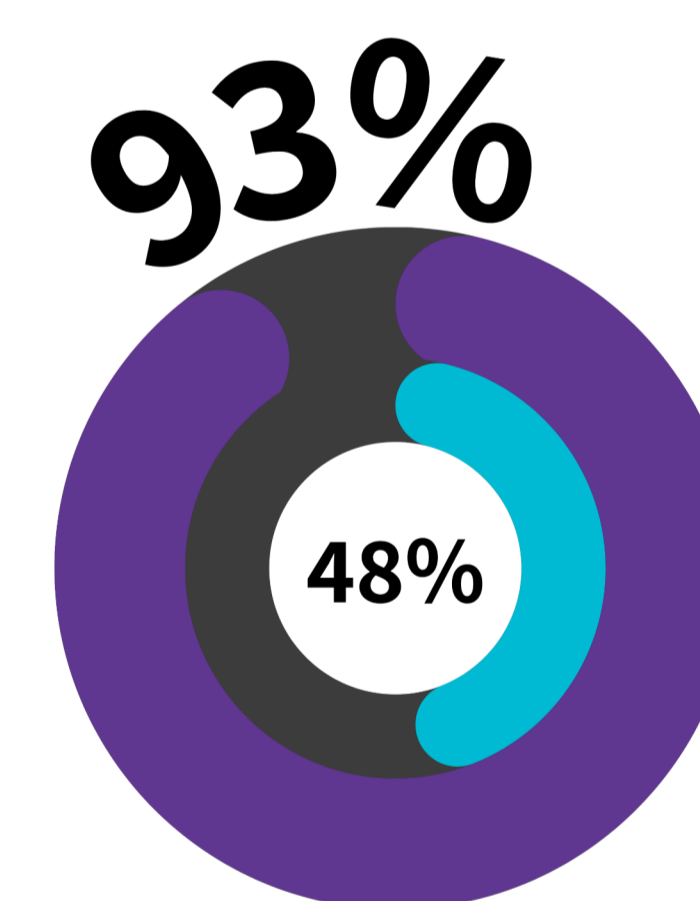
### Perceived benefits of having a mentor

- Professional growth, skill development and self-improvement;
- Support in project direction;
- Networking and connections.

“Have really appreciated [the] mentorship. Mentors have made me have a wider view /perspective of things and think out of the box. They have made implementation of some AMS activities easier through guidance. I am being moulded to be a great AMS leader by my mentors.

ALF-A Participant

### Mentoring meetings and communication channels



The majority (93%) had at least one meeting with each of their ALF-A mentors.

Face-to-face meetings (48%) were the most common way of interacting with in-country mentors.

Zoom (45%) or MSTeams (43%) were the two most common communication channels with UK-based mentors.

### Challenges

- Late mentorship assignment and start;
- Misalignment of knowledge/expertise;
- Logistical challenges e.g. difficulties scheduling meetings due to busy schedules/availability and time difference (with UK mentors), lack of face-to-face meetings, internet connectivity issues;
- Personal challenges e.g. overcoming shyness or other personal barriers to effective communication, uncertainty about what to discuss or how to initiate conversations with mentors.

### Continuous Quality Improvement

Suggestions for improvement of the mentorship experience are currently being considered, including:

- improving/tailoring the matching process;
- providing additional training and support resources;
- improving engagement through flexible and accessible communication channels;
- ensuring good time-management and flexibility.

### Conclusion

This study revealed key insights into the mentorship experiences of ALF-A fellows, fostering professional growth and skill development. While early-career mentees highlighted the guidance provided and their increased confidence to deal with internal issues such as shyness and hesitancy, mid-career mentees further emphasised sustained career development and networking.

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