The ILRI CapDev Grand Challenge



Growing Transformational Future Livestock Sector Professionals

Wellington Ekaya, Head of Capacity Development **International Livestock Research Institute** Email: w.ekaya@cgiar.org

INTRODUCTION

ILRI created the CapDev Grand Challenge process to strengthen its capacity development offering to graduate students and early career researchers from national research organizations in West, Eastern and Southern Africa, East, Southeast and South Asia. Annually, the Institute hosts 100 – 150 graduate students and early-career researchers within its research programs.

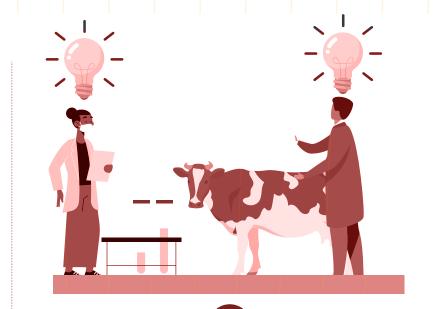
Launched in 2019, the process aims to equip next-generation livestock sector professionals with leadership and interpersonal skills they need to be effective research leaders, science communicators and influencers in the agriculture landscape in countries where ILRI works, and beyond. One cycle of the CapDev Grand Challenge takes 12 months. By the end of the cycle, participants are expected to be better at:

- o Informing and influencing decisionmakers
- o Working across disciplines, stakeholders and sectors
- o Delivering on leadership roles
- o Communicating science to non-technical audiences
- o Designing effective mechanisms for engaging stakeholders
- o Designing Impact Pathways

METHODS









92%

STRONGLY

AGREE

The CapDev Grand Challenge starts off with a 3-minute research pitching contest to a panel of six judges and a chief judge culminating in awards to top winners

PITCHING

SOFT SKILLS TRAINING

Pitching contest is followed by 10 months of softs skills training involving 10 courses and mentorship talks from global leaders in research for development

MENTORING

Participants apply acquired skills in their workplaces, are virtually mentored and supported to participate in international events, and to expand their networks for continued professional development

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Impact is tracked through interviews, testimonials from participants, reflection workshops and online surveys

RESULTS

84%

STRONGLY

AGREE

Fostering Leadership in Science

Skills I acquired motivated me and boosted my confidence in taking up leadership roles.

Strengthening Systems Thinking in

Skills I acquired made me more

Nurturing Science Storytellers

Skills I acquired greatly strengthened my confidence and effectiveness in communicating science to non-technical audiences.

Research

confident and effective engaging and working with people outside my own discipline.

90%

Impact

Because of the skills I acquired, I now feel motivated, confident and effective in mapping out the different actors in a project and explaining their roles.

Enabling Strategic Outreach for

Building Science Advocates

Skills I acquired strengthened my confidence and ability to engage with intention to influence decision makers.

STRONGLY **Emerging** AGREE **Impacts**

STRONGLY

88%

AGREE

90% **STRONGLY** AGREE

STRONGLY

AGREE

Strengthening Synergies in Complex Systems

Skills I acquired made me confident and effective in designing and discussing project impact pathways.

CONCLUSIONS

After 18 months of implementation, the CapDev **Grand Challenge demonstrated the potential for:**



Creating next-generation livestock sector professionals who are effective communicators, able to inform and influence decisionmakers



Creating systems thinkers able to contribute to agricultural research addressing global challenges in a **fast-changing world**



Fostering synergies and sustainability in complex livestock food systems

Catalyzing strategic outreach for accelerated impact

TESTIMONY FROM PARTICIPANT:

Apart from equipping me with new skills, I now realize I really needed this experience for my science and technical skills to be effective in creating change. The experience has given me a totally fresh way of looking at research and how we ought to think in a systems perspective if our research findings are to create real change, and faster.

Daniel Korir, ILRI PhD Graduate Fellow – Sustainable Livestock Systems, and winner of the 2019/20 CapDev Grand Challenge



#CapDevChallenge





