

CURES WITHIN REACH RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: A CHAMPION FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

In 2020, Cures Within Reach funded **Dr. Mainga Hamaluba** at **KEMRI Wellcome Trust Research Programme** to support a Phase I trial testing the safety of unithiol, a common metal poisoning drug, for its potential venom-inactivating properties in the treatment of snakebite in high-burden areas in Kenya. Snakebite affects over 5 million people globally and causes tens of thousands of death per year primarily in young children, as current antivenom treatments are expensive with low effectiveness and limited access for rural communities in Kenya.

While training as a pediatrician at Oxford, Dr. Hamaluba developed a passion for clinical research to address health disparities and improve patient outcomes, particularly in Africa where she had grown up. She returned to Kenya in 2016 and has since served as KEMRI Wellcome Trust's Head of Clinical Research, overseeing a portfolio ranging from malaria vaccines and COVID-19 to neonatal health and malnutrition. She also has experience in epidemiology and vaccine research, including time with the Oxford Vaccine Group studying vaccines in Nepal. Her work was adopted under the current vaccine schedule for Nepal's expanded immunization program.

Dr. Hamaluba has been a **champion for underserved communities and driving public health policy through translational research**. To her, this means diversity of projects, of principal investigators, of ethnicity and of gender – and equity across those areas.

Her mission: to deliver community-informed research toward disease treatments that may be underfunded and less visible on a global scale.



KEMRI | Wellcome Trust

PROFILE

- Dr. Mainga Hamaluba is a leader for research in underserved communities, focused on pediatric clinical trials across the East Africa.
- Dr. Hamaluba grew up in Africa and trained in the United Kingdom before joining KEMRI Wellcome Trust in Kenya as its Head of Clinical Research.

CWR FUNDING

- This \$150,000 **Phase I clinical trial** (including \$50,000 from CWR) is testing the safety profile of a common metal poisoning drug for treatment of snakebite.
- Dr. Hamaluba and this trial represent two of Cures Within Reach's communities:
 - **Developing World / LMICs**
 - **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**