



Issue #6

THE NEWS

IvE - Kenyatta University

Program Launch

January 2026 will be remembered as the month a bold vision became reality. After months of planning, partnership, and anticipation, the inaugural cohort of the MSc. Biomedical Engineering (Medical Device Innovation) programme officially opened its doors at Kenyatta University, marking an extraordinary milestone in Africa's MedTech story.

"Each innovator brings a unique perspective – together, they represent the next generation of MedTech leadership."

Thirteen exceptional individuals, biomedical engineers, a medical doctor, a health-tech entrepreneur, a pharmacist, a computer engineer, and a biomedical research scientist, walked through those doors carrying diverse expertise, lived experiences, and a singular determination: to solve Africa's most pressing healthcare challenges through innovation.



MSc Biomedical Engineering
(Medical Device Innovation)



Invention Education - Kenyatta University

Innovate | Convene | Create



MEET MDI COHORT 1



The cohort represents a remarkable cross-section of East Africa's brightest minds. Takondwa Sembo and Mark Wabwire bring deep biomedical engineering expertise. Dr. Salisu Ali Umar offers a clinician's lens – understanding healthcare challenges from the bedside. Prudence Ibila bridges the world of entrepreneurship and health technology. Joel Ngushwai straddles the frontier of computer engineering and biomedical science, while Jael Ongeru brings a critical regulatory affairs and pharmaceutical perspective that every medical device ecosystem desperately needs.

Rounding out this powerhouse cohort are Lindah June Adhiambo, Mark Mutahi, Janiffer Nyambura, Eliyah Wekesa, Alice Ada Awuor, Ernest Bwogi, and David Ajayi – each a biomedical engineer with unique research backgrounds and innovation ambitions.

The Onboarding Experience

The first weeks were intentionally designed to be both immersive and inspiring. Students were introduced to the programme's philosophy – that great medical devices are not built in isolation but at the intersection of clinical insight, engineering rigor, regulatory understanding, and entrepreneurial courage.

From their first day, the students experienced a curriculum that refuses to be ordinary. Structured around real-world problem-solving, the programme brings global MedTech standards to an African innovation context.

*The journey has begun.
Thirteen innovators.
One shared purpose.*

The Clinical Detective

Searching for the 'Unmet Need

Before You Can Design the Solution, You Must Understand the Problem – Intimately.

There is a critical mistake that haunts many medical device projects: designing for a clinical problem you have never truly witnessed. Clinical Immersion is the course that sends fellows beyond the classroom and into the healthcare settings where real patients, real clinicians, and real systems reveal the unmet needs that textbooks cannot capture.



In these sessions, Cohort 1 students are embedded in clinical environments such as hospitals, health facilities, and patient care settings. The task..., observing, asking, listening, and documenting.

The objective is deceptively simple: understand the problem before you dare to design the solution. The practice, however, is deeply transformative.



Students learned to conduct structured clinical observations, engage with healthcare providers to surface pain points. They are learning to sit with the discomfort of complexity and resist the urge to jump to solutions. For a cohort that includes a medical doctor, biomedical engineers, and a pharmacist, Clinical Immersion is where their diverse professional languages begin to converge into a shared vocabulary of human-centred innovation

Sparks, Sawdust, and Synergy

Getting Hands-On with Product Design

In the Design Studio, Failure Is Not the Opposite of Success – It Is the Method.

The Prototyping and Product Design class is where the MDI programme gets its hands dirty – literally. This is the course that transforms observations into tangible artefacts, sketches into structures, and hypotheses into things you can hold, test, and improve.

Students are learning to embrace iteration as a discipline. The first version of anything is expected to be imperfect.



*Build It. Break It.
Build It Better.*



The Professional Exchange

More Than Just Engineering



The greatest medical device in history is worthless if its inventor cannot communicate its value, navigate the professional world with confidence, or sustain the personal resilience required to see an innovation journey through to impact.

The Professional Foundations class exists to ensure that MDI students are not just technically excellent – they are complete, compelling, and career-ready professionals.

For a cohort that will one day be pitching to global investors, publishing in international journals, and sitting across the table from regulators, these skills are not optional. They are foundational.

Professional Foundations also creates space for reflection on why each student chose this path, what drives them, and what kind of innovator they aspire to be.

In a demanding programme, this intentional pause to examine purpose is not a luxury. It is what keeps the fire burning.



*Your technology impresses engineers.
Your story moves investors, clinicians,
and communities.*





Partnership & Presence

Maggie Flanagan at KU

Some visits are routine. This one was anything but. In a day that blended strategy, curiosity, and genuine excitement, Maggie Flanagan of The Lemelson Foundation visited Kenyatta University for an energizing deep-dive into the MDI programme – and left no room for doubt about the significance of what is being built here.

The visit opened with a strategic courtesy call with university leadership – a conversation that went beyond pleasantries to explore the programme's trajectory. It was the kind of dialogue that matters: frank, forward-looking, and firmly rooted in shared vision.



From Boardroom to Design Studio

From university leadership, Maggie was taken on a tour of the Design Studios at the Medtech Accelerator and Graduate School. These are the spaces where ideas get stress-tested and prototypes are born.

In the Room Where It Happens

Perhaps the most electric moment of the day came when Maggie joined the Product Design class during a live design review. She didn't observe from the sidelines – she engaged. Fellows presented their thinking, defended their design decisions, and experienced firsthand what it feels like to have a global funder lean in, listen closely, and take their work seriously. It was a powerful signal: the world is watching, and it is impressed.

Maggie also connected with members of the MDI Advisory Board, experienced practitioners and thought leaders helping to guide the programme's direction. The conversations were rich, grounded in both the realities of healthcare systems and the global possibilities of innovation.

