

SMART4TB Early Stage Investigator Program – Cohort 1

Background

Supporting, Mobilizing, and Accelerating Research for Tuberculosis Elimination (SMART4TB) is a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with the assistance of the American people, that aims to transform TB prevention, diagnosis, and care. SMART4TB has launched an important capacity-strengthening activity, the Early Stage Investigator Training and Mentorship Program, to train and support young investigators to develop, implement, and lead their own studies aligned with their national and local TB research priorities. The first cohort of SMART4TB Scholars representing five countries have successfully completed Phase 1 of this training program, which included 10 weeks of course work, an analysis of their national TB program (NTP), and the development of a TB research concept aligned with their country's NTP priorities. We congratulate our new SMART4TB Scholars!

39 Early Stage Investigators from Nigeria, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa, and the Philippines are ready to implement locally-led mentored research studies that support the transformative mission of SMART4TB.

Program Performance

- 100% of ESI scholars presented an analysis of their National TB Programs to colleagues and research faculty members
- 98% of ESI scholars completed a research concept paper
- 98% of ESI scholars strongly agreed that the program met their expectations and will begin applying training program skills to their work

Testimonials



"The SMART4TB Scholars program is a wonderful program! I have learned a lot including the fact that community engagement for research starts during protocol development. It has also helped me expand my network both in-country and internationally with potential for collaboration. The commitment of the SMART4TB faculty is remarkable; this has been an extremely invaluable experience and I encourage anyone that is interested to apply for the second cohort." **Leatitia Kampiire, SMART4TB Scholar, South Africa**



"This is the training that NTP programmes need to make a significant impact in better service delivery and subsequently fast-tracking Ending TB around the globe. My interactions with seasoned researchers and SMART4TB mentors have expanded my horizon in writing a research concept. When I did my Doctor of Philosophy, I had no idea about a systematic literature search until I took this important course. This training is indeed a way to go if anyone wants to maximize the gains in research work." **Stella Makpu, SMART4TB Scholar, Nigeria**



"This program has really changed my perspective on research. I have attended various basic research trainings during my career, but this training has instilled self confidence in research and has greatly changed my mind to pursue research and change lives of people. I would like to thank all my facilitators and more so the funders of this program. It will go a long way to solve health issues in our resource limited countries." **Chibumbya Robertson, SMART4TB Scholar, Zambia**



"Being part of this program is a unique and exciting opportunity, through which I had the privilege of acquiring immensely relevant knowledge. The highlight of my learning in the program was developing a research proposal that can address the challenges highlighted by my country's National Tuberculosis Program. On this journey, I was surrounded and supported by a remarkable network of colleagues and mentors, both national and international, with vast expertise in tuberculosis. This environment played a key role in allowing me to have an even more enriching experience. I am excited to contribute in an innovative way to address the main challenges related to tuberculosis." **Márcia Chiluvane, SMART4TB Scholar, Mozambique**



"I have learned so much from the consultations, individual discussions with peers, and exercises in the training and mentorship program. What I have learned from my experience has allowed me to apply it after each session in my own real-life setting, bolstering my individual capacity to make a change in the means of conducting research. The knowledge that I have gained has been and will be invaluable as I attempt to reach my aspirations. It was quite an experience, and I am ready for more." **AC Aquino, SMART4TB Scholar, Philippines**



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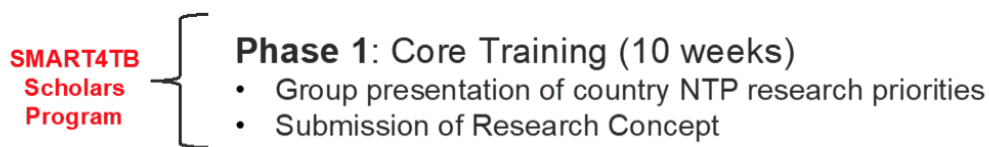


SMART4TB Early Stage Investigator Program

SMART4TB Training and Mentorship Program

The program's main objective is to train and support early stage investigators to develop, implement, and lead their own studies aligned with their national and local TB research priorities. Investigators within 10 years of receiving their most recent degree or who are new to TB research, based at an institution participating in SMART4TB studies, and supported by their local institutional leadership were eligible for participation in the program. The program has 4 sequential phases, each with specific eligibility criteria and deliverables required before advancing to the next phase.

Scholars in the program received ongoing feedback and support from the SMART4TB Mentors and Team, including live office hours, weekly communication, assessment feedback, and live webinars.



In Phase 1, the curriculum included the following components:

- Overview of SMART4TB's novel approach and tripartite mission for research, capacity strengthening, and policy translation
- Overview of the SMART4TB Early Stage Investigator Program
- National Tuberculosis Program (NTP) Overview
 - Scholars from each country presented current NTP Research Priorities
- Best practices for developing a research question
 - Each Scholar developed a research question and received feedback from mentors and SMART4TB team.
- Literature Search Strategies
- Basics of Study Design
- Developing a Research Proposal
 - Each Scholar developed a Concept Paper for Research Proposal with feedback from mentors and SMART4TB team.
- Best practices for Community Engagement
- Responsibilities of a Principal Investigator

For More Information: <https://tbcenter.jhu.edu/smart4tb/>



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