

*TDR Newsletter: Issue 8*

*April 2013*

Dear Fellow,

Welcome to the 8th issue of the TDR website newsletter.

This newsletter features:

- Intro and update
- Fellow's articles from:
  - o Laureano Mestra
  - o Brenda Okech
- Courses, Conferences and Meetings
- Call for Applications
- Mentorship Scheme

Dear Fellow,

I hope the first quarter of 2013 has been productive and successful for you.

The next round of the fellowship is still to be finalised and once all selections have been made and placements appointed we will find out more about our new colleagues! In preparation for the arrival of the new fellows I have created a new discussion topic in the community area of the TDRf website so that you can all share your advice for starting a placement: [Advice, hints and tips for starting your placements](#). I think this would be a useful and extremely valuable way of welcoming the new fellows to our community. Please could you spare a few minutes to offer some insight into this transition period which as you know, can be quite daunting.

The Global Health Network continues to develop new areas and expand its user base. There are three new areas of the network:

- **Consortium or the Standardisation of Influenza Seroepidemiology (CONSISE)** is a global partnership aiming to standardize influenza seroepidemiology and develop comprehensive influenza investigation protocols to inform public health policy. <http://consise.tghn.org/>
- **Global Health Methodology Research** is a community of researchers who are interested in supporting the generation of more and better evidence to drive improvements in health across the globe. <http://globalresearchmethods.tghn.org/>
- **Data Management / Association for Data Management in the Tropics (ADMIT)** is a public forum for clinical data managers engaged in non-commercial North-South collaborative research. It is animated by a core group of clinical data managers from the Network's partner institutions, and it is open to any colleagues who are willing to share experiences, questions, information, tools and experiences. <http://admit.tghn.org/>

There have been over 120,000 visits to the network sites and 50% of these are unique visits. The Twitter (@info\_TGHN) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/TGHN>) continue to be a valuable and highly accessed form of dissemination for the network.

SiteFinder (<http://sitefinder.tghn.org/>) is beginning to facilitate research partnerships and enable equity in access to research opportunities with 42 sites now registered. Registering is free, easy and could bring potential funding and collaboration opportunities to your home institutions.

As always this newsletter is designed for you so if there is something you would like to see included then please let me know: [liam@globalhealthtrials.org](mailto:liam@globalhealthtrials.org)

Best wishes,

Liam

Training & Professional Development Coordinator

The Global Health Network

**Article by:** Laureano Mestra

**Home institution:** Programme for Study and Control in Tropical Diseases (FECET), Medellin, Colombia

**Host institution:** Eisai Japan (6m) USA (6m)



### **Aftermath is always a new beginning**

**Laureano Mestra, MD.<sup>1,2</sup>**

1. World Health Organization/TDR Clinical Research Fellow (2011-2012)
2. General Director, founder and CEO of Septentrional R&D. \*

After finishing my fellowship I had the opportunity to getting deeper in the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) arena.

Thanks to be part of one year of the Eisai Inc. team, I was chosen to work in a non-profit organization named *Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi)*.

Eisai and DNDi are currently developing a novel compound for chronic undetermined Chagas disease and a Phase II clinical trial is being conducted in Bolivia.

I was part of this team for more than six months working as a medical manager and clinical research associate (CRA).

This was such a wonderful and enricher experience, basically because I had the opportunity of giving to people more of the knowledge I have been acquiring; especially the things I learned during my fellowship.

Unfortunately and due to the fact that the sea is not always calm for us, those ones who work in research for the poverty, I was laid off.

But not all is bad news, I am also working as a consultant for the World Health Organization/Polio Eradication Initiative and I am monitoring a clinical trial in Cuba and I think this is just the beginning. I decided to start my own company: *Septentrional R&D*.

Now, I am using all my knowledge, experience and strength to give shape to this project. A project for life.

Perhaps now I had to open my eyes to other therapeutic areas different than NTDs, but always keeping in my mind and heart the poor people around the world.

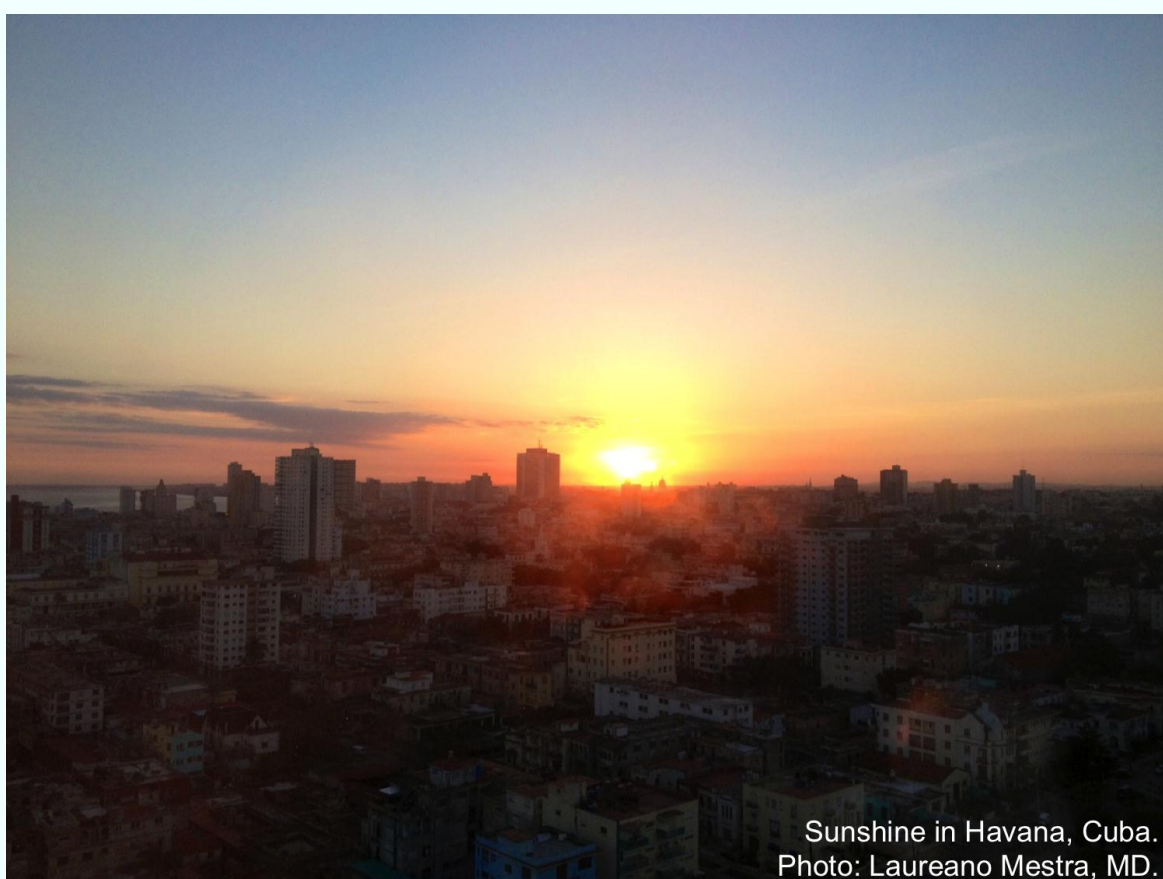
Opportunities come in different ways and sometimes they look like problems, for that reason my friends do not be troubled if the future after your fellowship is not clear yet; you are being now empowered to be able to overcome challenges for the poorest people around the world and to overcome challenges in your own life.

Don't give up my friends, don't give up.

Cheers,

Laureano

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**Article by:** Brenda Okech  
**Home institution:** Uganda, Medical Biotechnology  
Laboratories, Kampala  
**Host institution:** GSK Biologicals, Belgium



## **TDR-GSK career development fellowship is a pathway for exciting work on clinical vaccine research**

### **Current work**

The experience at GSK led to an opportunity to work as project manager for a consortium undertaking a multi-Centre malaria vaccine trial. The consortium is made up of 8 Partners including Medical Research Unit at Albert Schweitzer Hospital (MRU-ASH) in Gabon, the Medical Research Council (MRC) Laboratories in The Gambia, Centre National de Recherche et de Formation sur le Paludisme (CNRFP) in Burkina Faso, Makerere University (MUK) in Uganda, University of Tübingen (UKT) in Germany, African Malaria Network Trust (AMANET) in Tanzania and Navrongo Health Research Centre (NHRC) in Ghana with Statens Serum Institute (SSI) is the sponsor of the trial. European Malaria Vaccine Initiative (EMVI) left the partnership after one year and had contributed to the proposal development as well as the early phases of the trial. The objective of the project is to develop an efficacious malaria vaccine that is safe to be integrated into the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) within African countries. This is attempted through capacity building, networking & project management. The picture below shows some of the consortium members:



## **Lessons learnt from GSK**

Working in cross cultural environments with both Francophone and Anglophone African countries as well as interacting with donors while at GSK was a practical on the job training for my current position. Work on the RTS'S program was very important learning as my current work is also in a consortium with multiple partners including Anglophone and Francophone African countries.

GSK training has been very relevant for our current work and key example are training in protocol development, communication, GCP, GCLP and monitoring. Other aspects like harmonization of methods and quality control have also been very important. It is this training that opened the door to this exciting work opportunity for me and many others who have been on the program. The fellowship is a proven means to increase the number of locals from developing countries contributing to the global cause of vaccines for better health.

## **Courses, Conferences & Meetings**

### ***6th International Congress on Infectious and Parasitic Diseases***

**June 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Submit abstracts of scientific works and reports of disease control activities by 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Contact: [info\\_cipip@yahoo.be](mailto:info_cipip@yahoo.be)

### ***Implementation Research Training Workshop***

**7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2013 Gaborone, Botswana**

Request for applications - submission deadline 26<sup>th</sup> May 2013  
More information: [IR workshop Call for application 2013 2.pdf](#)  
Contact: [TDRToolkit@who.int](mailto:TDRToolkit@who.int)

### ***Course: Epidemiological evaluation of vaccines: efficacy, safety and policy***

**July 8<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine  
[More information](#)

### ***6th MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference***

**6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

International Convention Centre, Durban, South Africa  
More information: <http://mim2013.mrc.ac.za/>

### ***6<sup>th</sup> SA Aids Conference***

**18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2013**

ICC, Durban, South Africa  
More information: <http://www.saids.co.za/>

***AIDS Vaccine 2013***

**7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

International Convention Centre, Barcelona, Spain

More information: <http://www.vaccineenterprise.org/conference/2013/>

***Seventh EDCTP Forum***

**21<sup>st</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

Dakar, Senegal

More Information: <http://www.edctpforum.org/>

***4th Advanced Course on Diagnostics (ACDx)***

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

Les Pensières Conference Centre, Annecy (France)

<http://www.edctpforum.org/>

***ASTMH Annual Meeting***

**13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, DC

Contact: <http://www.astmh.org/Home.htm>

***2nd Clinical Trials Methodology Conference***

**18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

EICC, Edinburgh, Scotland

More information: <http://www.methodologyconference2013.org.uk/>

***Grant writing and peer review workshop***

**November 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> 2013**

Johannesburg, South Africa

Travel Awards available

[More information](#)

***International Conference on AIDS and STI's in Africa***

**7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

Durban, South Africa

[More information](#)

For more information on all upcoming courses, conferences and meetings please contact [info@globalhealthtrials.org](mailto:info@globalhealthtrials.org)

Please continue to write and submit a report on each conference or meeting you attend (and a photo if possible). This allows colleagues to learn from your experience and perhaps help them decide whether any future conferences by that organisation/on that topic would be of use to them.

I would also like to request that all current fellows upload their conference reports to the TDR website or forward to [liam@globalhealthtrials.org](mailto:liam@globalhealthtrials.org) and I will upload on your behalf. The template for the conference report can be downloaded, in word format, from the 'Conference Report' section of the website: <http://tdrfellows.tghn.org/conference-reports/>.

## Call for Applications

### **Short-term grant for research capacity strengthening and knowledge management to help improve disease control**

#### **Request for applications**

**Submission deadline: 12 May 2013**

This new short-term grant scheme is designed to bridge strategic gaps in research capacity and knowledge management to help researchers and health professionals increase their contribution in addressing issues related to disease control.

Building on past investments in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), the grant provides support to individuals or research teams to:

- expand their scope of knowledge and/or skills, and contribute to long-term achievements and sustainability of research efforts leading to health improvement
- address specific research capacity or knowledge management aspects that can advance the understanding, analysis and ways of finding solutions to public health problems

Support under this grant will be flexible, based on public health relevance, scientific quality and feasibility of the proposed expected output to be achieved within a period of one year.

The grant will not fund formal academic degree training, experimental studies or data collection involving human subjects or biological samples, or acquisition of skills not linked to a specific scientific output. In 2013 it is anticipated that 20-30 new grants (up to US\$ 50 000, non-renewed) will be awarded.

Proposals can be submitted in English, French, Spanish or Portuguese.

Further details of this call in English, French and Spanish can be accessed at:

<http://www.who.int/tdr/grants/empowerment/en/index.html>

### **Funding Opportunity Announcement: Training Programs for Critical HIV Research Infrastructure for Low- and Middle-Income Country Institutions**

#### **National Institutes of Health, Fogarty International Center and National Institute of Mental Health**

The purpose of this FOA is to encourage U.S. institutions with research collaborations at low-and middle-income country (LMIC) institutions to submit applications for training programs to strengthen the leadership and expertise in selected critical research infrastructure areas at their collaborating LMIC institutions. This FOA can only support training related to technical expertise, administration and financial management in support of one of these six areas:

- Dedicated research offices;
- Offices of research integrity;
- Ethics committees for protection of human subjects;



- Committees for animal care and use in research;
- Health sciences libraries (library and information science); and
- Information and communications technology systems (ICT) - (expertise to keep these systems up-to-date and functioning)

For more information visit: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-13-215.html>

## Mentorship Scheme

The Global Health Network's Professional Membership Scheme continues to be a popular area of the network. There are a wide range of PMS members based across a range of countries and research professions. Recently the annual review aspect of the scheme was activated so that members can record their accomplishments over the past twelve months and set career goals for the coming year. Many users; especially those in the early stages of building a career in clinical research, stated in their reviews that they receive very little career support and would benefit from having an experienced mentor.

Through focus groups, workshops, online questionnaires and individual interviews we asked a wider range of research staff what they needed to support them in taking part in research. The outcome was a call for access to pragmatic skills-training and a free mentoring scheme for potential and existing research staff, whatever their role within research.

In response to this demand we are currently pilot-testing a monitoring system using our existing network of experts and research staff who are active on The Global Health Network. There is a high demand for mentoring and currently we aim to pair one mentor with one mentee. To help with this process the Malaria Capacity Development Consortium (MCDC) has allowed us use of their excellent, fully interactive mentoring training tools for both mentors and mentees.

As a collective of experienced clinical researchers I wanted to take this opportunity to invite each of you to take part in this highly valuable mentoring scheme. Those willing to participate as a mentor would be required to sacrifice a small amount of their time to offer support and guidance to one mentee from the Professional Membership Scheme. The mentor and mentee are usually paired together based on their area of research and profession by the mentorship coordinator.

If you are interested in using your experience to help guide fellow researchers in their career please contact [training@globalhealthtrials.org](mailto:training@globalhealthtrials.org)