

MWELE MALECELA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

AUGUST 2023

Issue n° 3

PROGRESS
REPORT



INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to present the third issue of the Mwele Malecela Mentorship (MMM) program Progress Report, marking the continuation of our journey since the last update in May 2023. This report reflects our ongoing commitment to transparency, accountability, and effective communication as we strive to achieve our goals and initiatives: increase gender equality in representation and leadership by developing and supporting mid-career African women to become leaders and champions in NTD elimination at national and international levels. As we share our progress with you, you'll gain insights into the substantial progress we've made, the challenges we've met, and the remarkable transformations shaping the MMM Program.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM DESIGN AND SELECTION OF MENTEES AND MENTORS

Continuing our journey from the last edition, the MMM Program has dedicated considerable effort to ensure this component incorporates the criteria set for the selection of the most suitable mentees and mentors for the inaugural cohort of the MMM Program. Through a combination of rigorous criteria, a comprehensive evaluation of our Selection Committee, and the invaluable insights of the Steering Committee, the following outcomes were attained:

- ↳↳↳ **Selection of top ten mentees for cohort I:** The MMM Program Selection Committee, comprising seasoned experts in the NTD field, diligently evaluated each applicant to ensure that those chosen demonstrated a profound commitment to NTD elimination and displayed exceptional potential for growth and leadership. This process resulted in the identification of 12 exceptionally strong candidates, out of whom ten were deliberately chosen for the inaugural cohort with the guidance of the Steering Committee. Additionally, recognizing the potential and enthusiasm the two remaining candidates exhibited, they were selected to join the second cohort, scheduled for early 2024. These two individuals have expressed their eagerness to participate in the subsequent phase of the program, underscoring their dedication and commitment to the MMM journey.
- ↳↳↳ **Shortlisting of mentors for Cohort I:** The diligent review of mentors' applications received was an essential step in securing a strong composition of our mentor pool. Following the extension of the call for applications, an impressive total of 42 individuals, distinguished for their qualifications, expressed a keen interest in being part of the program. This phase was characterized by a comprehensive evaluation strategically designed to secure the participation of high-level women and men who have attained remarkable accomplishments and are recognized as influential leaders in the NTD community. As a result, 35 exceptional candidates were identified and advanced to the matching phase, where they will be thoughtfully paired with mentees to facilitate the exchange of insights, knowledge, and transformative mentorship.

Next Steps

- ☞ Launch of the Request for Applications for the second cohort of the MMM Program



LAUNCH AND IMPLEMENTATION


We are thrilled to highlight in this report the remarkable progress made during the critical launch and implementation phase of the MMM Program. Undoubtedly the core of the program, this phase has witnessed notable achievements as the MMM Secretariat worked diligently with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH), Menttium and The END Fund to ensure a successful implementation of the program. In this reporting timeline, we proudly share the following outstanding milestones achieved:

↳↳↳ **Matching of mentees and mentors.** The MMM Program Secretariat collaborated closely with Menttium to process the mentees-mentors matching. Leveraging their expertise, Menttium assessed the strengths, aspirations, and growth areas of both mentees and mentors upon completing the Matching tool. This thorough evaluation aimed to ensure optimal compatibility and mutual benefit within the mentorship pairings.

↳↳↳ **Mentorship Program Strong Start Launch scheduled.** This event took place on **August 16** and provided an opportunity to introduce and celebrate the exceptional individuals who were carefully selected to be part of the inaugural cohort. Through a gender-intentional approach, the launch ensured that mentees were equipped to exercise leadership and become influential advocates in NTD elimination efforts. The Strong Start training further strengthened the foundations of mentorship, equipping participants with essential tools, insights, and strategies to foster effective communication, meaningful collaboration, and impactful guidance throughout their mentorship journey.

Our warmest thanks go out to our esteemed partners, Menttium, The END Fund, ASTMH, and BMGF, for their invaluable collaboration and support in making the Official Announcement and Strong Start launch of the MMM Program a resounding success. Their dedication, expertise, and shared vision have played a pivotal role in bringing this transformative initiative to life. Through these partners' commitment to advancing gender equality, leadership, and NTD elimination, we have been able to provide a platform for mentorship that empowers, inspires, and creates a lasting impact. We genuinely appreciate their unwavering belief in the MMM Program's mission and their role in shaping a brighter future for African women in the NTD community.

Next steps

- ☞ Create a tailored mentorship journey platform to enable mentors and mentees to engage in meaningful interactions, access resources, and document their progress.
 - ☞ Ensure the participation of mentees at the Neglected Tropical Disease NGO Network (NNN)
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PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

Throughout this reporting period, the program's governance has continued to act as the driving wheel of the implementation of the MMM Program, offering insights into the structures, strategies, and collaborative efforts that have been instrumental in guiding and steering the program toward its overarching goals. The following achievements have been attained under the Program Governance component:

↳↳↳ **MMM Selection Committee assessed and recommended the first cohort of the MMM Program.** Following an intensive three-day meeting dedicated to assessing and selecting mentees for the inaugural cohort, the Selection Committee recommended twelve strong candidates. The committee also offered comprehensive recommendations for future mentee and mentor selections.

↳↳↳ **The MMM Steering Committee endorsed the top 10 candidates** following the Selection Committee's recommendations. Each selected candidate will receive a US\$15,000.00 cash award as a part of the mentorship program.

Next steps

- * Preparation for the After-Action Review of the first cohort of the Mwele Malecela Program.
- * Convene the second Steering Committee meeting.



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The program management and reporting component, an integral pillar of the MMM program, ensures the program's smooth execution, transparency, and collaboration with partners. This phase includes a comprehensive approach to overseeing all program activities, tracking progress, and communicating outcomes with close partners. During this reporting timeline, the following milestones were achieved:

↳↳↳ **The WHO AFRO UCN Cluster welcomed the MMM program's new NTD Advocacy, Partnerships, and Mentorship Officer.** Ms. Santa-Mika Ndayiziga has officially joined the WHO AFRO UCN team, where she will play a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainability of the MMM program and providing essential support to the ESPEN team in expanding NTD advocacy efforts across Africa.

↳↳↳ **The WHO AFRO UCN has completed the agreements with the partners** and has started to work with partners to ensure the smooth and successful implementation of the MMM Program in line with the program's objectives.

Next steps:

- ☞ Follow up with ASTMH to ensure the funding agreement has been received for countersignature
- ☞ Organize networking events for mentees and/or mentees and mentors

With this new issue, we celebrate the remarkable progress achieved since our last edition, highlighting our collective dedication to realizing the vision of the Mwele Malecela Mentorship (MMM) Program and the successful launch of its inaugural cohort.

Together, we continue to shape the landscape of NTD elimination, one mentorship at a time, and we thank you for your unwavering support in this honorable endeavor!