



Leaving no-one behind: Transforming Gendered pathways to Health for TB (LIGHT)

About LIGHT

LIGHT is a six-year cross-disciplinary global health research programme, funded by UK aid, and led by Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) in collaboration with partners in Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, and the UK.

LIGHT aims to contribute to real-world change, leaving no-one affected by tuberculosis (TB) in sub-Saharan Africa behind. The LIGHT Consortium is generating new evidence to transform gendered pathways to health for people with TB in urban settings. LIGHT's approach aspires to reduce the overall TB mortality and morbidity, and ultimately improve health, socio-economic

outcomes, equity, and contribute to the global efforts to end TB. LIGHT Consortium partners are the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) Kenya and Malawi; Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) UK; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) UK; Makerere University Lung Institute (MLI) Uganda; Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Programme (MLW) Malawi; Respiratory Society of Kenya (ReSoK) Kenya; and Zankli Research Centre (ZRC) Nigeria.

Check out our introductory [video](#) to learn more about LIGHT's work.



LIGHT Consortium members at the annual programme meeting in Uganda

Message From LIGHT's CEO



Welcome to LIGHT's annual newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading it and catching up on all the exciting activities that are taking place across the consortium, including research activities, stakeholder engagement and communications, and capacity strengthening. Since its inception in September 2020, LIGHT partners in Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda and the UK, have all been extremely active with research projects in full swing and early results are emerging. We have been seeing very positive engagement with stakeholders at global and national levels to ensure that all our research is relevant, demand-driven and ultimately leads to long-lasting impact within and beyond the communities we serve.

Moreover, LIGHT is committed to fostering a culture of continuous growth and learning. We have been undertaking a range of capacity strengthening activities, with individuals in the consortium and with key stakeholders, as well as strengthening research management at institutional levels. Multidirectional learning and sharing of experiences are key to the success of LIGHT.

Dr Rachael Thomson, CEO

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Men are disproportionately impacted by TB. More than 56.5% of all TB cases in 2021 were in men compared to 32.5% among women and 11% among children. Additionally, two out of every three cases of TB which go undiagnosed or not notified, are in men.

The LIGHT research teams are working on generating new evidence to inform gender-responsive policies and programmes that are effectively actioned to improve men's access to quality TB prevention and care. This will result in reduced number of people with TB-related ill health and deaths; reduced transmission to the wider community (including to women and children); and alleviated TB-associated financial burden for affected individuals and their families.

LIGHT's research is focusing on understanding the TB burden among young people and identifying solutions to barriers hindering screening, diagnosis, and treatment (Kenya); screening for active TB in young men outside of health facilities (Malawi); evaluating the acceptability, convenience, and effectiveness of identifying and linking men with TB to care in densely populated communities (Nigeria) and piloting male-friendly services in healthcare facilities (Uganda).

LIGHT is also conducting research across partner countries in Africa to compare different contexts and support the scale up of effective TB interventions. This includes modelling studies, health economic analysis, and working in partnership with TB-affected communities to co-create solutions.

In the past two years, LIGHT research teams across the consortium have been working hard on designing their research studies, developing research protocols, and obtaining ethical approvals. Research led by Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in Uganda, Malawi and Nigeria have started their recruitment processes in-country. Cross-cutting research is also underway and data collection tools have been finalised.

To know more about LIGHT's research work, check out our latest research publications below:



Research publications

1. Rickman, H.M., Kamchedzera, W., Schwalb, A., Phiri, M.D., Ruhwald, M., Shanaube, K., Dodd, P.J., Houben, R.M., Corbett, E.L. and MacPherson, P., 2022. [Know your tuberculosis epidemic—Is it time to add Mycobacterium tuberculosis immunoreactivity back into global surveillance?](#) *PLOS Global Public Health*, 2(10), p.e0001208.
2. McQuaid, C.F., Henrion, M.Y., Burke, R.M., MacPherson, P., Nzawa-Soko, R. and Horton, K.C., 2022. [Inequalities in the impact of COVID-19-associated disruptions on tuberculosis diagnosis by age and sex in 45 high TB burden countries.](#) *BMC medicine*, 20(1), p.432.
3. Pulford, J., El Hajj, T., Tancred, T., Ding, Y., Crossman, S., Silvester, L., Savio, M., Bevan, N., Tagoe, N. and Bates, I., 2023. [How international research consortia can strengthen organisations' research systems and promote a conducive environment and culture.](#) *BMJ Global Health*, 8(4), p.e011419.
4. Ku, C.C., MacPherson, P., Khundi, M., Nzawa Soko, R.H., Feasey, H.R., Nliwasa, M., Horton, K.C., Corbett, E.L. and Dodd, P.J., 2021. [Durations of asymptomatic, symptomatic, and care-seeking phases of tuberculosis disease with a Bayesian analysis of prevalence survey and notification data.](#) *BMC medicine*, 19, pp.1-13.

RESEARCH UPTAKE HIGHLIGHTS

LIGHT engages strategically with a range of key national, regional, and global stakeholders to ensure that our research is informed, relevant, effectively communicated, and timely for maximum impact. This includes informing policy discussions with evidence from LIGHT on how gender-responsive policies can significantly enhance access to TB prevention, diagnosis and care. The LIGHT research uptake teams have conducted stakeholder analyses and Political Economy Analyses (PEA) in Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Nigeria to better understand the deeply rooted social, political and economic factors that influence the TB epidemic in these countries.

In the past year, LIGHT team members have been engaging in key activities which contributed to strengthening and solidifying the consortium's presence at national, and regional and international fora. These activities included:

- 1 **Engagement with national stakeholders** to communicate our research and key messages through technical working groups, one-on-one meetings, and TV and radio interviews, as well as engagements with local communities, TB survivors and advocates, researchers, funding bodies, decision-makers, healthcare workers and at World TB Day events. Each year on 24th March, stakeholders, including the health community, relevant government agencies and the general public, observe [World Tuberculosis Day](#) to raise people's awareness and ignite commitment and efforts towards ending TB. For more information, [read our blog titled, "If we want a TB-free world, we must invest!."](#)



LIGHT team participating in the World TB Day event held in Machakos, Kenya. As we invest to end TB, there is a need for interventions that increase men's access to quality TB care

- 2 **Contributing to and reviewing National TB strategies and plans.** This included participating in the National Steering Committee for the Public-Private Mix of the National TB and Leprosy Control Programme (NTLP) in Nigeria to develop the "National Action Plan 2022–2025", guided by the National TB strategy. LIGHT also contributed to developing Malawi's National Male Engagement Strategy (NMES) with the country's Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare.
- 3 **Uptake of LIGHT's recommendation by the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding TB-related sex disaggregated data reporting practices.** The LIGHT team identified a gap in the reporting of treatment outcomes for TB, highlighting the importance of reporting data for both males and females to address gender disparities between sexes. As a result, the WHO acknowledged our observation and committed to reviewing and including treatment outcome data disaggregated by sex in the Global TB Report 2023 and related webpages. They also pledged to examine other reports, such as those on people living with HIV, for full reporting of sex disaggregated data.

4

Engagement with the wider TB community and networks to join efforts for maximum impact. This included chairing the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (Union) Working Group on Gender Equity in TB. Activities of the Working Group included organising with the World Health Organization (WHO) Global TB Programme a webinar on **“Multisectoral Engagement to Improve Gender Equity in TB and Ensure No One is Left Behind”** to mark International Men’s Day 2022.

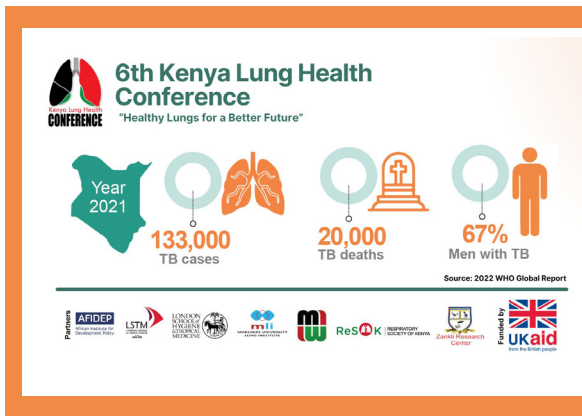
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Participation in scientific conferences including:

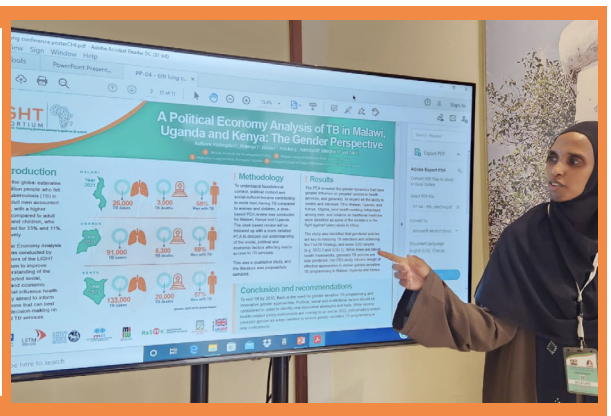
- Ⓢ **Health and Social Protection Action Research & Knowledge Sharing (SPARKS) Network Meeting** (11-12 October 2022) with the successful nomination of a LIGHT researcher onto the SPARKS Steering Committee.
- Ⓢ **The Union World Conference on Lung Health: Combating pandemics today & tomorrow** (8-11 November 2022).
- Ⓢ **5th Annual National TB and Leprosy Stakeholders Conference** in Uganda (7-8 December 2022).
- Ⓢ **Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute Spring Symposium 2023 on the Tuberculosis Pandemic – A Call to Action: Science, Application, Politics** (21-22 March 2023).
- Ⓢ **6th Kenya Lung Health Conference: Healthy Lungs for a Better Future** (23-25 November 2022).



The SPARKS Network Meeting focused on the need for better global health solutions that take into account the latest scientific research and advancements related to lung health and respiratory medicine.



The Kenya Lung Health Conference provides a platform to relay the most recent data and advancements in clinical practice and research in the field of lung health and respiratory medicine.



Dr Leyla Abdullahi, Research Uptake Manager for LIGHT in Kenya, presenting on TB and Gender at the 6th Kenya Lung Health Conference.

6 Advocacy and networking at the UN multi-stakeholder hearings on TB; Pandemic Prevention Preparedness and Response (PPPR); and Universal Health Care (UHC).

Working within the UK Academics and Professionals to End TB ([UKAPT](#)) network, LIGHT participated in the three health multi-stakeholder hearings at the United Nations headquarters in New York in May 2023.

LIGHT's engagement continues during the negotiations of the Political Declarations and in support of high-level representation at the UN High-Level Meetings (HLMs) in September 2023 and for an announcement supporting UK TB research.

LIGHT also worked through UKAPT and in collaboration with [Campaigns in Global Health](#) and [Treatment Action Group](#), to support academics and healthcare workers from around the world through virtual and in-person briefings to explain the process of preparing for and engaging in the 2023 UN HLMs. Campaigning also included a letter signed by over 130 leading academics and professionals, calling for the inclusion of researchers and healthcare workers in the UN HLMs and for them to be held during 'Leaders Week' when Heads of States attend the General Assembly in September 2023.

The letter was sent to the President of the UN General Assembly and the Co-facilitators of the meeting and was taken into consideration.



Can we have a commitment from Member States to strengthen their engagement and collaboration with their academics, healthcare workers, and affected communities to draw on their knowledge, expertise, and frontline experience... Can Member States also ensure that they contribute their fair share to mobilise US\$5 billion a year for TB Research and Development (R&D) including US\$2 billion for drugs, US\$1 billion for diagnostics, and US\$1 billion for TB vaccines as well as for implementation research and social science research ensuring uptake of evidence. Specifically, can Member States commit to a people-centred, equitable, gender-transformative, rights-based and stigma-free approach, including reaching men who carry a high burden of untreated infectious disease, to address the social and economic determinants driving the tuberculosis epidemic.

Abridged statement by Dr Kerry Millington at the UN TB multi-stakeholder hearing in New York, May 2023



Participants at the UN multi-stakeholder hearing on TB, May 2023

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING HIGHLIGHTS

LIGHT aims to strengthen the capacity of individuals, institutions, and multiple stakeholders in LIGHT countries to generate, adapt, translate, and utilise evidence, as well as manage research. Below we highlight some of the key capacity strengthening initiatives organised by the LIGHT Consortium:

Evidence Informed Decision Making (EIDM) training

EIDM training is tailored towards key stakeholders and decision-makers in LIGHT partner countries. It aims to enhance policymakers' capacity to effectively engage with new research findings, and improve their knowledge and understanding of maximizing research uptake. The training covers topics on systematic search for evidence,

literature synthesis, and communicating evidence for policy influence through for example developing policy briefs and drafting policy recommendations. The LIGHT team conducted three EIDM workshops, led by AFIDEP, engaging 80 stakeholders including National TB managers in Nigeria, Uganda and Malawi.

NIGERIA (4-8 July 2022): AFIDEP delivered, in partnership with the ZRC, a five-day EIDM training in Abuja for 38 stakeholders. Participants included mid- and senior-level TB programme personnel with the capacity to influence TB policies from Nigeria's National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme (NTBLCP), State TB Programme, WHO, Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), and ZRC. Participants were encouraged to share the skills they learned with their peers and colleagues.



Participants trained to champion inclusive and gender-transformative approaches to accelerate efforts in the TB response in Nigeria

UGANDA (29 August – 2 September 2022): AFIDEP hosted, in partnership with MLI, a five-day EIDM training in Entebbe, Uganda, reaching out to 17 stakeholders. Participants included mid- and senior-level TB programme personnel with the capacity to influence TB policies from Uganda’s National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme (NTLP), the non-communicable

disease programme at the Ministry of Health (MoH), and the MLI. The institutions selected participants to build their capacity in evidence use and policy formulation as they champion more holistic, inclusive, and person-centred approaches to accelerate efforts in ending the TB epidemic and NCDs.



Participants trained to champion inclusive and gender-transformative approaches to accelerate efforts of ending TB in Uganda

MALAWI (14– 17 November 2022): AFIDEP delivered an EIDM training to 25 Malawian stakeholders from NTLEP, the Ministry of Gender, and the civil society who are working to prevent and end tuberculosis (TB). The training was well received and led to the team’s involvement in policy reviews and other engagement activities.

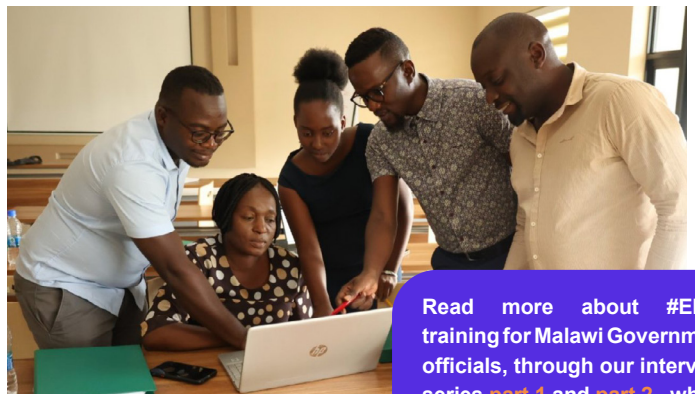
Bruce Matewera, Executive Director of Paradiso TB Patients Trust, and Rebecca Karimu Mtambo, Senior Tuberculosis Quality Management Officer at Malawi’s Ministry of Health, National TB and Leprosy Elimination Programme, were interviewed after the training to discuss its value and potential impact on their work.



Rebecca Karimu Mtambo, Senior Tuberculosis Quality Management Officer at Malawi’s Ministry of Health, National TB and Leprosy Elimination Programme receiving a certificate after the EIDM training in Mponela, Malawi from Dr Tumaini Malenga, Research and Policy Analyst at AFIDEP



Bruce Matewera, Executive Director of Paradiso TB Patients Trust displaying his certificate after the EIDM training in Malawi



Participants engage during the training

Read more about #EIDM training for Malawi Government officials, through our interview series [part 1](#) and [part 2](#), where AFIDEP’s leading expert, Dr Leyla Abdullahi, explored with the participants how to apply research findings to make real-world impact.

Research Administration and Management Training Programme (RAMP)



The increasing administrative and management workload due, in part, to more stringent governance research requirements means Principal Investigators spend over 40% of their time on administrative tasks, which could be more effectively done by dedicated research support staff (sources: [Independent Review of Research Bureaucracy and More Time for Science and Less Time for Administration?](#)). In response to our partners' requests, LSTM and the LIGHT Programme established a three-day Research Administration and Management Programme (RAMP) training for research administrators, managers, and finance officers.

The training was based on a needs assessment survey drawn from the [SARIMA Professional Competency Framework](#) under three themes: Administration, including diary management, minute taking, and travel logistics; Project Management, including risks management, safeguarding, monitoring and evaluation, and the use of tools such as logframes and Gantt charts; and Financial Management, including budgeting, forecasting, and reporting. The RAMP course has been run and refined in Liverpool (September-November 2022), Malawi (March 2023), and Kenya (June 2023).

Read more on the RAMP experiences through our blogs:

- 📌 [Research Admin and Management training: a learning journey.](#)
- 📌 [Training research support staff to achieve scientific success.](#)
- 📌 [Training administrators, managers, and finance officers: A conversation with Talib and Mary.](#)



Participants at the RAMP training in Malawi engaged in various activities

Capacity Strengthening Week (CSW23)



The team at a capacity strengthening session led by Kerry Millington, Research Uptake Manager of LIGHT Consortium

The LIGHT Consortium held its first **Capacity Strengthening Week (CSW23)** from 27th February to 3rd March 2023 at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). The event was attended by 27 LIGHT colleagues, 16 from African partner countries including Early Career Researchers (ECRs), Post-Doctoral Research Associates (PDRAs), Research Uptake Managers, and Communication Officers. Attendees received training on blog writing, content creation in Canva, social determinants of health, health economics,

qualitative and quantitative analysis, participatory research methods, and scientific writing training for ECRs.

Besides strengthening the capacity and knowledge of LIGHT team members in areas identified by them, the meeting included team building activities to improve team relationships, sharing experiences and practical learning on the effective use of stigmatising language within LIGHT.



I really liked all the engagement activities: small tables, moving people around, active learning, energetic atmosphere.

Photovoice, participatory approaches and writing a blog session made me better understand the concepts and the way to apply it to my work properly.

LIGHT team from UK (Liverpool and London), Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and Nigeria at LSTM premises during Capacity Strengthening Week 2023

SPOTLIGHT ON A TB SURVIVOUR

At the LIGHT Capacity Strengthening Week (27 February – 3 March 2023) in Liverpool, the LIGHT team members welcomed Tenzin Kunor, a survivor of TB and vocal TB advocate. He told his story of how he had experienced TB and the challenges associated with testing and treatment and how this had inspired him to become an advocate locally and globally.

He started a peer support network for people with TB and has interviewed other people with TB capturing illness narratives from the perspective of affected individuals. Tenzin’s presence and voice reminds academics about their limitations as professionals in speaking for affected communities and the importance of intentionally engaging with people and communities affected by TB in research and advocacy.

Read more about this here: [“Going the distance together: academics & health care professionals working with Tuberculosis survivors & advocates to end Tuberculosis.”](#)



Tenzin Kunor is a multi-drug resistant TB survivor and a leader for [We Are TB](#), a TB survivor-led advocacy and support organisation in the United States.

Tenzin has a passion for access and equity in health and higher education. He was named a 2021 US CDC TB Elimination Champion for his visionary role in the creation of the [We Are TB](#) Support Space, a programme to support TB patients and survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He is a member of the [WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB](#), and is a TB Elimination Alliance Mini-Grant recipient for a project addressing latent TB infection within the Tibetan American community. Tenzin is currently studying Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. [Read more about Tenzin Kunor’s story here.](#)



KEY LEARNINGS AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- ⊕ The EIDM trainings were very engaging and gave insights into how the NTLT teams use evidence to inform their decisions. Participants appreciated new knowledge and strengthening of skills to ensure that their decisions are informed by evidence, and also reported feeling more confident in communicating policy recommendations to improve country health systems.
- ⊕ To strengthen capacity of mid-level policymakers to deliver EIDM training further within their own institutions, the LIGHT Consortium is planning a Training of Trainers (ToT) on EIDM with nominated participants from the NTLTs within TB TWGs from all four African partner countries – Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda, in October 2023. The ToT aims to enable participants to deliver an EIDM training within their organisations, and therefore, strengthen the capacity of their peers in accessing, appraising, interpreting, synthesising, and utilising research evidence in decision-making in the health sector.
- ⊕ We will continue with our capacity strengthening efforts, ensuring that the learning is benefitting all those involved in the LIGHT Consortium including researchers, RU managers, and administrators, as well as targeting stakeholder outside the consortium.
- ⊕ The research teams will complete their data collection in the field and start their preliminary analyses. Findings will continue to be published in peer-reviewed academic journals as they emerge and be effectively communicated to inform TB gender-responsive policies and practice to achieve maximum impact.
- ⊕ Our strategic involvement with diverse stakeholders at national, regional and global levels has proven highly beneficial for our collaborative and advocacy efforts. Valuable insights have guided our timely and effective communication through webinars, conferences and meetings. These collaborations helped us in identifying emerging challenges and opportunities, enriching our approach for real-world impact. We will continue to strengthen LIGHT's presence at relevant international fora, including at the 2023 Union World Conference on Lung Health (15–18 November 2023).

Stay tuned and check out our latest news, blogs, podcasts, policy briefs and other publications by visiting our website <https://light.lstmed.ac.uk/> and follow us on social media.



@LIGHTonTB



The LIGHT Consortium



LIGHT CONSORTIUM