
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: QUEEN ELIZABETH ADVANCED SCHOLARS PROGRAM - STATISTICAL ALLIANCE FOR VITAL EVENTS (SAVE)

BACKGROUND

Most deaths in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) occur at home and without medical attention. As a result, causes of death are unknown, which limits evidence-based resource allocation, misses identifying new diseases or outbreaks (such as Ebola or Zika), and reduces accountability over health expenditures as well as progress towards the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Since 2002, the Registrar General of India, supported by the University of Toronto (U of T), has adopted the novel [Million Death Study \(MDS\)](#) to address this gap in knowledge on causes of death in India. Building on the MDS, researchers at U of T formed the [Statistical Alliance for Vital Events \(SAVE\)](#) with the mission to reduce premature mortality through investments in health and mortality information systems. SAVE has started efforts in Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone.

SAVE is offering a research scholarship program to engage doctoral, postdoctoral and early career researchers in the work of strengthening health and mortality information systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to support innovative multi-disciplinary research on maternal and child health (MCH) in order to improve access to health services. The program is funded by the [Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Advanced Scholars Program \(QES\)](#) and supported by the [Office of Global Public Health Education & Training, Dalla Lana School of Public Health](#), University of Toronto and the [Centre for Global Health Research, St. Michael's Hospital and University of Toronto](#).

THE PROGRAM

The main goal of the SAVE-QES program is to build exceptional research capacity among scholars to use mortality evidence to improve MCH and other premature mortality outcomes. For 2018-2019:

- Each scholar will be connected with a Research Placement Partner.
- Each research placement will be aligned with LMIC partner institution needs and with the individual scholar's learning objectives, as outlined in their customized learning and mentoring plan.
- Scholars will complete a pre-placement training program and participate in a research-intensive mentoring workshop focused on mortality measurement in Toronto, Canada (currently scheduled for June 2018).
- Each scholar will receive a consolidated remuneration that includes a research stipend and accommodation costs in Toronto (\$7,500-13,500 CAD); visas, economy fare travel to/from Toronto, workshop fees and other costs will be covered directly by the QES-SAVE program.

QES-SAVE Scholars will be expected to:

- Conduct quantitative research on MCH, using mortality data from existing datasets;
- Develop competencies and skills mostly through quantitative data analyses but also acquire relevant skills in areas like sex and gender analyses, grant and manuscript writing, knowledge translation, leadership, networking, and community engagement; and
- Disseminate research results to different stakeholders via high-impact journals.

RECRUITMENT:

Over the next four years, the program will train and support the research of 20 scholars to strengthen health and mortality information systems in low- and middle-income countries. For 2017/2018, we are recruiting **five scholars**:

- **Doctoral:** one student from Canada and one student from India, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, or Sierra Leone
- **Postdoctoral:** one scholar from Canada and two scholars from India, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, or Sierra Leone

TIMELINE:

- October 2017: launch of Call for Applicants
- December 15, 2017: application deadline
- February 12, 2018: applicants notified
- February-June 2018: pre-workshop preparation and development of mentorship plan (this includes mandatory completion of the edX/U of T online MOOC entitled “Death 101: Shaping the future of global health”)
- June 2018: one week intensive research workshop in Toronto
- After June 2018: Post-workshop – research project, compile research results into paper for publication, and post-workshop knowledge translation activities
- Participants will continue to engage with QES-SAVE as program alumni

ELIGIBILITY:

APPLICANTS FROM INDIA, ETHIOPIA, MEXICO, MOZAMBIQUE, OR SIERRA LEONE

- Must be a citizen or permanent resident of India, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, or Sierra Leone
- Must be a doctoral student or postdoctoral fellow
- Applicants’ research must fill a relevant mortality measurement gap identified by one of the LMIC partner institutions (with a priority given to MCH outcomes).

CANADIAN APPLICANTS

- Must be a citizen or permanent resident of Canada
- Priority will be given to students and alumni of the Collaborative Specialization in Global Health (doctoral stream), University of Toronto, as well as postdoctoral and early career scholars connected to Canadian hospitals with global health departments (e.g. St. Michael’s Hospital, Hospital for Sick Children).
- Applicants’ research must fill be relevant to global premature mortality measurement (with a preference for projects on MCH outcomes).
- Applicant must be a doctoral student or postdoctoral fellow

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must include:

- An application form
- Graduate transcripts (scholars must have at minimum an A- average in coursework)
- Curriculum vitae or resume, which specifies applicants’ current quantitative skills in epidemiology, economics, demography, biostatistics, or related areas.
- Letter of recommendation from your direct supervisor (1 page max)

- A 200-word expression of interest statement (in bullet points) outlining why you would like to be part of the SAVE Scholar Program and the alignment between the SAVE-QES program and your research interests
- Co-funding from supervisors for doctoral and postdoctoral scholars is encouraged, but will not be required.
- **Short listed** applicants may be asked to submit writing samples (a first-authored peer-reviewed publication is preferred, but dissertation chapters, course papers, reports and other examples of scholarly writing are acceptable) or examples of quantitative work (statistical programs) (maximum 10 pages). All applicants are encouraged to have these ready at the time of application, but do not need to submit them until asked.
- **Short-listed** applicants will also be invited to take part in a Skype interview.

Please send all application materials in one .pdf or .doc file to Vadim Levin (ghoffice.dlsph@utoronto.ca) by midnight EST on December 15, 2017

ABOUT

THE CANADIAN QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE SCHOLARSHIPS (QES)

The Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships aim to activate a dynamic community of young global leaders across Canada and the Commonwealth to create lasting impacts both at home and abroad through cross-cultural exchanges encompassing international education, discovery and inquiry, and professional experiences.

OFFICE OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION & TRAINING, DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (OGPHET)

The Office is the knowledge hub of global health educational activities at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto and views global health in an integrative manner. Its programs focus on the relationships among local, regional, national, and international forces that influence health and health equity as well as on the development of effective interventions and policies.

CENTRE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH, ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL (CGHR)

The Centre for Global Health Research (CGHR) is an independent, not-for-profit organization co-sponsored by St. Michael's Hospital (Toronto) and the University of Toronto. Founded in 2002 on the principle that effective health initiatives must be supported by reliable, evidence-based research, CGHR was created to conduct large-scale epidemiological studies in developing countries. CGHR's mission is to lead high-quality public health research that advances global health for all, with particular attention to the world's poorest populations.