

Press release

Krystal Birungi of Target Malaria Uganda/UVRI Announced as 2025-2026 Obama Foundation Leader

Entebbe, Uganda – 10 September, 2025 — Krystal Birungi today announced her acceptance to The Obama Foundation's Leaders program, joining more than 200 global changemakers for the 2025-2026 class. Following a competitive selection process, Krystal Birungi will be one of just 35 Leaders participating in the Leaders Africa program, where they will receive training in leadership development and civic engagement to help build their skills and scale their work across public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Krystal Birungi is a scientist at the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI) and the Research and Outreach Associate for the not-for-profit research consortium Target Malaria. An entomologist by training, Krystal Birungi has a track record in global health advocacy, raising awareness on the devastating toll of malaria on women and children in sub-Saharan Africa and in her home country, Uganda. In 2021, she was nominated by The Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) as part of their speakers' bureau to take on global malaria advocacy. She joins regular advocacy delegations and missions in donor countries to raise awareness on the importance of investing in malaria prevention, treatment, and research.

"I am incredibly honoured and humbled to be selected for this program," said Krystal Birungi. "This is a transformative opportunity to learn, grow, and connect with a global network of changemakers. I look forward to gaining new skills and perspectives that will be key in the acceleration of my fight towards the achievement of malaria elimination and public health equity in Uganda and Africa as a whole."

As part of the six-month program, these changemakers will convene virtually each week for sessions designed to help them drive change by honing their leadership skills, building deep relationships with their peers, and engaging with thought leaders and members of the Obama Foundation community. They will also have an opportunity to participate in virtual experiences and special events, including

conversations with experienced mentors in the Foundation's global network and prominent members of the African region.

Drawing on his Kenyan heritage, President Obama has made supporting emerging African leaders a key priority in his post-presidency work. Having launched as the Foundation's first regional program in 2018, the Leaders Africa program is creating a network of leaders who drive innovative change in their communities throughout the continent and across the globe. The 2025-2026 cohort of 35 Africa Leaders is working across a broad range of focus areas, including the climate crisis, public health and advancing rights, equity, and inclusion for all.

The Obama Foundation Leaders program is designed to inspire, empower, and connect emerging leaders from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the United States to change their respective communities and the world. To learn more, visit obama.org/leaders.

To learn more about Krystal Birungi, visit [Krystal Mwesiga Birungi | Target Malaria](#)

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About Target Malaria

Target Malaria is a not-for-profit research consortium that aims to develop and share new, cost-effective and sustainable genetic technologies to modify mosquitoes and reduce malaria transmission. Our vision is to contribute to a world free of malaria. We aim to achieve excellence in all areas of our work, creating a path for responsible research and development of genetic technologies, such as gene drive. www.targetmalaria.org

Target Malaria receives core funding by the Gates Foundation and Open Philanthropy. The lead grantee organization is Imperial College London with partners in Africa, Europe and North America.

For more information about Target Malaria:

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