The 8th FAIS conference in Durban was attended by 162 delegates, including 60 students and postdoctoral fellows from different parts of the world. 30 students and postdocs from South Africa were awarded local travel scholarships via a grant from the National Research Foundation (NRF).

FAIS organizing committee received 50 applications for international travel scholarships aimed at young African-based students and postdocs. 15 travel scholarships were given to trainees from East, West, North and South African countries. They were from Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The international travel scholarships were supported by a grant awarded to the FAIS conference by the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS).

All students and postdoctoral fellow attendees were given the opportunity to present their work at the FAIS conference. 12 students and postdocs were selected to give oral presentations in the plenary sessions while the rest presented in the poster sessions.

The 8th FAIS conference had one-day workshops on basic immunology lectures and flow cytometry aimed specifically at young students and scientists. A special session on Women in Science was also included in the conference program. Most students attended these workshops.

Testimonies from the awardees follow:

**Sheron Dzoro, Zimbabwe**

At the 8th FAIS conference was a remarkable experience for me as an Immunology student. The conference provided a great platform for interaction with mentors. The ladies’ session was particularly helpful. It really helps to meet people who have walked the same career path that we are pursuing.

**Shem Peter Muturi, Kenya**

“8th FAIS Conference empowered me as a Research Scientist by exchange of expertise and experiences in Immunology, an area deficient in our country. I was able to create useful networks with fellow-minded Researchers, with possible future collaborative research. It provided a life-changing experience of meeting with the big names of Immunology.”
“The organization and the conference venue were excellent. Personally, this conference has allowed me to open several opportunities, to start new challenges. The objectives of the event were clearly stated and met my expectations. In the end, I want to thank the organizers in awarding the successful FAIS Scholarship.”

Agrebi Nourhen, Tunisia

I believe that the 8th FAIS Conference supported my present and future scientific career through giving me new ideas, inspirational thinking about my present and future projects to update my knowledge of Immunology. Also, the 8th FAIS Conference contributed to my personal and scientific development through the opportunity to meet different participants from all parts of the world, with different experiences.”

Ahmed Adel, Egypt

“I wish to express my utmost gratitude for the scholarship to participate in the 8th FAIS Conference in Durban. The workshops on publishing, getting funded and career choices facilitated the navigation of some of the challenges I was facing in career advancement and the workshop in Gender Equality provided a unique opportunity to share experiences with fellow ‘career women’. I also enjoyed the networking opportunities afforded by the poster sessions and conference dinner.”

Barbara Burmen, Kenya
I was very pleased to participate in the 8th FAIS conference and to present my work in this interesting meeting. Indeed, this meeting allowed me to share on both the wealth of his program and the quality of the speakers who participated.

*Wafa Kammoun, Tunisia*

“I got an opportunity to relate, network and discuss other people’s research and methodologies and also was able to disseminate my research findings. I formulated contacts for future collaborations and was particularly happy to attend the Women in Science breakfast meeting, which was a very good opportunity to share with the senior and junior women in science and learn from the challenges of others. I also attended the session on the research process – getting funded, publishing and career choices; very good advice for us students, postdocs and early career scientists.”

*Jacqueline Kyosiimire, Uganda*

“Attending the FAIS conference was so awesome, so eye opening and stimulating. The program was well arranged, from the BD lectures on new lab equipment to the plenary sessions and the poster sessions that were highly interactive. I made new contacts with people in my area of research and met and discussed with the gurus in the field particularly Maria Yazdanbashki and Rick Maizels who had walked the path before.”

*Noah Paul, Zimbabwe*