

ADVANCE Leadership Development Program 2024 Cohort 3 Biograph Sketches

KENYA

1. Magdalene Ameka, Post-Doctoral Fellow - Kenya



Magdalene is a recent post-doctoral fellow based at KAVI-ICR. She is an early career scientist in the STI field interested in understanding the interactions between the protective and therapeutic functions of immune cells and immune cell metabolism and understanding the role of the microbiome in STI pathogenesis.

She has over 14 years' cumulative work experience in biomedical lab research in different disease contexts (Nosocomial cystic fibrosis, metastatic breast cancer, diabetes, obesity and hypertension and innate immunology and immunometabolic research). All her previous training has been in the United States. Her career highlights include: Experience at all levels of lab research, from undergraduate lab volunteer, lab manager to lead investigator with independent project conceptualization and design, Proven innovator (discovered novel roles for proteins of interest and development of novel assays) and effective scientific communicator (multiple publications and awarded presentations).

She has a long and steady publication record, specialized in-depth experience in but not limited to: a significant range of molecular and cellular biology, biochemical and immunology techniques, mouse genetics, complex mouse metabolic modeling and monitoring, assiduous cell culture techniques (primary and immortalized cells), multiplex flow cytometry, and inductively coupled mass spectrometry, fluorescence microscopy.

Magdalene is experienced at grant-writing and grant review: Successful independent extramural funding, grant reviewer, manuscript writing, thesis, book chapter and data presentation preparation skills [click here](#) for more information. She won multiple travel awards to give talks at university, national and international conferences and received speaking awards at a number of these conferences. She initiated and led interdisciplinary meetings of multi-lab research focus groups, managed successful collaborative studies across multiple labs in different universities, mentored and managed teams of graduate and undergraduate students (10+ students), and finally, awarded for efforts in diversity and inclusion.

SOUTH AFRICA

2. Bongai Khathide, Study Coordinator – South Africa



Bongai holds a degree in Pharmacy (UWC), an MSc in Pharmaceutical Chemistry (NWU), and a PhD in Pharmacology from the University of Pretoria. She serves as a study coordinator and a pharmacist at the Madibeng Centre for Research (MCR).

She entered the clinical research field in 2021 and has contributed in her roles to research at MCR in HIV treatment, HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, and the COVID-19 vaccines.

Bongai has a special interest in HIV/AIDS and STI research and is working towards publications on these topics. Bongai hopes to develop her grant writing and publication skills and grow to be an independent clinical researcher/investigator.

3. Sandile Cele, Research Scientist - South Africa



Sandile Cele is a South African researcher who received his Ph.D. in 2022. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he led the isolation and characterization of emergent SARS-CoV-2 variants, specifically the Beta and Omicron variants.

In this work, he made significant contributions to understanding variant evolution by characterizing the evolution of immune escape.

This work led to several highly impactful peer-reviewed publications that shaped the management of the COVID-19 pandemic (Cele *et al*, Nature 2021; Cele *et al*, Nature 2022, Cele *et al*, Cell Host & Microbe 2022).

Sandile joined the Aurum Institute as a Scientist on March 1, 2023. He is working on an IAVI-sponsored research study that entails clinical evaluation of HIV B-cell responses. His primary tasks include developing, optimizing, qualifying, and validating B-cell assays for clinical trials and establishing high-throughput single B-cell sorting and 10X genomics sequencing technologies.

4. Vaneshree Govender, Clinical Research Site Leader - South Africa



Vaneshree is a medical professional with 14 years of clinical research experience. Currently she serves as the Clinical Research Site Leader of the Aurum Pretoria Clinical Research Site, South Africa. Following her role as clinical investigator for collaborative studies conducted in Durban, South Africa, she served as co-PI with Prof Thumbi Ndungu (UKZN) and Krista Dong (Ragon), building research capacity at the FRESH study site.

Her scope as Principal Investigator has widened from HIV Prevention (microbicides and vaccines; prevention of bacterial vaginosis recurrence) to ATI studies (Gliad), COVID-19 prevention (vaccines) and TB prevention (First-In-Human vaccine; UNITAID TB prevention therapy trials in adults, children and pregnant women with HIV). She serves as the Chair of the Aurum Institute Safety Committee and Clinical Safety Officer for the Clinical Trials Unit, while providing remote

research management across 5 clinical research sites. As a clinical safety officer for Aurum clinical research sites, she assist with review and implementation of safety processes, and serve as Network Scientific Liaison for Aurum CTU NIH ACTG studies. She is currently co-leading a COVID Vaccine Strategies Study (CEPI funded) with Prof Churchyard while working on 2 first-author manuscripts (microbicides safety; COVID-19 vaccine strategies).

Having commenced as a research clinician in the MTN003 (VOICE) trial at the Botha's Hill Clinical Research Site (CRS), HIV Prevention Research Unit (HPRU), South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), she progressed to CRS Leader of the Chatsworth CRS, HPRU. Subsequently she successfully performed the role of Principal Investigator of the MTN020 (ASPIRE) study, overseeing implementation and quality of all aspects of the trial to study-end, at six clinical research sites. During her affiliation with the Microbicides Trials Network (MTN), she further served as a site representative on the network Executive Committee over 2 years, contributing to network-related scientific evaluations, discussions and decisions.

At the onset of the HPRU's affiliation with the HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN), she led the Isipingo CRS as CRS Leader for the first vaccine trial conducted at HPRU, HVTN100. Serving in multiple key roles concurrently, both scientific and site/staff management, has facilitated her ability to problem-solve within complex, multi-site clinical trials, and contribute to the improvement of systems and processes at the HPRU. Following a brief break in service, I continued to serve as a clinician and investigator of record at the Isipingo CRS, affiliated with the following studies: HVTN702, HPTN084, MTN025, MTN016, MTN015, HVTN100, HVTN111, and provided temporary CRS leadership from January to June 2019.

5. Zwelethu Desmond Zwane, Research Doctor - South Africa



Dr Zwelethu Desmond Zwane is a Principal Investigator at the Aurum Institute, Pretoria Clinical Research Site and serves as PI of 4 trials focused on COVID-19, HIV prevention and treatment trials. He also serves as Sub-investigator in several other trials across 2 sites. In 2023, he also became Interim PI for an HIV Prevention study (Purpose 1) where he provided PI oversight at the Tembisa Clinical Research Site from August to November 2023. Having joined the Aurum Institute in 2020 as Locum Medical Officer, he was then employed fulltime in July 2021 as sub-investigator and undertook his 1st PI role in February of 2022.

He has more than a decade of clinical experience, working mostly in public health care, NGOs as locum Dr supporting VMMC programmes and Ophthalmology. In the ophthalmology Dept at the regional hospital, he was the first Ophthalmic trained Medical Officer and was instrumental in scaling growth of the clinic operations, building and maintaining an effective referral system for ophthalmology patients in Swaziland, contributor to the Essential Drugs List in Swaziland which improved treatment access through the abolishing of out-of-pocket payments. During his time as Ophthalmology Department Supervisor, he trained medical interns and medical officers in basics of ophthalmic care including examination, management of ophthalmic emergencies, identification and prompt referral of patients. He holds a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBCb), University of Limpopo, MEDUNSA, Masters in Public Health (Health Economics), University of Cape Town. He has been a Medical Officer at Raleight Fitkin Memorial Hospital and as Ophthalmology trainee in Swaziland. He was also a Drugs and Therapeutics Committee member from 2016-2017.

UGANDA

6. Joseph Ssebwana Katende, Research Fellow - Uganda



Joseph is a research fellow at the MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit. His research focuses on using single cell technologies to understand B-cell repertoires and the role they play in the clinical outcome of viral diseases. This helps to identify the cell clones responsible for producing protective antibodies. These can be used to develop immunotherapeutic like monoclonal antibodies, immune-reagents for the detection and identification of viral diseases, as well as informing vaccine design strategies on the right epitopes required to mount protective immune responses. This approach is being applied to COVID-19, Rift Valley Fever Disease (RVFD), Marburg and Ebola virus disease (EVD), that are major causes of frequent outbreaks in Uganda.

Under the IAVI program, He had the opportunity to be mentored and trained in the field of immunology, specifically transient protein production which enabled his participation in the production of various HIV specific monoclonal antibodies required to evaluate sensitivity to both historical and contemporary HIV viruses. He also had the opportunity to present findings from data generated from these studies to the National HIV/AIDS Symposium that aimed at educating the masses on the impact of HIV and the various steps taken to address it.

In the laboratory, he supports several activities through the production of viral antigens, monoclonal antibodies and running various immunoassays. Through this exposure, I hope to provide necessary solutions to various existing, emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases on the globe.

7. Geoffrey Basalirwa, Data Manager - Uganda



Geoffrey is the Data Manager in the data and statistics department at UVRI-IAVI HIV Vaccine program since January 2022. He graduated with a Bachelor of Economics and statistics from Kyambogo University Uganda. He has been with UVRI-IAVI HIV Vaccine program CRC since 2016. He now oversees all the program clinical data management activities and data processes of all research undertakings – protocols on safety and efficacy of vaccines, working collaboratively with the research team to ensure data is collected, managed, reported clearly, accurately, and securely stored.

He participates and contributes towards the strategic planning of program research ensuring data management is conducted effectively and in accordance with acceptable guidelines, while following all the approved protocols, data management plans, standard operating procedures in line with the global and local applicable regulations. He is also an appointed stand in member for the chairperson on the program procurement committee since March 2023 to ensure adherence to the procedures and processes for efficient implementation of the program procurement plan.

8. Rachel Kawuma, Social Behavioural Scientist - Uganda



Rachel is a Social Behavioural Scientist based at the MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda research unit in Entebbe, Uganda. She holds a Master of Arts degree (counseling psychology) from Uganda Christian University in Uganda.

For the last fifteen years, she has been based at the MRC/UVRI & LSHTM in Uganda working in the social science department. She is engaged in research answering questions about social aspects across the life course amongst key and vulnerable populations like female sex workers, adolescents and young people, fishing community and the general community. Her research interests are in HIV disease prevention, care and treatment as well as sexual reproductive health and have contributed to several publications from these areas.

Rachel is currently the site PI for the DigiTapp study (Understanding digitally driven risk networks to inform user-centric target product profiles (TPP) for next-generation HIV vaccines) taking place in India, South Africa and Uganda, as well as the social science coordinator for the PrEPVacc (A Phase IIb three-arm, two-stage HIV prophylactic vaccine trial with a second randomization to compare TAF/FTC to TDF/FTC as pre-exposure prophylaxis) taking place in South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

9. Gerald Kevin Oluka, Research Fellow - Uganda



Gerald is a MSc Research Fellow studying the Immunology of viral-pathogen infections and vaccines at the MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit. His scientific interest is in the functional and genomic properties of antibodies and B cells in response to viral infection and vaccines, and how to use this understanding to improve future generations of immunotherapeutics and vaccines. His background is in Biomedical Sciences with a focus on Microbiology and he is currently completing a Master of Science in Immunology and Clinical Microbiology at Makerere University.

Gerald's current research involves profiling neutralizing and antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity functions of polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies, as well as evaluating B-cell receptor (BCR) germline profiles in relation to antibody function in SARS-CoV-2, Rift Valley Fever, Marburg and Ebola virus infection. He is part of a broader laboratory team under the International AIDs Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), evaluating the efficacy of broadly neutralizing monoclonal antibodies (bnAbs) against historical and contemporary strains of HIV-1. Gerald is keen to develop as a research scientist and hopes to contribute to the much-needed knowledge in combating existing and emerging viruses which are a threat to our common existence and livelihood.

10. Annemarie Namuniina, Laboratory Manager - Uganda



Annemarie Namuniina has over twenty years of experience in biomedical laboratory sciences and management. She began her career as a lab technologist, working on clinical chemistry and hematology analyses, as well as cellular and humoral tests. She eventually advanced to senior lab technologist, where she oversaw and educated other technologists, ensured quality control and compliance, and worked on research projects. She was promoted to deputy lab manager, where she oversaw lab processes, inventory, and equipment, and spoke with external stakeholders. She is currently the lab manager, and her responsibilities include overseeing the laboratory's general operations, budget, and strategic planning.

She holds a bachelor's degree in biomedical lab technology from Makerere University, an advanced diploma in health management and leadership from the Uganda Institute of Allied Health and Management Science (UIAHMS) Mulago, and a master's degree in biomedical laboratory sciences and management from Makerere University. She has authored and co-authored some papers in peer-reviewed journals. She is a member of the Allied Health Professionals. She is passionate about advancing the field of biomedical laboratory science and improving the safety of participants.

11. Nasimu Kyakuwa, Study Physician – Uganda



Nasimu is a Medical Officer at the Uganda Virus Research Institute, International AIDS Vaccine Initiative - HIV Vaccine Program Ltd. She received her medical degree from Makerere University, college of health sciences in 2016. She received a Master of Advanced Studies in vaccinology at the University of Lausanne in 2021. She is currently working as a study physician on 2 phase III COVID 19 vaccine trials (the UBUNTU and VAT 00008). She is also a study physician on a multi-site observational study in adolescent Girls and Young women (MAGY). She is a Co-Investigator on a phase II clinical trial 'A Randomized, Observer-Blind, Phase 2 Clinical Trial of COVAC-2 in Generally Healthy Adults'.

ZAMBIA

12. Priscovia Sichone, Laboratory Scientist - Zambia



Priscovia scovia is a Laboratory Scientist with six years of experience in Good Clinical laboratory practice (GCLP); she has a degree in parasitology and is pursuing her master's in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Lusaka. Priscovia is currently working on her master's dissertation titled "The burden of sexually transmitted infections in Zambian women at risk for HIV." The dissertation is a secondary analysis of the HVTN705 dataset for CFHRZ.

In 2020, she won an IIR grant; this work was a follow-up study of an intervention in 2016. She coordinated the work that was conducted in Lusaka.

Apart from the work experience, Priscovia is part of Toastmasters International and has served in the leadership role of Vice President of Membership and secretary. Priscovia hopes to become a well-rounded researcher with a data analysis and visualization expert.

13. Chibale Mwelwa, Laboratory Scientist - Zambia



Chibale is a Laboratory Scientist who obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Molecular Biology and Genetics in 2012 and is in the process of completing a master's in public health at the University of Zambia and a Master's in Infectious diseases at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases.

Having worked in the laboratory on various projects such as Population Effects of Antiretroviral Therapy to Reduce HIV Transmission (PopART), and a TB prevalence and drug resistance survey, she developed a great interest in playing an active role in formulating interventions that mitigated the effects of the scourges that persist in communities around me.

Her current role at the Centre for Family Health and Research in Zambia has not only introduced her to clinical trials but also to research regarding the profiling of functional T Cells and the characterisation of the HIV genome in acutely infected individuals in efforts to inform vaccine design. Her current project focuses on HIV-1 Genome-level analysis of the occurrence and prevalence of transmissible HIV-1 drug resistance mutations.

14. Maria Mbewe Kaleji, Quality Assurance Manager – Zambia



Maria is the Quality Assurance Manager at the Center for Family Health Research in Zambia (CFHRZ) - Ndola. She has a Master's degree in Public Health and a Bachelor's Degree in Microbiology and Biochemistry. Her goals and aspirations are to be part of a network of professionals who are able to make decisions that positively impact the world with regard to health care and make the world a better place; to be a change in the world. She had the privilege to author a research paper during the final year of her bachelor's degree program that ultimately got published in the International Journal of Pharmaceutical, Chemical, and Biological Sciences. She has also authored (with other authors) a study carried out at CFHRZ that was presented at the Research for Prevention (R4P) conference. She is the Principal Investigator for an observational study currently being carried out at CFHRZ that is sponsored by the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI). She loves to travel and interact with people and learns so much from that.

INDIA

15. V. Umashankar, Scientist E, India



Dr. Umashankar, is an experienced researcher in Bioinformatics, earned his PhD from Loyola College, University of Madras, Chennai, in 2008. His academic journey includes an M.Phil in Genetics, M.Sc in Zoology, and a PG Diploma in Bioinformatics. With two decades of experience, he is currently a Scientist-E at ICMR-National Institute for Tuberculosis Research, Chennai, since March 12, 2020. Previously, he held roles like HOD & Principal Scientist at the Centre for Bioinformatics, Vision Research Foundation, and HOD of the Department of Bioinformatics at SRM University.

Dr. Umashankar's expertise lies in Drug design, Microbial genome analysis, peptide therapeutics, structural bioinformatics, and computational pipelines. Recognized for his contributions, he received grants, including the Rapid Grant for Young Investigators from DBT and the Early Career Research Award from SERB-DST. His research involves Genome sequencing of Mycobacterium tuberculosis strains and Pseudomonas aeruginosa.

He has designed peptide inhibitors targeting Carbonic Anhydrase IX and co-developed corneal penetrating peptides with antifungal activity. In Covid genomics, he published two whole genomes and is currently working on a Covid metagenomics project funded by Indo-UK GCRF grant. His engagement includes deciphering transcriptomic changes in Hyperglycemia in Retinal cells. With 106 research papers, three book chapters, and reviewer roles for journals, Dr. Umashankar is an associate editor for BMC Bioinformatics and Frontiers in Bioinformatics. A member of ACS, Indian Bioinformatics Society, Society of Toxicology, and Bioclues, he organizes National Level Conferences and Workshops in Bioinformatics. His authored Bioinformatics tools & Databases contribute to global scientific knowledge. A theoretical model predicted by him is featured on the cover page of the 77th volume of 'Vitamins and Hormones' by Elsevier Academic/Press.

16. Swarandeeep Singh, Research Associate, India



Dr. Swarandeeep Singh, is currently working as Research Associate on a project entitled "Development of therapeutic broadly neutralizing monoclonal antibodies against circulating HIV-1 clade C in children and adults." He earned his Ph.D. in the HIV-1 Immunology Laboratory at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi under the chief guidance of Professor Kalpana Luthra.

During his doctorate, he developed expertise in designing and characterizing HIV-1 vaccines and recombinant monoclonal antibodies.

Dr. Singh's primary research interest lies in HIV-1 vaccine design, with a focus on testing designed immunogens in preclinical animal models. Additionally, he actively explores the generation and modification of novel monoclonal antibodies from chronically HIV-1 infected patients for therapeutic purposes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he has showcased the unique nature of HIV-1 broadly neutralizing antibodies (bnAbs) & polyclonal plasma antibodies cross-reacted and effectively neutralized SARS-CoV-2, showcasing the potential dual application of HIV research insights in combating other viral infections.

Acknowledged for his excellence in research, Swarandeeep has been honored with prestigious awards, including the HIV Research Trust Scholarship Award from the UK, enabling him to undergo training & develop advance skills on self-assembling nanoparticles vaccines under the supervision of Prof. Rogier W. Sanders at the University Medical Centre, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Additionally, he received the International AIDS Society (IAS) scholarship award in 2023, held in Brisbane, Australia. Swarandeeep's academic prowess is further underscored by his remarkable achievements in national-level exams India, securing AIR 53 rank in the Joint CSIR-UGC Junior Research Fellowship test.

Beyond the realms of academia, Swarandeeep's research impact is evident in his contributions to Indian patent application (202211004612) for "Novel engineered HIV-1 Subtype-C Envelope glycoprotein". His research findings have found a platform in reputable journals like iScience (Cell Press), PLoS, ACS, intimp, JGV reflecting his commitment to advancing scientific knowledge and contributing significantly to the global discourse on HIV-1 and related infections. (<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Swarandeeep-Singh-2/research>). In summary, Dr. Singh emerges as a dedicated and accomplished researcher, equipped with a profound academic and professional background. His expertise and commitment position him as a pivotal contributor to ongoing efforts in the fields of vaccine design and infectious diseases, ensuring his continued influence on the trajectory of scientific advancement in these critical areas.

17. Nancy Hilda J, Scientist C, India



Nancy is currently working as Scientist C at ICMR-National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis, Chennai, India. After completing her doctoral studies in neutrophil responses during tuberculosis in the year 2016, she continued working in the field of TB vaccine immunology.

Her research in human immunology for the past 13 years has spun around neutrophil and monocyte responses to Mycobacterium tuberculosis, T cell responses to TB vaccines and during tuberculosis disease. Currently, she is working in a phase III trial in India, trying to evaluate the efficacy and safety

of VPM1002 and Immuvac Vaccines against TB. Nancy believes the results of this trial will definitely have greater public health impact in preventing TB.

Even though her major focus is on TB all these times, she was also involved in a study where we looked into the follicular T helper cell responses during HIV-2 infection (Ponnan SM et al., 2021). This piece of work augmented her thirst in HIV research. Recently, she was nominated to attend International Vaccinology Course held between Sept 11 - 15th 2023, Seoul, South Korea organized by International Vaccine Institute, which covered all aspects beyond laboratory in vaccine research. Inspired by all these experiences and with support from her research team, they applied and have been awarded funding in the recent ICMR IAVI-IIR 2023 call under the heading 'Harnessing T Cell Repertoires (TCR) and metrics of diversity and clonality for HIV vaccine development' which will be her first project as Principal Investigator. She sincerely hope that this Leadership Development Program will be of great help in developing her leadership skills at the right time which will help her and the project to achieve their goal.

18. Jayakant Singh, Public Health Professional, India



Jayakant is a Public Health professional working in the areas of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) for over ten years. His interest lies in mixed-method studies in the discipline of Social Sciences and Health and has published scientific research articles in peer reviewed journals on various aspects of SRH. He is passionate about exploring the situations and needs of the LGBTQ+ community in India as part of his current engagement with the Humsafar Trust. Mr. Singh is leading the Monitoring and Evaluation of project NETREACH, a virtual HIV intervention programme to reach the unreached at-risk populations in India.

Mr. Singh holds a Master's degree in Social Work with Health and Development as the field of practice from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai; another Master's and M.Phil. in Population Studies (Demography) from the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai. He is expecting the award of PhD in Public Health from TISS, Mumbai in June 2024.

19. Shilpa Bhowmick, PhD Student, India



Shilpa completed her graduate and post-graduate degrees from Mumbai University (India). She is currently a PhD scholar at Viral Immunopathogenesis Lab, ICMR-National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health (Mumbai) since December 2019 and her PhD thesis is "Delineation of immune and viral signatures associated with TB reactivation in PLHIV." During her master's dissertation thesis she had an opportunity to work under the mentorship of Dr. Vainav Patel and Dr. Jyoti Sutar in "Analysis of Integrase and Protease gene associated drug-resistance mutations in HIV-1 Subtype C infected individuals from Mumbai, India". This study provided insight in preliminary screening of Drug resistance mutations (DRMs) in Integrase and the Protease gene of the HIV-1 infected individuals which led to a publication with me as a co-author.



Shilpa started her career as a BD FACS operator (2017-2020) and during that period she gained remarkable experience and expertise in Flow-Cytometry technique along with sorting of different types of cells. As an operator she had 2 publications. Further, she also contributed to COVID-19 diagnosis and research being a part of ICMR and have had an opportunity to report this research work which led to 4 publications. One of those publications; “sMAdCAM:IL-6 ratio influences disease progression and anti-viral responses in SARS-CoV-2 infection” was presented as an oral communication at 15th World Congress on Inflammation 2022 in Rome, Italy, for which she had also received the DBT Travel grant. As part of Lab carrying out HIV research, she has contributed to a number of projects which helped her gain co-authorship in few research articles of her seniors.

Shilpa is also working as part of DBT Wellcome Trust TSG project which aims to develop broadly neutralizing monoclonal antibody mediated prevention and treatment strategy in neutralizing HIV-1 subtype C circulating in India across different regions and distinct risk groups. In this project she contributes in recruiting HIV infected individuals along with generating HIV-1C Near Full Length genomes and sequencing. Her PhD thesis topic is about HIV-TB co-infection, she is trying to delineate immune and viral signatures associated with reactivation of latent TB infection to active TB in HIV infected ART naïve individuals, the preliminary data in this work about immune signatures was presented as poster at International conference of Immunocon-2023, AIIMS, New Delhi and it was well appreciated and received the best poster award.

Overall, with my experience and expertise in the field of HIV research, flow-cytometry and sequencing, my aim is to be at the forefront of innovative HIV research, playing a pivotal role in shaping policies and interventions that have a positive and lasting impact on individuals and communities affected by HIV and thus public health at large.