

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

27 FEBRUARY 2023

UPDATES

VAXEF TRAINING

The VAXEF study held a training on the 16th of February on the updated study protocol and introduced 2 new sub-studies which will be starting in the next few months. The first sub-study is aiming to evaluate point-of-care diagnostic tools for diabetes in routine outpatient care. They are going to compare 2 point of care HbA1c assays to a laboratory HbA1c, random and fasting glucose, and the gold standard oral glucose tolerance test in order to understand the limitations of current diagnostic strategies, and how best they might make an accurate diagnosis of diabetes more widely available. The second sub-study, in collaboration with Zvitambo and University of Sheffield, will evaluate immune responses among people who have and have not received COVID vaccines, and people with COVID-19 infection.



HEALTHY AGEING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT BEGINS

The Healthy Ageing public engagement project led by Dr. Celia Gregson has begun in Zimbabwe and The Gambia. The project aims to give older people a voice to express their opinions about ageing and musculoskeletal disability, in settings where older people are not currently heard. The project will have 3 main activities which are: the 'Art of Ageing Well in Africa' competition, 'Ageing Well' film, and the 'Story of Ageing' brochure. The 'Art of Ageing Well in Africa' competition will give older people aged 60 and above a platform to express their opinions and experiences around ageing using: art / graphic design / photography, music, poetry/pros and mixed media. The 'Ageing Well' film will be a co-produced film that will draw upon older people's key issues with ageing gathered through participatory workshops and will emphasize positive messaging and promotion of innovative solutions. The 'Story of Ageing' brochure will be a co-designed brochure that will feature images and stories encapsulating ageing. The project has currently entered its implementation phase and we cannot wait to share more on what will be happening in the next coming months!



ART OF HEALTH GOES GLOBAL

It is our pleasure to announce the Art of Health competition has gone global! Building upon the success of the previous one, The International Society for Sexually Transmitted Diseases Research (ISSTD) and Tino Mavimba (Ardent Creative) on the behalf of THRU ZIM have formed an exciting new alliance that will see them coordinating the competition on a larger scale. The competition aims to engage young people with their perceptions and attitudes on sexual health through creative expression. Young people interested in taking part are free to submit an art piece, graphic design or illustration that answers the question, "What does sexual health mean to you?"

To enter, follow this link: <https://stihiv2023.org/art-of-health/>. Entry deadline is the **15th of March 2023**.

Winners will win cash prizes and will also be flown out to the STI and HIV World Congress in Chicago, USA, from the 24-27th July 2023, to showcase their impressive artwork.



ART OF HEALTH COMPETITION

WHAT DOES SEXUAL HEALTH MEAN TO YOU?

Answer this question through an art piece/ graphic design / illustration entry today!

PRIZES Winners will be flown to Chicago, USA for the IUSTI World Congress! **+\$200 cash prizes!**

- Submit your entry as a JPEG via stihiv2023.org/art-of-health
- DEADLINE: 15 March 2023 WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT: 30 March 2023
- For more information: info@ardentc.com

Logos: THRU ZIM, ISSTD, IUSTI, asha

THRU ZIM STRATEGY MEETING

We held our first strategy meeting of the year and leadership got an opportunity to give updates on our respective themes and studies. The following themes gave updates: data management, training and mentorship, field management, statistics, social science, public engagement, and grantsmanship. Each theme discussed their current structures and systems well as new developments. Issues were also addressed. Study leads also gave updates for on-going studies. The next meeting is being planned for May.

NETHERLANDS EMBASSY VISITS THRU ZIM

The Netherlands (NL) Embassy visited us to share their public health research funding strategy and to learn more about our researches and students. Prof. Katharina Kranzer presented on our core values, research themes, capacity building, public engagement and research partnerships. Dr. Chido Dziva Chikwari presented on our ongoing HIV and sexual reproductive health (SRH) themed researches. The NL embassy commended us for our vast researches and expressed their willingness to collaborate with us and to support our future researches.



THRU ZIM

The Health Research Unit Zimbabwe

Katharina Kranzer

Professor of Infectious Disease Epidemiology
Clinical Research Department
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine



THRU ZIM

Ongoing HIV & SRH Research

Dr Chido Dziva Chikwari

Assistant Professor of Epidemiology
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine & The
Health Research Unit Zimbabwe



Dr. Mandi Tembo presents her menstrual health research with the MENISCUS trial team

DR. MANDI TEMBO JOINS THE MENISCUS TRIAL TEAM AND PRESENTS HER MENSTRUAL HEALTH RESEARCH IN ENTEBBE

Dr. Mandi Tembo joins the MENISCUS trial team and visited Entebbe, Uganda earlier this month. She worked with the qualitative team and shared her PhD findings in menstrual health. MENISCUS is a trial evaluating the impact of a multi-component menstrual health intervention in Ugandan secondary schools on girls' education, health, and wellbeing.

Find out more about the MENISCUS trial here:

<https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres-projects-groups/meniscus>

ERASE-TB REACHES ENROLMENT TARGETS

ERASE-TB study has completed enrolment in both Zimbabwe and Tanzania. We would like to commend the entire research team for this achievement and its laboratory partners at the Biomedical Medical Research and Training Institute and Zvitambo for making this possible. The study had previously begun enrolment during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the research team had to soldier on despite COVID-19 related challenges such as travel restrictions and infection control issues. The study is now focusing on routine follow-ups and unwell visits.



Dr. Rudo Chingono

DR. RUDO CHINGONO APPOINTED TO A NEW POSITION

Dr. Rudo Chingono has been appointed as the new postdoctoral social scientist for the Fractures E3 study and will be managing the Work package 5 across Zimbabwe, South Africa and the Gambia. We would like to wish her the very best in her new role!

THRU ZIM PARTICIPATES IN STI PREVENTION AND CONTROL BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Dr. Chido Dziva Chikwari, Prof. Rashida Ferrand and Dr. Kevin Martin participated in a brainstorming meeting with the Ministry of Health and Child Care at Rainbow Towers titled "Revisiting Approaches to STI Prevention and Control in Zimbabwe: A Brainstorming Session". This brainstorming meeting focused on STI management strategies.



Dr. Constanica Mavodza

DR. CONSTANCIA MAVODZA RECEIVES FINAL PhD AWARD

Constancia Mavodza submitted her minor corrections and has had her PhD approved. She is now formally Dr. Constanica Mavodza, and will be graduating in March 2023. A huge congratulations to Dr. Constanica Mavodza!

THRU ZIM ABSTRACTS QUALIFY FOR RENOWNED EVENTS

We are proud to announce that 15 abstracts have been submitted to the International AIDS Society meeting in Brisbane, Australia and 4 abstracts to the International Society for Sexually Transmitted Diseases Research (ISSTD) meeting in Chicago, USA, all scheduled to take place later this year.

5 MINUTES WITH... MUFARO MAKUNI



Mufaro Makuni

What do you do and when did you start?

I joined THRU ZIM in May 2019 as the public engagement coordinator. My role involves handling our communications such as managing our website and Twitter account, writing and disseminating our internal monthly newsletter, developing visual content such as our study films and maintaining our photo and films repository. I am also extensively involved in implementing public engagement projects such as the school engagement programme, the Youth Researchers Academy, the Art of Health competition and currently the Healthy Ageing public engagement project. I work closely with our public engagement lead, Dr. Mandi Tembo, and we both ensure the work we do at THRU ZIM reaches our internal and external audiences.

Where can we find you in the office?

You can find me in the field management office just across the entrance.

What do you enjoy about your work?

I enjoy how fulfilling my work is and how much I have grown since I started here. I am especially grateful to have the opportunity to find new ways to keep our audiences engaged in terms of our research and public engagement. I also enjoy working in teams because public engagement is at its best when it is a team effort. I have also enjoyed working with young people at secondary schools, and giving them platforms to develop and empower themselves. Going forward, I hope to continue adding value to THRU ZIM and to see the heights we will reach in the near future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

'R' WhatsApp group

Individuals using the 'R' statistical programme, please feel free to join the WhatsApp platform to be kept up to date on all 'R' related opportunities and announcements.

Link: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/LpxX6UdAS3K8NamfY7eZs3>

THRU ZIM study registrations and updates

To all study leads, please take note of the study registrations and updates spreadsheet which contains information pertaining to study ethical approvals. Information highlights ethical approval expiry dates that need to be noted. You are all also required to update the spreadsheet with missing information pertaining to your ethical approvals as well.

Link: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1jyRcoKbCHn6IH2PVQ2VbWC5nmhnpicLttkNoNS1p7mE/edit#gid=0>

THRU ZIM MSc project list

To those that have an agreement with MSc students, the THRU ZIM MSc project list needs to be updated with their information. This is a working document that needs to be updated as you reach agreements with students over the coming months.

Link: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15WWhSrHDSYB2PR7N1FNYUanMANsGd-1l/edit#gid=1747447857>

Call for abstracts: Zimbabwe TB Research Open Day

The Ministry of Health and Child Care, Zimbabwe in collaboration with Africa University, JSI, and USAID invite abstracts for the 2nd edition of the Zimbabwe TB Research Open Day conference to be held in April 2023 (TBA). The abstracts fall into two categories i) On-going research and ii) Completed research. Participants whose abstracts make it into the top five in each category will get awards (to be determined by the Organising Committee for the event). The abstracts will cover a broad range of disciplines (e.g., behavioural/social, epidemiological, laboratory-based, and diagnostic) and thematic areas such as TB, TB/HIV co-infection, TB/COVID, and TB and comorbidities (Diabetes mellitus, hypertension). The TB Research Open day is a platform where researchers can share their protocols and research findings in the presence of their peers and policymakers. This may enhance the utilization of research findings to inform policy and practice. The event will also facilitate the identification of research that is of relevance to the National TB Control program so that such research gets showcased for funding.

If this call is of relevance to you please feel free to submit an abstract.

For full application details email: mufaronashe@gmail.com

Follow this link to begin your application: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSevuZ77k2DeBVC7dzfRRibR1ctXzYj7vz929DA-YG0tQ-7DDQ/viewform>

Application deadline: **28th of February 2023**

OPPORTUNITIES

MSc Sexual & Reproductive Health Policy and Programming Scholarships (2023/24)

MSc Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy and Programming is an online programme developed and delivered by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the University of Ghana School of Public Health (UGSPH). This programme is primarily targeted at those interested in acquiring the knowledge and skills required to design, implement and evaluate evidence-based sexual and reproductive health programmes and policies in sub-Saharan Africa and other low- and middle-income settings. There are 45 scholarships currently available to African residents. Don't miss out!

Follow these links for more information:

1. <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/courses/masters-degrees/sexual-reproductive-health-policy-programming>
2. <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/2023-24-msc-srhpp-scholarships>

Application deadline: **16th of March 2023**

LSHTM Research Degree Student Poster Day

We would like to encourage our PhD students to take part in this event that will be held at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) on **Tuesday the 18th of April 2023**.

There are two ways to participate:

- In person: Please contact: itd-staff-request@lists.lshtm.ac.uk to book a stand by 27th March 2023. You will need to be available to attend on the day. Your poster will be eligible for a Faculty Prize (decided by judges) and for entry in the People's Prize (decided by online vote). We will send details on how to get your poster printed and the schedule for the day closer to the event.
- If you're not able to attend in person, you can submit a poster for display online (please inform us by the 27th of March if you intend to do this). Your poster wouldn't be eligible for the Faculty prizes, but it would be entered into the People's Prize (decided by online vote).

All research degree students are expected to present a poster at this event at least once during their course of study. Please talk to your supervisor about your participation. This is a very useful exercise, not only for telling others about your work but for getting helpful feedback from other students and members of staff with whom you wouldn't normally be in contact. Even if you aren't presenting this year, please do try to attend the event to support your colleagues.

We would strongly advise you to book a place on the "Producing a research poster" session taking place on the 28th of February - to do so, please click here: <https://studentbookings.lshtm.ac.uk/index.php/login>

When designing your poster, please check the LSHTM poster templates here: <https://login.lshtm.ac.uk/nidp/wsfed/ep?id=lshtm-mfa-default&sid=0&option=credential&sid=0>

Consider the following:

- You do not need to have results - a well-presented background and plan of your study is perfectly acceptable.
- A poster should contain key information only, not details of everything you have done
- Figures, pictures and diagrams can often be more effective than lots of words or large tables in a poster
- Design your poster as though it were going to be printed and read from about a meter away. Avoid small fonts
- We will only cover the cost of posters printed in size A1
- Portrait orientation is generally better, if possible
- Posters will need to be ready for uploading online and sending to the printers by the 12th of April at the latest
- You do not need to make a new poster: one that you have already prepared and presented elsewhere is fine (if this applies and your poster is larger than A1 size, please let me know so that we can make sure there are poster boards large enough to accommodate it).

PhD opportunity in viral immunology

This is a PhD fellowship in viral immunology funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The successful candidate will register for their PhD at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine for 36 months and will work with a team of scientists from ZVITAMBO (Prof Andrew Prendergast, Ms. Kuda Mutasa), BRTI (Prof Katharina Kranzer), and the University of Sheffield, UK (Prof Thushan de Silva, Prof Sarah Rowland-Jones). The PhD studentship will be based primarily at the ZVITAMBO Laboratories, with specific time allocated for training visits to the UK. The student will be provided with extensive training in immunological techniques to characterise antiviral adaptive immune responses in the blood and mucosa.

Follow this link to apply: <https://www.thruzim.org/opportunities>

Application deadline: **24th of March 2023**

PICTURE OF THE MONTH



LSHTM students enjoying a special dinner during their visit to Oxford University

Please do send us your submissions for "Picture of the Month" – it really can be about anything you and colleagues found interesting, entertaining, funny, and/or visually stunning. Fun captions are encouraged.

"Picture of the Month" will receive a small token of our appreciation, so let's get creative!

Share your news, publications, pictures, announcements: publicengagement@thruzim.org. Follow us on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/ThruZim>

THANK YOU!
