

**STIMULATING TRAINING & ACCESS
TO HIV RESEARCH EXPERIENCES**

DESIGNATHON HANDBOOK

2022

#STARScholar2023



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MEET THE TEAM

Leadership Team

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Dr. Joseph Tucker (UNC)
Dr. Idia Thurston (TAMU)
Dr. Collins Airhihenbuwa (GSU)

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Kaithleen Hernandez (GSU)
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FSU: Florida State University; MON: Monash University; SLU: Saint Louis University; TAMU: Texas A&M University;
UNC: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; UTSA: University of Texas at San Antonio; WFU: Wake Forest University

OUR PARTNERS



STAR DESIGNATHON

In collaboration between SLU, UNC Chapel Hill, Texas A&M, and GSU, the STAR designathon, similar to a hackathon, is a 72-hour interactive event in which young people will work together to design and present their self-devised solutions to social and health issues.

This designathon is dedicated toward developing creative ideas to address HIV for young people from the global majority. The contest will follow a workshop-style format where participants will learn and implement design-thinking concepts such as rapid prototyping, co-creation, lean start-ups, etc. Participants will then pitch their solutions to an expert panel of judges. Opening this event to young people with diverse experiences, cultural backgrounds, and areas of expertise holds rich learning opportunities and may maximize the potential for a real and lasting impact. This event seeks to provide participants the opportunity to learn, design, and collaborate with a community of research experts, health leaders, entrepreneurs, and creatives. We are eager to engage in important conversations and foster a solutions-focused community to develop novel ideas that can improve HIV outcomes for youth.

“ By letting young people lead, and giving them the tools to address problems they are best positioned to solve, is what contributes to making a difference in our communities.

Dr. Juliet Iwelunmor



HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Designathon will occur in the following 6 sequential phases: understand, define, sketch, decide, prototype, and validate.

1 0

Understand

You will first begin to learn, research, and gather insights about the problem you want to solve. This means you should be prepared to answer questions related to increasing HIV prevention services among the global majority of youth aged 13-24 years old.



2 0

Define

Now that you have understood the context of the problem, you will now brainstorm to identify new solutions to the problem statement.



3 0

Sketch

You will sketch your best idea and fully map it out while using words when necessary to highlight key details.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

04

Decide

You will work with mentors and experts to develop and share your sketched ideas to receive helpful feedback.



05

Prototype

You can think of this phase as running an experiment to test out your proposed solution. There are several ways to prototype your solutions, such as diagrams, user journey maps, role plays, and digital mock-ups (for campaigns). Anything can be prototyped in a day if it is clearly mapped out!



06

Validate

This is your moment of truth! You will pitch your solutions to an expert panel of judges to be selected as a finalist. Not to worry, everyone is a winner!



EXPECTATIONS & ROLES

We are fortunate to have an amazing group of young researchers and leaders from the four participating universities join in this designathon. We received numerous, impressive applications and open-call responses. Each application was reviewed and scored by the leadership team. In addition, all judges, mentors, participants, and organizers joining us are the best of the best. You all deserve to be here, and we are delighted to have you!

- Judges: There will be a panel of 5 judges who will determine if the proposed solutions are clearly and concisely described; relevant to the population; novel; feasible, scalable/replicable, and sustainable; and promote equity and fairness.
- Mentors: These individuals will provide guidance and/or suggestions based on their areas of expertise.
- Participants: These individuals bring their unique expertise and creative ideas to the designathon.
- Organizers: This consists of a dynamic collaboration of public health experts and young people providing a safe space to support and champion national conversations that strengthen local practices. They help make sure that the group understands the goals/structure and stays on task.

RULES

Any content or materials developed for the designathon must be your own original work. Throughout your participation in the designathon, you agree not to develop or submit any content or materials:

- That are created in whole or in part by any third party (including the use of AI);
- That infringe on any intellectual property rights of others or on the privacy or publicity rights of others;
- That violate any agreements or policies to which you may be subject;
- That you know are false, inaccurate, or misleading;
- That are obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, or racially or religiously biased to any other person;
- For which you were compensated for by a third party;
- That violate any applicable law (including, but not limited to, those governing export control, consumer protection, unfair competition, false advertising, or anti-discrimination).

INSTRUCTIONS

- All participants must be present and actively participating during the entire duration of the competition;
- Plagiarism is prohibited;
- All participants must respect the instructions of the competition staff and coordinators;
- If applicable, any changes to the attendance over the course of the designathon must be communicated to a member of the team immediately.

MEET THE INNOVATORS



Aarti Sahai

My name is Aarti Sahai, and I am a current Junior Public Health Major, Biology Minor in the Medical Scholars Program (B.S/M.D.) and University Honors Program at Saint Louis University. Accordingly, I am passionate about ensuring routine access to mental and physical healthcare in rural hotspots, so that no marginalized group in any community has to weather the lethal effects of neglect sans proper care. Furthermore, I am both humbled and appreciative of the opportunity presented by STAR regarding the prospect of facilitating real-world change via targeted intervention. Thank you.



Anthony Ogliore

Hi! Anthony Ogliore is a sophomore at Saint Louis University. I am pursuing a double major in Healthcare Management and Art History, as well as a minor in Public Health. I am currently studying abroad in Geneva, Switzerland for the semester. Being exposed to so many different cultures, being able to actively participate among other perspectives, and meet so many people has been an incredible experience. I consider myself extremely fortunate to be able to participate in the Designathon, where I can bounce ideas off mentors and other students. I can't wait to meet you all!

MEET THE INNOVATORS



Harsh Agarwal

Harsh Agarwal is a public health professional with local and global 360 experience in programmatic interventions, academic research, and implementation science - committed to delivering quality services for unmet needs around sexual reproductive health and HIV/AIDS through innovation and technology while working across the cascade of prevention, testing, treatment, and cure. Agarwal graduated as a Mechanical Engineer in India and later pivoted to public health after a stint in marketing and communications. In India, he worked with FHI 360, YRG care, Blue Lotus Advisory, & The Girl Effect on programs around behavioral change and HIV service delivery that were supported by Elton John AIDS Foundation, USAID, and Nike Foundation. Harsh draws learning from his diverse professional and personal experiences and does work that's human-centric and built around the needs of the communities.

He commenced his Masters in Public Health (MPH) program in global health concentration at UNC Chapel Hill in August 2021. During his time at UNC, Harsh worked on several research projects at UNC that focussed on Long-Acting Injectables at the UNC clinic, acceptability of home-based viral load testing devices in USA, ethics around HIV cure, Shared Decision-Making tool for PrEP for women in Malawi, and nutritional outcomes for HIV positive mothers in Zambia. Agarwal was the only MPH student from his cohort to be selected for the coveted UNC-FHI research fellowship, where he supports the data visualization for USAID Healthy Behaviours (a behavioral change program in Ethiopia), impact evaluation of a multi-country performance improvement program - Total Quality Leadership and Accountability (TQLA) and an NIH funded study that looks at a pleasure-based approach to PrEP counseling. Agarwal is also an award-winning filmmaker and a TEDx speaker.

Team-building, brain-bursting, energy-sapping, fun, innovative, self-discovering, enlightening, and rewarding sums up the designathon experience. An experience of a lifetime!

“

”

Dr. Joseph Tucker

MEET THE INNOVATORS



Hawi Merga Bekana

My name is Hawi Merga Bekana, a 27-year-old Medical Doctor from Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. I graduated from Addis Ababa University, Black Lion Specialized Hospital in February 2022. After my graduation, I was employed by the Ministry of Health in Ethiopia in the first and largest COVID-19 treatment center by the name “Eka Kotebe General Hospital”. The COVID-19 pandemic had entirely shifted my interest to Public Health. It was during this time that I have been able to understand its importance and how much of its principles if implemented by the majority could have saved millions of lives. As a result, I wanted to focus on diseases that cross beyond borders and affect the world. It was of great interest to me as well to know about the frequency, distribution, and control of diseases. Therefore, I joined the Master of Public Health in Global Health and Epidemiology joint Concentration at Saint Louis University College of Public and Social Justice. Currently, I am attending my first-year second-semester courses. I am a graduate research assistant working at Saint Louis University and In collaboration with Saint Louis County Department of Public Health on research titled “Best practices in Long Acting Reversible Contraception use other Family Planning methods in title X clinics in USA.” My research focus areas are infectious diseases more specifically HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis.



Hewitt Mesfin

Hello, I'm Hewitt. I'm a senior at Georgia State University earning my bachelor's in Public Health. I have spent much of my undergrad years working in different jobs, and successfully advancing my skill sets. My passion and interests lie with public health, and I have goals of becoming an epidemiologist. My experiences have allowed me the opportunity to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds and accumulate extensive knowledge of current health concerns. This experience ranges from volunteering at the Clarkston refugee center to working with Emory University on numerous research studies. In total, I have completed four internships while in college. My passion for public health has also inspired me to start a health brand and social media that works to teach others on topics ranging from nutrition to holistic care. Throughout my past work experiences, I have learned communication skills, efficiently working with others, improvisation and critical thinking. I have advanced my computer skills and gained many certifications with numerous research programs. I have worked hard and risen up in many leadership roles.

MEET THE INNOVATORS



Mikayla Ontiveros

My name is Mikayla Ontiveros and I am a student at Georgia State University. I am currently pursuing a degree in Biology as a Junior. I have a passion for both the science and the art of medicine. As a future gynecologist, I have a strong desire to make a positive impact in low-income communities by providing quality healthcare to those who need it most. In my free time, I love indulging in my creative side through art, fashion, and music. I believe that combining my love for the arts with my passion for medicine will help me to approach patient care in a holistic and empathetic manner. Additionally, I have a keen interest for health and epidemiology. I am constantly seeking new ways to stay informed about the latest developments and findings. Overall, I am a driven individual with a passion for medicine and a commitment to serving others. I am confident that my education, interests, and passion will help me to achieve my goal of making a meaningful difference in the lives of women in need.



Namira Chowdhury

Hello, my name is Namira Chowdhury and I am a second-year public health student at Georgia State University. I am very excited to join the STAR program and get a chance to create meaningful change within my field. My interests include expanding my knowledge about public health, specifically, topics related to maternal and child health, watching movies, and exploring the city of Atlanta. I am very passionate about bettering my community and believe that my role in STAR will be a pivotal stepping stone in doing so. I look forward to meeting with everyone and sharing my ideas!

MEET THE INNOVATORS



Olukayode Apata

Olukayode Apata is a first-year Ph.D. student and Graduate Research Assistant in Research, Measurement, and Statistics (RMS) at MAGE Lab, Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC), Texas A&M University. He is currently undergoing another master's degree in Educational Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi. He received a bachelor's degree in Physics Education and a master's degree in Educational Evaluation at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His research interests are psychometrics, STEM Education, HIV research, Social-Emotional Learning, Critical Race Theory, and ethnic neighborhoods. His ongoing research in the MAGE Lab is on undergraduate engineering students' persistence.



Suyin Woo

Suyin Woo is a Biomedical Sciences major with a computer sciences minor studying at Texas A&M University en route to medical school. She graduated from Allen Texas High School with honors and AP distinction. She spends her time playing piano with the university orchestra and volunteering with the local A&M American Medical Student Association, American Chemical Society, and Health Occupations Students of America Chapters, where she will also be competing in biomedical debate competitions. Her favorite pastime is to drink hot tea and muse on the meaning of life.

MEET THE INNOVATORS



Tochukwu Patrick

My name is Tochukwu Patrick and I am an Undergraduate student at Saint Louis University studying Public Health. I am Nigerian and I grew up in New Jersey. I am interested in research, epidemiology, community engagement, and social media. I am currently a communications intern for the City of St. Louis Health Department. I aspire to work with the black community and create interventions to make opportunities available to better their lives.



Ujunwa Onyeama

Ujunwa is a first-year Master of Public Health student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she is getting a Master of Public Health degree in Global Health. She is passionate about understanding the public health needs of communities she relates to and beyond. She has a vested interest in conceptualizing innovative ideas that can prove invaluable in the global health field. Her background in medical laboratory sciences and relevant experiences in Nigeria has primed her towards an interest in the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young adults. This interest informs her passion for HIV-related research. Ujunwa currently works as a graduate research assistant with the Department of Health Behavior at the Gillings School of Global Public Health. She works on two global health projects, creating content for a research app and assisting with study implementation, data analysis, and literature reviews. She is dedicated and fully committed to harnessing every opportunity she receives to effect visible change within and outside her community.

MEET THE INNOVATORS



Vignesh Vakati

I am majoring in Psychology with a minor in Health Care Ethics on the Pre-Medical track at Saint Louis University. In school, I am a part of the Alpha Epsilon Delta Club (Pre-Med Honors Society), a member of the Indian Students Association, treasurer for Movement Exchange, and a product architect for EpiBand of MEDLaunch. Further, this past summer, I worked as a Medical Scribe in the Emergency Department at SLU SSM Health. In my free time, I love playing basketball and tennis and am on the SLU Club Tennis team. Outside of school, I am an enthusiastic and motivated individual with a strong work ethic and a proven track record of success in a variety of roles. My adaptability and willingness to take on new challenges has allowed me to make a positive impact in my community. I hope to use my connections as an MLK Scholar to better my community and bring about changes that will be beneficial for all.

“ ... my mentor really re-educated me and I was able to see that my lived experiences matter to my research. I could do work that impacted my community, work that I relate to.

Dr. Idia Thurston



SETTING THE STAGE

- Racial and ethnic minority adolescents and young adults (AYA) account for a significant amount of new HIV cases. In the United States in 2018, 43% and 26% of HIV diagnoses were Black and Hispanic people, respectively, despite these groups only making up 13% and 18% of the population [1].
- However, the essential HIV prevention services that would help are not easily accessible to this population due to various individual, social, and structural factors [1].
- Furthermore, the field of HIV prevention interventions lacks diversity with racial-ethnic minorities making up over 30% of the US population, but less than 9% of people in health and biomedical professions, despite the fact that underrepresented AYA are a critical resource of talent in this field of research [2,3]
- Closing this gap is essential for closing inequities in HIV prevention and outcomes and eventually ending the HIV epidemic.
- There is an urgent need for both creative strategies to promote HIV prevention services among racial and ethnic minority youth and training for a new generation of AYA researchers ready to face these challenges. STAR aims to do both.
- This designathon will highlight the next generation of HIV researchers' voices to close the gap in HIV prevention services. Participants will design, refine, and present a potential solution to address the following designathon contest question, "How Might We Promote HIV Prevention Services Among Youth Aged 13-24 In Your Community?" With the help of the contest guidelines, speakers, and mentors, participants will develop and edit their ideas to incorporate a human-centered design thinking approach and maximize the potential impact of their solutions.

1. Sullivan et al., 2021; The Lancet.

2. Wiley et al., 2020; Journal of American Medical Informatics Association

3. Foundation NS, 2019; Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering0

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Through the designathon contest, students and young researchers are coming up with solutions to the contest question outlined below:



How Might We Promote HIV Prevention Services Among Youth Aged 13–24 In Your Community?

Keeping in mind the barriers global majority young people may face,

- What problem is this innovation addressing? Has anyone else tried to address this problem?
- Is there any evidence on the impact of this innovation so far? Has this campaign/strategy been implemented before?
- What are some outcomes that you hope to achieve with your innovation?

DESIGNATHON DELIVERABLES

At the end of the weekend, we expect for each individual/team to provide 3 main deliverables:

01

Your PLAN (People, Learning, Adapting & Nurturing)

Create your plan. Use the PLAN handout that was given to you to map out your plan with either visuals or written text.

02

Specific Aims

Develop your specific aims. Use the provided handout to guide you as you draft your specific aims. Your specific aims should be 1-page long (font size 12, single-spaced). In your 1-page, you should 1) introduce your idea, 2) give a sense of the gaps, 3) introduce your approach, 4) provide 3 specific aims of what you will do, and 5) explain the impact or why people should care.

03

Pitch

You will have 5 minutes to pitch your idea and 5 minutes to answer the questions of the judging panel. They will judge your project based on 5 criteria: 1) clear and concise description; 2) relevance; 3) novelty; 4) feasibility, scalability/replicability, and sustainability; and 5) promotion of equity and fairness.



All components must be submitted on the final day at 9:00 am CT, before the pitch presentation.

JUDGING CRITERIA

The ideas will be evaluated by an experienced judging panel according to the following criteria (on a 10-point scale):

Clear and Concise Description

How clearly is your strategy for HIV prevention described?

Relevance

Will your strategy be relevant to the global majority aged 13-24?

Novelty

How novel or innovative is your strategy?

Feasibility, Scalability / Replicability and Sustainability

How practical or realistic is your innovation? Is the strategy easily piloted? Are there means to assess the effectiveness of this solution? Are there preliminary data or prototypes available?

Promotion of Equity and Fairness

How does your proposed innovation address issues of equity and fairness (in health outcomes, in representation), as well as the participating team's methods of developing their ideas? Do solutions involve empowering youth and community members through co-creation or participatory processes? Are gender and other intersection inequalities acknowledged or addressed in the approach to innovation, or as an outcome of the innovation itself?

PRIZES

After the pitch presentations, three prizes will be given based on the highest scores from the judges:

1ST

\$100
Amazon
Gift Card

2ND

\$75
Amazon
Gift Card

3RD

\$50
Amazon
Gift Card

AWARDS

We will recognize top individuals or teams in following categories with Certificates of Recognition:



MOST INNOVATIVE

awarded to the idea that is voted most innovative by the judges



VIEWER'S CHOICE

awarded to the idea that is voted the best idea by the audience



PEER CHOICE

awarded to the idea that is voted the best idea by the designathon participants

What happens after I pitch my idea?

Top finalists will become members of the 2023 STAR cohort where you will receive a continued intensive 6-week summer training with a focus on dissemination and implementation science, priming you to become the next generation of HIV researchers capable of planning, executing, evaluating, and disseminating innovative and creative HIV prevention strategies. Seed funding to implement your ideas will be given at the end of the summer boot camp.

DESIGNATHON SCHEDULE

Before the Designathon | Setting the Stage

Participants should watch pre-recorded videos and review the articles of interest to prepare for a successful weekend!

Day 1 | Mentor and staff introductions and introduction to HIV research

Participants will explore and identify a challenge for the weekend. They will hear expectations from experts and mentors of the challenge and ensure their defined ideas are addressing the needs and core issues of young people in the global majority.

Day 2 | Rapid prototyping, expert feedback & iteration, & health equity

Building on insights and inspirations of Day 1, participating individuals bring to life and refine their ideas through discussion and collaboration with expert and youth advisory mentors. Participants will learn how to involve their community through panels on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) and community partnership.

Day 3 | Final presentations & judging

Participants will finalize their prototype. They will share and pitch their final prototype draft to a panel of judges who will chose the 2023 STAR cohort.

AGENDA

ALL TIMES IN CST.

FRIDAY

4:00 PM

Opening Remarks from STAR Leadership Team

4:30 PM

Meet & Greet / Networking

5:00 PM

Kick off Panel - HIV Research and Disparities

6:00 PM

Setting the Context: Our "Why" & How to Create a

PLAN

7:00 PM

End of Day: Work on Deliverables

AGENDA

ALL TIMES IN CST.

SATURDAY

9:00 AM

Networking / Reflection

9:30 AM

Using Creativity & Storytelling

10:30 AM

Meet with Expert Mentors

11:30 PM

Panel - Health Equity: Working with Communities through Evidence-based and Strengths-based approaches

12:30 PM

Lunch

1:00 PM

Work on Deliverables

3:30 PM

Meet with Expert Mentors

4:30 PM

Work on Deliverables

6:30 PM

Optional - Meet with Staff Mentors / End of Day

AGENDA

ALL TIMES IN CST.

SUNDAY

9:00 AM

Finalize Pitch and Practice

10:00 AM

Deliver Pitches

12:00 PM

Announce Winners and STAR 2023 Cohort!



You've made the decision to join us. You have already begun your journey as a leader, and we are very excited to welcome you to our team.

”

“

Dr. Collins Airhienbuwa

MEET THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS



Dr. Juliet Iwelunmor

Dr. Juliet Iwelunmor is a Professor of Global Health in the Department of Behavioral Health Science and Health Education at Saint Louis University College for Public Health and Social Justice. Her research is centered around the use of culturally salient implementation science strategies to develop, implement, and sustain in community settings, evidence-based health interventions that reduce health disparities and advance health equity. She is the PI of an R01 study aimed to use participatory crowdsourcing methods to drive HPV prevention among mother-daughter dyads in Nigeria (1R01CA271033-01A1). She is also the PI of a UG3/UH3 NIH phased grant aimed at assessing the effectiveness of youth-friendly implementation science strategies in increasing uptake and sustainability of HIV self-testing led by and for Nigerian youth (UH3HD096929). In addition, she has also led other implementation science trials focused on evaluating the scale-up and sustainability of well-proven chronic disease management programs targeted at hypertension and other cardiovascular risk factors in sub-Saharan Africa.



Dr. Joseph Tucker

Dr. Joseph D. Tucker is an infectious diseases physician and Professor at UNC Chapel Hill with a special interest in social innovation and crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing has a group of individuals solve a problem and then share solutions with the public (more details here). He is the Co-Director of the International Diagnostics Centre at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. His team's ongoing research investigates crowdsourcing open calls to increase sexually transmitted disease test uptake in China, enhance research mentorship in LMICs, and promote HIV self-testing in Nigeria. His open calls have focused on promoting diagnostics, creating people-friendly health services, and enhancing the uptake of vaccines. Dr. Tucker works closely with the TDR Social Innovation in Health Initiative. He has contributed to several World Health Organization guidelines and serves as a member of the TDR Global Working Group. Dr. Tucker has published 449 manuscripts. He received his BA from Swarthmore, MD from UNC, AM (RSEA) from Harvard, and Ph.D. from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

MEET THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS



Dr. Idia Thurston

Idia Binitie Thurston, Ph.D. (she/her) is a licensed clinical psychologist and Associate Professor of psychology and public health at Texas A&M University (TAMU). She is a core member of the Diversity Science Research Cluster at TAMU and serves on the board for the Society of Pediatric Psychology (APA D54). She is co-editor of an upcoming issue on Health Equity for the American Psychologist journal. She trained at Florida State University, University of South Florida, and Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School. Dr. Thurston currently directs the CHANGE lab, where she collaborates with scholars and community members to conduct health equity research. Her body of work explores how race, ethnicity, social class, gender, size, and sexuality intersect and influence health and well-being in adolescents and their families. She partners with local community organizations to develop and disseminate strengths-based, culturally-responsive tools that reduce stigma, enhance wellness, and promote resilience. She has published over 70 peer reviewed articles and received over 2 million in grants/awards from the National Institutes of Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, American Psychological Association, and Sister Reach. Dr. Thurston is passionate about mentoring and promoting pathways to psychology for individuals underrepresented in our field by advancing structural and systemic change. She is deeply committed to a re-imagining of psychological science, practice, and training to ensure ALL are seen and represented. She is a mama of 3 and passionate about good food and snatching joy!



Dr. Collins Airhihenbuwa

Dr. Collins Airhihenbuwa is a Professor of Health Management & Policy and leads the Global Research Against Non-communicable Disease (GRAND) Initiative at the School of Public Health at Georgia State University. He is an expert in creating solutions to promote health equity in national and global health and has more than 30 years of experience advancing research on culture, identity, and health to inform strategies for training young professionals to conduct health behavior and public health research and intervention. He was previously Dean of the College for Public Health and Social Justice at Saint Louis University in Missouri and authored a cultural model (PEN-3) that is used in several countries to develop programs and interventions to address health inequity. He has served as a visiting scholar to UN agencies such as the World Health Organization and major universities, including Purdue and Boston University, and has served on boards of Saint Louis City and Hospitals, the National Advisory committee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Scholars, the Global Philanthropy Alliance, and the board of Scientific Counselors for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Airhihenbuwa has authored more than 130 articles and book chapters and seven books. He is a former President and Distinguished Fellow of the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) and a fellow of the American Academy of Health Behavior and the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research. He is also the recipient of several prestigious awards including the Scholar of the Year by the American Association of Health Education, the symbol of H.O.P.E award by the American Journal of Health Promotion, the Outreach award by Penn State University, the David Satcher award for leadership in reducing health disparities by CDC and DHPE, and the Mentor award by SOPHE.

MEET THE JUDGES



Dr. Kemba Noel-London

A health equity researcher with an interest in exploring the social determinants of health and policy level impacts on minority health specifically within youth sports and access to appropriate care. Her research also includes examining the impact of traumatic childhood experiences on youth physical activity, sport participation and mental health outcomes; development of trauma informed sport and sports medicine practices and organizations; and disparities in access to safe youth sports inclusive of access to athletic training and wider healthcare services. She also has experience working in sports medicine and school based health care in the United States and internationally.



Gera King

Gera is in her final year of the MPH program with a concentration in Health Promotion and Behavior at the School of Public Health at Georgia State University. Her research interests are in global health and creating solutions to address health inequities. Gera is passionate about reducing health disparities and improving health outcomes for historically marginalized populations. She enjoys traveling and experiencing different cultures.



Ebenezer Adeoti

Ebenezer is a first-year graduate student in the MPH program with a concentration in Epidemiology at the College for Public Health & Social Justice, Saint Louis University. He has a background in medical practice in Nigeria and he is interested in global health research with the aim of applying epidemiological methods to improve health outcomes. He hopes to use his experience in public health studies to identify, develop and deliver sustainable interventions to key populations in dire need in low and middle-income countries. Ebenezer loves watching soccer and reading scientific literatures. He also plays chess and scrabble in his spare time.

MEET THE JUDGES



Dr. Ucheoma Nwaozuru

Ucheoma Nwaozuru, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Implementation, Division of Public Health Sciences at Wake Forest School of Medicine. She received a Master's in Community Health and Preventive Medicine from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a PhD in Public Health Studies from Saint Louis University, College for Public Health and Social Justice. Her research focuses on participatory and community-engaged research to promote the adoption and sustainability of evidence-based interventions. Her training and research experience has involved qualitative research methodology, community-based participatory research, crowdsourcing, and social innovations for health and the use of these principles to promote health equity, intervention adoption, and sustainability. She is a co-investigator on the Innovative Tools to Expand HIV Self-Testing (ITEST) project in Nigeria (MPI: Iwelunmor, Tucker, and Ezechi) that uses crowdsourcing open calls to promote the uptake of HIV self-testing among Nigerian youth. In this capacity, she facilitates the youth advisory board meetings and assists with implementing the crowdsourcing open call activities for Nigerian youth.



Dr. Stuart Rennie

Stuart Rennie is Associate Professor in Social Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Faculty Associate at the UNC Bioethics Center and Extraordinary Professor in Medicine at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He obtained a Masters in Anthropology and a PhD in philosophy (ethics) from the Leuven University, Belgium. Dr. Rennie's current teaching and research interests focus on research ethics, infectious disease ethics and medical ethics in marginalized communities, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. He is currently co-Principal Investigator of a NIH-funded PhD program in bioethics with collaboration with Stellenbosch University. He is also co-investigator on a NIH-funded study on the responsible conduct of HIV research with adolescents in Kenya, a project on ethics of big data research for health promotion in South Africa and Nigeria. He is member of the HIV Prevention Trials Network's (HPTN) Ethics Working Group and was co-author of the HPTN research ethics guidance in 2009. He also serves as ethics consultant for the World Health Organization on voluntary male circumcision programs for HIV prevention and the ethics of research on new HIV prevention approaches. He has published widely in peer-reviewed journals on themes such as informed consent, HIV testing policies, implementation ethics, research involving children, health surveillance, health inequality and social justice.

MEET THE MENTORS



Dr. Laura Salazar

Laura F. Salazar, PhD, is a Professor at Georgia State University's School of Public Health in the Department of Health Policy and Behavioral Science. Dr. Salazar's research has been devoted to helping understand, prevent, and ameliorate HIV/AIDS among high-risk populations and also interpersonal violence. She was trained as a community psychologist at Georgia State University (GSU) where she received her PhD (2001). She also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in HIV/AIDS clinical research at Emory University's School of Medicine (2003). Before joining the faculty at GSU in 2011, Dr. Salazar was a member of the faculty at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. Her research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and includes the use of web-based and mobile technologies to expand the reach of health promotion efforts. Dr. Salazar has published over one hundred and fifty journal articles in medical, public health, and social science journals and is a co-author of five public health textbooks. Dr. Salazar currently teaches a PhD level seminar class.



Dr. Kate Muessig

Kate Muessig, Ph.D. (she/her) is a Professor in the College of Nursing at Florida State University (FSU) and is the founding Associate Director of the Institute on Digital Health and Innovation at FSU. Dr. Muessig received her Ph.D. at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and postdoctoral training at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research develops interventions combining digital health tools, behavior-change strategies, and health systems navigation to decrease HIV transmission and improve health care for people living with HIV. She has served as Principal Investigator of multiple NIH research studies, including a six-city pilot trial supporting HIV medication adherence, a national randomized controlled trial testing stigma reduction to improve HIV outcomes, and two implementation studies to increase the availability of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in rural health clinics and community-based settings. She co-leads the Statistical and Data Management Center of the NIH Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV interventions which supports a portfolio of national research studies addressing the HIV prevention and care continuum. Dr. Muessig's methodological focus is on the use of qualitative and mixed-methods research to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of multi-component interventions.

MEET THE MENTORS



Dr. Enbal Shacham

Dr. Enbal Shacham is a Professor and the Associate Dean for Research at the College for Public Health and Social Justice and the Acting Associate Director of the Taylor Geospatial Institute at Saint Louis University. She has been researching the intersection of health and location using geospatial science and application, epidemiology, and behavioral science throughout her career. Her research has explored how social and physical environmental factors and their impact on infectious and chronic diseases by leveraging technological advancements and data to improve health equity. The research she conducts is committed to growing insightful methods to better know and provide real-time data, analyses, and interventions for improving health in communities and clinic settings both domestically and internationally.

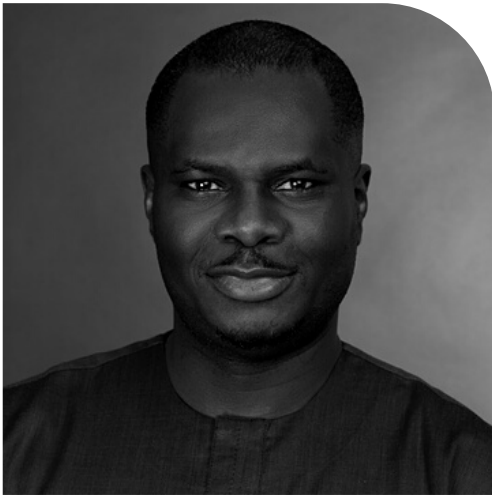
- Leverage geospatial technology to identify physical and social environment predictors of health outcomes that build the foundation for actionable interventions to create more equitable environments
- Develop and use smartphone apps to better understand real-time behaviors and symptoms including: COVID-19 symptom tracking and contact tracing, mental health symptoms, alcohol and drug use, sexual behavior
- Determine access and availability to community resources that interrupt health management (including HIV infection, mental health, and drug use)



Dr. Weiming Tang

Dr. Weiming Tang is an associate professor of UNC Chapel Hill, and the Co-Director of UNC Project-China. His background training is in the field of epidemiology, with an emphasis on HIV/STI epidemiology, study design, and data analysis. His research focuses on promoting HIV/STI testing and healthy behavior change among key populations. Specifically, he is interested in using crowdsourcing and other participatory methods to enhance health services. He also pays specific attention to digital health/telemedicine, especially in the evaluation of digital health. He has co-authored more than 250 peer-reviewed publications.

MEET THE MENTORS



Chris Ihidero

Chris Ihidero holds first and second degrees in Literature-in-English and was Chief Operating Officer of Amaka Igwe Studios, one of Nigeria's leading audio-visual production companies, from 2010-2014. He has been a theatre artiste, broadcaster, newspaper columnist, magazine editor, and university lecturer. He made a switch to film in 2007 when he joined Amaka Igwe Studios as a trainee director. Beyond his duties at AIS, Chris also worked as Director of Studies at the Centre for Excellence in Film and Media Studies, Lagos, the research and training arm of AIS. Chris has directed over 100 hours of TV drama and has written or consulted on over 1000 episodes of TV dramatic content, including Fuji House of Commotion and HUSH. In September 2013, he became the Chief Operating Officer of Q Entertainment Network. He officially launched PinPoint Media in September 2014. He founded True Nollywood Stories, TNS (www.tns.ng), in December 2014. Chris produced MTVShuga Naija Series 3 in 2015 and Series 4 in 2017. In 2020, Chris produced Nigeria's first feature animation film, Lady Buckit & the Motley Mopsters. Through his "Chris Ihidero's StoryStory" project, done in honor of his late teacher, Amaka Igwe, Chris has trained over 200 Nigerian storytellers for free.



Dr. Nora Rosenberg

Nora E. Rosenberg, Ph.D., MSPH, is an infectious diseases epidemiologist with a background in health policy, behavioral science, and implementation science. Her research is focused on developing, implementing, and evaluating HIV prevention, care, and treatment programs in low-resource settings. Her overarching career goal is to support the scale-up of evidence-based interventions in marginalized groups, particularly women of reproductive age. Dr. Rosenberg has expertise in HIV testing, contact tracing, partner services, youth-friendly health services, and health worker capacity-building.

MEET THE MENTORS



Dr. Rhonda BeLue

Rhonda BeLue PhD CQM/OE is a Professor in the Department of Public Health at the University of Texas, San Antonio. Her work focuses on improving healthcare access and promoting healthy behaviors in families and organizations in black/BIPOC communities in the US and global south. She has dedicated her career to the elimination of health inequities and advocating for social justice. She takes a holistic approach to advocating for social justice, including community-based participatory research approaches to addressing health disparities; participating in and supporting black, indigenous, and diverse cultural arts activities; and serving local organizations that serve African American and BIPOC communities. She has also worked as a local public health practitioner in Nashville, TN where she served as the director of the research and evaluation unit and the liaison between the Nashville Metro Public Health Department, the local community, and academic institutions. She has extensive experience in procuring funding for academic and community-based organizations and has expertise in evaluating community-based programs, interventions, and organizations development in community-based organizations. She holds a master of statistics and a Ph.D. in Policy Analysis & Management from Cornell University and Graduate Certificates in Organizational Leadership and Development from St. Louis University.



Dr. Chris Owens

Dr. Owens (he/him/his) is a health behavior scientist with training and expertise in rural HIV prevention/care among rural LGBTQ populations and HIV prevention among LGBTQ adolescents. His research takes a socioecological perspective where he examines how intrapersonal (e.g., attitudes, skills), interpersonal (e.g., parents, primary care providers), organizational (e.g., health care organizations and systems), and communal (e.g., culture, policies) factors influence rural HIV outcomes and LGBTQ adolescent sexual health outcomes. In addition to taking a socioecological perspective, Dr. Owens has training and is interested in implementation science, where he investigates how healthcare organizations and providers can better adopt, implement, and sustain HIV preventive and care evidence-based practices. Dr. Owens has training in mixed method and qualitative study designs. He is a fellow for the 2021-2022 Inter-CFAR Implementation Science Fellowship and a fellow for the 2022-2024 Fordham University HIV/Drug Abuse Research Ethics Training Institute (RETI).

MEET THE MENTORS



Dr. Allison Mathews

Dr. Allison Mathews serves as Executive Director of the Gilead COMPASS Faith Coordinating Center and Research Fellow in Faith and Health in the School of Divinity at Wake Forest University. She specializes in integrating technology, social marketing, community engagement, and social science to examine the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religiosity on HIV-related stigma and to innovate clinical research engagement and access to health care for underserved populations. Dr. Mathews has been invited to speak about HIV and COVID-19 on national and international platforms, including TEDxCaryWomen. Dr. Mathews and Ms. Kimberly Knight co-founded and had December 14 officially declared by the state of North Carolina as HIV Cure Research Day to raise awareness about HIV cure research and encourage community involvement in ending the HIV epidemic. She has expertise in engaging communities in HIV clinical trials and COVID-19-related studies to raise awareness about COVID-19 vaccines, connect people affected by COVID-19 to wrap-around services, and better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved communities. As executive director, she has launched several new initiatives to engage Black faith communities across the US South about HIV, including the Black Faith & HIV website, the HIV & Faith Ambassador program, and awarded funding to over 85 community-based organizations to do anti-stigma work. Dr. Mathews serves on several national boards, including the NC Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission appointed by Governor Roy Cooper, and the HIV CARE Cure Community Advisory Board. She earned her BA in Sociology from Howard University and her MA and PhD in Sociology from UNC-Chapel Hill. She completed her postdoctoral work at UNC-Chapel Hill in the Department of Social Medicine and the Institute for Global Health and Infectious Disease.



Leonore Okwara

Leonore Okwara, MPH is the Founder of the Association of Black Researchers (ABR), a 501c3 nonprofit organization that serves as a central resource to inform, support, and advance a multidisciplinary community of Black Researchers. ABR was established to improve research-community partnerships, increase accessibility to information and resources, and build academic and professional capacity within the Black community. Leonore is also a Research Program Manager at Johns Hopkins University. In this role, she manages research-related contracts and regulatory activities. Over the past two decades, she has served in a research program management capacity within the nonprofit, academic, and government sectors. Leonore has coordinated dozens of single, multisite clinical, and behavioral health-related research projects focused on cancer, tobacco, mental health, asthma, women's health, and rare conditions. She has cultivated equitable partnerships between researchers and the community, and organized events that focused on addressing community mistrust in research. Because of this experience, Leonore understands the importance of bringing researchers together to share best practices, strategies, and lessons learned with future researchers. Leonore received her Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from Eastern Virginia Medical School.

GLOSSARY

OF KEY TERMS

- **Design Thinking** A creative process of designing; The process starts with the people for whom the solution is designed for; and ends with e.g. new product or service that is tailor-made to suit these people's need
- **Feasible** Possible to do easily or conveniently
- **Impact** The overall effect or influence of innovation on a population or environment
- **Innovation** The act or process of introducing new ideas, devices, or methods
- **Iteration** The process of creating a "rough version of the product" with the express purpose of getting feedback on it and improving it
- **Pitch** A form of presentation to communicate your idea/solution, how it works, why it counts, and who it benefits
- **Prototype** A prototype is an early sample, model, or release of a product built to test a concept or process
- **Scalable** Ability to create an impact when implemented in a real-world setting
- **Specific Aims** Specific aims outline the key steps to fulfill objectives that address a critical need
- **Sustainable** Able to be maintained overtime
- **Young people** Comprised of two age groups: adolescents (10-19 years old) and youth (15-24 years old)



Please refer to the [NIAID HIV Language Guide](#) to view suggestions for communicating about HIV and related topics.

STAR 2023



**IT BEGINS WITH A
BRIGHT IDEA.**