Over the years, the department has conducted and garnered experience and expertise in Phase I and II HIV vaccine clinical trials and epidemiological studies. Moreover, the CTD has worked with unique populations within the general fishing communities. These have included healthy populations, special cohorts to characterize the general fishing communities, women, and emancipated minors, among others. Additionally, the program has a well-equipped, state-of-the-art laboratory and highly trained staff responsible for performing HIV-related experiments.

**Laboratory capacity**

The laboratory is comprised of four sections; safety, serology, immunology, and molecular. The safety section is dedicated to monitoring the safety of study products and is comprised of two units: clinical chemistry and hematology. Serology specializes in the serological testing for common and complex immunological diseases. A range of qualitative and quantitative analytical methods including rapid testing for HIV and syphilis, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay for HIV and Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, and other disease profiles. Immunology includes a flow cytometry unit, which is integral to the complex monitoring of the immune responses to study vaccines during clinical trials as well as basic science research in immunophenotypic evaluations. An additional peripheral blood mononu-
clear cells (PBMC) isolation/enzyme-linked immune absorbent spot (ELISpot) sub-unit has standard procedures for isolation of PBMC and ELISpot assays for both fresh and thawed cells.

The molecular section forms part of the basic sciences support lab and employs technologies for fast, easy quantification of gels and blots (macromolecules — proteins, or fragments of DNA or RNA — initially present in a complex mixture). The facility is used for IAVI’s Vaccine Immunology Science and Technology for Africa (VISTA) program research work, which is supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

People
The team at UVRI-IAVI is led by Brenda Okech B.Sc. Ch, Ph.D., executive director. The team includes a medical director, a clinical trials manager, a head of department community studies, a social science and community engagement coordinator, a laboratory manager, a quality management coordinator, a data manager, an administration manager, and a finance manager.

Community engagement
The community studies department contributes to the development of community engagement strategies in accordance with Good Participatory Practice guidelines to ensure ethical and compassionate treatment of community members and maximize their support and involvement in UVRI-IAVI activities.

The department is responsible for conducting epidemiological, social-behavioral sciences research. It also links the program agenda to communities and research participants; undertakes community advocacy; and strengthens capacity for research literacy and HIV prevention.

Over the years, the department has created a strong presence in fishing communities along Lake Victoria, through training village health teams, peer guides, and peer leaders on the importance of research for improving communities’ health and HIV prevention.

IAVI-supported activities
- Research preparedness: engaging communities and cohorts
- Identification and engagement of key populations for ongoing and future HIV prevention clinical trials
- Capacity strengthening
- International training
- Investigator-initiated research — a platform that strives to provide career development opportunities for junior investigators through funding for research
- Strengthening laboratory capabilities
- T-cell immunogen design and assessment

Uganda Virus Research Institute—IAVI (UVRI-IAVI) HIV Vaccine Research Programme

information@iavi.or.ug | +256 414 322377/8
UVRI IAVI HIV Vaccine Program Ltd,
Plot 51-59 Nakiwogo Road,
P.O. Box 49, Entebbe, Uganda
iavi.or.ug

IAVI gratefully acknowledges the generous support provided by the following major donors:

As of October 2021

IAVI gratefully acknowledges the generous support provided by the following major donors:

Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) | Foundation for the National Institutes of Health | National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases | amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research | The Buimerc Group | Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS | Cancer Research UK | The City of New York, Economic Development Corporation | Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (DoD) | GSK | The Hearst Foundations | Keith Haring Foundation | Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, NJ, USA (known as MSD outside the USA and Canada)
And many other generous individuals and partners around the world

Follow us:
facebook.com/iaviorg | twitter.com/iaviorg | github.com/iaviorg | linkedin.com/company/iavi-org

Go to iavi.org/subscribe to receive our updates