

GC ADDA



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

2025 has been an exciting and productive year for GC ADDA, and we're pleased to bring you the second edition of our GC ADDA newsletter.

NEW MEMBERS

Our second call for membership was through OLT nomination. We're delighted to welcome the following new faces to our network:

Full Member:

Sospeter Njeru (KEMRI, Kenya)



Associate Members (clockwise):

Dina Coertzen (University of Pretoria, South Africa)

Mariëtte van der Watt (University of Pretoria, South Africa)

Tayla Rabie (University of Pretoria, South Africa)

Stanley Mukanganyama (AiBST, Zimbabwe)



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NEW PROJECTS

Early in 2025, network members were invited to apply for GC ADDA Member Project status. We can proudly announce that the following 3 projects are now part of our GC ADDA pipeline:



Peter Mubanga Cheuka: Medicinal Chemistry Exploration of the N-Phenylbenzamide Scaffold for Antimalarial Activity



Lyn-Marié Birkholtz: Aurora kinase inhibitors as multistage active antimalarials



Lyn-Marié Birkholtz: Protacs as resistance resistant antimalarial candidates

WORKING GROUPS

At the Convening Meeting (March 2025 in Accra), the network participants worked on the critical success factors for the next 1-3 years. This resulted in the Balanced Scorecard (approved in May 2025). Woven into this document is the need for 5 GC ADDA working groups. The GC ADDA ecosystem was invited to sign up to the groups, which commenced monthly meetings in September and are currently working on deliverables ahead of the February meeting:

1. Fundraising Deliverables:

Fundraising strategy for GC ADDA
Engagement with Funders Forums

Members:

Greg Basarab - chair
Elizabeth Kigundu - deputy chair
Erick Strauss, Fortunate Mokoena,
Glaudina Loots, Peter Mubanga
Cheuka, Susan Winks

2. Scientific Review Deliverables:

SWOT analysis of current portfolio
Strategy to strengthen pipeline

Members:

Vinayak Singh – chair
Iruka Okeke - deputy chair
Ed McIver, Lyn-Marié Birkholtz,
Mathew Njoroge, Peter Warner,
Rajshekhhar Karpoormath, Roslyn
Stella Thelingwani, Winston Nxumalo

3. Patient Advocacy & Community Engagement Deliverables:

Survey of current member
community engagement
List of contacts for relevant
communities, initiatives, stakeholders
directly affected by GC ADDA
infectious disease research
Community engagement plan
Template for patient journeys



WORKING GROUPS

3. Patient Advocacy & Community Engagement

Members:

Arnold Forkuo Donkor - chair
Liezl Krugmann - deputy chair
Adrienne Edkins, Cali Hall, Edwin Murungi, Gabriel Mashabela, John Igoli

4. Diaspora Engagement

Deliverables:

Diaspora engagement plan
Database of current diaspora connections
Strategy to increase diaspora network
Link to African Diaspora Network for joint initiatives and assistance

4. Diaspora Engagement

Members:

Jessica Akester – chair
Dinkorma Ouologuem - deputy chair
Candice Soares de Melo, Collen Masimirembwa, Fidele Ntie-Kang, Jenn Maroa, Monicah Otieno, Mwila Mulubwa, Rose Hayeshi

5. Industry Engagement

Deliverables:

Develop “Friends of GC ADDA” plan and slide deck for engaging suppliers/distributors
Formalize database of industry experts (mentors, webinars, advisory boards, etc.)
Identify key vendors/suppliers to engage as strategic partners for GC ADDA

5. Industry Engagement

Members:

Janine Scholefield - chair
James Duffy - deputy chair
Amanda Rousseau, Fabrice Boyom, Gang Liu, Grace Mugumbate, Laurent Dembele, Richard Amewu, Upendra Argikar

Thank you to H3D Foundation
Consultant Godfrey Mayoka for acting as Secretary across all Working Groups.



We wish the groups well as they tackle their tasks in preparation for the GC ADDA Convening Meeting in February.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS

The Grand Challenges Annual Meeting included a session dedicated to GC ADDA entitled *Scaling and Strengthening Drug Discovery in Africa*. At the session, Prof Kelly Chibale gave an overview of the network and formally launched the GC ADDA website. The Principal Investigators of the four GC ADDA Flagship Projects presented their work, and Susan Winks spoke on the panel discussion together with representatives from IFPMA, GMRI and LifeArc.

Launch of www.GCADDa.org

Full Members

- GCADDA website is live
- Find out more about our mission, our people, projects and network activities
- Get in touch

IFPMA hosted Kelly Chibale in Geneva including engaging African and European ambassadors on the mission and vision of GC ADDA in September. GC ADDA was presented by Susan Winks and H3D Foundation Ambassador Jutta Reinhard-Rupp at the 5th African Health Research and Innovation Funders Forum in November in Cape Town attended by more than 60 global health funders. An interview with Collen Masimarembwa was published in *Nature Africa*: [Read article](#)

Photo: Dr David Reddy, IFPMA Director General, and Prof Kelly Chibale, CEO of the H3D Foundation, meeting in Geneva.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Share your Highlights: Email us your research highlights for inclusion in future newsletters.

The following 5 visits enabled training between network institutions:

Ghana Drug Discovery Hub collaboration: KNUST DMPK scientists Daniel Amprako and Rita Opuku spent 6-weeks training on various ADME assays at H3D in Cape Town (June – Aug).

AiBST: Stanley Mukanganyama spent 5-weeks training on various ADME assays at H3D (June – Aug).

Cross-site validations: KNUST, AiBST & H3D recently conducted cross-site validation of solubility, microsomal stability & LogD assays to ensure consistency & reproducibility at the 3 sites.

RAFIKI Fellowships unlocked Robi Chacha’s (KEMRI) chance to train in CRISPRi and THP-1 assay at Stellenbosch University (Oct-Nov). Rendani Mbau (Stellenbosch University) visited KEMRI to establish local capacity for the generation of Mtb H37Ra HiBiT fusion proteins (Nov-Dec).



TRAINING

Lots of training and resource-creation has been underway:

Supporting logistics: RAFIKI

Fellowship & Workshop Handbooks will be available to GC ADDA members. These Handbooks leverage H3D experience in running workshops and H3D, MMV & DDU's experience in hosting fellowships.



Supporting Infrastructure and Data

Management: The RAFIKI Alliance is working to strengthen sample management systems at several GC ADDA labs. In Oct-Nov, H3D's RAFIKI CDD Vault workshop supported 19 data champions from 11 GC ADDA institutions to spend a full week optimizing their data vaults, electronic notebooks & reagent inventories.

Drug Discovery Workshops:

Stellenbosch University's RAFIKI workshop, *Pre-Clinical Drug Discovery Workshop*, provided hands on training to >30 African drug discovery researchers (Oct). Drug Discovery Unit Training Academy ran an online *Synthesis Simplified Short Course* for RAFIKI & GC ADDA (Oct-Nov).



Mentorship: The RAFIKI Global

Health Mentorship Programme has 25 pairs, with all of the mentees coming from GC ADDA network institutions. The Scientific Leadership & Communication Workshop took place in October in Cape Town.

Project Management Training:

LifeArc has generously offered bespoke training to the GC ADDA Flagship Project Managers. The 9-month programme, spanning ~ 45 hours of training, kicked off in August and will culminate in an in-person 2-day training in London in June.

AI2050 Webinar Series: Co-hosted by

Ersilia & H3D Foundation, this series taught selected concepts of AI/ML for drug discovery, & shared open-source, ready-to-use AI/ML tools for scientific research. Recordings here: [AI2050 Webinar Series](#).

Massive Open Online Course:

Introduction to Small Molecule Drug Discovery & Development presented by H3D Foundation in partnership with the Merck Global Health Institute explores: The different stages of drug discovery and development, including the tools and technologies influencing how we think about new medicines, as well as drug metabolism, pharmacokinetics and drug safety all the way to clinical development and beyond.



H3D Foundation Webinar Series

brings together global experts to share insights across the interdisciplinary field of drug discovery. See past presentations [here](#). Join [the mailing list](#) for future webinars.

This semester, GC ADDA Flagship teams nominated speakers aligned with their project work: James Duffy – Malaria (Oct), Rosemary Dorrington – Natural Products (Nov), Eric Rubin – TB (Nov), Upendra Argikar – DMPK (Jan 2026).



MEMBER INITIATIVES

ANPDB The African Natural Products Database is a comprehensive repository for natural compounds sourced from species across the African continent. ANPDB compiles detailed metadata on the traditional medicinal uses of source organisms, linking ethnobotanical knowledge with chemical & biological data.

ACTI The Africa Centre for Therapeutics Innovation was established in 2025 to advance transdisciplinary, biology-focused, drug discovery & therapeutic innovation at Stellenbosch University.

UB-CEDD The University of Buea Center for Drug Discovery was established in 2025 to utilize natural products from across the continent to identify new drugs suitable for resource-limited regions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Our Convening Meeting is scheduled for **24-26 February 2026** in **Nairobi, Kenya**, at the Serena Hotel and Conference Centre. With a proposed attendee list of 90, it promises to be a moment to tackle the next phase of the network with gusto. On the agenda: Community engagement | Network updates | Flagship and Member Project updates | Working group presentations | Workshopping sessions | Training | Closed meetings for the GC ADDA Leadership and the Flagship Projects | Networking dinner. Here are some photos from our previous convening meeting to set the tone:



We can't wait to see you there!

THANK YOU FOR A FRUITFUL AND REWARDING YEAR OF COLLABORATION.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO 2026.

IN THE MEANTIME, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SEND US YOUR NEWS!