



Makerere University Walter Reed Project

We are a biomedical research organization with over 20 years' experience and commitment to influencing public health policy and action through impactful infectious diseases research, innovation, surveillance, capacity building, and health systems strengthening.

Annual Report

01 January – 31 December 2023

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Acronyms

ACESO	The Austere Environment Consortium for Enhanced Sepsis Outcomes
AFI	Acute Febrile Illnesses
AFRICOS	African Cohort Study
ANC	Antenatal Care
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
BRILLIANT	Bringing Innovation to cLinical and Laboratory Research to End HIV In Africa through New Vaccine Technology
CAB	Community Advisory Board
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
EIDP	Emerging Infectious Diseases Program
EMR	Electronic Medical Records
FY	Fiscal Year
GIHSN	Global Influenza Hospital Surveillance Network
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOPE	HIV Obstruction by Programmed Epigenetics
IBC	Institutional Biosafety Committee
JMEDICC	Joint Mobile Emerging Disease Intervention Clinical Capability
KPs	Key Populations
MHRP	U.S. Military HIV Research Program
MOCHI	Multi-national Observation Cohort of HIV and other Infection
MU-JHU	Makerere University -Johns Hopkins University Research Collaboration
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TSS	Technology Support Services
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development



WORD FROM CHAIRPERSON

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Makerere University Walter Reed Project (MUWRP), I eagerly invite you to read the 2023 MUWRP Annual Report. As we reflect on MUWRP's journey of over two decades, we are reminded of its modest origins and the remarkable advancements it has achieved over the years, making it a leading institution in biomedical research, disease surveillance, and healthcare systems strengthening in Uganda.

Originally established to implement clinical trials for vaccine development, MUWRP has significantly evolved over the years, broadening its focus to enhance global health security. Today, the organization provides essential services in HIV prevention, care, and treatment, conducts surveillance

for diseases of epidemic potential, and prepares for and responds to outbreaks. These efforts demonstrate MUWRP's proactive commitment to safeguarding public health and fostering a healthier community, addressing critical health challenges with urgency and compassion.

The success that MUWRP has achieved in the financial year 2023, as highlighted in this report, stems from an unwavering commitment to continuous learning and adaptation. This dedication has propelled the organization to integrate invaluable lessons and insights from past experiences, embrace new technologies, and implement best practices in its ongoing programs. As a result, MUWRP remains responsive to the evolving needs of the communities and stakeholders

it serves, significantly enhancing its overall effectiveness and impact.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all MUWRP's stakeholders, including our Board members, partners, collaborators, and the communities we serve, for the continuous support as we strive to advance public health and research in Uganda. Together, we look forward to a future characterized by innovation and progress, steadfastly focused on our mission of improving health outcomes for all.

PROF. FRED WABWIRE-MANGEN
Chairperson, Board of Directors



FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you MUWRP's annual report for the fiscal year 2023. This report highlights the significant accomplishments and progress achieved by our organization during the reporting period, underscoring our unwavering commitment to addressing some of the most pressing health challenges faced in Uganda and beyond.

In alignment with the strategic plan for 2022–2026, the year 2023 stood out remarkably for MUWRP. The organization achieved significant milestones across a spectrum of endeavors aimed at combatting public health threats. Notably, our organization successfully conducted vaccine clinical trials targeting critical health threats, including HIV, Marburg virus, COVID-19, and Schistosomiasis; and continued with the implementation of the African Cohort Study (AFRICOS) which is fundamental in providing robust evidence to inform HIV programming in Uganda and globally. In addition, MUWRP continued to successfully provide comprehensive HIV services to various communities, while

maintaining vigilant surveillance for both novel and re-emerging diseases and conducting activities for outbreak preparedness and response.

MUWRP's achievements in 2023 are attributable, in part, to the establishment of new strategic partnerships, including collaborations with the BRILLIANT consortium for development of novel HIV vaccine candidates, the Sabin Vaccine Institute, the CASACDE cervical cancer prevention network and the HOPE laboratory for HIV cure research, while strengthening existing relationships with the Ministry of Health, hospitals, district health teams, donors, implementing partners, and government regulatory and ethical bodies. Additionally, MUWRP prioritized operational excellence and innovation, enabling the organization to streamline processes, adopt new technologies, and embrace continuous improvement.

I acknowledge the Board members for providing invaluable strategic guidance and oversight. I also thank the communities we serve for their vital

role in supporting our work and the MUWRP staff for their dedicated efforts and commitment to advancing our mission. Through concerted efforts with all our stakeholders, we have made significant contributions toward the health and well-being of communities within Uganda and beyond, reinforcing our aspiration to be a leader in conducting infectious diseases research and influencing public health policy.

I invite you to explore the detailed contents of this report, which will provide you with valuable insights into MUWRP's achievements in 2023. It is my hope that the information provided in this report will inspire many to join us in our noble mission of mitigating disease threats through quality health research, disease surveillance, and health system strengthening.

Hannah Kibuuka, MBChB, MMed, MPH.
Executive Director

Executive Summary

In 2023, MUWRP marked the second year of its 2022–2026 strategic plan, conducting a diverse array of activities aimed at enhancing clinical research, laboratory services, HIV prevention, care and treatment, surveillance for novel and re-emerging diseases threats, and outbreak preparedness and response. The organization’s efforts also extended to improving administration and financial systems, yielding various notable achievements highlighted in this report.

MUWRP made significant strides in clinical research, successfully conducting impactful trials related to HIV, Marburg, COVID-19 and Schistosomiasis. These trials were bolstered by support of the clinical and research laboratory, research pharmacy, data management, and community engagement initiatives.

MUWRP forged strategic partnerships and collaborations to advance joint research efforts. Notable collaborations included working with the Sabin Vaccine Institute on the “Sabin 002” trial, a Phase 2 study

to evaluate the safety and immune responses of an experimental Marburg virus vaccine. MUWRP also participated in the formation and setup of activities of the BRILLIANT Consortium, collaborating with 19 African research institutions focused on designing and assessing HIV vaccines developed by African scientists. MUWRP is slated to serve as one of the clinical trial research sites within this consortium.

The clinical and research laboratory played a crucial role, handling sample processing, storage, and

testing for various studies, including the BOOST ME (Measles) study in partnership with Makerere University –Johns Hopkins University Research Collaboration (MU-JHU) and the Mpox sub-study within the AFRICOS Study. The laboratory’s expertise has attracted collaborations from diverse research entities, highlighting MUWRP as a key site for infectious diseases research.

With funding from the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), MUWRP

consolidated and sustained a comprehensive approach to HIV services, emphasizing testing, prevention, care, and treatment across the districts of Buvuma, Buikwe, Kayunga, and Mukono. Key achievements included the distribution of 7,804 test kits and the facilitation of circumcision services at 38 health facilities, collectively reaching 25,633 men. Additionally, 63,986 individuals living with HIV received antiretroviral therapy (ART) in these districts. In the same year the HIV program extended its coverage to Nakasongola and Luwero districts.

MUWRP also provided substantial support to various health facilities in PEPFAR program districts, enhancing their capacity to deliver effective HIV services. Initiatives included the implementation of Electronic Medical Record (EMR) systems across 88 ART facilities, installation of solar power systems in 27 health facilities, establishing internet infrastructure at 11 facilities, and renovating waiting areas in five health facilities.

Through the Emerging Infectious Diseases Program (EIDP), MUWRP sustained its commitment to supporting detection, mitigation, and response to emerging infectious disease threats of global health security consequence. Through this endeavour, MUWRP collaborated with local and international partners to conduct surveillance for human respiratory pathogens, antimicrobial resistance, and acute febrile illnesses, including viral haemorrhagic fevers. The program also undertook zoonotic disease surveillance in bats, poultry, and swine across Uganda. In the same year, MUWRP initiated influenza surveillance collaboration with the Global Influenza Hospital Surveillance Network (GIHSN).

In a notable development, the Joint Mobile Emerging Disease Intervention Clinical Capability (JMEDICC) transformed into a new entity known as the Austere Environment Consortium for Enhanced Sepsis Outcomes (ACESO) Uganda. This signified a strategic shift towards pioneering research in emerging technologies.

Through ACESO Uganda, MUWRP contributed to bolstering Uganda's capacity to effectively respond to future epidemic threats. Notably, MUWRP collaborated with the Ministry of Health to develop comprehensive guidelines and strategies intended to improve the country's preparedness for infectious disease challenges.

Under administration, MUWRP enhanced operational efficiencies which propelled the organisation towards strategic objectives. Key achievements encompassed the effective management of the organization's vehicle fleet, the formation of an interdepartmental safety marshals team, management of contracts, the acquisition of vital goods and services to support operations. Other achievements included the advancement and execution of technological innovations, and the successful completion of the NSSF compliance audit, thereby strengthening financial integrity.

Program Achievements



This section highlights MUWRPs significant accomplishments in 2023 across various programs and departments, including clinical research, laboratory services, HIV programming, emerging infectious diseases, the Austere Environment Consortium for Enhanced Outcomes (ACESO), and administration.

1.0. Clinical Research

In 2023, MUWRP continued its commitment to advancing vaccine trials and cohort studies, and registered remarkable progress as highlighted below:

Under the Schistosomiasis trial, MUWRP conducted follow-up assessments for 200 participants at the MUWRP satellite research centre in Kasenyi, Wakiso District. These assessments are set to continue until October 2024, with the final evaluation of participants expected by then.

The MUWRP research clinic participated in a Phase III vaccine trial for COVID-19, funded by SANOFI. After the independent Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) confirmed the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, participants who got placebo in the first stage, switched to the vaccine in the second stage and booster

vaccinations were administered to 33 participants confirmed eligible for the second stage. Follow-up visits for vaccine recipients are ongoing.

As part of the HOPE collaborative - an HIV cure research initiative funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) - MUWRP implemented the RV419 protocol, which involved collecting biological samples such as inguinal lymph nodes and rectal biopsies, along with peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs). The research clinic successfully enrolled the targeted number of participants for the fiscal year 2023 and collected the necessary samples.



Laboratory staff analyze data from samples taken from volunteers at the MUWRP clinical and research laboratory.

In 2023, MUWRP initiated a Phase II trial for a candidate Marburg vaccine, sponsored by the Sabin Vaccine Institute. By the end of the year, 20 participants had been enrolled, with ongoing screening activities.

The African Cohort Study (AFRICOS), marked 10 years of its implementation in 2023. To celebrate this milestone, a symposium was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania under the theme: “**Progress and Future Directions**” which highlighted key findings from the study and facilitated discussions on ongoing research and future initiatives. MUWRP made a presentation, titled “**Utilization of Laboratory Results to Enhance Patient Care,**” which emphasized the necessity for

vigilant monitoring of kidney function in participants receiving Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF). The discussion recognized the potential risks associated with TDF, particularly in older individuals with naturally declining renal function.

MUWRP also continued to implement the Multi-national Observation Cohort of HIV and other Infection (MOCHI) study, a prospective observational investigation focused on HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The study aims to enhance the research site’s capacity to enroll and retain individuals at a high risk of HIV acquisition while maintaining engagement with these communities for future trials, including phase 3 HIV vaccine studies.



AFRICOS Uganda received a plaque in recognition of their accomplishments in the last 10 years. In attendance were: (L-R) Capt. Neha Sha (MHRP), Col. Julie Ake (MHRP) Mr. Michael Semogerere (AFRICOS Uganda), Dr. Estella Birabwa (PEPFAR) and Dr. Vamsi Vasireddy (WRAIR-Africa).

In 2023, MUWRP concentrated on enrolling participants into this cohort, and successfully achieved the annual enrollment target of 100 participants. This research is anticipated to yield valuable insights into the incidence of HIV and STIs among participants at increased risk to HIV, track high-risk behaviours and reveal the factors contributing to HIV acquisition. Further enrollment and follow up will continue in 2024 with a target of 400 participants.

Notably MUWRP partnered with the Sabin Vaccine Institute to launch “Sabin 002”, a Phase 2, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial aimed at evaluating the safety, tolerability, and immune responses of an investigational monovalent chimpanzee adenoviral-vectored Marburg virus vaccine in healthy adults. This study enrolled 63 participants aged between 18 and 70 years.

MUWRP also collaborated with 19 African research institutions and communities to establish the BRILLIANT Consortium. This consortium is led by African female scientists, including Dr. Glenda Gray from South Africa Medical Research Council (SAMRC), Dr. Betty Nanzigu Mwesigwa from MUWRP, Dr. Linda-Gail From Desmond Tutu Health Foundation, and Dr. Cissy Kitiky



Dr. Betty Mwesigwa, MUWRP's Deputy Executive Director talks to the press at the launch of the BRILLIANT consortium in Uganda. She is flanked by Dr. Cissy Kityo Mutuluza (right) from the Joint Clinical Research Centre, and Dr. Charles Olaro (left) from the Ministry of Health.

Mutuluza from the Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC). With a five-year HIV VISTA funding award from USAID, the consortium aims to advance the design, development and assessment of HIV vaccine candidates emanating from the African continent. The consortium was officially launched in Uganda in October 2023, with a press conference at Hotel Africana, Kampala. MUWRP is set to serve as one of the key clinical trial research sites laboratory and engage in the immunogen designing initiatives of the consortium.

MUWRP highly values the critical role community perspectives play in shaping its research agenda and outcomes.

Through the community engagement initiatives, MUWRP has actively fostered partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure robust community involvement in various research activities. A significant highlight of this effort was a virtual national stakeholder meeting organized to delve into the scientific dimensions of the HOPE collaboratory's HIV cure research focus areas. This meeting attracted a diverse group of participants, including researchers, Community Advisory Board (CAB) members, media representatives, regulators, and Ministry of Health officials. The meeting fostered knowledge shared and dialogue around HIV cure research in Uganda and globally.

2.0. Data Management

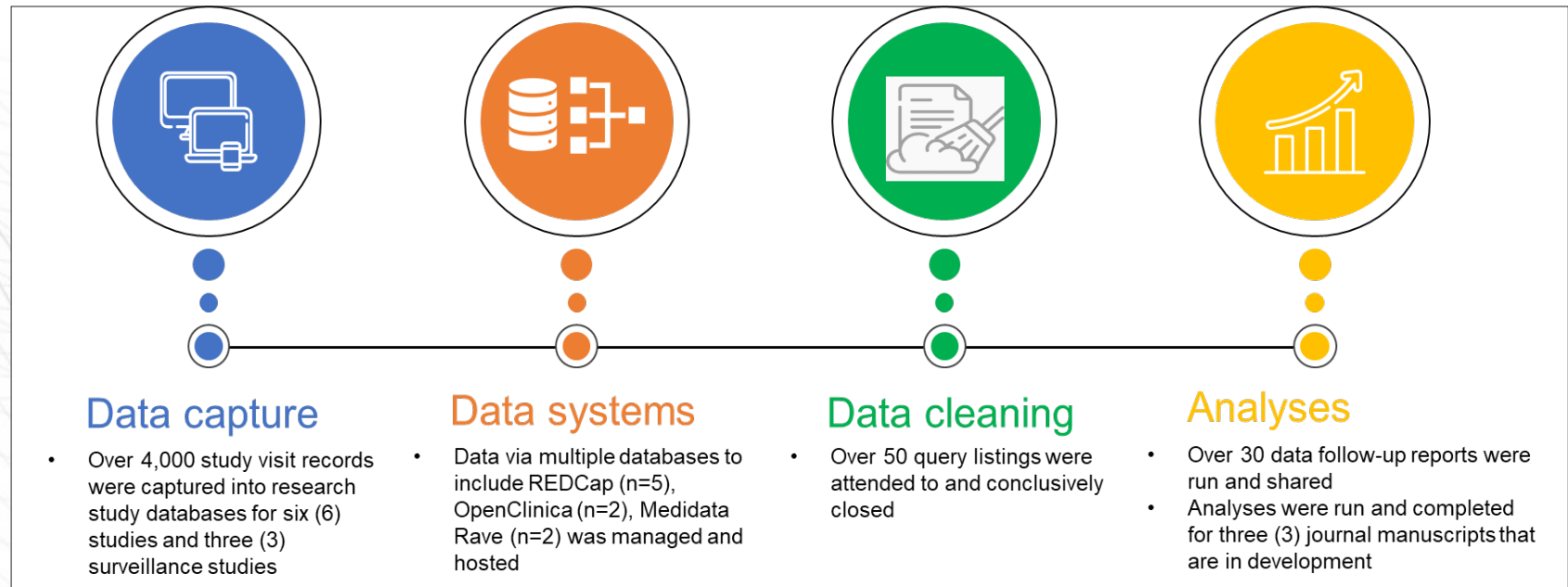
MUWRP's Data Department effectively supported the data management requirements for clinical vaccine trials, non-clinical studies, and surveillance research.

In FY 2023, the data department performed various data management tasks including data capturing, processing and analyses for;

- (a) clinical vaccine trials including COVID-19, Marburg, and Schistosomiasis;
- (b) non-clinical trials including the MOCHI study, AFRICOS.

(c) surveillance research focusing on human respiratory pathogens, antimicrobial resistance, and acute febrile illnesses.

Furthermore, the department significantly contributed to the planning and development of tailored data systems for an upcoming implementation study on cervical cancer screening (CASCADE Protocol), that will be conducted across over 30 health facilities.



3.0. Clinical and Research Laboratory



MUWRP's Clinical and Research Laboratory has maintained its accreditation from the College of American Pathologists (CAP) since 2005. In 2023, the laboratory reaffirmed its dedication to promoting research by offering vital testing, sample processing, and storage services for a diverse range of studies. Below are the highlights of the laboratory's notable accomplishments:

The laboratory hosted delegations from the U.S. Military HIV Research Program (MHRP) and from the Sabin Vaccine Institute, that evaluated its capabilities to support clinical trials. From these engagements, Sabin Vaccine Institute confirmed that the laboratory was adequately equipped to support the the Sudan

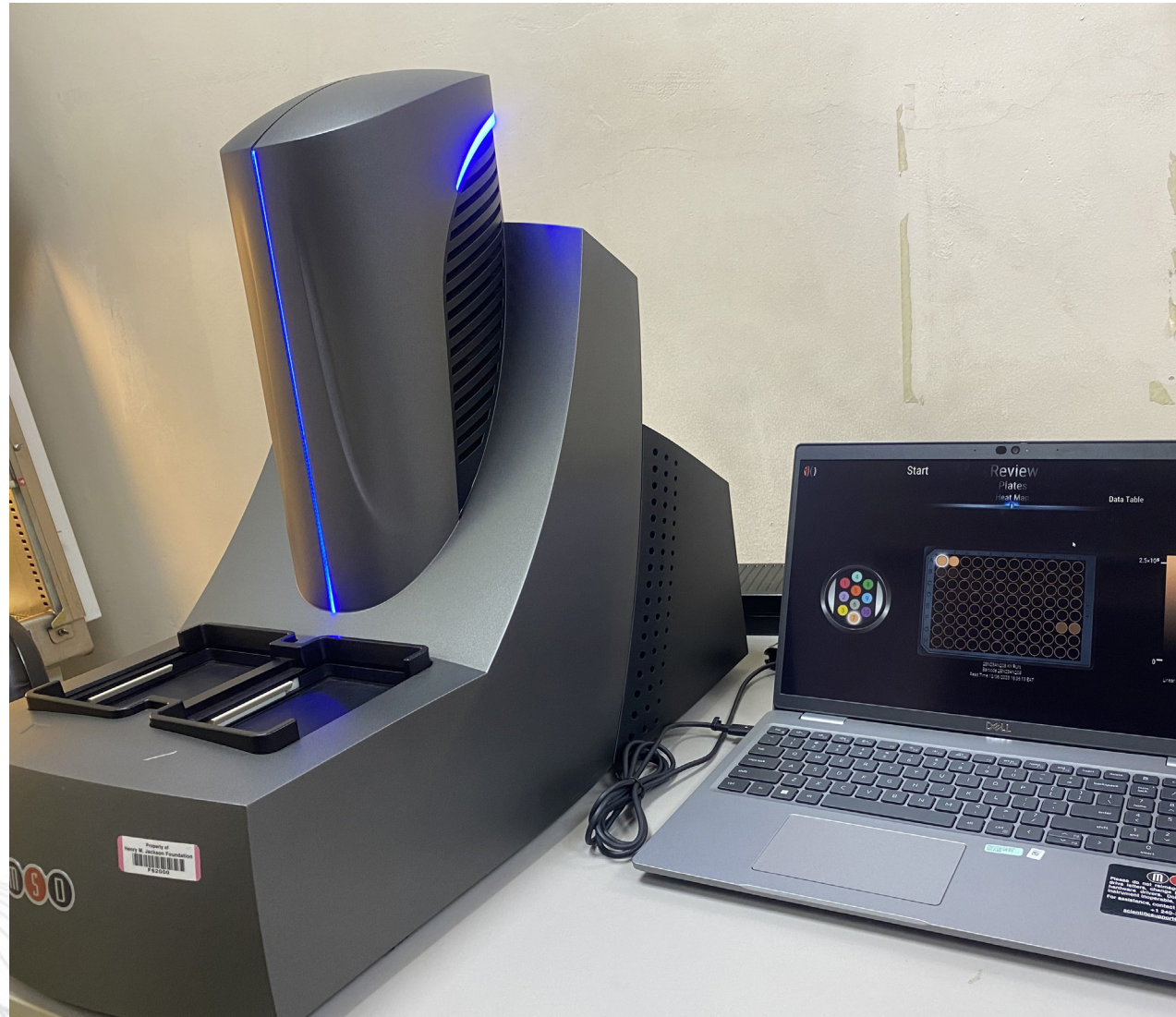
Ebolavirus vaccine trial. On the other hand MHRP identified that the laboratory needed to strengthen capacity in terms of equipment and skills to effectively support HIV cure research under the DELIVER initiative. The laoratory will be supported to build that capacity in 2024.



Dr. Vamsi Vasireddy from WRAIR-Africa (left) and Col. Julie Ake from MHRP (2nd left) hosted by the MUWRP team led by Dr. Betty Mwesigwa (3rd right) and Dr. Prossy Naluyima (2nd right) at the MUWRP laboratory in Kampala.

The laboratory staff participated and represented MUWRP in various educational events and conferences aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills in line with the latest innovations as highlighted below:

- The Meso Scale Discovery Training held at the WRAIR laboratory in Rockville, Maryland, USA. MUWRP was represented by two biomedical scientists - Emmanuel Wasswa and Justine Nalunga. The training focused on the Meso Scale Discovery multiplex platform and involved the analysis of multi-site samples from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda to assess for Mpox and vaccinia antibody levels from plasma or serum. This training was instrumental in transferring the necessary technology, skills and expertise for performing Mpox testing at MUWRP.
- The American Biosafety and Biosecurity (ABSA) International Conference which was held at the CHI Centre in Omaha, Nebraska. MUWRP was represented by Harriet Nabirye, the Quality Assurance and Control Co-ordinator. The event highlighted the significance of forming an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) and updating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to bio-risk management. The conference exposed MUWRP to biosafety issues globally as the organisation begins to focus on issues related to global health security within its programming.



Multiplexer equipment at the MUWRP clinical and research laboratory.

- The 6th Biennial Strategies for HIV Cure Conference which took place in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. Justine Nalunga, a biomedical scientist, who represented MUWRP, showcased a poster detailing the processing of lymph node tissues. This presentation emphasized MUWRP's capabilities, demonstrating that it is possible to conduct HIV reservoir research in settings with limited resources.

In a collaborative initiative, the MUWRP clinical and research laboratory supported the Makerere University – Johns Hopkins University Research Collaboration (MU-JHU), to conduct the BOOST ME trial. The trial focused on assessing an earlier prime BOOST vaccination schedule to improve measles protection in regions with a high disease burden. In this undertaking, the laboratory took charge of processing, storage, and testing trial samples such as peripheral blood mononuclear cells and serum.

A Research Associate at the laboratory, Godfrey Zziwa, enrolled in a PhD program at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden. His research investigates immune correlates of protection to SARS-CoV-2 in an African demographic prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to elucidate the reasons contributing to the comparatively lesser impact of the COVID-19 crisis on African populations versus caucasian populations. MUWRP anticipates utilizing the insights gained from this research will enhance efforts in developing effective COVID-19 vaccines.



Justine Nalunga taking a conference participant through MUWRP's poster.



Godfrey Zziwa presenting his PhD thesis



Karolinska
Institutet

Investigation of Corona virus
immunity before and during
the COVID-19 pandemic in
Uganda

4.0 PEPFAR HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment Program



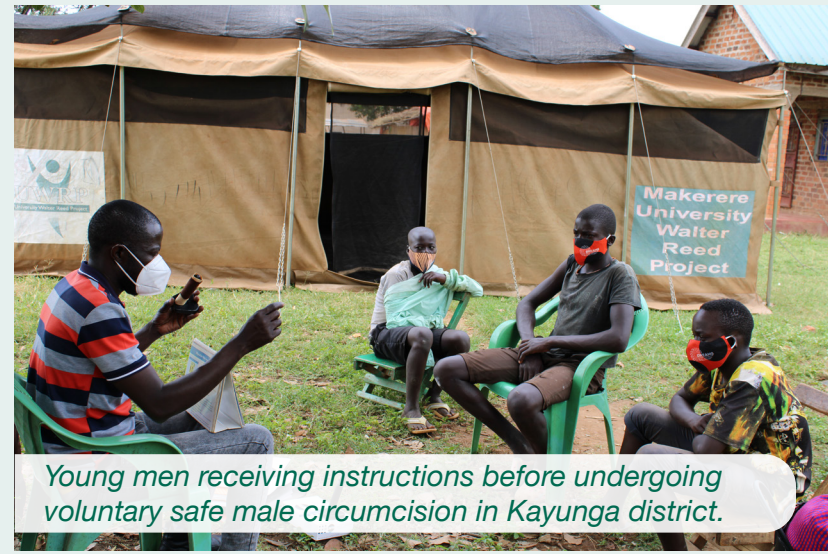
In fiscal year 2023, MUWRP effectively enhanced its comprehensive HIV programming and services across the districts of Buvuma, Buikwe, Kayunga, and Mukono, and to extend its coverage to Nakasongola and Luwero districts. The program registered notable achievements in all the six districts under various indicators including HIV testing, prevention, care and treatment, and health systems strengthening:

MUWRP successfully distributed 7,804 HIV test kits, surpassing the annual target of 6,939. The increase in test kit uptake was largely attributed to increased attendance of pregnant women at antenatal care clinics, and higher enrolment of key populations (KPs) seeking HIV testing services. This effort resulted in a corresponding rise in the number of partners of pregnant women and KPs who also underwent HIV testing.



HIV testing services in communities.

As part of its HIV prevention intervention, MUWRP provided safe male circumcision services to 38 health facilities with 25,633 men undergoing circumcision, out of the targeted 26,330. Among those circumcised, 24,833 (97%) chose surgical methods, while 800 (3%) opted for device-based methods. Notably, 83% of circumcised individuals were within the critical 15-29 age group, boosting preventive measures among a high-risk demographic.



Young men receiving instructions before undergoing voluntary safe male circumcision in Kayunga district.

To enhance HIV care and treatment, MUWRP provided consistent antiretroviral therapy (ART) to 63,986 individuals living with HIV, marginally exceeding the set target of 63,156. This included 60,974 adults and 3,012 children. A total of 742 previously lost clients were successfully followed up and returned to treatment across 63 health facilities.

To strengthen health systems and enhance quality HIV service delivery, MUWRP installed solar power systems in 27 health facilities to mitigate power interruptions affecting service delivery. MUWRP also facilitated internet connectivity at 11 facilities through enhanced network infrastructure, and the integration of an Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system into the laboratory operations at Kayunga Regional Referral Hospital. This contributed to improving partner data management, and information exchange among various departments, advancing the reporting capabilities and improving service delivery to clients.

Furthermore, MUWRP supported five health facilities in redesigning patient waiting areas at ART clinics to enhance patient flow, confidentiality, and infection prevention and control. The facilities include: Buikwe HC III, Goma HC III, Naggojje HC III, Kangulumira HC IV, and Nkokonjeru HC III.

MUWRP also contributed to salaries for over 1,300 healthcare workers (clinicians, social workers, and lay workers) in Mukono, Kayunga, Buikwe and Buvuma districts, bolstering the human resources available for HIV service delivery, and provided sub-grants to 26 implementing partners, including community-based organizations to further strengthen HIV service delivery in the districts of operation.



Modified waiting area at Goma HC III ART clinic, Mukono district.

Furthermore, MUWRP expanded its HIV and AIDS programming to the districts of Nakasongola and Luwero in Central Uganda. During the reporting period, MUWRP largely focused on the transition of responsibilities from Mildmay Uganda, which had previously served as the implementing partner for the PEPFAR program in those districts.

5.0. The Emerging Infectious Diseases Program (EIDP)



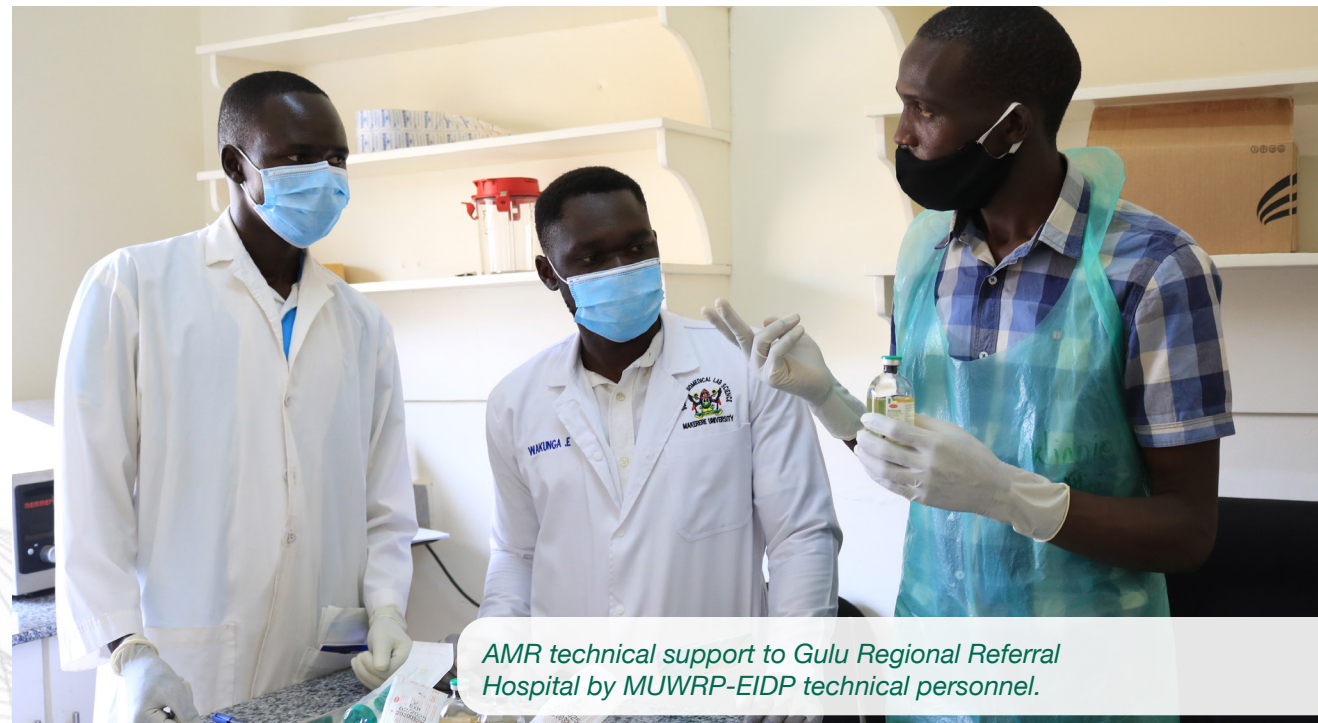
Cognizant of the ongoing threat posed by novel and re-emerging pathogens to global health security, MUWRP sustained the strengthening of epidemic intelligence, coordination, and response in Uganda and Somalia.

In FY 2023, MUWRP through EIDP, collaborated with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs, Uganda Virus Research Institute, and other stakeholders to strengthen surveillance and outbreak response efforts for priority pathogens in Uganda and Somalia. The areas of focus were human respiratory pathogens, antimicrobial resistance, acute febrile illnesses, enteric pathogen surveillance in Somalia, and zoonotic respiratory disease surveillance in bats, poultry, and swine in Uganda.

Human respiratory pathogens surveillance identified adenoviruses (24.82%), respiratory syncytial virus type A (8.01%), and influenza type A (4.95%) as the most prevalent viral causes of influenza-like illness in Uganda, with children being the most affected demographic. MUWRP shared 98% of the weekly influenza surveillance updates

with the Ministry of Health (MoH), along with periodic memos regarding the circulation of virulent strains.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) surveillance efforts revealed alarmingly high levels of antibiotic resistance to locally available antibiotics. Findings indicated that 9.4% of isolated gram-negative bacteria were resistant to carbapenems, while 43.2% of all *Staphylococcus aureus* isolates were resistant to cefoxitin in vitro, i.e. phenotypically methicillin resistant. For this, AMR remains a significant public health threat in Uganda.



AMR technical support to Gulu Regional Referral Hospital by MUWRP-EIDP technical personnel.

Surveillance for causes of Acute Febrile Illnesses (AFI) in Uganda and Somalia indicated that dengue (9.30%) and malaria (2.57%) were the most prevalent causes of fever in Somalia, while in Uganda, malaria was the predominant cause of acute febrile episodes, with a positivity of 24.10%, half of which was attributed to plasmodium falciparum. These findings were communicated to the Ministry of Health during quarterly review meetings, ensuring that critical data informs health policies and interventions.



Sample preparation at the African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) level II hospital-Mogadishu.

For zoonotic respiratory pathogens surveillance in bats, poultry and swine, influenza A H9 remained the most prevalent viral respiratory pathogen in poultry at live bird markets in Kampala. Further, the prevalence of influenza A in swine sold in Kampala was low at 0.45%. Overall, the need to strengthen biosecurity at live bird markets remains critical.



Zoonotic disease surveillance: swine sample collection.

Surveillance among civilians and military populations in Somalia revealed the enteric pathogens salmonella species, pathogenic escherichia coli, campylobacter species, and adenoviruses were the leading causes of acute gastroenteritis.

In 2023 MUWRP joined the Global Influenza Hospital Surveillance Network (GIHSN) and received seed funding for severe acute respiratory illnesses (SARI). With this funding, MUWRP expanded its SARI surveillance efforts to Western Uganda.

6.0 The Austere Environment Consortium for Enhanced Sepsis Outcomes (ACESO)

Through the Austere Environment Consortium for Enhanced Sepsis Outcomes (ACESO), MUWRP has played an essential role in enhancing Uganda's readiness and response strategies for future epidemic outbreaks.

A significant development in the fiscal year 2023 was the transformation of Joint Mobile Emerging Disease Intervention Clinical Capability (JMEDICC) into a new entity: The Austere Environment Consortium for Enhanced Outcomes (ACESO) Uganda. This transition marked a strategic shift that redirected focus toward innovative research on novel emerging technologies for sepsis care while scaling back direct filovirus outbreak response and research efforts.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, MUWRP through ACESO Uganda contributed to the development of comprehensive guidelines and strategies tailored to improve the country's preparedness for infectious disease threats. Key partnerships were established through initiatives like the Emergency Preparedness Response flagship and the Multisectoral Joint External Evaluation Program. For its participation in these efforts, MUWRP was recognized as a strategic partner during the Sudan Ebola outbreak response and was actively involved in the subsequent post-outbreak recovery plan.



Health workers at ACESO practicing preparedness for responding to disease outbreaks.

7.0. Administration



In 2023, the Administration Department played a pivotal role in managing operational needs and advancing the strategic goals of the organization. The department comprises various functions, including administration and operations, human resource management, supply chain management, technology services, and finance management. Below are the highlights of key accomplishments realized under administration in 2023:

Human Resource Management

The human resource management section established an interdepartmental safety marshal team with a mandate to identify hazards across various workstations and enhance workplace safety and health. In order to fulfill this mandate, the team undertakes multiple responsibilities, including;

- Providing first aid during medical emergencies,
- Conducting regular risk assessments and hazard identifications,
- Formulating and executing occupational health and safety policies and procedures,
- Delivering training and awareness programs for employees,
- Performing regular inspections and audits,
- Establishing procedures for incident reporting and investigation,
- Implementing control measures and safety protocols, and monitoring safety performance.



MUWRP staff conducting a fire safety training.



Dr. Fred Magala, MUWRP-PEPFAR Program Director, launching the UPDF 5-year HIV and AIDS Strategic plan

Supply Chain Management

The supply chain management section led the procurement of various essential items and services. Notable among these included:

- Engaging a contractor to construct an elevator/lift at the Nakasero office, ensuring compliance with national regulations for accessible buildings for disabled and elderly people. Construction is to be completed and commissioned in 2024;
- Setting up and furnishing the Ntenjeru Training Centre in Kayunga District, which has since hosted several trainings and other events, significantly reducing costs previously incurred for hiring external training spaces,
- The Team supported the process of contracting a service consultant that led the development of a 5-year HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan - 2023/2024 to 2028/2029.

Fleet Management



MUWRP established a comprehensive fuel management policy along with a systematic documentation framework. This framework includes a database, an organized filing system, calendars for vehicle repairs and services, detailed reports, activity log sheets for each vehicle trip, and fuel consumption allocations tailored to the usage of individual departments. Such measures facilitated the collection of essential

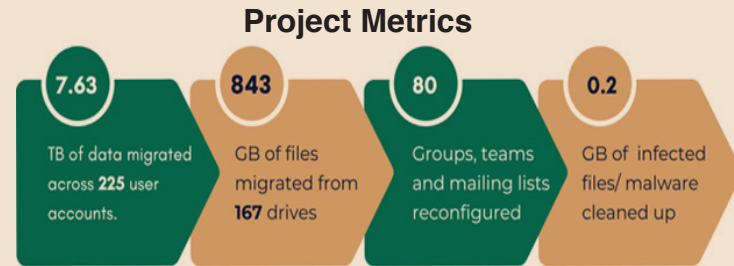
data, including vehicle movement times, mileage, fuel consumption, and any incidents or challenges faced during vehicle operation. Consequently, this facilitated effective monitoring and analysis of fleet performance, leading to decreased fuel consumption, improved vehicle maintenance schedules, and enhanced overall fleet management, ultimately resulting in cost savings and increased operational efficiency.

Technology Support Services



MUWRP’s Technology Support Services (TSS) unit made significant advancements in technological integration and operational efficiency in 2023, including:

- Facilitating the transition from Google Workspace to Microsoft Office 365 for 200 employees, including migrating terabytes of data and implementing advanced security measures, fostering enhanced collaboration and streamlined workflows.



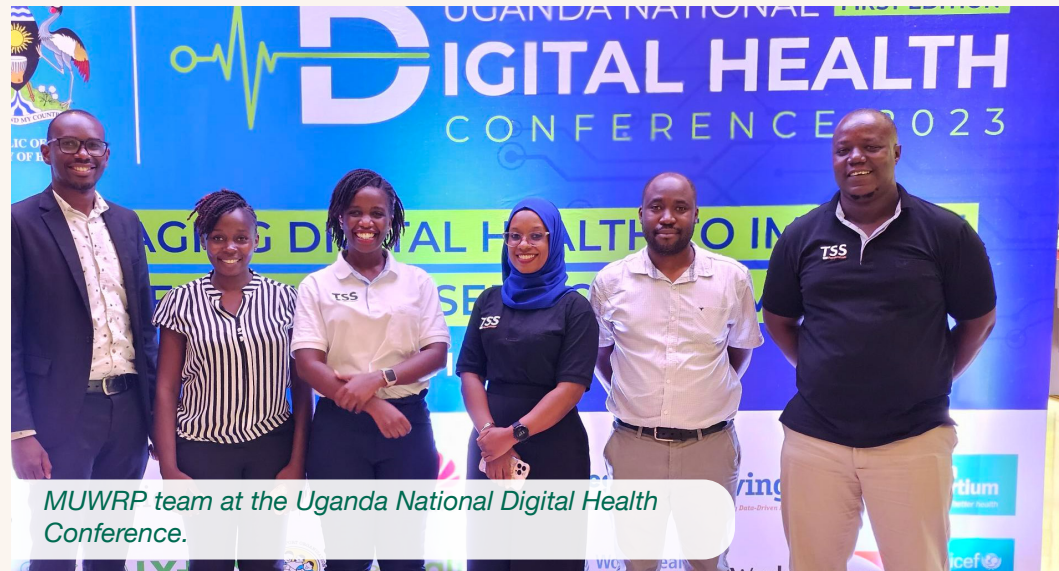
- Development and launch of an in-house Laboratory Information, Surveillance, and Analytics (LiSA) platform marked a major milestone. It provides a comprehensive system for digitizing surveillance workflows with artificial intelligence, improving tracking and analysis of surveillance data.

- Introduction of the Unity Employee Portal, created in collaboration with HRP Solutions, streamlined HR functions such as time sheet management and leave tracking, reducing licensing costs and manual entry errors while enhancing budget tracking.

Category	Entitled	Balance
Annual	21	1.75
Compassionate	5	5
Maternity	0	0
Paternity	5	5
Sick	60	60
Study	0	0

The Unity Employee Portal interface.

- Showcasing MUWRP’s digital innovations at the National Digital Health Conference, highlighting the LiSA platform and facilitating collaborations with other stakeholders, thus boosting MUWRP’s visibility in the digital health landscape.
- Implementing strategic infrastructure projects, including optimizing hybrid solar power solutions for remote sites and negotiating service contracts with leading biomedical equipment manufacturers, further improving operational reliability and cost efficiency.



Finance Management



In the realm of finance management, MUWRP maintained its commitment to upholding financial integrity and compliance standards, as well as prioritizing the welfare of its employees. A significant achievement in this regard was the successful conclusion of the NSSF Compliance Audit, which evaluated MUWRP’s conformity with the National Social Security Fund Act Cap 222. This audit entailed a thorough review of wage records and financial transactions over a six-year period, from January 2018 to September 2023. The audit outcomes confirmed MUWRP’s integrity in collecting and reporting of employees’ NSSF contributions.

Table 1: Statement of Financial Position as at 30 September 2023:

	Notes	Actual 2023 US\$	Actual 2022 US\$
ASSETS			
Fixed Assets			
Leasehold Land	7.6	1,001,152	1,023,533
Buildings	7.6	470,937	573,687
		1,472,089	1,597,220
Current Assets			
Cash at bank and in hand	7.4	1,704,445	468,088
Receivables	7.5	1,578,428	2,322,916
Total Assets		3,282,873	2,791,004



Plot 42, Nakasero Road
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