

Unity in Diversity

Diversity is personal to me — coming from an underrepresented minority background, a female student in STEM and the first member in my family to obtain a doctorate degree — I have lived and worked in some of the most diverse cities and institutions and understand the importance of diversity and inclusion. I aspire to develop an independent research group that embraces diversity by including people from a range of different backgrounds, national origins, cultures and healthy conditions — all united with the same goal of science and curiosity. In my opinion, diverse groups are always more likely to provide unique insights and creative solutions, form a stable and happy environment, and represent our future. Despite my background, I was given a lot of opportunities and support and I wish for the next generation of scientists and engineers to have the same or even better experience as I had.

Current & Past Activities

- **Tutoring underperforming students:** During my studies, I have tutored several underperforming high school students. I quickly realized how with small encouragement and guidance, and a pinch of kindness, students become extremely competent and motivated regardless of their background. At the end of the semester, all of my students excelled in the tutored subjects, providing me with a highly rewarding experience.
- **Mentoring students of diverse backgrounds:** I have supervised undergraduate students of diverse backgrounds. As a foreigner myself, I understood their challenges with language and cultural differences. Despite their struggles, they were extremely motivated and highly-performing students, many of them pursuing their careers further in academia.
- **Graduate student recruitment:** I worked in the recruiting committee for the graduate program at the University in Munich. We placed a lot of emphasis on equal and unbiased evaluation, assessing students in the light of their abilities regardless of their background. I have helped to build a diverse and inclusive group of students forming the basis of one of the most prestigious master programs.
- **Addressing diagnostic needs in low-resource settings:** The lack of pathologists in low-to-middle income countries leaves a large proportion of the population without access to reliable diagnostics, causing delays in treatment and contributing to an overall worse outcome. During my postdoc work, we developed a low-cost 3D-printed microscope with an embedded AI model for a point-of-care cancer diagnostics. The device has the potential to address the diagnostic needs in the absence of expert pathologists, professional microscope hardware, network connections or expensive slide scanner and computing resources.

3-5 Year Diversity and Inclusion Outlook

- **Developing an inclusive research lab:** I aspire to create an inclusive group that gives opportunities to people who might not have obvious achievements due to their background but who demonstrate the potential to thrive once in competitive settings. This stems from my own experience as I was given a chance to move to Harvard and work in the lab that championed diversity — here I learned to assess students based on who they can be given the chance, not on who they are now. I am looking forward to applying the same principles in my research group.
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- **Local outreach:** I believe that exposure to the research environment, even for a short period, can have a tremendous impact on young students and their future, however many are deprived of such privilege. Therefore, I envision collaborating with local high schools and advancing equitable access to education for underprivileged communities by offering them summer placements in my laboratory.
 - **Global outreach:** I will organize internships in my lab for students from underprivileged groups. This is very personal to me since I was once given an opportunity to take an internship at University of Oxford. This experience was the sparkle that propelled and inspired my further career and I wish to enable such experience to as many students as possible.
 - **Addressing disparities in healthcare:** Scientific and technical advances offer new opportunities to address diagnostic needs in low resource settings, reduce healthcare costs and deliver equitable care to all patients. In my lab I wish to continue developing tools addressing the needs of underrepresented and underprivileged patient groups, aiming to reduce the disparities in healthcare.
 - **Recruitment and retention:** I truly believe in the benefits and necessity of hiring a diverse group of people that will be true representatives of human population. I will lead efforts to recruit the best students and give the opportunity to underrepresented groups. I will actively support the inclusion and retention of diversity in future faculty recruitment as well as in my own research group.
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