

## Collaborative research visit at the Forslund lab in Berlin

I had a research visit of two weeks at PhD Sofia Forslund's lab at Max Delbrück Center in Berlin, Germany. I visited her lab during two weeks in March 2023. During this time I participated in the weekly group meeting, where I also had the opportunity to present my research project and gather input from the entire department on my study design, methods and results. In addition to this I had several meetings with PhD students and post docs in the group, where I gave input based on my expertise in bioinformatics to them, or where they gave me input and suggestions for how to improve my research project.

I applied for this grant because I wanted to collaborate with Sofia Forslund on a particular project. I had first met her at a conference in Berlin, in fact, the conference was arranged by my Marie-Curie PhD consortium and she was an invited speaker. I really enjoyed her presentation and found a lot of interesting points in the types of projects they conducted in her lab. Additionally, I thought she would be a suitable collaborator for the technical aspects of my new project. Shortly after the conference I contacted her and presented my project to see if she was interested, and she was very enthusiastic about the project. We discussed the possibility of me visiting her research group, to improve the connections with the PhD students and postdocs in her lab. With this, I found out about the Young Talent Fund grant which suited my wishes perfectly. This grant would allow me to travel to her department in order to learn new techniques, and to establish a collaborative network to improve my research project.

From this experience I received lots of useful feedback on my research project, and I learned a lot of new methods. In addition to this, it was so much fun to expand my research network and to get to know a whole new department in another country. I got to experience the differences and similarities compared to my 'home' department at the AMC. Finally, I really enjoyed the opportunity to work in a new environment and gain international experience.

It can be a really eye opening experience to see how things are done in another department. Sometimes their methodologies and approaches are completely different, and you can learn a lot of new things. You also gain a different perspective on research, and I really experienced that I had a great opportunity to make some lasting network connections. When you visit another institution you can really develop and get to know other researchers in your field (or similar fields), as compared to a conference or symposium where it's a very limited amount of time and you meet so many people that it can be really overwhelming.

Everyone in the department were so warm and welcoming. They immediately showed me to a very nice office and gave me a tour of the buildings and the labs, and introduced me to everyone. I was also invited to join general seminars that were relevant for my research. I had a really good time while getting to know everyone during the lunch and coffee breaks. Additionally, they invited me to join for dinner on the weekend, and told me about all the good spots to visit in Berlin. I was quite surprised about how close I would become with several of

the people in the department, and I am sure that these connections will last a long time throughout my career. We were already talking about when we would see each other next. It also created some great connections for future work opportunities or longer research visits and collaborations moving forward.

I really enjoyed my research visit at the Forslund lab, as it gave me great opportunities for international networking and collaboration for my future career. I would herewith like to give a warm thank you to the donors of the AMC Young Talent Fund for this opportunity.

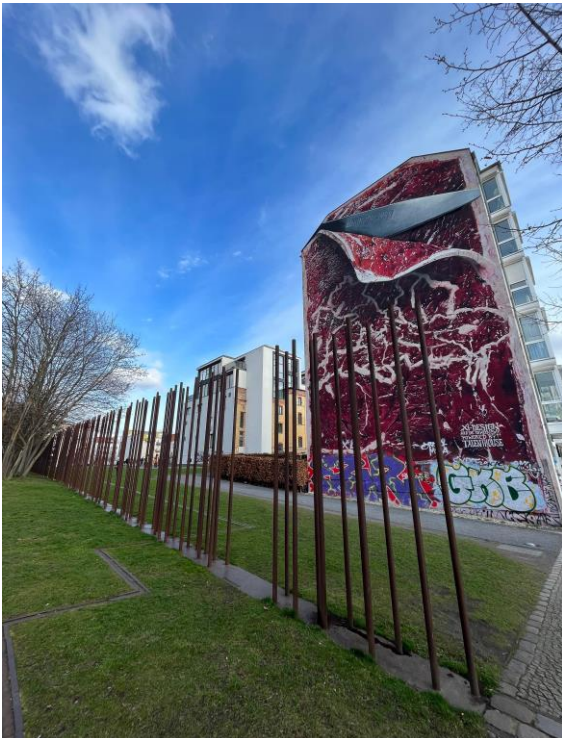
Ulrika Boulund, March 2023



My apartment hotel, just a short walk from the office.



My very sunny office.



I visited a memorial and outdoor museum for the Berlin wall.



Mauerpark on a Sunday, there is a market and it's full of people and some interesting shows.



I visited the Jewish museum in Berlin.