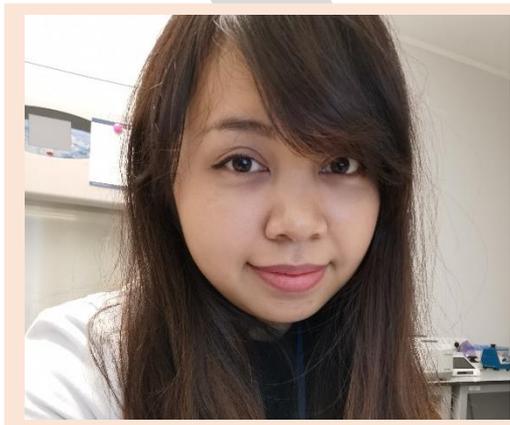


## Meet the Researcher: Gladys Langi



Gladys Langi completed her Bachelor of Science degree at the Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia in 2012. After graduation, she worked as a research assistant at a non-profit cancer research institute in Indonesia for three years. In 2015, she was awarded the Fulbright scholarship for a Master's degree in Human Genetics at the Virginia Commonwealth University, USA. She graduated in 2017 and returned to Indonesia to work as a research assistant at the Bandung Institute of Technology. Since 2018, she is a PhD candidate at the Medical University of Bialystok, Poland, under a COFUND PhD program (ImPRESS). Her PhD project is to develop prediction models for bariatric surgery outcomes using multi-omics data.



**Gladys, please tell us a little about yourself. Where are you from, and what is your research background?**

*I studied and worked in Indonesia until 2015, where I studied molecular genetics and was a research assistant for a human genetics research group. In 2015, I was awarded the Fulbright scholarship for a Master's degree in Human Genetics. Genetics has been my main research interest since my undergraduate studies. However, during my time in the US, I was introduced to epigenetics and my Epidemiologist advisor helped me appreciate the role of environmental factors. So, after graduation, I was looking for a PhD programme where I can study both genetic and environmental factors for complex human diseases. Luckily, I found a good fit with the ImPRESS PhD programme at the Medical University of Bialystok (MUB), Poland.*

**You have started your PhD research as a Fellow on the MSCA COFUND programme ImPRESS. Can you say a few words about this training network?**

*The acronym for my COFUND PhD programme is ImPRESS, which stands for the International Interdisciplinary PhD studies in Biomedical Research and Biostatistics. This programme emphasizes training in omics technologies, which are high throughput methods that allow simultaneous examinations of thousands of genes, proteins, and metabolites, in a large number of samples. We have classes on laboratory training and biostatistical methods for omics research. While most lectures are from MUB professors, we also have guest lectures from our partner institutes, such as the Hasselt University (Belgium), University San Pablo-CEU in Madrid (Spain), University*

*of Pécs (Hungary), and ideas4biology (Poland). We also have travel grants to attend training and conferences anywhere in the world.*

**What does your PhD project involve?**

*I am developing models using clinical and multi-omics data to predict bariatric surgery outcomes for obese diabetic patients. Bariatric surgery has been reported to effectively resolve type 2 diabetes in morbidly obese patients, but remission is not guaranteed. So, prediction models could be useful for surgeons and patients to make informed decisions regarding surgery. We are interested in using not only clinical data but also different omics to develop the models. For my PhD, I am using circulating microRNA and lipidomic profiles measured from biological samples before surgery. We are aiming to integrate these data to develop good prediction models and gain insight into the molecular mechanism of diabetes remission after surgery.*

**What prompted you to pursue your PhD as part of a European MSCA-COFUND programme?**

*Studying abroad is a great opportunity, but there are cultural, societal, and even legal challenges that are difficult to navigate alone. I was looking for a PhD fellowship that welcomes and supports international students. I first heard of MSCA from an Italian researcher who visited my Indonesian institute where I worked in 2017. He promoted how prestigious the programme is and explained how well MSCA supports fellows. This encouraged me to apply for the COFUND PhD position at MUB.*

**How would you explain the advantages of doing a PhD as part of a European MSCA-COFUND programme to our research community here in ASEAN?**

*The greatest advantage for me is being able to connect with researchers from around Europe. First of course with researchers from our partner institutes. They have been very welcoming and generous with sharing their knowledge. Then, I met other European-based researchers through conferences and summer schools, thanks to my travel grant from the PhD programme. Additionally, based on my experience so far, the EU and my host university have always been supportive. They encourage me and my cohort to discuss any concerns that we have and worked with us for solutions. This kind of support is particularly important for international students, especially for non-EU students who have never lived in Europe before, like me.*

**Can you tell us a little about the application process?**

*I found the process to be straightforward. The university gave clear information about the process and it was completed within the advertised timeline. The application opened from early March to the*

*end of May, so I had two months to prepare the essays and documents. Then, I had a Skype call with the programme organisers for the interview. In early July, I received the results, and a week later, information about my academic supervisor.*

**Do you have any tips you would like to share with prospective applicants here in ASEAN that may consider applying to an opening on a MSCA-COFUND programme?**

*Make sure you clearly express how you are a good fit for the programme. MSCA-COFUND programmes are competitive, so highlight all your accomplishments and research experiences.*

**As a researcher, which goals and ambitions do you have for your future career?**

*I would like to have a career in an interdisciplinary setting, where I collaborate with researchers from different fields to improve public health, specifically for complex diseases. So far, my MSCA programme has greatly supported me in this effort. I have always been eyeing for a career in academia, but lately, I am warming up to the idea of working outside academia. I am thankful that MSCA encourages PhD students to explore different career paths.*