

I am a 3rd year PhD student in the Lo Celso and Luis labs investigating how a platelet-biased stem cells are regulated by the bone marrow microenvironment. During my PhD I have been doing a lot of microscopy, including 3D timelapses in vivo and large tilescreens containing a few rare stem cells.

With the Stevenson fund bursary, I spent 12 weeks in Boston in the Cimini lab at the Imaging Platform of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard to develop my image analysis skill. It was fantastic to interacting with a team with so much expertise in their own software CellProfiler and any other image analysis software and coding for image analysis. I enjoyed seeing the wide variety of projects they work on, including screening experiments at a different scale. I had to adapt to a new environment, new work habits (Slack, different meeting styles) and intense project management as very time constrained. There were many out of my comfort zone moments, but I learned a lot, developed more coding skill and a strong understanding of image processing concepts.

They often joked about their engineering perspective, and I was inspired by the ethos of the lab and people's career paths. It was interesting to dive into the American culture of anything is possible. Boston being a hub for science, some of my favourite haematopoiesis/ stem cell labs were there, I got the opportunity to interact with members of these lab and was able to present my work.

I met great people during my stay in Boston and also explored the area, Montreal, NYC, Washington DC and experienced my first American thanksgiving. I hope to continue to collaborate with the Cimini lab in the future.

To any female student thinking of applying to the Stevenson fund to support a research exchange abroad, go for it! I am very thankful to the Stevenson Fund for enabling this wonderful experience!