

YOUSEQ CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE

11 February 2022

As noted by the United Nations, science and gender equality are both vital for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In order to achieve full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls, the United Nations General Assembly declared 11 February as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science in 2015.

It seems an appropriate day to celebrate some of our own highly regarded female scientists here at YouSeq, where we are lucky to have many talented women in the team. Let's take a look at some of their scientific journeys, what brought them into the world of science and their future aspirations.



Dr Ellie Kirby

Research Scientist

Time at YouSeq: 18 months

Tatjana Leibssle

Manufacturing Scientist

Time at YouSeq: 8 months



Helen Philbrook

Manufacturing Scientist

Time at YouSeq: 2 years



1. What made you want to go into science?

Ellie: I was always curious about how everything functions. As a child I was always interested in animals and ecology, but this evolved into an interest of cellular and molecular biology while I pursued my degree and Ph.D.

Tatjana: General interest. Maths was my favourite subject since primary school, and later I fell in love with chemistry.

Helen: I loved the very first series of Blue Planet by with David Attenborough and was convinced I was going to be a marine biologist.

2. Did you have an inspiring role model?

Ellie: Someone particularly relevant to the field I am in is Rosalind Franklin who had a major contribution to the discovery of DNA structure.

Tatjana: No. Quite the opposite. When I mentioned that I consider to study chemistry, people reacted like that: "Are you sure you want to do that? It's a completely male dominated domain, you will struggle to be accepted." Or "Do you really want to work in hazardous environments like labs? And working with acids? Your hands will look awful."

Helen: Not so much role models but all my science teachers have always been enthusiastic about encouraging other people keen to learn more which made picking up new ideas much more accessible.

3. What do you particularly enjoy about your specialist area of science?

Ellie: It allows me to be curious. As a Research Scientist in Molecular Biology there are so many new technologies, discoveries and developments I can utilise to enhance products we create.

Tatjana: I like the procedure of manufacturing and controlling the quality of every assay, so we can be sure we deliver good products.

Helen: I really enjoy being hands on with science, some of the best science happens when you can try out new things in the lab and are given the freedom to explore new avenues.

4. How important do you think your specialist area is for science development or society?

Ellie: Particularly now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the work we do is especially vital. But we also confront pressing global challenges in other diagnostic fields. With the kits I have helped develop, we are able to identify and subsequently treat various agricultural, vet and plant pathogens that have the potential to be devastating.

Tatjana: Very important - detecting diseases is the first step in the line of curing or even eradicating them.

Helen: We are currently in the golden age for qPCR and medical diagnostics and that means the reach that these technologies have is completely novel. Being able to develop new kits for customers that are having their first experiences of these applications will decide whether new communities continue to explore the advantages of these technologies and whether development continues at the pace it currently is.

5. What are your future scientific aspirations?

Ellie: I want to continue making large contributions to the development of products in the diagnostic space. In line with YouSeq's goals I would like to be heavily involved in allowing us to create a way to detect all diseases at once.

Tatjana: I want to enlarge the spectrum of my lab skills, gain more theoretical knowledge and generally a deeper understanding of biology, so I feel comfortable to call myself a true specialist.

Helen: My aspiration in pursuing science has always been to have an impact, whether that's on a big or small scale. YouSeq is about making meaningful waves in the world, pioneering and improving accessibility in medical diagnostics, and that's really what I want to continue doing, making the world a bit better for everyone else.

It's a privilege to work alongside these inspirational women! If you would like to find out more about the world of YouSeq please visit our website youseq.com or give us a call +44(0)333 577 6697