

LIBRARIANS WITHOUT BORDERS

Before the digital revolution, practicing evidence-based health care, policymaking or education in developing countries was virtual impossible. In 2001, that slowly began to change, first with Hinari, WHO's biomedical free and low cost access to research program and later with open access and Research4life (R4L) which comprises 5 programs including Hinari, 100,000 peer reviewed resources, 9,000 registered institutions and 200 publishing partners. Despite these gains in access however, many researchers, doctors, librarians and policymakers in developing countries still suffer from a lack of information literacy. The Librarians without Borders (LwB) was founded in 2007 by the Medical Library Association (MLA) and supported by the Elsevier Foundation to provide essential face-to-face, train-the-trainer workshops for the R4L community. Since 2016, LwB also supports a corps of librarian trainers through annual training grants. To date, the partnership has awarded 15 training grants, conducted 90 workshops in forty-two countries and developed a decade worth of training modules. The 2019 FAO R4L MOOC supported by the Elsevier Foundation will complement LwB's efforts, helping to scale up virtual training reach and offering participants a required pre training for face-to-face LwB workshops.



Beneficiary group

Researchers, faculty, students and staff from governmental and local non-governmental agencies.

Budget

\$45,000.

The Elsevier Foundation funds often are leveraged with additional resources from UN agencies or participating institutions.

Location

Developing and emerging countries.

Goals

- Increase the number of trainers based at R4L registered institutions, including health information professionals, researchers and lecturers in multiple disciplines, and post-graduate and medical students whose activities will result in a cascading effect on users from their institution.
- Build the R4L repository of learning and training with timely and relevant materials, a critical and ongoing activity.
- Inform and align LwB training with the FAO R4L MOOC curriculum.

Milestones

5 grant projects completed in Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Nigeria – many of them built on previous grants as longstanding collaborations with the host institutions.

20 funded projects since 2016.

2 Hinari 'Train the Trainers' workshops completed by the coordinator, Lenny Rhine:

- Zambia Library Consortium/University of Zambia; July 2019. 34 participants: health information professionals from several regions.
- University of Papua New Guinea School of Medicine and Health Sciences Library; November 2019. 40 participants: health information professionals, lecturers and clinicians and key National Department of Health staff.

Level of evidence

Level 1	Quasi-experimental
Level 2	Pre-post or cross-sectional
Level 3	Point-in-time study
Level 4	Performance metrics/stats
Level 5	Anecdotal evidence

Pre- and post-workshop surveys are completed; a six-month follow-up 'outputs' survey is also disseminated.

Future plans

- Continue to align the LwB training with the FAO R4L MOOC to create a streamlined training offering going forward
- Update face-to-face training material, in collaboration with ITOCA.
- Highlight underutilized resources via the work of a R4L taskforce.
- Update the author skills material to include better coordination with other agencies (INASP) and publishers that have similar resources and conduct related courses.
- Together with the staff of the WHO Country Office in Papua New Guinea, LwB is piloting a follow-up strategy focusing on updating individuals trained in the past 3 years, a 'rollout' for National Department of Health (NDOH) training, and integration of research strategy using R4L resources for the NDOH's five-year strategic plan.



Main image: the Librarians without Borders Coordinator Lenny Rhine teaches researchers how to get the most out of Research4Life during a training in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, in November 2019.

Over 40 participants attended, representing most of the key health-related organizations from the region. The workshop had a special focus on Hinari, Research4Life’s health research programme, and included training on reference platforms like Mendely.

“I want to start a center for victims of gender-based violence, as well as a research center on the subject. As a young researcher, Research4Life plays an important role for advancing my career.”

— OLIVIA SHARON EPHRAIM, a participants in the Papua New Guinea Workshop

