

# Elsevier Foundation

2025 Partnerships



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# **Inclusive Research**

# Bridging the gap: an AI community of practice

**Association of College &  
Research Libraries**



## **Location**

United States



## **Target group**

Under-resourced  
early-career librarians



## **Budget**

\$37,000  
(2025)



## **SDGs**

SDG 10  
(target 10.2)

## **Synopsis**

Supports librarians to strengthen AI knowledge and skills, launching a sustainable community of practice and expanding AI leadership capacity across institutions.

## **Program description**

In 2025, the partnership with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) piloted Bridging the Gap: an AI Community of Practice, a professional development initiative designed to build AI literacy among underrepresented, early-career librarians.

Through a “train-the-trainer” model, the program equipped participants with practical skills, ethical frameworks and leadership tools to implement and share AI knowledge within their libraries. The program combined in-person learning, ongoing virtual engagement and open educational resource development to ensure sustained impact. Ultimately, it builds a growing network of librarians prepared to navigate and shape the responsible use of AI in academic settings.

Participants committed to developing a plan to implement AI literacy programs at their institutions to ensure their communities benefit from the training. After attending the program, they were able to: integrate AI literacy into instruction, host workshops for students and faculty, create guidelines and learning materials, and help their campuses move from abstract debate to concrete practices.

## Goals

- Build AI literacy among under-resourced early-career librarians.
- Create a sustainable AI-focused community of practice.
- Enable participants to serve as trainers and knowledge multipliers within their institutions and professional networks.

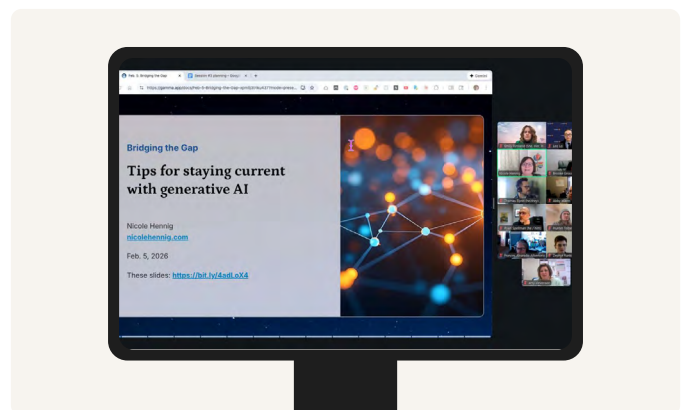
## Activities and milestones

- Selected 11 early-career librarians from under-resourced institutions across North America through a competitive application process which required endorsement from a library director or university librarian, ensuring institutional support. The team prioritized candidates who demonstrated a clear plan to share their learning with their library community.
- The cohort represented a diverse range of institutions, including: DeSales University, East Texas A&M University, Filipino Librarians Association – UAE, Fort Lewis College, Illinois Wesleyan University, Nevada State University, Northern Kentucky University, Oglethorpe University, Southwest Minnesota State University, Wartburg College, United States International University Africa.
- Delivered a one-day intensive, in-person workshop on June 26, 2025, during the ALA Annual Conference in Philadelphia.
- Trainers included members of the ACRL AI Competencies Task Force, with expertise in AI literacy, academic library services, and professional development. Dr. Emily Singley, Elsevier’s Vice President, Global Library Relations and Partnerships, joined as a facilitator.
- Provided expert-led sessions on key content areas:
  - AI and Academic Librarianship: Training on how AI tools can be used to support academic research and library services.
  - AI Ethics and Best Practices: Ensuring that participants are equipped to handle ethical considerations when integrating AI into their work.
  - Community Building and Train the Trainer Model: Supporting participants to disseminate AI literacy within their institutions.
- Launched a series of three follow-up webinars and virtual meet-ups (September 2025, November 2025, and February 2026) to reinforce learning and sustain peer exchange.
- Initiated development of Open Educational Resources (OER) and digital materials to support broader dissemination of AI literacy tools.

*“This pilot reinforced a clear takeaway: targeted support and a strong peer network can help under-resourced teams move quickly from learning to local impact.”*

**Dr. Leo Lo**

Immediate Past-President, Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)



# Rising Black Scientists Awards

**Cell Press**



## Location

United States



## Target group

Under-resourced scientists across the life, physical, earth, environmental, health and data sciences.



## Budget

\$22,000 per year (2022–2025)



## SDGs

SDG 10 (target 10.2)

## Synopsis

Recognize US early-career Black researchers' talent and achievements in STEM and provide them with support to grow their networks and opportunities.

## Program description

The gaps in support, funding and opportunities are significant for Black scientists, particularly for early-career researchers. The Rising Black Scientists Awards aim to address these challenges by providing recognition and resources to undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral Black scholars in the life and physical sciences, recognizing that success in science is driven not only by a combination of talent and motivation but also by access to strong support networks, recognition and opportunities during the critical early-career stage.

Winners each received \$10,000 to support their research, a \$500 travel grant and the opportunity to publish their winning essays in high impact journals within Cell Press. Each year, 4 honorable mentions (2 undergraduate students and 2 graduate students/postdoctoral scholars) received \$500.

## Goals

- Increase the visibility of rising Black scientists through publication of their essays in widely read and recognized platforms in their field.
- Provide recognition and financial support to the next generation of Black scientists to encourage retention.

## Activities and milestones

- Winners were selected from an outstanding pool of hundreds of applicants from across the life, physical, earth, environmental, health, and data sciences.
- Essays from the winners and honorees were published in the journals Cell and iScience on February 6, 2025

## Spotlight on the 5th edition winners

### Life and health sciences



**Jheannelle Johnson** (Stanford University). Her work centers on understanding cell vulnerability in Alzheimer's disease. In her essay "The sounds of music: Tracing memories

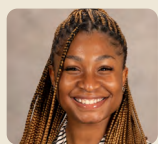
and pathways through research and resistance," she shares how music offered her a window to connect with her grandmother suffering from Alzheimer's disease and inspired her research.



**Victor Ekuta** (Morehouse School of Medicine). In "Retooling science: Transforming tools into instruments of equity as a Black physician-scientist," Ekuta explored the interplay between

science and identity, describing how both can drive positive change or be misused to perpetuate harm, and how he is using his insights to have a meaningful impact on his community.

### Physical, earth and environmental, or data sciences



**Kenna Gloria Agbugba** (Philander Smith University). Agbugba has co-led a team to design an award-winning AI-driven literacy-support prototype for students in Detroit and has worked

on a National Science Foundation project to develop a learning support AI-powered app. In her essay, "Bridging worlds: A STEM journey from Nigeria to the U.S. and back," she shares how she wants to use her skills to build tools for supporting the advancement of students in her homeland.



**Nyasha Milanzi** (Michigan Technological University). Her research centers on building energy transitions in underserved communities – developing affordable, sustainable

air pollution detectors and solar cookers. In her essay, "Inspiring the next generation of engineers and scientists to be champions of equitable change," she relays her mission to advance climate action with cross-disciplinary approaches addressing the public health needs of the most vulnerable communities.

An additional four scholars received honorable mentions, and their essays appear in the interdisciplinary open-access journal iScience.

- **Daphna Fertil** (National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering) for her essay "Healing through innovation: Advancing health equity from lab to community".
- **Darnell K. Adrian Williams Jr.** (Albert Einstein College of Medicine) for his essay "The Sprained Mind".
- **Arona Bender** (Duke University) for her essay "Beneath the surface: A journey through hidden waters".
- **Efemena Johnson** (George Mason University) for her essay "From Nigeria to innovation: A vision for inclusive science".

*"Winning this award is not just a personal achievement, it's a testament to the power of resilience, representation, and the pursuit of equity in science and medicine."*

**Victor Ekuta**

Winner, Morehouse School of Medicine

# Supporting women scientists

## China Women's Association for Science and Technology



### Location

China



### Target group

Early- and mid-career women scientists



### Budget

\$15,000  
a year (2024-2026)



### SDGs

SDG 5 (target 5.5)

## Synopsis

Empower Chinese women scientists through targeted workshops that provide international discipline-specific networks, expert insights, resources, and networking opportunities which foster a more inclusive academic environment.

## Program description

Despite the narrowing gender gap in the promotion of Chinese researchers, many women still encounter a “glass ceiling” in their career progression, facing significant barriers to senior positions. According to the Gender report conducted by Elsevier and the National Science Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, while the proportion of female researchers in China showed a steady increase from 13% in 2005 to 27.7% in 2019, data revealed that as women researchers ascend to higher positions, disparities widen and they struggle to attain senior positions.

To address these challenges, the Elsevier Foundation has partnered with the China Women's Association for Science and Technology (CWAST) to support early-career female researchers in China through targeted workshops that provide discipline-specific networks, resources, and training, and create pathways for Chinese women researchers as authors, editorial board members for international journals and speakers at conferences.

## Goals

- Provide recognition and amplification opportunities for early-career women scientists.
- Identify opportunities to support discipline-specific networks.
- Facilitate opportunities for more international multi-sectoral dialogue around gender and research with scientists, policymakers, evaluation institutions, funders and media.

## Activities and milestones

- Organized an in-person workshop at Elsevier Measurement, Sensor Systems and Applications Conference (August 2025) with high-level speakers, including Prof. Gao Bo (CWAIST representative and Deputy Director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Technical Physics), Dr Yandan Jiang, Associate Professor at Beihang University and Professor Paolo Carbone, President of IMEKO (International Measurement Confederation), IEEE Fellow, Editor-in-Chief of Measurement, and co-Chair of the conference.
- Developed a new webinar series hosted by Elsevier's China Researcher Academy, to offer accessible, high-quality virtual learning resources for thousands of researchers. 3 webinars were held, bringing together experts from Elsevier, including editors and publishers and senior leaders within CWAIST, who shared tips and insights for early-career researchers in China.
  - Peer Review Demystified: Building Your Expertise as a Researcher (September 2025 – language: Chinese)
  - Pathways to becoming an Editor (October 15, 2025 – language: Chinese)
  - Breaking Barriers: Career Journeys of Senior Women Scientists (November 2025 – language English)

## Looking ahead

Building on the strong engagement to date, our partnership will continue to evolve its webinar series to address timely topics such as research confidence, SDG-aligned work and international collaboration. We aim to further leverage the Elsevier Researcher Academy platform and explore opportunities for joint outreach and discipline-specific sessions with leading journals and editorial teams to increase visibility and access to global networks.



# Chemistry for Climate Action Challenge

## Elsevier Chemistry Portfolio



### Location

Low- and middle-income countries



### Target group

Green & sustainable chemistry researchers



### Budget

\$55,000 a year (2018–2020), \$35,000 a year (2021–2027)



### SDGs

SDG 5 (target 5.5), SDG 10 (target 10.2) and SDG 13 (target 13.1)

## Synopsis

The Chemistry for Climate Action Challenge recognizes projects that use green and sustainable chemistry solutions to tackle some of the greatest challenges identified by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## Program description

Climate change is the most important challenge affecting the future of our planet as underscored by the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports. The need for sustainable ideas to tackle global issues is now more pressing than ever, and chemistry can play a key role in finding practical solutions to urgent challenges, advancing the achievement of the UN SDG agenda.

A longstanding collaboration with Elsevier Chemistry journals, the Challenge raises awareness and builds global networks of researchers making crucial progress towards the SDGs. In addition to SDG13 Climate Action, the Challenge also supports SDG5 Gender Equality, recognizing the pivotal role that women play in combating climate change. The winning projects each receive a prize of \$25,000.

## Goals

- Highlight innovative green chemistry projects that address issues in low- and middle-income countries, with a strong emphasis on climate resilience.
- Encourage sustainability science, international collaboration, and scientific exchange.
- Support the integration of sex and gender dimensions in chemistry research.

## Activities and milestones

- In 2025, a total of 213 applications were received from 60 countries.
- The top 5 finalists, from India, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Netherlands, and Mexico pitched their projects at the 9th Elsevier Green & Sustainable Chemistry Conference in Pune, India (4–6 March 2025) and 2 winners were selected.
- The Elsevier Foundation hosted a roundtable discussion at the conference with the 2025 finalists, Challenge alumni and jury members to discuss innovative sustainable chemistry solutions and their impact on communities in the Global South.

## Spotlight on the 2025 winners

The 2025 winners demonstrated how green and sustainable chemistry offers tangible ways to support Climate Action (SDG13) in their local communities.



**Dr Pooja Singh**, Assistant Professor at the Symbiosis Centre for Waste Resource Management of Symbiosis International (Deemed University) in India, received \$25,000 for her project Transforming waste into sustainable sanitary pads. By utilizing locally sourced materials such as water hyacinth and tapioca, Dr Singh's team will create a multi-layered sanitary napkin that not only prioritizes menstrual hygiene but also addresses pressing waste management issue.



**Dr Mokgadi Hlongwane**, Lecturer and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator at the Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa, received \$25,000 for her project enhancing the resilience of medicinal plants, particularly *Lessertia frutescens*, a plant indigenous to South Africa and used to treat various ailments, including wounds, fever, diabetes and cancer. Dr. Hlongwane's project seeks to develop beneficial bacteria promoting the plant's growth and resilience against climate stress — thereby ensuring the continued availability of these crucial remedies.

*“The proceeds of this award will be used to accelerate the development of a bioinoculant that enhances abiotic stress tolerance for sustainable cultivation of medicinal plants and crops. Backyard and small-scale farmers are going to be equipped with skills to farm smart and sustainably. This milestone serves as an endorsement for the credibility and potential of our project.”*

### Dr Mokgadi Hlongwane

Lecturer and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator, Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa

*“I am extremely honored and humbled to receive this prestigious award,” said Dr Singh. “On behalf of my team, I extend our gratitude to the Elsevier Foundation for this opportunity. This recognition validates the importance and potential of our work and underscores the significant role of chemistry and biotechnology for addressing local environmental and health issues.”*

### Dr Pooja Singh,

Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Centre for Waste Resource Management of Symbiosis International, India

## Impact at a glance



**18**

green and sustainable chemistry projects supported since launch



**\$673,280**

in prize money awarded



**18**

alumni active across 17 countries



**9**

alumni contributing as editors, reviewers, speakers or advisors

# Agents of Change Awards

## Elsevier Materials Today



### Location

Global



### Target group

Researchers and professionals in the material sciences community



### Budget

\$15,000 a year  
(2023, 2025, 2026)



### SDGs

SDG 10  
(target 10.2)

## Synopsis

Recognize initiatives that focus on intersectionality and encourage systemic change within the materials science research community.

## Program description

The 2024 Elsevier Gender Report highlighted the slow yet steady increase of female researchers in materials science, currently at 32% globally. Despite progress, significant disparities persist.

The Materials Today Agents of Change Awards annually recognize and support initiatives that are taking practical steps to encourage an actively inclusive materials science research community. Each year, two \$10,000 grants are awarded to individuals or teams making impactful strides in this area. With support from the Elsevier Foundation, the awards were expanded in 2023 to include a dedicated ceremony and networking dinner.

## Goals

- Recognize grassroots, department-level, or broader initiatives within the materials science community.
- Drive greater inclusion and prioritize sustainable plans for long-term success.

## Activities and milestones

- Refreshed criteria and guidelines to attract more highquality nominations.
- The 2025 Awards ceremony took place at the Elsevier Materials Today Conference (June 23-26, Sitges, Spain), ensuring high visibility and networking opportunities.
- During the conference, 2023 Award winner Dr. Vishal Chaudhary presented his insights from an alumni perspective. Dr. Chaudhary launched the Happy Mental Health Club to address mental health stigma in academia; organized online sessions, awareness programs, conferences and workshops to recognize and respond to mental health issues, emphasizing early intervention; and linked his research on environmental factors to mental health with the goal of developing biosensors for real-time stress monitoring.

## Looking ahead

Winners of the next award cycle will be announced in 2026, selected by a panel of six judges, including past winners and distinguished scientists.

*“We are deeply honored to receive this award. This recognition underscores our commitment to supporting Indigenous youth through hands-on STEM experiences and mentorship, fostering their voices and perspectives in the future of biobased materials innovation.”*

### **Orlando Rojas**

Canada Excellence Research Chair in Bioproducts, The University of British Columbia

## 2025 winners



Thriving Together – Indigenous Outreach Program for Biobased Innovation, led by Kelley Oh and Orlando Rojas at The University of British Columbia. The program engages Indigenous high school students in Canada through immersive STEM experiences, amplifies Indigenous knowledge systems, and builds pathways for youth to explore careers in biobased innovation.

By partnering with community, government, and industry, “Thriving Together” is fostering broader participation in science while honoring different approaches to knowledge.



BME UNITE Future Faculty Program, led by Dr. Elizabeth Cosgriff-Hernandez at The University of Texas at Austin. The program strengthens the academic pipeline in biomedical engineering by supporting postdoctoral scholars through mentorship, community-building, and professional development. Since 2021, it has helped over 50 fellows transition into faculty roles.

By creating a sustainable model grounded in collaboration, “BME UNITE” exemplifies how inclusive academic practices can create long-term impact.

# Female Science Talents

## Falling Walls Foundation



### Location

Germany, with worldwide participants



### Target group

Early-career women researchers from academia and industry



### Budget

\$50,000 per year (2022), \$90,000 a year (2023-2025)



### SDGs

SDG 5 (target 5.5), SDG 10 (target 10.2)



### Additional partners

Bayer Foundation, DFG (German Research Foundation), Volkswagen Foundation (since 2024)

## Synopsis

Inspire and empower women scientists to make their next career step, pursue flexible career paths, build an international network, and promote women leadership in science, business and society.

## Program description

While women are well represented in early academic stages, they remain significantly underrepresented in senior leadership, decision-making roles, and high-visibility recognition. The partnership with the Falling Walls Foundation advances the Female Science Talents (FST) Program – an international initiative dedicated to strengthening women’s leadership in science and beyond.

Through a highly selective, year-long intensive program for 20 early-career researchers from across disciplines and geographic regions, the program provides tailored leadership development, mentoring, and global exposure at a pivotal career transition point.

In 2023, the Falling Walls Foundation and the Elsevier Foundation also established the inaugural “Women’s Impact Award”, designed to recognize women scientists for their visionary research in fields related to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, while also demonstrating commitment to gender equality, justice and the gender dimension in science.

## Goals

- Support early-career women scientists through targeted leadership development, mentoring, and career support.
- Build a strong, international community of outstanding female researchers across disciplines and geographies.
- Connect participants with forward-thinking institutions, companies and decision-makers.
- Drive systemic change by addressing gender disparities in leadership, recognition, research and decision-making in science.
- Recognize exceptional research through the Women's Impact Award, for women who conduct interdisciplinary research and contribute to greater inclusion in science.

## Looking ahead

The partnership is focused on strengthening long-term impact to develop emerging women research leaders. This includes refining the mentoring framework with clearer matching and orientation processes, consolidating a coherent curriculum informed by participant feedback, and strengthening structured impact measurement and the alumnae program.



## Activities and milestones

### Female Science Talents

- Selected 20 Intensive Track participants from ca. 250 applications from high-, middle- and low-income countries.
- Delivered a structured program of thematic workshops, career talks, peer-to-peer exchanges, and alumni networking events throughout 2025.
- Introduced a pilot mentoring program pairing alumnae with current participants, including three formal FST-organized meetings and additional informal sessions to foster mutual growth.
- The Elsevier Foundation co-hosted the International Spring and Fall Gatherings in May and November in collaboration with key partners, providing recommendations for speakers. The events focused on inclusive leadership, responsible innovation, entrepreneurship, public speaking and inclusive AI.
- Enabled active participation in major science platforms, including the Falling Walls Science Summit and Berlin Science Week, where participants contributed to roundtables and organized panels.
- Strengthened impact measurement through pre- and post-participation surveys, and event feedback mechanisms, to assess leadership mindset and skills development.

### Women Breakthrough Award winners

- Dr. Ângela Gonçalves, on the influence of reproductive cycling on aging and disease. Dr. Gonçalves was also awarded the Falling Walls Science Breakthrough of the Year 2025 in the Women's Impact category.
- Dr. Colette Wabnitz, on gender equity in fisheries, supporting women's leadership, and advancing just and sustainable ocean governance.
- Dr. Omneya Attallah, on early detection of breast cancer in resource-limited settings via novel cost-effective non-invasive biomarkers and artificial intelligence.



# Transforming University Libraries Leadership & Innovation Programme (TULLIP)

**National University of Singapore**



## Location

Singapore, serving Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other Asian countries



## Target group

Early- and mid-career academic librarians, particularly from under-resourced institutions



## Budget

\$32,000 (2025)



## SDGs

SDG 4 (targets 4.3 and 4.4) and SD10 (target 10.2)

## Synopsis

Strengthened leadership and digital innovation capacity among academic librarians across ASEAN countries and beyond.

## Program description

Academic libraries are evolving rapidly in response to digital transformation, AI and changing research workflows. Yet many early-career librarians in under-resourced universities across Southeast Asia lack access to structured leadership development and exposure to innovation practices in leading research institutions.

Our partnership with the National University of Singapore (NUS) Libraries addresses this gap through the Transforming University Libraries Leadership & Innovation Program (TULLIP), an intensive five-day program delivered at NUS with a focus on ASEAN member countries. Through workshops, experiential learning and case-based collaboration, we equip librarians with leadership, digital and partnership-building skills to better support research, teaching and learning within their institutions. The Elsevier Foundation provided seed funding to jump start the program and provided fellowship support to librarians from under-resourced institutions based in Research4Life eligible countries, enabling broader participation in TULLIP.

## Goals

- Build leadership and innovation capacity among early- and mid-career librarians in ASEAN, Asia and beyond.
- Reduce inequalities in access to international professional development opportunities.
- Strengthen librarians' ability to support research, teaching, and learning in a digitally evolving environment.
- Foster a sustainable, pan-Asian network of library leaders committed to collaboration and knowledge exchange.

## Activities and milestones

- Delivered two five-day TULLIP workshops at NUS (6–10 January 2025; 30 June–4 July 2025)
- Received 198 total applications across both intakes, demonstrating strong regional interest; selected 27 participants for the January 2025 cohort and 28 participants for the July 2025 cohort
- Awarded 32 TULLIP Fellowships across both intakes, including 22 funded by the Elsevier Foundation
- Delivered program modules on leading transformational change, AI, digital transformation and innovation, library partnerships for education and research and libraries as living labs (collections, infrastructure and placemaking)

## Looking ahead

With 198 applications received for 55 available places across two intakes, demand for TULLIP significantly exceeded capacity, underscoring the need for continued leadership development opportunities for librarians in under-resourced institutions. Building on the success of the 2025 cohorts, NUS Libraries will continue offering TULLIP annually from 2026 to sustain and deepen its impact.

With additional regional institutional and philanthropic support secured since launch, the program is positioned for long-term sustainability. The growing TULLIP community will continue to strengthen regional collaboration, knowledge exchange and leadership capacity across academic libraries, contributing to more resilient and future-ready research ecosystems.



*“TULLIP has been one of the best training courses I’ve ever attended. It helped me further shift my perspective, see beyond the surface, and appreciate the profession more.”*

**Roana Marie Flores**

Associate American Corner Librarian,  
De La Salle University, Philippines



# OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early-Career Women Scientists in the Developing World

**Organization for Women in  
Science for the Developing World  
(OWSD)**



## Location

Low- and  
middle-income countries



## Target group

Women scientists who have  
received their PhDs within  
the previous 10 years



## Budget

\$60,000 a year (2011,  
2013-2018), \$80,000 a year  
(2019-2021), \$100,000  
a year (2022-2026)



## SDGs

SDG5 (target 5.5);  
SDG10 (target 10.2) and  
SDG17 (target 17.6)

## Synopsis

The more diverse the pool of scientists, the more robust and impactful the research. Women scientists from low- and middle-income countries often make life-changing contributions to advancing the UN SDGs, identifying problems and finding solutions that others have not considered.

## Program description

Women scientists in low- and middle-income countries are advancing solutions to urgent global challenges, yet many face limited visibility and support at critical stages of their careers. Through a long-standing partnership with the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), the Elsevier Foundation supports an annual awards program that recognizes outstanding early-career women scientists. Since 2013, the OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Awards have championed the achievements of 84 women scientists from over 38 low- and middle-income countries.

Winners receive a cash prize and are sponsored to attend major scientific conferences, where they participate in workshops, meet experts, and expand their networks.

In 2021, the awards were re-aligned with the UN SDGs, shifting focus from specific scientific disciplines to broader research areas, welcoming a range of interdisciplinary approaches. To date, the 2022 awards focused on climate action, the 2023 awards on Food Security, 2024 on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, 2025 on Inclusive Health, and 2026 on Sustainable, affordable and reliable energy. The prize also acknowledges the scientists' commitment to leadership, mentoring, and engagement.

## Goals

- Recognize outstanding women scientists, enhancing their visibility and career advancement.
- Inspire and support future generations of women scientists facing indifference and a lack of support in their research environments.

## Activities and milestones

- 2025 winners (Inclusive Health) announced on 3 March 2025, ahead of International Women's Day. Media coverage included BBC Health Check and national newspapers.
- Two awardees attended the 7th OWSD General Assembly (Bogotá, November 2025), alongside 25 alumnae. To ensure full cohort participation, a separate health-related convening is planned for 2026.
- Three alumnae of the award joined us in a special panel session held in partnership with SciDev.Net at the World Conference of Science Journalists (Pretoria, December 2025) to discuss the impact of media visibility for women scientists.
- 2026 winners (Sustainable, affordable and reliable energy) announced on 24 February 2026 and will be celebrated in a relevant international energy conference.

*"This award is a defining moment in my career, giving me a chance to share my research work and its impact on a global platform. Beyond personal recognition, it represents an opportunity to inspire and empower other women scientists, reminding them that their work is valuable, and they should believe in their potential to provide meaningful contributions. This award serves as a reminder that the sky is never the limit, there is always room to grow, achieve more, and make an even greater impact."*

**Halima S. Twabi**

Associate Professor, University of Malawi

## Spotlight on the 2025 winners — Inclusive Health



**Manal Badrasawi, Palestine**

Clinical nutrition and public health, with a focus on women's health and food insecurity.



**Reem Obaydo, Syria**

Green analytical chemistry and sustainable pharmaceutical methods.



**Alejandra Paniagua-Avila, Guatemala/USA**

Recovery-oriented mental health research in Indigenous and under-resourced communities.



**Sarmila Tandukar, Nepal**

Environmental and wastewater surveillance for infectious disease detection.



**Halima S. Twabi, Malawi**

Biostatistics and data-driven research addressing maternal HIV outcomes and childhood nutrition.



# Gender Summits

Portia



|                 |                                                                                                                                 |                             |                                                          |                                      |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                 |                                                                                                                                 |                             |                                                          |                                      |
| <b>Location</b> | <b>Target group</b>                                                                                                             | <b>Budget</b>               | <b>SDGs</b>                                              | <b>Additional partners</b>           |
| Global          | Researchers, gender scholars, policymakers, funders, industry representatives, and other stakeholders in the research ecosystem | \$45,000 a year (2024-2026) | SDG5 (5.5), SDG10 (targets 10.3) and SDG17 (target 17.6) | The German Research Foundation (DFG) |

## Synopsis

Advance inclusion for all in research and innovation by leveraging the global Gender Summit platform to facilitate multistakeholder dialogue and achieve consensus on critical interventions at the national, regional and institutional levels.

## Program description

Since 2011, the Gender Summits (GS), instigated by Portia and convened globally, have significantly impacted the international research community. To date, the Gender Summit platform has been held 25 times across 18 countries, facilitating 50 days of dialogue, featuring more than 1,200 speakers and engaging over 9,000 participants.

The GS uses new research to foster dialogue on science participation. They address gender gaps in research and strive to improve the societal impact of science, catalyzing resources to design gender action plans and establishing integrated, multi-year strategy plans to tackle these gaps.

In 2025, we continued evolving the GS platform into a more inclusive and sustainable hybrid model, combining global online programming, regional in-person hubs, and focused policy dialogues supporting the expansion into low- and middle-income countries. Together, we are strengthening global collaboration, promoting gender-sensitive implementation of the SDGs, and ensuring that science systems deliver equitable and socially relevant impacts.

## Goals

- Enhance multistakeholder engagement to examine how gender biases affect research outcomes.
- Promote cross-disciplinary and multi-institutional collaboration for joint action.
- Expand the global presence and capacity of the GS platform through a hybrid approach, expanding to low- and middle-income countries where possible.

## Activities and milestones

- Conducted eight consultation workshops in the USA and Canada as part of the global Roadmap 2.0 consultation process (out of 10 planned), despite disruption following the withdrawal of NSF funding.
- Held four additional international Roadmap 2.0 workshops (EU/Germany, South Korea, Japan and Mexico), with one further workshop scheduled for Brazil in 2026.
- Launched the regional GS-India platform with a two-day online event in November 2025 and planned an in-person Summit in New Delhi, hosted by the Indian National Academy of Science on March 10, 2026.
- Strengthened partnerships supporting gender-sensitive SDG implementation, including collaboration with UN Women, the World Bank, and the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa.
- Elizabeth Pollitzer, Director of Portia has served on Elsevier's Global Research Cultures Advisory Board since 2020, sharing her expertise, networks and findings from the Gender Summit legacy with Elsevier's leaders and their mission to advance inclusive health and research within the organization.

## Looking ahead

Our partnership will continue consolidating lessons from more than a decade of Gender Summit dialogue to demonstrate where progress has been made and where persistent inequalities remain. In 2026 and 2027, we will extend global consultations to develop regionally sensitive versions of Roadmap 2.0 and strengthen institutional commitments to equity for all.

Portia will also deepen collaboration across Africa and India, expand the network of Gender Summits and expert contributors, and further embed hybrid participation models to increase inclusion, sustainability and geographic reach.



## Impact at a glance



**25**

Gender Summit events delivered globally across 18 countries since 2011



**50**

days of dialogue, 1,200 speakers and 9,000 participants to date



**12**

organizations committed to host Roadmap 2.0 consultation workshops



# Country Connectors

## Research4Life



### Location

Global (Bhutan; Democratic Republic of Congo; El Salvador; Moldova; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Tanzania; Ukraine and other eligible Research4Life countries)



### Target group

Researchers, librarians, policymakers, lecturers, government staff, and tertiary-level students



### Budget

\$70,000 a year (2022-2027)



### SDGs

SDG4 (target 4.4) and SDG17 (17.6 and 17.16)



### Additional partners

Springer Nature and Wiley Foundation

## Synopsis

Boost research quality and output in low-and-middle-income countries by supporting local interventions to enhance information management, improve access, awareness and usage of Research4Life resources.

## Program description

Research4Life was launched over two decades ago to provide access to critical peer reviewed resources and support research, teaching, practice and policymaking among researchers, faculty, scientists and healthcare practitioners in the global South. Since 2022, the Research4Life Country Connectors (CCs) program has worked to establish national country focal points to build local capacity and teach critical research skills within institutions. By fostering awareness and skills building, CCs seeks to grow committed networks of users and mentors, ensuring regional and global coordination and significantly impacting research, practice and policymaking, going far beyond the original Research4Life objective of providing access to published research.

The Country Connectors program is being implemented across 14 countries using 4 languages (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese) and developing national, regional and global networks for maximum impact.

## Goals

- Deep engagement and capacity building to increase usage and impact of Research4Life.
- Extensive training for users to develop research skills and evidence-based decision-making through local investments.
- Build strong communities of evidence users connecting researchers, librarians and policymakers.

## Activities and milestones

- Delivered national workshops, webinars, and MOOCs to increase awareness and practical use of Research4Life among students, faculty, librarians and institutional ambassadors.
- Expanded outreach to newly registered and previously inactive institutions, contributing to a measurable increase in Research4Life registrations across eligible countries.
- Delivered the annual master training program with e-learning specialists TwentyOne Skills, equipping Country Connectors and ambassadors with certified modules to strengthen training delivery and user support.
- Achieved strong gender participation in training activities, with 52% women participants, supported by targeted recruitment of women ambassadors.
- Presented country case studies and user experiences at the Research4Life Global Partners Meeting and the Action for Equity Conference (Oxford, July 2025), highlighting the role of research access in evidence-based development.
- Strengthened research ecosystems through engagement with institutional leaders, collaboration with Technology and Innovation Support Centers, and support to local publishers, contributing to improved research visibility and increased citation impact.

## Looking ahead

Building on progress in 2025, our partnership will continue strengthening the Country Connectors network across regions. Future efforts will focus on scaling ambassador programs, expanding mentoring and regional collaboration, and further embedding Research4Life within national research and innovation systems.

By deepening partnerships with institutions, publishers, and innovation networks, we aim to support stronger communities of evidence users and ensure that researchers and practitioners in lower-income countries can fully participate in the global research ecosystem.



### Impact at a glance



**1.8M**

beneficiaries reached across participating countries.



**52%**

of training participants were women, supporting gender equity in research capacity building.



**1,775+**

institutions supported through country-level Research4Life networks.



Increase in Research4Life registrations across eligible countries, meeting program targets.



Higher citation impact for research outputs from participating countries compared with the pre-partnership baseline.



**3**

user stories per country annually documenting the impact of improved research access.

*“In our darkest times, access to information becomes our light.”*

**Tetiana Yaroshenko**

Ukrainian Country Connector, and Deputy Director,  
State Scientific and Technical Library of Ukraine

# Envisioning Futures

**Riken**



## Location

Japan



## Target group

Early-career women scientists



## Budget

\$40,000 a year (2022-2024) and no-cost extension 2025



## SDGs

SDG5 (target 5.5)

## Synopsis

Map the journeys of distinguished senior Japanese women scientists through targeted interviews exploring challenges and leadership best practices in a country with persistently low numbers of women researchers and research leaders.

## Program description

Over the past few years, the percentage of female researchers in Japan has risen from 16.9% to 22% according to Elsevier's 2020 and 2024 Gender Reports. While this is encouraging, it remains low compared to the global average of 41% women researchers. At RIKEN, the largest scientific research institute in Japan, the ratio of female researchers in leadership positions is 9%, a far cry from the global standard. In 2025, the Japanese government postponed its goal of reaching 30% women in leadership positions to 2030 citing the need to better understand the underlying causes for the continued slow progress.

“Envisioning Futures” interviewed Japanese women research leaders, exploring how they overcame challenges throughout their careers. By sharing this hard-won, critical experience, RIKEN hopes to accelerate the growth of Japanese women in leadership positions, raising awareness about intersectional diversity, supporting career progression and offering policy makers guidance for effective interventions.

The RIKEN interviews, together with national data, were published in the “[Envisioning Futures: Women's Leadership and Gender Equity in Japanese Research](#)” report, which is being translated into Japanese. The report blends data-driven analysis with compelling personal narratives, offering a timely roadmap for institutional change and a call to action for the advancement of women in science and innovation.

## Goals

- Capture leadership and management behaviors through interviews with distinguished women scientists.
- Increase the visibility of women research leaders in Japan and the challenges they encounter.
- Address the underrepresentation of women researchers in Japan by accelerating the development of female researchers through leadership training.

## Activities and milestones

- 9 interviews conducted with Japanese women scientists. All interviews are available on RIKEN's website in both [Japanese](#) and [English](#).
- Presented the “Envisioning Futures: Women’s Leadership and Gender Equity in Japanese Research” report at a panel discussion during World Expo 2025 in Osaka, hosted by the Netherlands Pavilion. The event, titled “Common Ground: How Collaboration and Inclusion Drive Innovation in Science”, featured panelists Dr. Reiko Mazuka (RIKEN Center for Brain Science), Dr. Yoshie Otake (RIKEN Center for Advanced Photonics), Dr. Yoko SHIMPUKU (Hiroshima University), Domiziana Francescon (Elsevier Foundation), and was moderated by Mia Yamakawa Lewis (Elsevier).
- Presentation of the initiative at the Japan Society for Research Policy and Innovation Management Conference on November 9, 2025.

*“True progress in science depends on inclusion, resilience and collective action. By embracing diverse career paths and recognizing a broader range of achievements, we can build a research ecosystem where all voices are heard and innovation flourishes.”*

### Dr. Yuko Harayama

Secretary General, Global Partnership on AI (GPAI);  
Former Executive Director, International Affairs, RIKEN  
and Former Member, The Elsevier Foundation Board

## “Envisioning Futures: Women’s Leadership and Gender Equity in Japanese Research” report



### Key highlights:

- **Significant gender gap:** As of March 31, 2024, women make up 22% of active researchers in Japan, well below the global average of 41%.
- **Leadership disparity:** Women hold an even smaller share of senior positions, with only 16% of scientific publication authorships and 17% of patent applications by women.
- **Nonlinear pathways:** Many women research leaders have advanced through flexible, opportunity-driven careers, reframing interruptions as sources of resilience and growth.
- **People-centered leadership:** Interviewees describe fostering lab cultures built on empowerment, collaboration and psychological safety – creating “communities of belonging”.
- **Mentorship and networks:** Access to mentors and professional networks emerges as a vital driver of career progression and confidence-building for women in research.
- **Cultural barriers:** Persistent challenges include unconscious bias, unequal evaluation, cultural norms, and limited institutional support for work-life balance.
- **Progress and gaps:** Japan’s ambitious government targets for women’s participation and leadership remain challenging, with incremental progress highlighting the need for continued vigilance and sustained action.
- **Rethinking success metrics:** Advocacy to broaden assessment criteria beyond publication metrics and patents to include societal impact, interdisciplinarity, mentorship and science communication.

# Climate Women

## The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS)



### Location

Low-and-middle-income countries



### Target group

Women researchers and communities in low-income countries experiencing the devastating effects of climate change



### Budget

\$100,000 a year (2021-2026)



### SDGs

SDG 5 (target 5.5),  
SDG 13 (targets 13.1 and 13.3)

## Synopsis

Provide project grants to women scientists from low-income countries tackling concrete problems in climate change through collaboration and interdisciplinary research.

## Program description

The application of scientific research often struggles to be relevant to real-life situations, especially in low-and-middle income countries, which in turn hinders progress. Significant improvements can be achieved when research involves local populations, and knowledge is shared within communities. UN Women reports that a quarter of economically active women globally work in agriculture, facing climate challenges and unequal burdens of care.

Launched in 2021, our partnership with The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) supports women researchers in climate action and builds on a previous collaboration (2015-2019) to bridge the North-South sustainability research divide through PhD travel grants, visiting professors, case study competitions and sustainability symposia at the TWAS General conferences.

Climate Women focuses on the implementation of sustainability science by empowering women researchers to lead concrete climate action projects with a grant of \$25,000 over three years for projects with potential to address climate change in local communities.

## Goals

- Promote gender equality by creating opportunities for women in climate action projects.
- Respond to and tackle communities' needs in line with the principles of sustainable development and focusing on those experiencing the brunt of climate change.
- Effectively transfer knowledge from scientific research to real-life scenarios for practical and tangible change under the umbrella of SDG 13: Climate Action.

## Activities and milestones

- To date, 14 Grants of \$25,000 each have been awarded to teams of 2-5 women. These were announced at both the COP 27 and 28 conferences through special events at the UNESCO Pavilion.
- The Elsevier Foundation provided an online “Project Cycle Management” course in partnership with MindTheGap, (an EU funded partnership to support universities to create their own Gender Action Plans (GEP) in order to strengthen the Climate Women teams’ project management capacity.
- The African Union and UNESCO hosted a special 4-day training workshop in Addis Ababa in October 2025 and convened the African Climate Women project leads, TWAS fellows, and local PhD students to maximize networking, knowledge sharing and impact. The workshop included presentations from senior climate researchers, science diplomacy experts and policymakers.
- Developed a preliminary impact assessment of the projects led by the 14 ‘Climate Women’ teams.

## Looking ahead

As we move forward, the partnership will build on the momentum of the Addis workshop and ongoing capacity-building efforts to enhance collaboration, leadership, and impact measurement. By documenting preliminary results and raising the visibility of the projects’ collective impact, the program aims to attract additional resources and expand opportunities for women scientists driving climate action in their communities.



*“Climate resilience and capacity building in renewable energy systems is a lifetime empowerment for women and youths.”*

**Zviemurwi Johnny Chihambakwe**

Zimbabwean industrial engineer and recipient of the Climate Women grant



**Inclusive  
Health**

# Tanya Marlo

## Aidsfonds



### Location

Indonesia



### Target group

Sexually active youth, including the LGBTQI community, who are vulnerable to STI or HIV infection



### Budget

\$50,000 (2022),  
\$70,000 (2023),  
\$90,000 (2024) and  
\$105,000 (2025)



### SDGs

SDG 3 (target 3.3)  
and  
SDG 10 (target 10.2)

## Synopsis

Empower vulnerable Indonesian youth and minority groups to take control of their health through accessible sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) and HIV-related information, counselling, and care.

## Program description

HIV-related deaths in Indonesia have surged by 60% since 2010, in contrast to the global downward trend. At the same time, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information is increasingly constrained by rising conservatism. According to UNAIDS, approximately 540,000 people are living with HIV in Indonesia, yet only one-third receive PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), a lifesaving treatment.

The Tanya Marlo project, or “Ask Marlo” in Bahasa Indonesia, targets youth by providing easy access to information and care via a web-based platform and chatbot. These tools offer tailored, youth-friendly information using the internationally proven Stepped Digital Care Model for Sexual Health, linking users to counselors and service directories. To increase reach and impact, the Tanya Marlo team co-creates content together with local partners and young people, connecting audiences with the care they need.

## Goals

- Deliver comprehensive, non-judgmental and sex positive HIV- and SRHR services.
- Promote self-care and enhance young people's agency to seek information and services online and offline.
- Build a coalition of digital health partners to increase reach and impact.

## Activities and milestones

- Produced videos, posters, podcasts and TikTok Live sessions to increase engagement on sensitive HIV and SRHR topics.
- Created a sexual Risk Assessment Tool providing anonymous, personalized advice and strengthening referrals to services.
- Enhanced systems to support counselors and improve data analytics for monitoring engagement and service uptake.
- Conducted offline outreach activities, including campus engagement ("Goes to Campus") and focus group discussions with youth and students to inform platform development.
- Strengthened existing partnerships and mapping new youth- and LGBTQI+-friendly health providers.
- Participated in the international Stepped Care Webinar hosted by Aidsfonds to share lessons learned and attract future partners.

## Looking ahead

As implementation progresses beyond the initial three-month extension period, the partnership will scale up digital engagement and strengthen digital-to-clinic referral pathways. This will include a new YouTube video podcast series to provide a more stable and accessible channel for sexual education content and further promote the digital Risk Assessment Tool to measure and improve the overall service network. Tanya Marlo is also exploring collaborations with universities to generate evidence on the effectiveness of integrated digital health interventions. By reinforcing the coalition and co-fundraising efforts, our partnership aims to secure long-term sustainability and ensure that Tanya Marlo continues to serve young people across Indonesia.



### Impact at a glance



**2.5M**

people reached through online channels and helplines in 2025.



**120**

pieces of digital content produced including video podcasts.



**55**

campus outreach activities conducted under the "Goes to Campus" initiative.



# Health Systems Strengthening in Somalia

**Concern Worldwide**



## Location

Mogadishu, Banadir, and Gedo Regions, Somalia



## Target group

Regional health management teams, information officers and healthcare workers in 12 health facilities across 6 districts



## Budget

\$50,000 (2023, pilot) and \$100,000 a year (2024-2026)



## SDGs

SDG 3 (targets 3.2 and 3.8) and SDG 13 (target 13.1)

## Synopsis

Capacity building to provide a timely, effective response to surges in acute child malnutrition cases in Somalia.

## Program description

Somalia continues to face one of the most severe humanitarian crises with 4.4 million people experiencing crisis-level food insecurity driven by conflict and a prolonged drought, further exacerbated by climate change. As drought intensifies, the number of children suffering from malnutrition continues to rise. Healthcare facilities are facing surges driven by many complex and overlapping factors, such as the pre-harvest hunger gap and increased incidence of malaria and diarrhea during the rainy season. It is during these caseload surges that the potential to save lives is greatest, yet government health systems are often not able to provide a timely, effective response.

Concern Worldwide works together with the Somali Ministry of Health to improve the capture of quality data, enabling healthcare workers to track cases and respond to fluctuations without compromising service. Based at the Banadir Hospital Stabilization Centre, the project builds on the successful 2023 pilot to scale up data improvement and management through the CMAM Surge Approach (Community Management of Acute Malnutrition). This innovative methodology, now in its third year, ensures timely and accurate information sharing and coordination between communities, health facilities and district health teams in 12 facilities across 6 districts of the Banadir and Gedo regions in Somalia.

## Goals

- Improve data management and utilization through capacity building of health managers.
- Scale up the CMAM Surge Approach results achieved during the pilot by training healthcare workers in outbreak detection, prevention, and control, enhancing their ability to manage and respond to infectious disease threats.

## Activities and milestones

- 18 frontline health workers, including nurses and nutrition staff, received training on Outbreak Prevention and Control enhancing their ability to detect early warning signs, implement infection prevention measures, and coordinate rapid responses during public health emergencies.
- 25 District Health Management Team (DHMT) members participated in Health System Strengthening and Public Health Disease Control training, improving oversight, resource management, service quality, and coordination with local authorities and partners.
- Supported surge responses during peak periods, including +200 severe acute malnutrition admissions at Banadir Health Centre in June 2025 and +400 admissions at Banadir Hospital Stabilization Centre in July 2025.
- Provided refresher training and ongoing mentorship on CMAM Surge implementation, including threshold monitoring and contextual analysis.
- Convened district-level coordination meetings to review progress, address operational challenges, and align with Somalia's Ministry of Health priorities.

## Looking ahead

Our partnership will extend through 2026 to expand the gains made during the pilot and expansion phases by scaling up and strengthening the CMAM Surge approach across supported health facilities, with additional health facilities to be added.



### Impact at a glance



**214,438**

children under five screened for malnutrition across supported facilities.



**297,903**

outpatient consultations conducted.



**2,942**

children with Severe Acute Malnutrition admitted for lifesaving treatment at Banadir Hospital Stabilization Centre.



**18**

healthcare workers trained in outbreak prevention and control.



**25**

DHMT members strengthened in oversight, governance and quality monitoring.

*“Since adopting digital health management information tools, the quality and timeliness of our data have improved dramatically. We can now record complete and accurate information for every child, generate reports on time, and make informed decisions quickly. This ensures that malnutrition cases are addressed promptly, and resources are allocated where they are most needed.”*

**Khadra Abdirahman**

MCH Nurse, Supported Facility

# Implementation Science Program

**Julius L. Chambers  
Biomedical Biotechnology  
Research Institute**



## Location

North Carolina,  
United States



## Target group

Faculty and students  
(undergraduate and  
graduate) at North Carolina  
Central University (NCCU)



## Budget

\$100,000 a year  
(2020-2022) with  
no-cost extensions  
(2023-2025)



## SDGs

SDG 3 (target 3.8),  
SDG 5 (target 5.5) and  
SDG 10 (targets  
10.2 and 10.3)

## Synopsis

Strengthening a pipeline of implementation scientists to accelerate the translation of evidence-based interventions into underserved communities.

## Program description

A persistent “translation gap” exists between scientific discovery and routine clinical care: while timelines vary, evidence uptake can take many years and is often slower for conditions affecting under-resourced populations.

To bridge this gap, the Julius L. Chambers Biomedical and Biotechnology Research Institute (BBRI) at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) conducts multidisciplinary and cross-institutional research focused on health issues that disproportionately affect minority and underserved populations. The Implementation Science Education and Training (ISET) program, funded by the Elsevier Foundation, supports new and early-stage investigations focused on health disparities research by providing graduate students with training and mentoring in implementation science (IS), supporting the submission of successful IS-focused grants, addressing IS gaps in health disparity research and developing a culture of IS across NCCU at all levels.

## Goals

- Increase the number of health researchers who are conducting implementation science research and dissemination.
- Organize outreach and networking activities within the NCCU community.
- Develop faculty expertise in implementation science and expand capacity at NCCU.

## Activities and milestones

- Finalized pilot projects and completed a qualitative program evaluation with fellows. Examples include:
  - Physical Activity Opportunities for African American Women (Dr. Amy Linder and Dr. Karen Webb)
  - Adoption of Nutrition Guidelines in Food Pantries and Their Impact on Diet Quality and Nutrition Security of Children and Adolescents from Low-Income Families in North Carolina: A Mixed Methods Study (Dr. Lamis Jomaa and Dr. Kimberly Powell)
- Organized outreach and networking activities within the NCCU community
- Supported final data analysis and publications from pilot studies
- Advanced dissemination efforts, including conference abstracts and peer-reviewed publication submissions
- Conducted evaluation interviews and supported data collection for ongoing projects in physical activity and nutrition/food pantry research

## Looking ahead

As this funding cycle concludes, this program remains committed to building implementation science capacity at NCCU and strengthening the infrastructure needed to reduce health disparities. Implementation science frameworks are now embedded in new grant submissions, pilot initiatives and community engagement efforts across NCCU.

BBRI will build on the partnerships established with community leaders, health organizations and research institutions to ensure that evidence-based interventions are translated into practice more rapidly and equitably. By strengthening faculty expertise, mentoring the next generation of scholars and reinforcing community infrastructure, BBRI is advancing a durable culture of translational science that extends well beyond this partnership.



## Impact at a glance



**16**

Implementation Science Fellows supported across cohorts.



Delivered 1 peer-reviewed journal publication and presented 3 conference papers



Community infrastructure strengthened to support health disparities research and implementation.

*“This Implementation Science focused effort has done more than fund research. It has helped in strengthening the research culture at NCCU.”*

**Dr. Deepak Kumar**

Associate Provost and Dean of Research and Sponsored Programs, North Carolina Central University

# Inclusive education in Cambodia

**Kidshelp**



## Location

Phnom Penh, Cambodia



## Target group

School children under 18,  
teachers, families and  
student volunteers



## Budget

\$4,800 (2024)  
\$3,200 (2025)



## SDGs

SDG 3 (target 3.8),  
SDG 5 (target 5.1)

## Synopsis

Strengthen knowledge and daily practices in oral hygiene and patient safety, laying the foundation for healthier lifelong behaviors through school-based education and community engagement.

## Program description

Malnutrition remains a significant health concern in Cambodia, affecting 32% of school children, with 10% underweight. In addition, 45% of children experience untreated dental cavities, often linked to high sugar consumption and poor hygiene practices. The partnership with Kidshelp Cambodia addresses these interconnected challenges through school-based education programs that promote oral health, hygiene and patient safety awareness.

By delivering engaging learning sessions, distributing essential supplies, and reinforcing healthy habits through teachers and families, the partnership aims to embed practical health knowledge early in life, where it can have the greatest long-term impact.

Inclusive Education in Cambodia builds off a successful 2024 pilot which equipped female Cambodian nursing students with comprehensive training in diabetes management through ClinicalKey, Elsevier's evidence-based health support platform. With the guidance of Natasha Gulati, Elsevier's Customer Success Team Manager, the students conducted diabetes screening drives in low resource settings, identifying patients, and providing personalized coaching on lifestyle and medication management. Through this work, they were able to demonstrate the transformative power of education and support, and illustrate how informed individuals can take proactive steps toward better health outcomes.

## Goals

- Improve children's knowledge and daily practices related to oral hygiene and handwashing.
- Increase awareness of patient safety concepts through child-friendly educational materials.
- Reach at least 50 students and their families with positive feedback from adults through upcoming nutrition education activities.
- Build local capacity by engaging teachers and student volunteers in sustained health promotion efforts.

## Activities and milestones

- Delivered oral health education sessions, including demonstrations of proper brushing techniques and distribution of toothbrushes and toothpaste.
- Reinforced oral hygiene practices through ongoing teacher monitoring and classroom follow-up.
- Printed and distributed Doctor Safety books in English and Khmer to students, teachers and families.
- Organized a formal storytelling day in September 2025, combining book readings with practical demonstrations of proper handwashing. Classroom sessions and hygiene demonstrations were recorded to support continued learning.

## Looking ahead

- Despite challenges, including language barriers, remote coordination across countries, and delivery in rural settings, the team remains committed to strengthening local capacity and embedding sustainable health behaviors among children and families.
- Natasha Gulati was able to form a project team for Nutrition Education, with a formal launch planned for the first half of 2026 – expanding the program's focus to address dietary habits and long-term health outcomes.



# Fostering Undergraduate Excellence and Leadership in Nursing (FUEL)

**North Carolina Central University (NCCU) and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCA&T)**



## Location

North Carolina,  
United States



## Target group

Undergraduate  
nursing students



## Budget

\$50,000 a  
year (2025-2026)



## SDGs

SDG 4 (targets 4.3 and 4.4)  
and SD10 (target 10.2)

## Synopsis

Strengthening the pipeline of diverse, practice-ready nurses by improving clinical judgment, exam readiness and professional development, as well as reducing financial barriers to success.

## Program description

Healthcare is undergoing rapid transformation driven by technological advancements, evolving care models, and shifting patient expectations. The market continues to advance in areas such as telemedicine and data-driven healthcare with a strong emphasis on value-based care. As demand for more sophisticated, patient-centered services grows, the need for a highly skilled, well-trained healthcare workforce is essential to drive innovation, improve patient outcomes, and adapt to the changing healthcare landscape.

The Fostering Undergraduate Excellence and Leadership in Nursing (FUEL) program is led by two nursing schools, North Carolina A&T State University, and North Carolina Central University, and focuses on enhancing nursing students' success through structured National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) preparation, advanced professional development opportunities and holistic student support.

## Goals

- Design professional development opportunities through specialized webinars and events to equip students with leadership and industry-specific knowledge.
- Offer financial assistance to address critical needs that impact academic performance and retention.
- Provide NCLEX preparation resources to enhance exam readiness and licensure rates.

## Activities and milestones

- NCA&T hosted a four-hour maternal health workshop in October 2025, which convened nearly 100 participants, including 77 students, faculty, community colleges, partner institutions and featured alumni speakers funded through honoraria.
- NCA&T secured mentorship commitments for 11 students with paid professional memberships and included a graduate-led session on transitioning into professional practice.
- Both universities are providing targeted scholarships and emergency stipends, including \$1,000 awards for high-need seniors, \$500 emergency grants, support for accelerated students, and supplemental basic-needs assistance to reduce financial barriers and improve student retention and success.
- Across both institutions, 82 NCLEX EAQ licenses (62 for NCA&T and 20 for NCCU) will be integrated into academic programming to strengthen licensure readiness and improve first-time pass rates.

## Looking ahead

This dual-institution partnership is creating a scalable model for collaborative nursing workforce development across HBCUs. The NCA&T maternal health workshop demonstrated the power of alumni engagement, mentorship commitments, and cross-sector participation. Building on that momentum, the NCCU convening will significantly expand reach and visibility, bringing together students, national nursing leaders and partner organizations.

In April 2026, NCCU will host a full-day leadership and professional development event featuring renowned speakers from national nursing organizations, interactive panel discussions on leadership and entrepreneurship, involving broad cross-institutional participation with NCA&T and other regional programs, and capacity for up to 600 attendees.

By combining licensure preparation, leadership development, mentorship, and direct financial support, our partnership is investing in long-term workforce readiness and health equity. Together, our partners are strengthening the next generation of nurse leaders who will serve diverse communities across North Carolina and beyond.



# Climate Care Champions Program

Swasti



|  <b>Location</b> |  <b>Target group</b>                             |  <b>Budget</b> |  <b>SDGs</b> |  <b>Additional partners</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ananthapuramu District, Andhra Pradesh, India                                                     | Frontline health workers (ASHAs, ANMs, MLHPs, Medical Officers, MPHAs) and vulnerable communities at risk of heat-related illness | \$50,000 (2025 pilot) and \$100,000 a year (2026-2027)                                          | SDG 3 (targets 3.4 and 3.8), SDG 10 (targets 10.2 and 10.3) and SDG 13 (targets 13.1 and 13.3) | Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education                                                              |

## Synopsis

Building capacity for frontline workers to prevent, identify and respond to heat-related illness and strengthening district-wide climate resilience.

## Program description

Extreme heat is emerging as one of the most immediate and visible health impacts of climate change in India. In districts such as Ananthapuramu, where high temperatures, water stress, and rural livelihoods intersect, vulnerable populations face growing risks of heat-related illness, particularly older people, young children, pregnant and lactating women, outdoor workers, and low-income households. At the same time, frontline health workers, predominantly women, carry the responsibility of protecting communities while navigating increasing climate pressures within already stretched systems.

Through our partnership with Swasti, we are strengthening district health systems to respond proactively to extreme heat. In 2025, we focused on equipping frontline workers with practical skills, multilingual tools, and structured mentorship, while embedding heat preparedness within the District Heat Action Plan. By aligning closely with government leadership, the Climate Care Champions Program (CCCP) is ensuring that climate-responsive health action becomes institutionalized within routine systems rather than remaining in a standalone intervention.

## Goals

- Build frontline workers' competencies to prevent, identify early, and manage heat-related illnesses.
- Strengthen referral and follow-up pathways to ensure timely care for high-risk individuals.
- Integrate heat preparedness into district systems through development of a District Heat Action Plan (HAP).
- Generate evidence on training effectiveness to support scaling within government systems.

## Activities and milestones

- Developed a comprehensive, heat-focused curriculum co-created with district stakeholders.
- Delivered a 4-day Training-of-Trainers (ToT) workshop for 90 nominated trainers, and cascaded training to 2,266 frontline workers across Primary Health Centres and Urban PHCs.
- Finalized and launched four bilingual educational and communications materials and detailed job aids for summer and monsoon seasons.
- Supported district government to develop a District Heat Action Plan, aligning frontline roles and referral pathways.
- Strengthened documentation of heat burden through systematic reporting of suspected and identified HRI case.

## Looking ahead

Building on success in Ananthapuramu, our partnership will expand to Guntur and Bapatla through a three-arm study comparing chatbot-only support, chatbot plus online training, and a blended in-person model. This will generate evidence on the most effective and scalable approaches to frontline climate-health preparedness.

Swasti will also work to integrate the CCCP curriculum into District Heat Action Plans and introduce heat-related illness indicators into their Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), enabling routine tracking of heat burden and strengthening long-term system resilience.



### Impact at a glance



**2,356**

frontline workers trained to prevent and manage heat-related illness



**90**

trainers certified through structured Training-of-Trainers workshops



**8,717**

suspected/identified heat-related illness cases recorded, strengthening district visibility of heat burden



**5,423**

individuals referred to health facilities for timely care



**4**

bilingual educational materials and job aids launched to support consistent frontline counselling



District Heat Action Plan developed (launch expected ahead of Summer 2026)

*“When [trainers] showed the steps: first check the pulse, make the person lie in shade and, give oral rehydration solutions; that gave me so much clarity. Now I know the order. I don’t feel scared anymore. I feel like I can actually help.”*

**Lakshmi**

ASHA Worker, Ananthapuramu District

# Doctor Safety

World Patients Alliance



**Location**

Global



**Target group**

Children ages 3-14



**Budget**

\$40,000  
(2024-2025)



**SDGs**

SDG 3 (target 3.8),  
SDG4 (target 4.7),  
SDG 10 (target 10.2)

## Synopsis

Offer children early exposure to patient safety concepts through free, multilingual books, embedding safer healthcare awareness across schools and communities.

## Program description

Patient safety is a pressing global concern, with the World Health Organization reporting that 134 million adverse events due to unsafe care occur annually in hospitals in low- and middle-income countries, resulting in at least 3 million deaths. As one of the leading causes of death and disability worldwide, it is crucial to address these issues early on. By educating children about patient safety principles, we can help establish a culture of safer healthcare practices for future generations.

In response to this urgent need, the Doctor Safety partnership with the World Patients Alliance developed a 5-part series of free children’s books to promote patient safety – educating young readers and supporting families to engage in safer care from an early age. The initiative was led by Laís Junqueira, Elsevier’s Quality, Patient Safety and Innovation Manager.

In 2025, the project expanded its international reach through conference presentations, academic endorsements, school integration and large-scale distribution – combining expert engagement with grassroots support and educational access.

## Goals

- Increase awareness of patient safety among children through accessible, age-appropriate educational materials.
- Engage experts and professional audiences to amplify dissemination through healthcare and academic networks.
- Expand multilingual accessibility to ensure global reach.
- Integrate patient safety education into school curricula to foster long-term cultural change.

## Activities and milestones

- Presented the project at the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) Conference, distributing approximately 800 copies to global healthcare leaders.
- Secured formal academic endorsement from the Academia Nacional de Medicina of Colombia, including an official recommendation and launch event.
- Presented the books to Rio de Janeiro's Ministers of Culture and Education, who advocated for disseminating the books through their clinics and school system.
- Distributed 6,000 books through expert audiences, six times the original target of 1,000.
- Expanded availability from 2 to 9 languages, with four additional translations in progress.
- Integrated the books into three school systems, including curricular use at Khemara School in Cambodia and schools supported by Naidvar Trust in Ghana and Kenya.

## Looking ahead

The expansion of the Doctor Safety books into nine languages and integration into diverse school curricula demonstrate the project's sustainability and adaptability across contexts. Distribution efforts continue to scale, with an anticipated 15,000 additional printed copies supported through philanthropic donations.



### Impact at a glance



**6,000**

books distributed through expert audiences



**9**

languages available



**3**

school systems actively using the books





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