



RESEARCH4LIFE COUNTRY CONNECTORS

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

**Creating a tailored approach to networking,
promotion, research cycle and information skills
building throughout the country and region.**



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Executive Summary

The vision for Research4Life's future direction transforms from one-way donation to reciprocal engagement to enable diverse and rich scholarly exchange. The aim for 2030 is to significantly increase participation of researchers from lower income countries in the global research community. Research4Life remains committed to supporting local research networks in their capacity development.

The goal of the Research4Life Country Connectors network project is to provide local interventions to heighten awareness, strengthen capacity of information use and management and build communities of evidence users within national and regional levels.

Overall, the initiative helps in increasing the participation of researchers from LMICs in the global research community and to support local networks in capacity building.

By 2030, we aim to have significantly increased the participation of researchers as both consumers and producers of critical research, providing the necessary capacity building through local networks and partnerships¹

The Research4Life Country Connectors has now been implemented in six countries in its first year with a focus to providing a tailored approach for implementing the Research4Life 2030 strategy in each country and related region. This takes into consideration the existing physical and social infrastructure in each country and region.

Expansion into other countries and regions is planned for the coming year. The project can be scaled by implementing in more regions covered by Research4Life. This allows for strengthening of as many countries as possible allowing them to mature to higher levels of capacities of information use, network support, research quality and quantity.

Introduction

Research4Life (R4L) is the collective name for the five programmes – Hinari, AGORA, OARE, ARDI and GOALI designed to enhance the scholarship, teaching, research and policymaking of the many thousands of researchers, faculty, scientists, and medical specialists in lower income countries. Research4Life provides free or low-cost online access to academic and professional peer-reviewed content through more than 10,000 institutions.

Research4Life has a strong impact on the quality of research, practice, and policymaking in institutions and countries where users are aware and trained in its use. However, the most recent Research4Life User Experience Review shows that many key players in the health ecosystem are simply unaware of the evidence that is available to them through Research4Life. Past pilot efforts have shown that a dedicated country focal point can expand the extent to which Research4Life is known about and embedded in institutions and communities.

The Country Connectors project is designed to work in and with specific countries to promote access to research and the expansion of evidence-based knowledge. In each of the target countries, the Country Connectors work is creating a tailored approach to networking, promotion and information skills building throughout the country. The project launched successfully at the end of 2021

The project objectives are to:

1. Lead local interventions to heighten awareness about Research4Life resources, strengthen capacity of information use and management.
2. Build communities of evidence users within national and regional settings and supporting user communities with local networks and partnerships.
3. Customize research needs and engagement with relevant local

4. partners to boost research capacity. Provide quick access for queries and one on one support in local languages.
5. Engage with local publishers with interest in Research4Life.

Geographical Areas impacted

The Country Connectors programme is working in six countries in the first year of implementation:

1. United Republic of Tanzania
2. Bhutan
3. Ghana
4. Liberia
5. Sierra Leone
6. Kenya

In a majority of these countries the model of partnering with an institution as a Country Connector is being followed. The model of using network organizations in Ghana and Sierra Leone was used due to the sizes of the countries, number of active Research4Life institutions, number of eligible institutions, research status of the country and the strength of the network organization in these countries. This mix shows the tailored approach that is considered beginning from selection.

The selection of the countries is based on a rigorous rubric that considers elements such as investment in research, usage of Research4Life, regional penetration, language, network sustained professional institutions and number of registered institutions amongst other considerations. A balance of three tiers (low-use, mid-use, and high-use) is mixed to help in long term measurement and understanding of implementation approaches for the regions.

Target Groups

The programme is working with researchers, librarians, faculty, post graduate students, legal professionals, local publishers, and key stakeholders. The key stakeholders include technology partners and media institutions.

The cascade target groups are policy makers of central and local governments and clinicians, patients, funders, programme managers, regulators, and science communities in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

The differences in the target groups depend on the gaps and needs in each country. These groups are further divided into subject areas where required and the approaches in working with them differs according to time, specific needs, levels of education and geography. Where possible the use of virtual platforms is incorporated.

Implementation

The final quarter of 2021 and first quarter of 2022 was focused on ensuring the foundational work was done and ready for the onboarding of the countries. This included working on the planning with a review on the work done during the baseline phase in 2018-2019. The following elements were produced in consultation with the UN Programme Managers and the Research4Life Committees:

- Project Theory of Change
- Terms of References for the various Country Connectors models
- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- Rubric for designation of Country Connectors (institutions and associations)
- Country Budgets
- Contractual Agreements
- Workplan templates

In the second quarter of 2022, the target of bringing on board at least three countries was achieved, with the United Republic of Tanzania, Bhutan and Ghana officially signing on with the University of Dodoma, Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences and Ghana Library Association designated as the Country Connector host institutions, respectively. The last two quarters of the year saw Liberia, Sierra Leone and Kenya sign on as the final three countries for the year. This is in partnership with African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU), Sierra Leone Research and Education Network (SLREN) and Moi University, respectively.

Engagement with the Research4Life Committees to better understand their planning and areas of work fitting into local interventions was an ongoing process throughout the year. This evolved to the Country Connectors joining the Committees as members and this is a process that will continue to grow in the coming year. It is key to an efficient implementation process of the key targets from the committees.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The initiative is measured using a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, which covers six key outcomes and aligned indicators. These include specifically:

Outcome 1:

Increased usage of Research4Life

Outcome 2:

Increased publications and presentations among user/ active institutions compared to previous two years

Outcome 3:

Increased local and regional communications on Research4Life

Outcome 4:

Increased local publisher engagements

Outcome 5:

Improved user query resolutions at country level

Outcome 6:

Increased network of country and regional mentorship of connectors

The following Impact Indicators can be incorporated from year two onwards as designated relevant for the particular focus country:

1. Increase in users trained on Research4Life (MOOCs, webinars, Face to face workshops, one on one training)
2. Number of training materials translated into local languages

3. Increase in training modules that support research skills incorporated in training
4. In-house training by institutions
5. South-to-South collaborations
6. Country Connectors partnering with technology partners, publishers, and research institutions to support eligible institutions
7. Institutions updating curriculum and lecture materials
8. Higher quality research

The implementation of the six main outcomes was achieved in 2022, with the exception of the last two countries who joined in the last quarter of the year.

“Research4life has brought tremendous changes in the life of students, staff and lecturers at Njala University, the facilities provide by Research4life has greatly improved research and publication in the university. There has also been great turnaround on student’s project and dissertation by having access to Research4Life resources through the computer laboratory.” Elizabeth Manna, Njala University.

Country Focus

In all the six countries all the planning and foundational work was achieved as part of project implementation with a mix of the following activities:

- Completed Country Workplans for 2022
- Official virtual meetings with the Senior Advisor Capacity Development, Capacity Development team, User Support and Institution Management team, Content Strategy and Policy team.
- Weekly meetings with the Countries Coordinator.
- Segmented and submitted the Research4Life institutional usage files according to High-usage, Low-usage, Lapsed and Non-registered institutions.
- Tested accessing contents of the Nature Masterclass online course.
- Created local WhatsApp groups for user communication.
- Created specific Gmail accounts in standard structure for easy communication to Country Connectors by Research4Life and users.
- Checked the list of registered institutions and contact details and requested some institutions to update their contact details as the previous contacts were outdated.
- Successfully recruited champions (mentees/ambassador networks) for Research4Life.
- Traced and verified new institutions that were in the process of registering for Research4Life.
- Shared the Research4Life Publishing and Research Communications (PRC) webinar series and the availability of Nature Masterclass on-demand training shared through social media.
- Identification of the local publishers (continuous).
- Wrote and published an article on the partnership in the university bulletin.
- Started planning for participating in a national event.
- Started planning and communication for visits to lapsed institutions in Dar es Salaam.

United Republic of Tanzania

The University of Dodoma is the designated Country Connector host in the United Republic of Tanzania. It appointed two staff members (Dr. Grace Msoffe and Agatha Mashindano) from the library to lead as Country Connectors in the project implementation. United Republic of Tanzania was the first country of implementation, joining on 29 March 2022.

The Research4Life Country Connectors participated in the 17th Tanzania Commission for Universities Exhibitions. The higher learning institutions, research institutions, students, researchers, and regulatory and professional bodies from within the country come together for this in the event in the Dar es Salaam region. Users interested in the Research4Life programme had the opportunity to see how the content can be searched and downloaded and other features offered by the Research4Life programme. The institutions that were not registered on the programme were also assisted in registering.

In addition, the Research4Life Country Connectors visited some of the institutions that are located in Dar es Salaam, previously identified with low usage and those that had lapsed in usage. Fourteen (14) institutions were reached during the institution-to-institution outreach. During the visits to the

institutions, various issues were addressed and observed, including understanding the challenges leading to low usage or non-use of the Research4Life programmes. Furthermore, the institutions were requested to update their contact information.

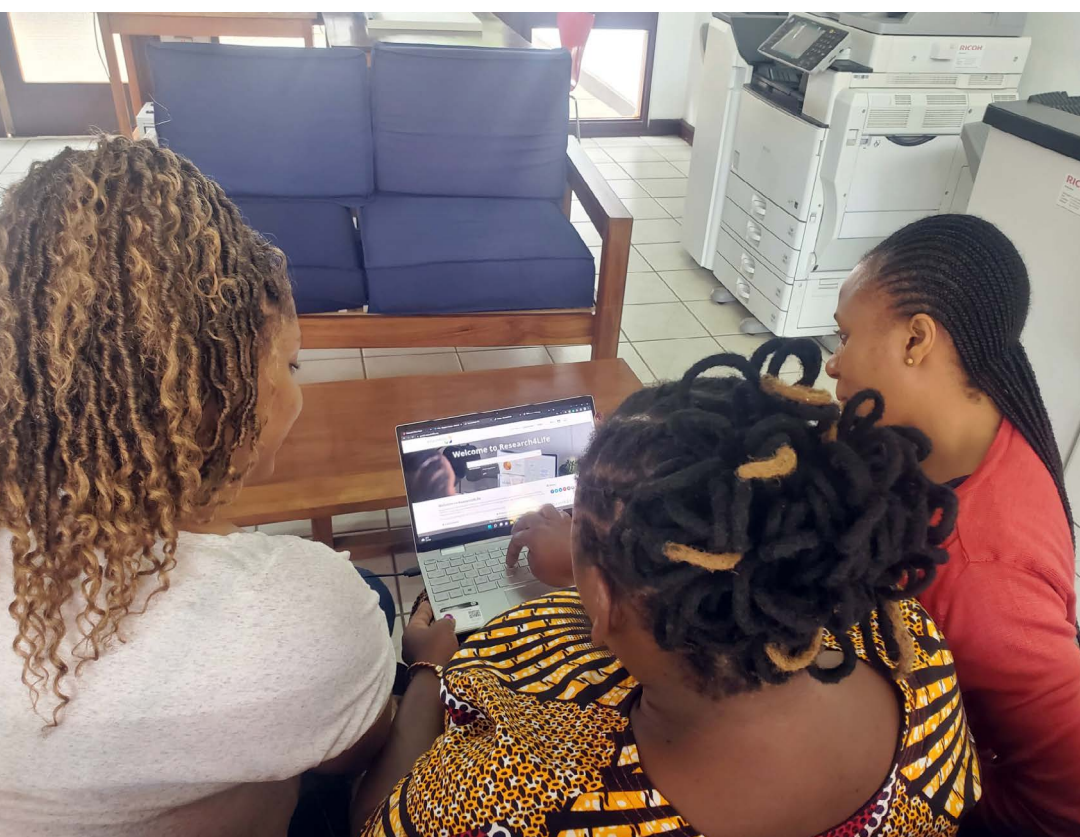
The Research4Life Country Connectors helped identify volunteers to do content verification while at their institutions. One of the volunteers have started to work with the content verification team.

During the last two quarters, the Research4Life Country Connectors assisted institutions and individuals in using the Research4Life programmes, especially in accessing the Scopus Database. This reduced the HelpDesk user queries. Further, the Country Connectors communicated with registered institutions requesting them to update their contact details as the previous contacts were outdated. The communications were done via email, WhatsApp, and text messages. As an outcome of this communication, twenty-four institutions updated their contact information, and these were shared with the Research4Life HelpDesk. The activity of communicating with institutions is continuous throughout the year.

Furthermore, through email and social media, the Research4Life Country Connectors managed to run the Call for Ambassadors to apply for the Research4Life Advanced Master Course to potential eligible individuals and encouraged them to participate in the course.

The Research4Life Country Connectors identified and selected thirteen (13) ambassadors who participated in the Research4Life Advanced Master course. The Research4Life Country Connectors and the identified ambassadors participated in the Advanced Master course during 20-22 September 2022.

Agatha (Country Connectors) One-one outreach with librarians in the United Republic of Tanzania





RESEARCH4LIFE PARTNERS WITH UDOM TO BOOST INFORMATION USE IN TANZANIA

An article in the University of Dodoma bulletin

access to over 150,000 leading journals, books, and other resources in the fields of health, agriculture, environment, technology, and law through more than 10,000 institutions.

Research4Life offers access to publications such as

The development of a Communications and Marketing Plan was key for United Republic of Tanzania. This was done with assistance from the Research4Life Marketing Team during the Advanced Master course. This led to a hundred percent of reshare, customization and production of content for marketing and outreach. Direct engagement with the local publishers started in the last quarter of the year, with formal introductory letters supported by the Research4Life Content Strategy and Policy Committee, being distributed to the local publishers. The sharing and promotion on local platforms such as WhatsApp groups, emails, and word of mouth about the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global webinar, had a high response rate. These communication platforms continue to be used in assisting institutions and individuals using the Research4Life programme.

In the last quarter the Research4Life Country Connectors conducted marketing and outreach in the Arusha region and reached low users and un-using institutions. There were two main objectives that the Connectors accomplished from this activity:

- i. Reach out to lapsed and low-usage institutions in the Arusha region

The Connectors reached out to the lapsed and low-usage institutions in the Arusha region. During the visits to the institutions, various issues were addressed and observed, including finding out why there was low usage or why they were not using the Research4Life programme. In addition, the Connectors managed to obtain information on institutions' publications.

- ii. Marketing and showcasing Research4Life resources during the COTUL Events through presentation and hands-on practices.

The Research4Life Country Connectors engaged with the professionals who participated in the COTUL conference, workshop, and Annual General Meeting. Various library and information science stakeholders, researchers, and directors of libraries participated in the COTUL events from 7th to 11th November 2022. The presentation on the Research4Life programme and a training session on discovering e-resources through the Research4Life programme

were conducted during the events. The participants had practical hands-on sessions (learning by doing). During the sessions, the participants were able to explore how to use Summon search, how to use content search and explore various Journals, Books, Reference Sources, etc., and how to explore various databases such as SCOPUS and Dimensions. This presentation increased the awareness of Research4Life resources among the participants. Furthermore, the sessions enabled participants to discuss the challenges they face in using and accessing Research4Life in their institutions.

During the COTUL events, three unregistered institutions were identified and assisted in registering. These institutions were Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU), Military College of Medical Science, and St. Augustine University Mwanza. Institutions that faced specific challenges were assisted, and the challenges were resolved. The assisted institutions include the State University of Zanzibar, the Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, and the Institute of Social Work. The challenges faced by these institutions were shared with the Research4Life helpdesk and resolved.

Furthermore, Research4Life Country Connectors visited four (4) institutions that were identified as lapsed institutions. The institutions include; the Institute of Accountancy Arusha, Tengeru Institute of Community Development, Tumaini University Makumira, and Arusha

University. During the visits to the institutions, various issues were addressed which had led to non-use. This included the skills to access, lack of awareness and infrastructure challenges.

There was low awareness of the Research4Life programme, especially at Tumaini University Makumira, Tengeru Institute of Community Development, and Arusha University. The librarians in these institutions were oriented on how to access Research4Life. They were also taken through the marketing tools and approaches. Two institutions reported challenges with usernames and passwords. The challenge was reported to the Research4Life helpdesk and resolved.

The main challenges that are facing many registered institutions include unreliable internet connection and low awareness of how to access and use the Research4Life programme.



COTUL workshop training on discovering e-resources through the Research4Life Programme





Research4Life Workshop 2022: College of Science and Technology, Phuentsholing, Bhutan

Bhutan

Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences is the host institution for Bhutan, joining on 5 May 2022. The institution appointed two Country Connectors Dr. Chenchu Dorjee and Phuntsho Norbu to lead the implementation.

The first Research4Life Country Connectors project outreach was done for the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). The presentation was attended by the Director General of the Department of Academic Affairs, the Chief of Programmes, Teaching and Learning Divisions, RUB, and the Head of RUB college libraries. One of the direct outputs was a discussion to promote Research4Life in RUB colleges and the participants expressed the need for more support from Research4Life to enhance their capacity and skills to teach their users.

The Research4Life partnership with Jus Mundi was communicated with Jigme Singye Wangchuck Law School (JSWLS), the only law college in the country. The ambassador from JSWLS helped to spread the news across the law school. The ambassador also ran a Research4Life training with a special focus on the GOALI programme. The ambassador and the Country Connector are in regular communication, as planning is underway for a workshop to include faculty, post graduate

students and some of the practicing professionals.

The call for participation in the Advanced Master Course to potential ambassadors was popular and this was coordinated by the Country Connectors. A selection of the ambassadors to join them was key in helping identify and build on the network of future trainers and advocates of Research4Life.

In the Faculty of Nursing and Public Health at RUB, new students joined for the new academic year in August 2022.

A weeklong (two-hours each day) Research4Life training was held with three batches of students pursuing Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery, Bachelor of Public Health, and Nested Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery courses. The students of the first two batches are in-service students who have been working for a minimum of five years.

Many of them had not heard of Research4Life and the trainings benefited them to make use of scientific resources during their study period. The third batch of students are pre-service students who are pursuing an additional one year after their diploma course. Their fourth year is focused mainly to develop research proposals. The R4L resources will help them locate and synthesize relevant articles to write literature reviews for their proposals.

The ambassadors in other colleges were reminded to sensitize their users about Research4Life. Working with and on behalf of the Country Connectors, many of the ambassadors have presented in their respective colleges. The ambassadors were provided with resources and any support they required. They have represented the Country Connectors beyond expectation as the Country Connectors were not able to visit each college as planned, due to the road closures with the rainy season, especially in the third quarter.

The development of the Country Communications Plan was accomplished with

the guidance given by the Communications and Marketing committee during the Advanced Maser course. Marketing and outreach ramped up in Bhutan during the last two quarters. The Country Connectors maintain a list of contact details of all the participants who attended the Digital Access to Research workshops in 2019. This contacts database keeps growing and is used to provide updates and news on Research4Life, and to help resolve queries. Local institutions are encouraged to contact the Country Connectors if they have any difficulties in accessing the Research4Life programmes.

All the updates of Research4Life shared on its official website and social media are re-shared with the contact points through the official Country Connectors accounts. Furthermore, a flyer was designed with a customization to the culture to promote the project and was shared on the Faculty of Nursing's official Facebook page. The flyer and Research4Life's introduction video from YouTube were shared on the same page given the faculty is one of the oldest and most reputable health institute in the country. It currently has more than seven thousand likes and over eight thousand followers. This will increase outreach to more audiences and can reach a growing audience.

The notification of the Nature Masterclass Online Courses in eligible countries, was shared with all the registered institutions. There were some access issues which the Country Connectors worked on with the helpdesk to resolve. Separately, the local publishers have been identified and will continue to be added to the growing list. A few publishers were engaged during the period, with a focus on alignment to the new Research4Life strategy.

The updating of contacts continues to be done and the Country Connectors initiated activating IP-based access for campus-based institutions especially in colleges where there are students in boarding facilities. Currently 4 out of 10 colleges have managed to activate their IP-based access successfully.

The Research4Life capacity development workshop for tertiary institutions in Bhutan was conducted at the College of Science

and Technology, Phuentsholing, from 29-30 December 2022. The trainers were Phuntsho Norbu, Country Connector, Bhutan, Prof. Lenny Rhine, Senior Advisor Capacity Development, and co-chair Research4Life Capacity Development Committee, and Chhime Rinzin, Ambassador and Library Assistant of the Faculty of Nursing and Public Health, Bhutan. Kimberly Parker, Hinari Programme Manager joined remotely to give deeper insights on the new Research4Life strategy.

Twenty (20) individuals attended the workshop from nine tertiary institutions of Bhutan. The participants consisted of 17 females and 3 males. All the participants were library staff from the various colleges of the Royal University of Bhutan, Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan, and Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law. There is a lack of professional librarians in the country which makes it key to provide capacity building for those working in the libraries. An initial group of professional librarians are currently in countries outside Bhutan pursuing their studies.

Bhutan has no institutional repositories, and this gap was further highlighted with the launch of the ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis database. An innovative collaborative project has been conceptualized with United Republic of Tanzania to help build institutional repositories in Bhutan.

Ghana

The Country Connector lead institution in Ghana is the Ghana Library Association (joining on 16 June 2022) which appointed three members to lead the implementation, namely Dr. Richard Lamptey, Amponsah Eric Amoahful, and Miriam Linda Akeriwe. The three are based in three different regions of the country, which was a strategic decision by the Ghana Library Association Executive Council, to allow for widespread and more localized engagements. These represent the Southern Sector, Middle Sector and Northern Sector of the country.

The orientation of the Country Connectors, meetings with the Research4Life committees and support to develop planning documents

were achieved. The call and selection of ambassadors for the Advanced Master Course was achieved. After the course, the Country Connectors in turn, appointed nine In-Country Ambassadors strategically selected from various institutions to assist in the project delivery. The ambassadors are from the three sectors within the country. The Country Connectors are planning with the sector ambassadors to visit the various institutions within their sectors. The network is gradually collating contact details of librarians in the various institutions enrolled and providing one on one training with users.

In the last quarter, the following institutions received one on one support with various access challenges, which were resolved:

- i. Ghana Institute of Physicians and Surgeons, Accra
- ii. School of Ophthalmic Nursing, Korle-bu, Accra
- iii. Accra Technical University
- iv. Regentropfen College of Applied Sciences, Bongo, Upper East Region
- v. Bank of Ghana Library (first-time registration from a branch of the government)

The Country Connectors participated and presented the project at the Ghana Library Association (GLA) conference from 24th - 25th November 2022. An online form was distributed during the conference to solicit data on institutions to help understand awareness of their registration, use, and challenges. This was also extended to the GLA mailing list to enable participation from the general membership of the GLA.

Research4Life Country Connectors also had a presentation at the Open Access Resources workshop for 96 Librarians and Tutors from 75 health training Institutions in Ghana - 4th - 6th October 2022 at the Computer Science Lab, College of Science, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

One of the Country Connectors presented the project at the CARLIGH / EIFL workshop for Institutional Repository Librarians from 29th - 30th November 2022. These efforts are

intended to advocate for support of research capacity by management and policy makers of institutions and associations. This is key as Ghana migrates to Group B status in 2024, and institutions will need institutional support for subscriptions.

Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, a network association has been engaged as a Country Connector and the alignment of the network's strategy with the Research4Life strategy is of interest for implementation. The Sierra Leone Research and Education Network (SLREN) joined as Country Connector host on 27 July 2022.

The usage of Research4Life in Sierra Leone is low and a few focused efforts over the years have been made in the country. This extends to new institutions over the past five years not having any awareness of Research4Life. The Country Connectors did a survey to understand user awareness and invite interested institutions to register. Six institutions immediately expressed interest in registering.

The institutional computer laboratories are the most accessible facilities within the universities because of the free access to Internet and other facilities. These facilities are accessed by more than 200 hundred people a day including students, staff of the university and even teachers from the various secondary schools. The following procedures have been established at Njala Campus to improve awareness and build skills of use:

1. The Research4Life link has been installed on all computers, making it a default link on the Chrome and Opera browsers
2. The E-resource link has been given to every lecturer to be used on their personal computers and training has been provided to help access the link and search
3. Research4Life training was conducted with three volunteers working in the computer laboratory. They in turn continue to train new students on Research4Life

4. Lecturers are being asked to give new students some orientation programme which includes access and use of Research4Life and its importance to learning and research.

As part of the drive to promote Research4Life in the University of Njala, in November 2022, Deans and Heads of academic departments were invited to attend the Research4Life awareness training workshop. The participants were introduced to the content portals to access evidence-based resources for curriculum development. The Research4Life training account was used for the participants to access the content portals, as many participants did not know their institutions' login credentials. The Deans and heads of department now play a significant role in promoting Research4Life in their respective institutions/organizations. They have since reported that advocacy programmes and training on access to the content portals were conducted for their users, especially for postgraduate students.



The participants of R4L awareness training Workshop, Njala University Auditorium



The participants of Conference of Vice-Chancellors & Principals Meeting

At IPAM, University of Sierra Leone, Country Connectors have been able to train two new staff who joined this year and registered for the Research 4Life MOOC 7th ed. Master Course. Three ambassadors completed the course and were awarded certificates.

Two of the Country Connectors are working in the library and provide an information literacy course for all first-year students and Research4Life is a major module. One on one training continues in the host institution and several lecturers have shown interest in learning more since the implementation of the Country Connectors project.

Local and regional communication about Research4Life

The Country Connectors have created a WhatsApp group to promote Research4Life in universities, colleges, and schools. Furthermore, weekly, or monthly updates on how to access Research4Life resources are communicated via the University Radio FM 92.2, the university newsletter, websites, Twitter, and Facebook accounts.

The use of Research4Life resources was promoted at the Conference of Vice-Chancellors and Principals meetings to get buy-in of from the leaderships of universities, the Tertiary Education Commission, and the Ministry of Technical and Higher education.

Country Connectors have also actively promoted the use and access to R4L resources at the regional West and Central Africa Research and Education Network (WACREN). WACREN leadership has requested for a collaboration with R4L to promote and rollout R4L resources to the WACREN community. The Sierra Leone Research and Education Network (SLREN) will work closely with WACREN to pilot R4L resources for universities in member countries.



There is a relatively low level of research activity in Sierra Leone, particularly of that which reaches academic journals. The important research being done in Sierra Leone rarely becomes part of the global body of scientific knowledge because of a lack of skills for negotiating the complicated process of publishing. The improvement of access needs to be accompanied by skills training for researchers and journal editors in writing, research communication and publishing. In this case, in response to the poor access to Internet around the country, Country Connectors are working with researchers to adapt online courses to develop courses that could be downloaded and used offline.

Country Connectors will also endeavour to engage local publishers in early 2023. The Connectors and Research4Life will explore supporting the publishers in indexing and hosting their journals to be represented in the Research4Life portal. By supporting the building of skills and brokering relationships, Sierra Leonean journals can eventually be included by Research4Life. Many reports and grey literature produced in Sierra Leone risk being lost due to difficulties in publication and a lack of institutional or national repositories. This means important knowledge is not being shared, or used and could potentially be duplicated. This literature needs to be kept, and needs to be shared, either institutionally or nationally; even internationally. The creation of a Sierra Leone platform using journals online software may be a way to increase the visibility of research coming out of Sierra Leone.

A dedicated WhatsApp group has been created to improve communication between Research4Life users in the various institution. The general email address for users will be

Staff and Students using Research4Life in the Library and ICT Lab, Njala Campus, Sierra Leone

updated with new users. An incident response database is being developed for 2023. This database will be used to record all queries relating to the use of R4L online resources. The Country Connectors will communicate with all the registered institutions to verify and update their contact points' email details.

Increased network of country and regional mentorship of connectors

Institutions in Sierra Leone are exploring the implementation of institutional repositories. Currently, there is limited expertise and no experiences of implementing institutional repositories. With support from SLREN, a meeting was set up between the WACREN member institutions in Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria to share experiences and expertise about implementation of institutional repositories. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana have experiences with institutional repositories as they have implemented one in their university and help other organizations. The Research4Life Country Connectors of Sierra Leone want to get support from them for implementation. Country Connectors, through SLREN have also approached WACREN for capacity building in the development and hosting of institutional repositories for research institutions in Sierra Leone.

The announcements of free access to ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global database and its webinar were shared to all the focal point users. They were reminded to share the announcement to their networks. More engagement is anticipated between the Research4Life Committees and Country Connectors in Sierra Leone to promote the use of the ProQuest database by Sierra Leonean researchers.



Liberia

The African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU) is the Country Connector host in Liberia, joining on 3 August 2022. The head of the library, Stephen Browne was appointed to lead the project implementation on behalf of AMEU. Another staff member from the ICT department was also tasked with assisting in the project implementation. The Country Connectors have met with a majority of the Research4Life Committees to help understand how they can work better in implementing the workplans of each Committee. The WHO Regional Office and Liberia Country Office have shown commitment and support to the project. The WHO Country Office has met with the Liberia Country Connectors, co-facilitated in a workshop, and continues to liaise on the implementation work.

The usage of Research4Life in Liberia declined over the past three years. The focus in Liberia is to boost usage, while strengthening the social and physical infrastructure for the user institutions. It is also key that as many institutions as possible are registered to provide access. The marketing of Research4Life at a local level was pursued by direct email, calling and one on one meetings.

Multiple notifications were distributed to higher education institutions that were not registered with Research4Life. As a result of this work, two new institutions in Liberia have been registered.

The Country Connectors ran a call for participation in the Advanced Master Course in September 2022. Six ambassadors were chosen to attend the course. The ambassadors finished the training and are now actively promoting Research4Life their institutions. They are expected to conduct advocacy programmes, and training in particular for postgraduate students. One of the ambassadors is based at the University of Liberia which has over twenty-five thousand students. The University of Liberia has the only Law School in Liberia, the School of Pharmacy, a Medical College, an Engineering College, and an Agricultural College that stand to benefit from concentrated efforts.

Research4Life Training 2022, Liberia



In the last quarter a workshop was held with Public Health and Nursing students from five institutions and colleges. This was a mix of government agencies, colleges, and private institutions. The workshop was attended by lecturers, public health experts, senior students, librarians, and nurses. The Country Connectors led the training with support from Olivia Dennis from the WHO Liberia Office. This was further supported virtually by Kimberly Parker who focused on getting the participants to understand the current Research4Life strategy and Prof. Lenny Rhine who facilitated key sessions.

The Country Connector made concerted efforts to understand and engage the local publishers, starting with the AMEU Interdisciplinary Journal. The Country Connector has been appointed as one of the editors for the AMEU Journal, which will be published in December 2022. The first issue of the journal will be a significant milestone that will improve local publications. The Journal has about 15 articles from both local and foreign researchers. The identification of more local publishers is underway, with plans to build their capacities, enable their visibility and provide local networks through the Country Connector project.

Access to good bandwidth is a challenge with 19% of Liberians using the Internet consistently. The nation does not satisfy the affordability standard set by the UN Broadband Commission, according to research by the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI). While the top 20% of earnings typically spend 8% of their monthly income for 1GB of data, the

bottom 20% pay a shocking 47.56% of their income, which is significantly higher than the 2% target. In addition to the expensive cost of access, connections' quality and dependability present a problem. With barely 5% of its population having access to broadband internet, Liberia is one of the least connected nations in the world. Additionally, where access is possible, it is too expensive for the typical Liberian, many of whom depend on little to no outside assistance. The poor Internet connection situation and few available skilled information professionals are contributing factors to the low usage of Research4Life in Liberia.

The Country Connectors have started engagements with the local Internet Service Provider and the Research and Education Network to strategize on these challenges and find ways to bridge such digital divides.

Kenya

Moi University has partnered with Research4Life to host the project work, joining on 30 November 2022. It appointed three staff to implement the work namely Prof. Joice Baliddawa, Prof. Mabel Nangami and Dr. Isabel Esebe. The three have a mix of teaching, research, and library management experience. Although joining late in the year, the Research4Life Country Connectors have begun work on the project activities already.

The Country Connectors went through the project orientation, met with Research4Life Committees, and developed their planning documents. The Country Workplan was completed, and the Country Connectors continued to meet weekly with the Project Coordinator and twice with the Advisor Capacity Building.

Kenya is a Research4Life Group A country. Registration data indicates that Kenya has 153 institutions subscribing to Research4Life. This information enabled the Country Connectors to familiarize themselves with the Research4Life listed institutions in Kenya. The institutions were categorized according to levels of use. These criteria will be further analyzed to extract the positive and challenging aspects for the four categories. A list of the nonusers is being

completed to enable sensitization activities and awareness raising since awareness plays a key role in usage.

Aggressive advertisement is underway to promote awareness for Research4Life. Research4Life content has been shared on the Moi University website. Contacts with the local media services is being forged at the institutional level. Arrangements are being made to schedule a meeting with the local publishers in the first quarter of 2023.

Overall Expanded Areas

Capacity Development

The Senior Advisor, Capacity Development Prof. Lenny Rhine has been supporting the work of the Country Connectors in building local skills and has been especially focused on enhancing the capacities of the Country Connectors themselves. A Capacity Needs assessment survey was developed and run for all the Country Connectors and Ambassadors. The results were the basis of a Virtual Master Trainer course that was held virtually in September 2022 hosted by ITOCA and in partnership with ITOCA and the R4L Communications Committee. The Master Course was led by the Senior Advisor Capacity Development.

Along with the course, the Country Connectors ran a call for ambassadors in each country, did the review of applications and submitted final names for those ambassadors who joined them for this Master Course. This has enabled the foundation of the wider in-country network for ambassadors based at the institutions who can work closely with the Country Connectors.

The Senior Capacity Development Advisor completed several activities with Country Connectors beginning with Bhutan and ending with Ghana. These included:

- Virtual meetings with five groups of Country Connectors; discussions included initial introduction and overview of training activities and training materials that are available via the R4L website; also discussed was what the Senior Advisor could assist with.



- Each group of Country Connectors was supplied with a list of individuals in their countries that had attended or completed a MOOC or attended a virtual master trainer course. These lists were used by the Connectors to identify individuals that could become Ambassadors in each country.

- A Training Needs Survey was developed by the Project Coordinator and the Senior Advisor Capacity Development.

- The Country Connectors completed the Training Needs Survey about training needs – ranking knowledge in several categories. This was used to identify topics and customize the Country Connectors and Ambassadors’ virtual course.

- Bi-monthly meetings were held with the Countries Project Coordinator for continued planning and implementation.

The Senior Advisor Capacity Development also virtually co-facilitated two workshops in the last quarter of the year, one in Liberia and another in Bhutan.

STM Conference

The Countries Project Coordinator was invited to join a panel at the STM Annual Dinner & Conference in Frankfurt on October 2022. The panel was centred on the power of collaboration and exchanging knowledge on the various constructs to achieve development. Research4Life is a notable programme that has shown the power of collaboration and partnership. The Country Connectors project is expanding new collaborations in the regions and countries to enhance research quality, quantity, visibility and build research capacities.

The complexities of the scholarly communications infrastructure grow more challenging every day. Small and even medium-sized publishers may struggle to replicate services and offer new models around their content. As a result, many players are banding together to share the load. While we are used to industry associations and

member organizations, often in conjunction with vendors, libraries, and other stakeholders, the new collaborations find like-minded organizations working together to build infrastructure, create and disseminate content, and share best practices.

The conference was followed by the Frankfurt bookfair which helped the Countries Project Coordinator, together with other Research4Life colleagues, to engage with new and potential partners.

SDGs Contribution

The project is achieving and contributing to Research4Life’s efforts for the following SDGs:

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Budget

The budget for Year 1 implementation enabled implementation of the project with principal areas focused on putting together the project team (Countries Coordinator, Senior Advisor Capacity Building, WHO Project support and the Country Connectors), administration and project activities. Three countries started in the second half of the year, with fifty percent of them in the last quarter. This resulted in some budgeted line being moved to 2023. Annex 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the budget.

Looking Ahead

Additional Partners

The initiative aims at collaborating and partnering with key institutions at national and regional levels where synergy exists. These include technical, publishing, media, front line community and funding partners to strengthen the impact of the Research4Life Country Connectors work. To date, several partners have been identified for each country, with an objective to collaborate with them at local level. This will be a continuous process with specific types of partners differing for each country and region.

South-to-South Collaborations

The project has seen initial developments in the South-to-South collaborations with United Republic of Tanzania and Bhutan naturally identifying opportunities of strengthening each other's research output and knowledge

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



sharing, at a national level. The Country Connectors in United Republic of Tanzania have collaborated with Country Connectors from Bhutan to support the development of the institutional repositories in Bhutan. This has cumulated into a project and grant proposal to enable this collaboration to start. The process is still ongoing with a need for a funding partner. The Country Connectors initiative will continue to identify and foster research and innovative collaborations across the regions to foster South-to-South collaborations.

Sustainability and Expansion to other regions
Funding will be required to scale the project to more countries beyond the amount currently designated in the original approved proposal. The project also can be scaled by implementing in more regions covered by Research4Life. This allows for strengthening as many countries as possible allowing them to mature to higher levels of capacities for information use, network support, research quality and quantity.

The ideal target is for 80 countries to be engaged through the initiative with 50% in active status and supported, with the remaining 50% in Emeritus or Associate status.

Emeritus status is reached when a country has matured to a level where it can maintain continued progress without a dedicated Country Connector. This is measured using the targets in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Associate status is for those

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





countries who are currently doing well in the main six outcomes of the Country Connector project, despite not having formal Country Connectors.

Conclusion

The Research4Life Country Connectors initiative has achieved local interventions in six countries in its first year of implementation. The collaboration with institutions and associations in the countries is commendable, with a growing demand from other regions eager to join and receive the benefits of this work. The number of local activities, initial outputs and

growing achievement of outcomes indicates the success of working more closely with the users of Research4Life from within our country communities.

The need for growing the reach, improving the research cycle and the research output from the Global South is being accelerated by the Country Connectors' work. The need to support existing countries while expanding to other regions is key to achieving significant impact and ensuring an inclusive, diverse and equitable scholarly communications environment for Research4Life and the broader global community.

Summary of Activities and BUDGET				2021 Expended	2022 Budgeted	2022 Expended	
Project Oversight - Activity 1							
1.1	Project Initiation and Design - 2 months (Consultant .5 FTE)			\$9 000	\$-		
1.2	Oversight of initial 2 countries (.5 FTE for 6 months; FTE reducing thereafter)			\$-	\$40 656	\$40 656	
1.3	Oversight of additional 5 countries (.3 FTE for first 6 months; FTE reducing thereafter)			\$-	\$15 246	\$16 176	Administration of local reimbursements included here
1.4	Oversight of additional 3 countries (.2 FTE for first 6 months; FTE reducing thereafter)			\$-	\$-		
1.5	Oversight of additional 5 countries (.2 FTE for first 6 months; FTE reducing thereafter)			\$-	\$-		
1.6	Travel			\$-	\$5 000	\$3 360	Travel to GPM deferred for 2022
Subtotal				\$9 000	\$60 902	\$60 192	Unspent funds are being redirected to Year 2 Oversight activities
Advice & Mentoring for Skills Building - Activity 2							
2.1	Honorarium			\$-	\$10 000	\$10 000	
2.2	Travel			\$-	\$5 000		Travel to GPM deferred for 2022
Subtotal				\$-	\$15 000	\$10 000	Unspent funds are being redirected to Year 2 CC activities
Country Connectors - Activity 4							
4.1	Honorarium			\$-	\$2 250	\$2 120	Eswatini not paid as agreement never finalized
4.2	Activities			\$-	\$4 500	\$3 835	Several countries launching later in the year took time to prepare workplan activities
4.3	Travel			\$-	\$6 750	\$2 005	Several countries launching later in the year took time to prepare workplan travel
Subtotal				\$-	\$13 500	\$7 960	Unspent funds are being redirected to Year 2 activities
"Overhead for WHO (including administrative costs)"					\$13 410	\$13 410	
Grand total				\$9 000	\$102 812	\$91 562	
Funding Sources							
WHO				\$9 000			
Elsevier Foundation					\$70 000		
Friends of Research4Life unearmarked					\$32 812		

