



RESEARCH4LIFE COUNTRY CONNECTORS
ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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FOREWORD

What exactly is a Research4Life Country Connector? When reading this report on the work of the Country Connectors in 2023, you will come across terms you might find confusing: Country Connectors, Ambassadors, network, host institutions. Each of these means something slightly different, but all of them are part of milieu that this project is trying to create in a country and across regions and beyond.

Research4Life has been delivering access to information (and much more) in low- and middle-income countries for more than two decades, and the Country Connectors project is the culmination of our work to deliver value in countries.

The current Research4Life Strategic Plan envisions a pivot from delivering and supporting access to information to a holistic approach supporting our community of users as both consumers and producers of research. Our overall 2030 strategic direction is to significantly increase participation of researchers from low- and middle-income countries in the global research community. At the same time, Research4Life remains committed to supporting local research networks in their capacity development. In the area of governance, one major objective in the strategy is to achieve equitable participation and representation throughout the partnership. The Country Connector project is the most visible of the partnership's efforts in these areas.

To answer the initial question of this forward, a Research4Life Country Connector is part focal point, part champion, part mentor, part listening post, part role-model, part cheerleader. All these and more form the two-way connections within a country and with the Research4Life partner community as a whole.

With the second year of the project now completed, we were excited to see the embedding and expansion steps that are part of our vision for the Country Connectors. The in-person investigations and interactions have provided valuable and necessary information back to the partnership – such as when our Liberia Country Connector reported on un-using institutions, having found a library being reconstructed (and still lacking its new roof) and another with rationed electricity. We are also seeing extra efforts to reach and doing training in remote regions in countries such as Bhutan. And major network events such as in El Salvador and Sierra Leone. The group is excited about cross fertilization of ideas from one location to another, as when United Republic of Tanzania pioneered some mini grants for their Ambassadors, and Ghana picked up and adapted the idea.

And back to the difference between Country Connectors, Ambassadors, network, host institutions? You'll need to read on to learn more, so settle in and enjoy!

Kimberly Parker

Hinari Programme Manager and Chief Operations Officer
Research4Life

BACKGROUND

The Research4Life Country Connectors project delivers local interventions at national and regional levels, to heighten awareness about Research4Life resources and improve the research quality and quantity in eligible countries. 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.

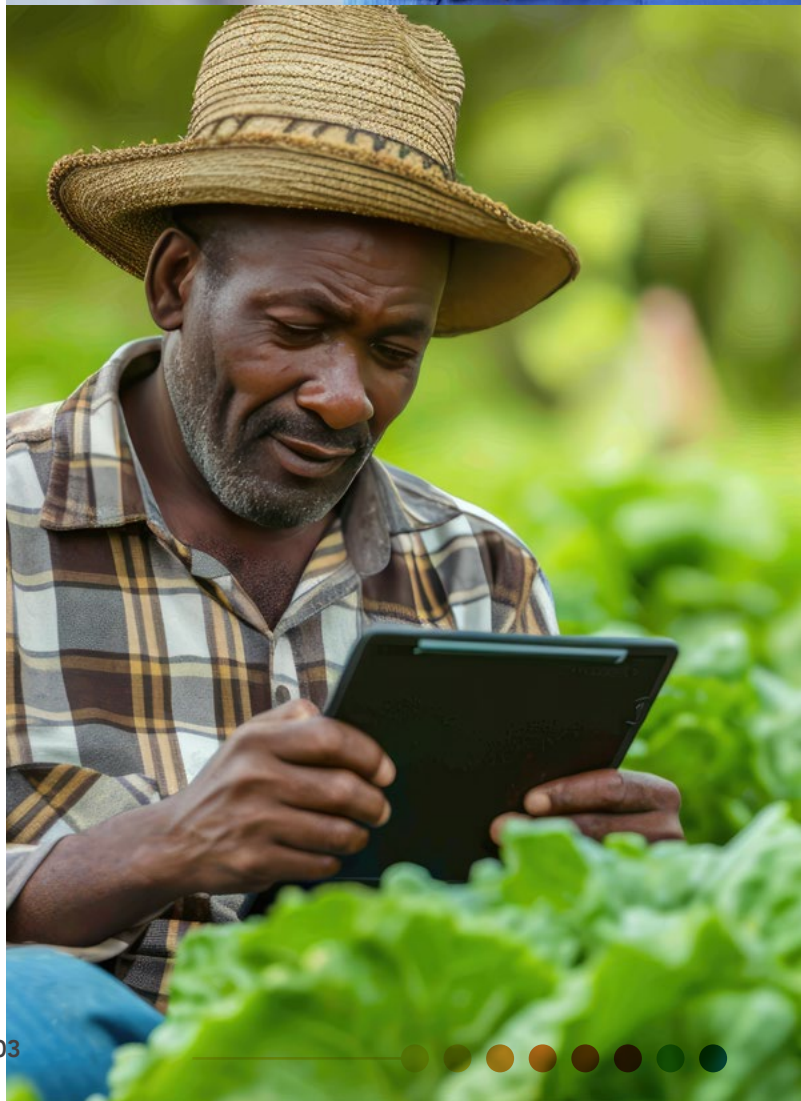
The Country Connectors work is impacting improved research capacities to enable better research quality and quantity. This ultimately improves knowledge economies when research is turned into technology and industry which enable innovations and development in the countries.

The Country Connectors started implementation in 2022 with six countries and has expanded in 2023 to eleven countries, with another being engaged for full onboarding in January 2024. The following countries participated in the programme in 2023:

- United Republic of Tanzania
- Bhutan
- Ghana
- Liberia
- Kenya
- Sierra Leone
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Senegal
- Republic of Moldova
- El Salvador
- Ukraine

The implementation in Libya was delayed due to the disaster of the floods in the country. Libya will be considered in 2024 with consultation of the stakeholders with working experience in the country to confirm their capacity to take on the project at the present time.

The rubric used to select countries joining the Country Connectors considers language, location, professional networks in the country, research support and use of Research4Life, among other aspects. Once this is established, profiles of the institutions in the country are vetted using another rubric which considers type, size, location of institution, current political and economic resilience, structure and policies, access to national networks e.g., associations, age, and status of institution.





INTRODUCTION

The first quarter of 2023 achieved work in both administrative and country activities areas. The annual report for the previous year was finalized in the quarter, and this was a twofold process with a tailored report for Elsevier Foundation (a major fund source) and another for the wider stakeholders including Friends of Research4Life (the collective funding stream). The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was reviewed considering the learnings from 2022 and one outcome was updated. The budget for the year was reviewed and finalized.

The selection process for the new countries was finalized in the first quarter using the Country Selection Rubric. This was a rigorous process which utilized seven main indicators and in consultation from all the UN agencies after a shortlisting of ten countries. The following were confirmed to be joining the Country Connectors project in 2023:

1. Senegal
2. Democratic Republic of Congo
3. Republic of Moldova
4. El Salvador
5. Kyrgyzstan

A grant was awarded by Springer Nature towards one country (Senegal) over the next three years. More partners continue being sought to expand to more countries/regions and to strengthen the work being carried out in existing Country Connector countries. Country Connectors continued to join the Research4Life committees with a growing number now identifying areas of interest and becoming members of additional committees.

The Country Connectors first global meeting and workshop was held virtually in February, with all Country Connectors participating. This enabled deeper knowledge sharing, a review for the previous year and planning for this year. The meeting was held virtually over two days and strengthened relationships within the Country Connectors and opened more avenues for south-to-south collaborations. The chairs of some Research4Life committees also joined the meeting together with the Senior Capacity Development Advisor of the project.

Raising the visibility of research from the low- and middle-income countries is a priority for Research4Life, and this effort expanded working with local publishers in the countries. All project countries identified such publishers, with initial meetings implemented in some of the countries. The collaboration with the Directory of Open Access Journals and the Capacity Development and Content Strategy Committees is aiding the initial efforts of this priority area. A successful 4-week course was developed and run for local publishers from Bhutan, Ghana, and Republic of Tanzania.

Building an extended network of ambassadors for Research4Life within the countries strengthens the work of the Country Connectors. In the reporting period, more engagements with the ambassadors and the buildup of more ambassador networks were achieved.

An Associate status has now been defined for those countries who are currently doing well in the main six outcomes of the Country Connector Monitoring and Evaluation, despite not having Country Connectors already. Ukraine was actively working using much of the approach of the Country Connectors model, using their own funding. They signed an agreement to partner with Research4Life as an Associate Country Connector, becoming the first Associate Country Connector and have now been integrated fully into the Connector approach and the network of Connectors.

The Research4Life General Partners Meeting (GPM) in Washington DC was preceded by a one-day Country Connectors strategy meeting where some Country Connectors could join in person and the majority virtually. Those who joined in person were able to participate fully in the GPM, including joining panels, presentations, and engagement with the wider partner communities.

All the countries including the new ones participated in a 3-day Master Course customized annually for Country Connectors. They were joined by country ambassadors and key members from the User Group, thus enabling broader influence and benefit from the Master Course beyond the Connector countries.

The implementation of work in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal, both French speaking countries, facilitates the uptake of research content and in turn knowledge production in more languages. The grant provided by Springer Nature is enabling the objectives of the Country Connectors to be realized in Senegal while impacting the quality and quantity of research in the country and strengthening internal networking within the Connectors as a whole.

The implementation of work in El Salvador marked the expansion of the Country Connectors into Spanish speaking countries and the Americas region.

The Country Connectors have diligently promoted R4L products across diverse platforms, including mailing systems, social media, mass media, WhatsApp groups, and various fora. Collaborative efforts with the association partners continued, leveraging the association's massive lists to disseminate information periodically. This strategic dissemination approach seeks to enhance awareness and participation with wide audiences across the networks they provide.

GENERAL PARTNERS MEETING

The Research4Life annual General Partners Meeting was hosted at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington DC. The Country Connectors internal meeting preceded the GPM bringing together all the countries in a hybrid manner. The major constraints preventing more Country Connectors participating in person were visa issuance. Additional funds for travel sponsorships were received from the American Chemical Society and the Elsevier Foundation and were also sourced from Springer Nature's grant for Senegal and Friends of Research4Life. Only three Country Connectors managed to participate together with the project lead. The internal meeting of the Country Connectors was also open to funders, committee chairpersons, executive council members and other interested partners, keeping the work of the initiative transparent for broader partnership.

The Connector participation in the GPM enabled the countries to exchange knowledge, strategize for the future and communicate closely with the partners observing the meeting. An informal dinner for the on-site Connectors was hosted by Elsevier Foundation before the meeting. During the GPM, the Country Connectors participating in person were able to lead panel discussions, contribute to the plenary sessions and have one on one interactions with the wider partners participating. A progress report of the initiative was given during the meeting and informal interviews also conducted.



Country Connectors, User Representatives, and other key members at the Research4Life Partners Meeting 2023

Outcomes

Increase in New Registrations and Revived institutions

Country	Launch Date	New Institutions -1	New Institutions +1	Revived Institutions -1	Revived Institutions +1	Registration forms submitted -1	Registration forms submitted +1
Ukraine	28-Mar-22	15	299	9	88	30	450
United Republic of Tanzania	29-Mar-22	8	7	7	9	20	20
Bhutan	5-May-22	4	7	2	2	7	12
Ghana	16-Jun-22	14	20	10	13	28	37
Sierra Leone	27-Jul-22	2	4	0	1	2	4
Liberia	3-Aug-22	3	3	0	3	3	3
Kenya	30-Nov-22	25	16	11	19	56	51
Democratic Republic of the Congo	12-Jun-23	9		1		17	
Senegal	28-Aug-23	3		2		7	
Republic of Moldova	1-Sep-23	0		0		1	
El Salvador	10-Oct-23	4		6		7	
Kyrgyzstan							

-1 Signifies 12 months leading up to and including launch date

+1 Signifies 12 months following and starting the day after launch date

Launch date is signature date by the institution on the APS - exception Ukraine where informal communication date is what is noted

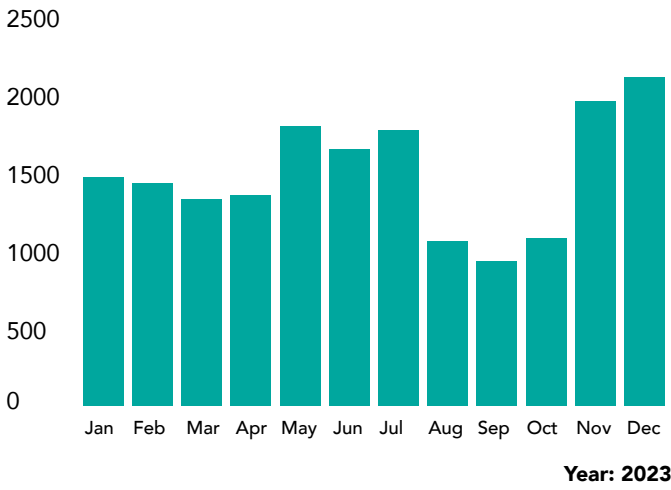
Revivals sometimes derive from email correspondence in helpdesk, so may not always originate from a submitted registration.

Increased publications in a country compared to previous two years

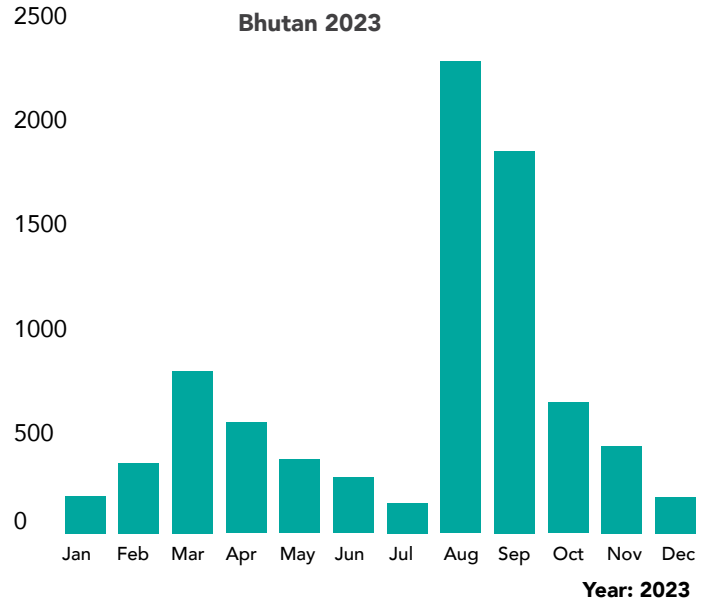
Country	Launch Date	2021 publications	2022 publications	2023 publications	2024 publications	2021 citations	2022 citations	2023 citations
Ukraine	28-Mar-22	37,277	31,277	29,591		231,727	248,486	258,358
United Republic of Tanzania	29-Mar-22	3,262	3,677	3,992		82,959	93,150	96,603
Bhutan	5-May-22	304	304	240		4,561	5,854	6,056
Ghana	16-Jun-22	6,569	7,710	7,740		115,106	143,890	159,670
Sierra Leone	27-Jul-22	391	398	400		8,520	9,801	10,426
Liberia	3-Aug-22	144	170	203		4,543	5,068	5,411
Kenya	30-Nov-22	6,743	6,539	6,747		190,066	209,537	215,094
Democratic Republic of the Congo	12-Jun-23		1,156	1,281			23,061	24,582
Senegal	28-Aug-23		1,486	1,567			33,778	34,549
Republic of Moldova	1-Sep-23		667	789			13,177	13,476
El Salvador	10-Oct-23		561	561			6,991	6,999

Increased usage of Research4Life

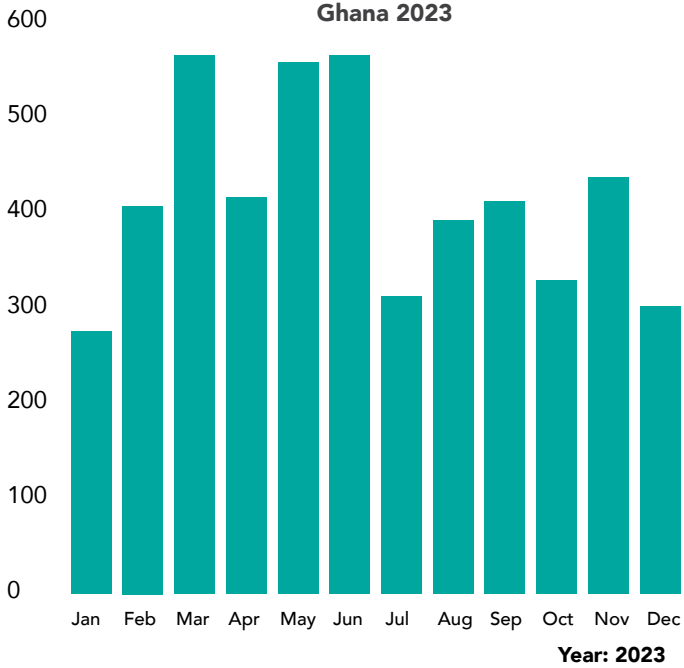
United Republic of Tanzania 2023



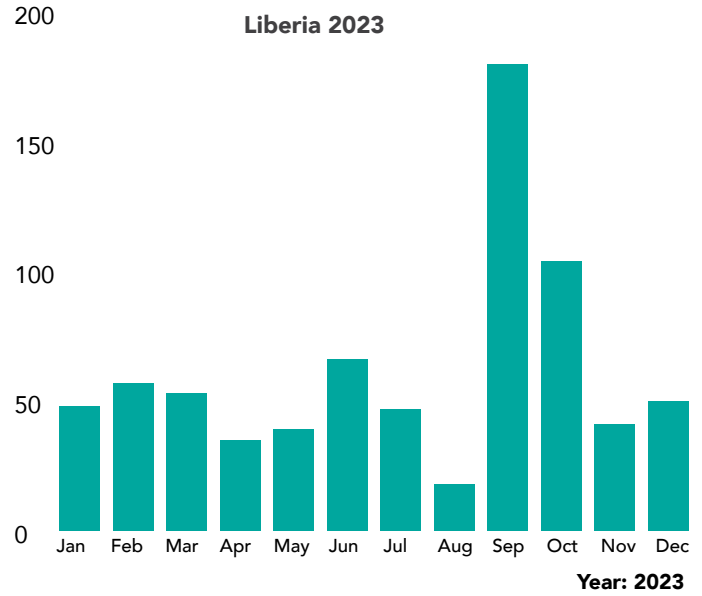
Bhutan 2023



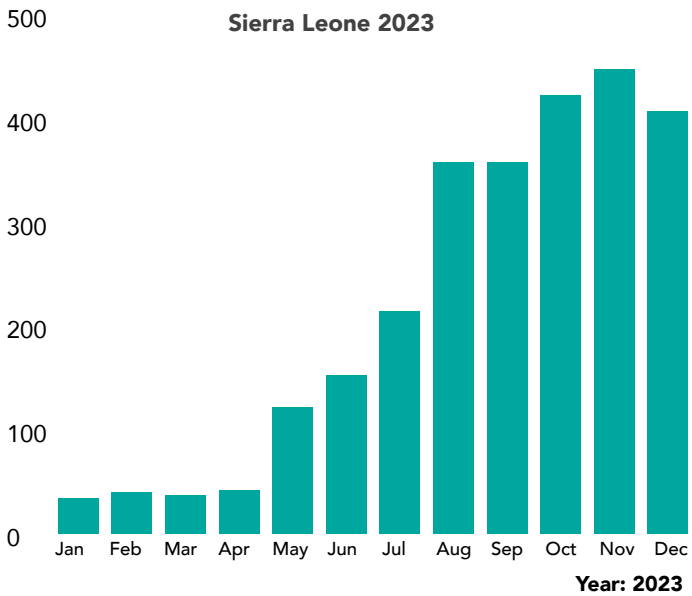
Ghana 2023



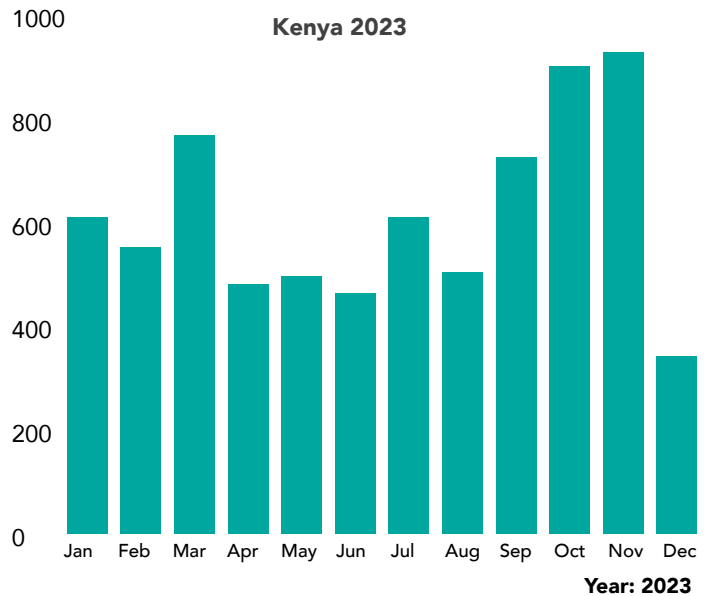
Liberia 2023

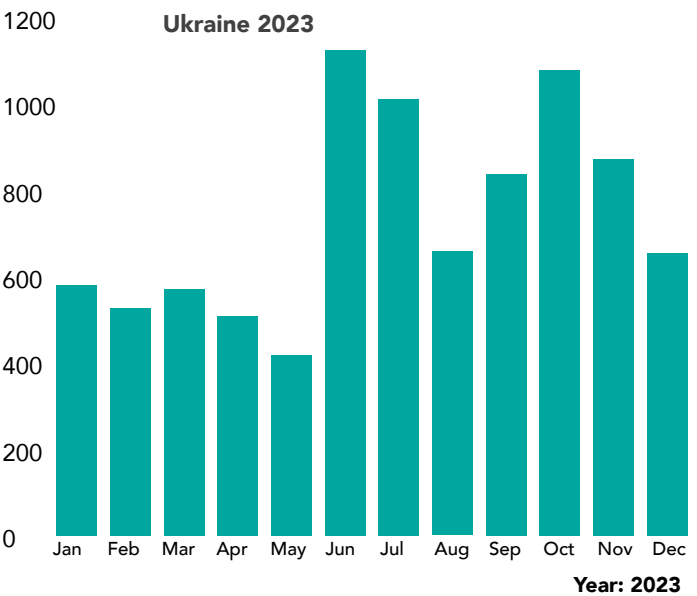
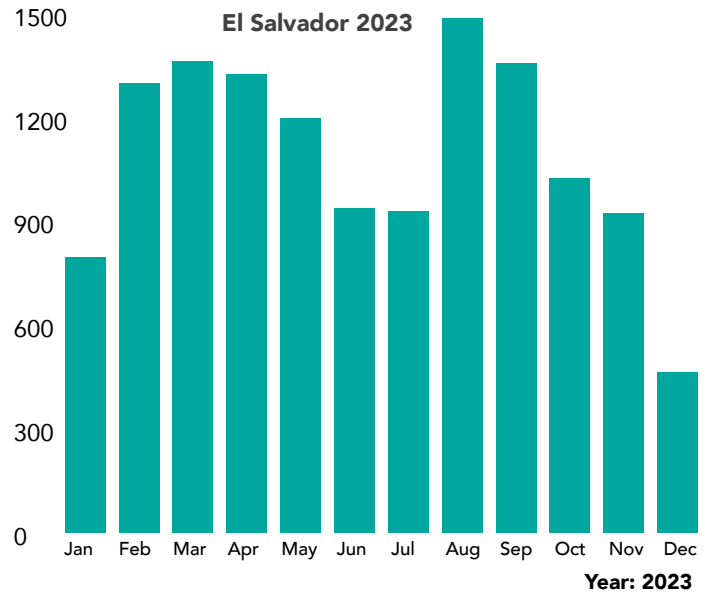
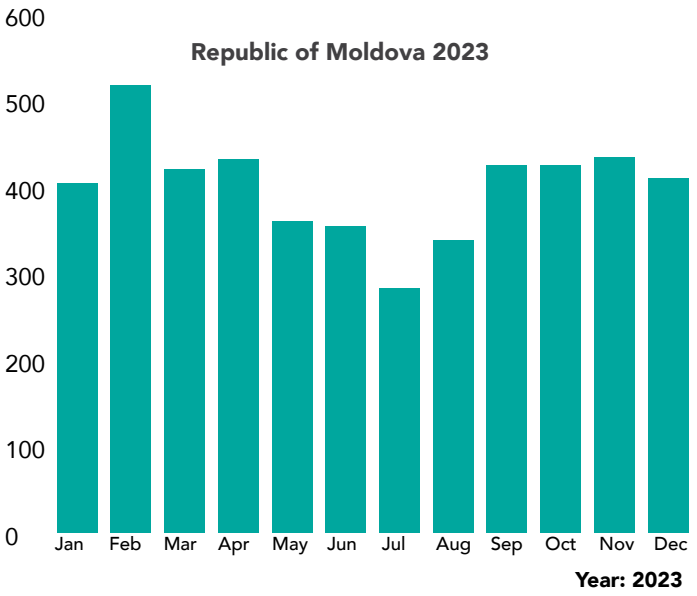
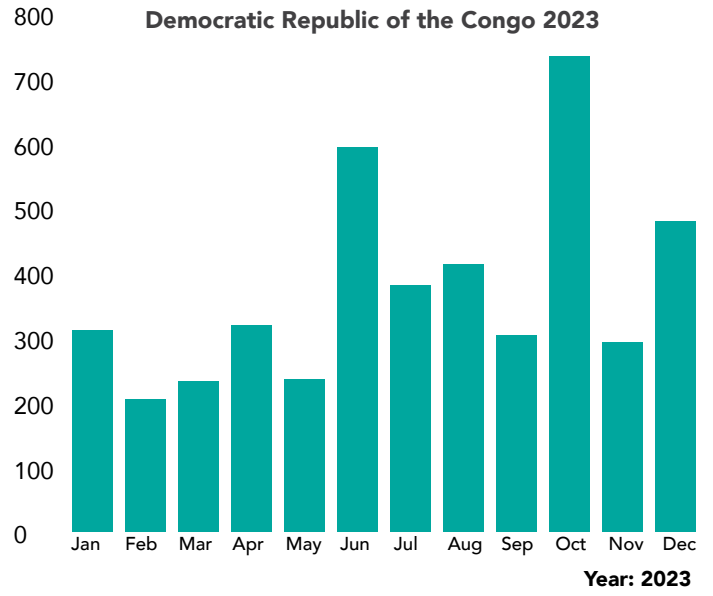
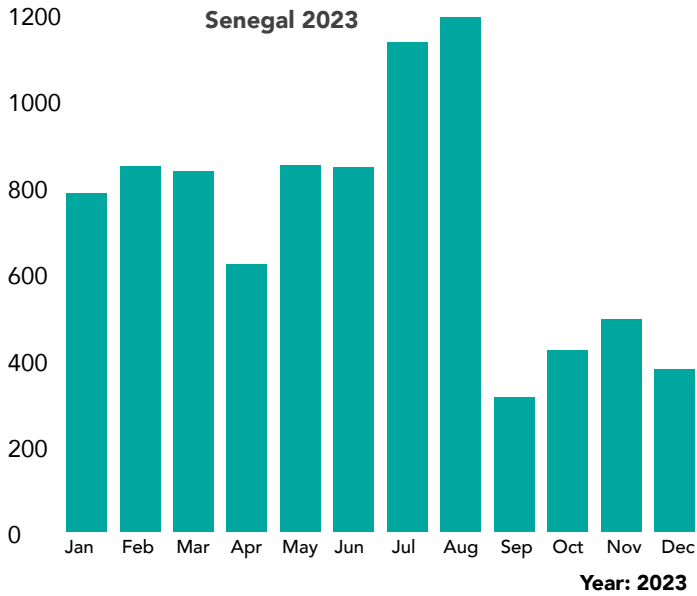


Sierra Leone 2023



Kenya 2023





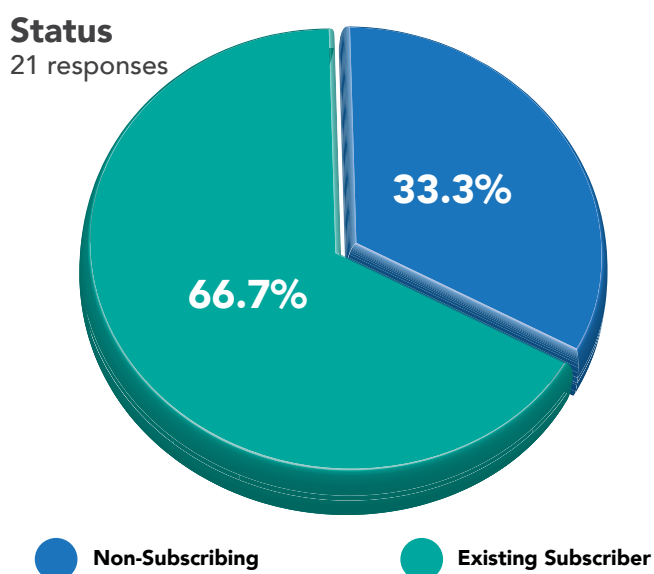
Activities Implementation in countries

GHANA

The partnership with the Ghana Library Association provides an opportunity to reach an extended network of registered and eligible institution. Ghana is a high usage country, vast in geographical size and has a high level of research output.

A User Needs survey enabled the kickoff for the work in Ghana. The survey was used to collate contact details of the officer-in-charge, assess the registration status of the institutions, and to find out their access status (working or not working).

At the time of reporting, 21 institutions had completed the form. 14 (66.7%) of the institutions were "Existing Subscribers" to R4L and 7 (33.3%) were "non-Subscribing."



Some of the existing subscribers indicated that they had access to the Research4Life content, while others noted varied challenges including lack of access, intermittent interruption, and loss of access credentials (Username/Password). Follow-up on the unregistered institutions commenced in the second quarter.

A webinar for librarians on "Registration and Access to Research4Life Content" was run in collaboration with the Ghana Library Association. The main beneficiary group were the librarians from the registered institutions. The webinar ran for one and half hours, with co-facilitation from the Country Connectors, an ambassador, project coordinator and co-chair of the Research4Life Capacity

Development Committee, Lenny Rhine. The webinar enabled productive discussions amongst users on challenges and shared solutions. The ambassador led the skills session together with the Capacity Development co-chair.

A survey was run during the webinar to understand the institutions in depth and collect updated contacts. The general comments indicated that most of the participants hoped for more Research4Life webinars in the future.

"A very good collaboration that has also come in very timely. Thanks to the organizers."

"Wish this webinar is being organized every month"

"More webinars on the use of Research4Life at least four times in a year"

"We'll be looking forward to the additional webinars especially the searching among the health training institutions"

Following the challenges identified and reported by the librarians and participants in the User Needs webinar in the first quarter of the year, the Country Connectors cross-checked the status of the related institutions from the Research4Life registration list. All those who had sent in queries via the form were reached via phone to alert them of the status of their institution.

Those who were not registered were encouraged to register. Those unsure of their access credentials were asked to submit the details of the officers-in-charge of the Research4Life account for the necessary support service. During the verification and outreach process it was clear that some complained of access challenges due to their local Internet connectivity. There is need to find local technical partners to support Internet connectivity.

To increase the network of country and regional ambassadors, the Country Connectors reached out to librarians of academic and research institutions in Ghana through the Ghana Library Association. About 40 of the librarians agreed to serve as Research4Life ambassadors in their institution. The Country Connectors collaborate with these librarians to help organize institution specific capacity building training for students and staff.

Theme

Registration and Access to Research4Life Content

Research4Life in Collaboration with the Ghana Library Association is organizing a webinar on registration and access to Research4Life contents. The webinar is intended to highlight issues relating to new registrations and access challenges among already registered institutions.



LENNY RHINE
co-Chair of the Research4Life Capacity Development Team



BLESSING MAWIRE
International Development Consultant with Research4Life



RICHARD BRUCE LAMPTEY
Research4Life Country Connector - Ghana



MIRIAM LINDA AKERIWE
Research4Life Country Connector - Ghana



ERIC AMPONSAH AMOAFUL
Research4Life Country Connector - Ghana

- ▶ **Introduction to Research4Life**
- ▶ **Support Services**
 - Reconnection for already registered institutions with access challenges
 - The Country Connectors
 - Access to frequently asked questions
- ▶ **Publishing in Research4Life Enlisted Journals**

- ▶ **Registration - How institutions can join and use Research4Life**
- ▶ **Promoting institutional Journals through Research4Life**

Target Group:
LIBRARIANS



29TH MARCH, 2023
W E D N E S D A Y

Meeting ID: 369 506 9449



12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Passcode: Lenny

Transition Webinar for Ghana and Kenya

As part of the preparation towards the transitioning of Ghana and Kenya from the "Group A" (free access) to "Group B" (fee-based) category in 2024, a transition webinar was organized on 15th June 2023. The webinar discussed the implications of the transition of the two countries. The webinar was coordinated by the Country Connectors Lead, Blessing Mawire and facilitated by Lenny Rhine, Co-Chair, Research4Life Capacity Development Team, Kimberly Parker, Programme Manager, Hinari, and Jenna Sharpe, finance assistant, WHO.

Two hundred and two (202) people registered for the webinar, which indicates that a good number of people got to know about the webinar and had therefore become aware of the forthcoming transition. Seventy-eight (78) people participated in the webinar from the two countries.

The webinar focused on the following:

1. What is Group B and why are Kenya and Ghana moving
2. The basics of the fees and payments
3. Questions about Group B and how the finance works
4. Capacity Building
 - a) Training material and support
 - b) Interaction with discovery when unpaid
5. General Questions

The webinar was beneficial to help users in the two countries appreciate the implications of the transition and to help prepare for it.



Research4Life Eligibility 2023

Research4Life Transition Webinar: Ghana and Kenya

You are invited to a Research4Life webinar

The webinar is intended to discuss issues relating to the Research4Life eligibility criteria ahead of Ghana and Kenya's transition from Group A (Free Access) to Group B (Fee-Based Access)

When: Jun 15, 2023, 14:00PM CEST - Amsterdam, Berlin, Rome, Stockholm, Vienna
12:00PM GMT - Ghana
15:00PM EAT - Kenya

Target group: Academic and Research Institutions in Ghana and Kenya

Register for the Webinar: <https://forms.gle/j6Fx2D9ZhgFCqpG7>

Join the Zoom Webinar: <https://who.zoom.us/j/96807246893>

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www.research4life.org



Research4Life Local Publishers Engagement: Ghana

You are invited to a Research4Life webinar

Research4Life invites journal editors and their editorial team to a webinar to discuss how to improve the capacity and visibility of their journals by including it on the Research4Life platform

When: July 13, 2023, 12:00PM GMT

Target group: Journal Publishers and their Editorial Team

Register for the Webinar: <https://forms.gle/qtCfBpHpHagblyka>

Join Via Zoom: <https://who.zoom.us/j/91042662407>

Meeting ID: 910 4266 2407 Passcode: Connect@23

Facilitators



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Communications and local collaborations

One of the Country Connectors, Dr. Richard Bruce Lamptey, had a live media interview on the 'Joy News' section of the 'AM Show' on 'Joy TV' on 9th May 2023. Joy TV is one of Ghana's oldest and most popular TV/Radio stations. The news item highlighted the importance of research in formulating and implementing policy. It also noted the financial challenges researchers from low- and middle-income countries face in accessing research resources. Dr. Lamptey was given the opportunity to speak about the benefits of subscribing to Research4Life.

Dr. Lamptey touched on the benefits of using Research4Life. He also bemoaned the lack of awareness among students and researchers. He further informed the audience that Research4Life is collaborating with local publishers in Ghana to make their content available via Research4Life to help increase the visibility and awareness of local research. He encouraged the general audience, students, researchers, academics, and faculty members to use the Research4Life resources. He also encouraged librarians to register their institutions for access to Research4Life. The interview is available at: <https://youtu.be/BTJgtJPAfXs> - from 3:40 minute to 6:11 minute of the news section.

LOCAL JOURNALS

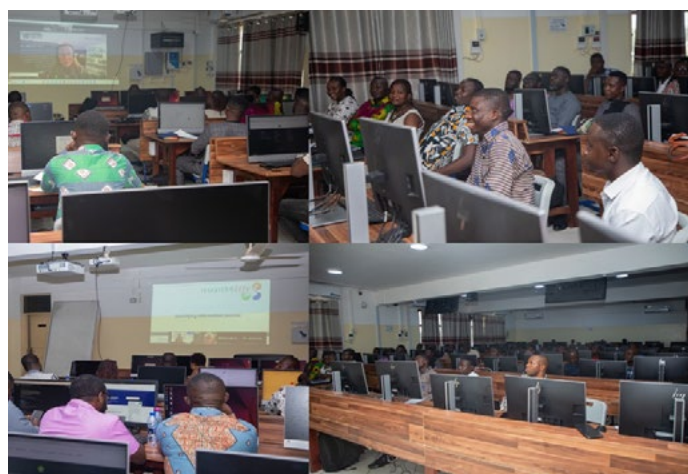
A list of 36 local journals was collated, with the contact details of the Editor-in-Chief and their team. In addition, a contact mailing list of about 150 editorial team members was collated to enhance the outreach work. A local publishers engagement webinar was run on 13th July 2023 as part of the initial engagements with the local publishers.

Through this engagement, local journal publishers will have an opportunity to build their capacities in publishing and add their journal content to Research4Life. The benefits of the journal being featured on the Research4Life platform include increased journal awareness, attracting new authors, reviewers, and editors to your publications, and providing a wide range of accessibility and retrieval of the articles.

A noteworthy highlight was one Ghana Country Connector's participation in the July Research4Life General Partners Meeting in Washington DC, USA. The Connector advocated against relocating Ghana from Group A to Group B, citing the country's economic challenges reported by the World Bank. The subsequent partner decision to defer Ghana's move to Group B status has been communicated to librarians and researchers in Ghana, eliciting positive responses.

A two-day in-person workshop for Librarians of the Colleges of Education in Ghana was organized during 14th – 15th November 2023, at the College of Science Learning Commons of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The aim of the workshop was to equip the librarians of the Colleges of Education with 'knowledge of the information resources on the Research4Life portal, and the necessary skills to access these resources to support teaching and learning in their institutions'.

The workshop was sponsored to cover the workshop fee, snacks, lunch, venue, and logistics for participants. Transportation and accommodation cost was borne by the participating institutions. In total, the workshop expected fifty (50) participants from the fifty (50) Colleges of Education across the country. Forty-seven people registered online for the workshop. However, thirty-nine (39) participants from thirty-eight (38) Colleges of Education attended the workshop.



The Research4Life Hinari Programme Manager joined the introduction and welcome online via Zoom to give an overview of Research4Life and its strategy and encouraged participants to reach out for support through the Country Connectors and ambassadors. The Senior Advisor Capacity Building, also joined via Zoom to present and educate participants on some sessions. One of the ambassadors Mr. Edward Borteye was one of the facilitators of the workshop organised for Colleges of Education librarians.

Some of the comments from participants:

Vivian Amponsah (Librarian, Christian Service University College, Kumasi)

Attending this workshop, "I have learnt about the various databases Research4Life has for all institutions. I am glad that my institution can freely use these resources to improve research in my environment. I am also glad that this workshop served as a train-the-trainer for me to be able to impact to others, especially to my students and lecturers. Thank you Research4Life, thank you KNUST for hosting us. We wish that this will continue to happen so that many of our colleague librarians have this great experience to also impact this Research4Life resources knowledge to others. Thank you so much.

Jonathan Seyram Agbamey (Librarian, Fosu College of Education)

"I would like to express my profound gratitude to Research4Life for the opportunity I have been given to go through a number of lessons, most especially the rich resources available to the various colleges of education. What I have really learnt is the skills to search these resources. I hope that when I go back to my institution, I will organise workshops regularly to market these resources to the tutors as well as the students to help them develop their information retrieval skills and make very good use of all the great resources that are available to us. Thank you once again Research4Life for such an experience".

Benjamin Saah (Librarian, Saint Louis College of Education)

"for the past two days, we have benefited from enormous education that will be very impactful in our libraries and our colleges at large. We have learnt from the resources that Research4Life have made available for our educational institutions free of charge. We have also learnt a lot of skill on how to use Mendeley, Research4Life and how to use Google Scholar and many others. I think that these knowledge and skills that I have gained will be very useful to my college community. When I get back, I intend to organise workshops and seminars for students and faculty as well as administrators to buy into these skills so that we can be better for it. We are very grateful to Research4Life and like Oliver Twist, we ask for more. Thank you very much".



Martha Baidoo (Ag. Librarian, Wiawso College of Education)

“Indeed I would like to show gratitude to Research4Life for organising such a workshop for us from yesterday and today. I have learnt a lot as a librarian, researcher and as a lecturer as well. I have learnt a lot about the numerous resources Research4Life is having. It has enhanced my capacity in searching databases that when I go, I am going to impact on the tutors and the students as well, so that it will help them in their research, presentation, and information literacy skills. We are so grateful to Research4Life. We are expecting that much of these workshops should be organised for us”.

Albert Buondau (Assistant Librarian, McCoy College of Education, Nadowli)

“I am very happy to be here. For the past two days, I have been exposed to the rich resources that Research4Life are having. And the presenters have taken us through a lot of it and we have seen how rich it is, and we really

appreciate it. I hope that this workshop has put me in the position that I can go back to support my college with these rich resources. The workshop has also given me the opportunity to interact with my colleagues and network with my senior colleagues. I will use this opportunity to say thank you very much to Research4Life for putting this workshop together for us. I would also like to thank my college Principal for making it possible for me to be here. When I get back to my college, I am hoping that I will replicate this programme so that it will benefit the staff and the students and my college community. Thank so much Research4Life, I am very grateful”.

Presentation at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Ghana Library Association

The Country Connectors partnered with the Ghana Library Association to organize a pre-conference workshop at the Annual General Meeting of the association. The AGM was held at the Koforidua Technical University campus, on 23rd - 24th November 2023. The workshop was aimed at taking advantage of the diverse presence of librarians and information professionals and scholars from across the country to introduce and promote the Research4Life Resources.

Research4Life Mini Grant Workshops

The Country Connectors partnered with some ambassadors to implement work using the mini grants and organised three workshops for selected target groups across the three sectors of the country (Northern Sector, Middle Sector, and Southern Sector). Each Country Connector partnered with an ambassador at their location to select a target group, venue, topics and supporting with the facilitation of the programme. A total of 126 participants were trained from the mini grants.



LIBERIA

Liberia is a small coastal country in West Africa. One of the key challenges in the country is lack of developed infrastructure, especially road infrastructure. This makes it imperative to have local support to enable continued outreach work and support. In March 2023, the Research4Life Country Connector for Liberia embarked on outreach activities to 11 education and health institutions in 3 of Liberia's 15 political subdivisions. This was supported by a staff of the WHO Country office. The 7-hour road trip to the Margibi County enabled an understanding of some of the challenges and gaps experienced by the institutions.

As examples at Cuttington Junior College, the Librarian informed the team that the lack of Internet connectivity and computers were the primary reasons for the low usage of Research4Life. At Booker Washington Institute, the Library was being renovated with support from the U.S. Embassy.



Booker Washington Institute in Kakata Library – under renovation

The team headed to Cuttington, Bong County. At Cuttington electricity was being rationed with the library allocated two hours of electricity a day. The library at Cutting University had no Internet access at the time of the visit. There were more than 20 desktop computers in the lab, but these have not been used for more than a year. At the Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI), there were no administrative staff onsite due to strike actions. CARI is registered with Research4Life. It has some of the best agricultural researchers and extensionists in the country. At all the institutions visited, the team met with executive management, trained users, and potential users, and identified the challenges and gaps.

The importance of collaboration with local, regional, and international stakeholders is key for Liberia due to the excessive lack of physical infrastructure and skills. This helps in building the social infrastructure to support the physical gaps and achieve better research ecosystems. The period saw collaborative capacity building events with the Institute for Global Health at an international level and locally with the JFK Medical Centre and the



Officials of Cuttington University



Liberia Library Association.

The capacity building events increased knowledge and skills among medical and health professionals from the following institutions:

- John F. Kennedy Medical Center
- Tubman National Institute of Medical Art (TNIMA)
- Liberia College of Physicians and Surgeons
- AM Dogloiti College of Medicine
- University of Liberia College of Health Science

Outreach continued in institutions with low or no usage to ascertain challenges. The institutions include:

- The United Methodist University
- Adventist University of West Africa
- Luis Arthur Grimes School of Law
- Cuttington University Graduate School
- AME Zion University



Collaborative training with Philip Walker of Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health for medical professionals at JFK Medical Center (June 19-23, 2023).



The Country Connector attended an engagement with medical lecturers and researchers to identify their publishing needs in collaboration with the Vanderbilt Institute of Global Health



The user queries continue to be addressed and specifically there was engagement with senior students at AME University on relevant literature searches. The lecturers from Cuttington Graduate School of Professional Studies were also helped in smaller groups with relevant information resources. There were also engagements with medical lecturers at AM Doglioti College of Medicine at the University of Liberia.

In increasing local and regional communication on Research4Life, the Country Connector participated in a training needs assessment with the Liberia Library Association on June 22, 2023. This was in collaboration with Mr. Walker and his Team from Vanderbilt Institute of Global Health to share knowledge and experiences and to identify opportunities for librarians in Liberia. The User WhatsApp Group has been maintained with additional members joining.

In July, Research4Life Liberia conducted outreach activities at two prominent institutions: the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) and the United Methodist University. These outreach activities' main objective was to identify challenges librarians face in utilizing Research4Life. The insights gathered from these interactions were utilized to develop strategies aimed at increasing the overall usage of Research4Life, thereby contributing to a more robust research culture in Liberia.

Furthermore, on September 7, 2023, the Research4Life Liberia Country Connector extended support to the College of Business at Stella Maris University. The focus of this training was dual-pronged, aiming to enhance both the usage of Research4Life and the overall publication output of research from the College of Business.

On September 16, the Research4Life Liberia Country Connector organized a comprehensive training session lasting an entire day, targeting 70 research supervisors at the AME University Graduate School. The primary focus of the training was to enhance participants' understanding of fundamental research principles, enlighten them on potential sources of research grants, and familiarize them with essential reference management tools, specifically Mendeley and Zotero.

The training aimed to equip research supervisors with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their research capabilities. The AME University Graduate School served as an ideal venue for this initiative.

Topics Covered were as follows:

1. Research Fundamentals: Providing a solid foundation in key principles of research methodology.
2. Sources of Research Grants: Identifying and accessing various channels for research funding.
3. Reference Management Tools (Mendeley and Zotero): Practical guidance on utilizing these tools for effective reference organization and citation.

These initiatives collectively underscore the commitment of Research4Life in fostering a research-friendly environment in Liberia, enhancing the skills of research supervisors, and addressing challenges faced by librarians in utilizing valuable research resources. The ongoing efforts seek to strengthen the research landscape in Liberia and promote a culture of continuous learning and knowledge dissemination.



The last quarter of the year had some interruptions due to the October and November 2023 general and presidential elections. There were many security worries surrounding the elections. Most institutions and offices were partially shuttered due to political and security concerns.

As the elections concluded, an outreach to the Southeast region of the country was done. Due to poor road infrastructure, the Country Connector had to travel through neighboring Cote d'Ivoire to reach Harper and Maryland, in Southeastern Liberia. The trip took three days by vehicle. While in Harper, the Research4Life Country Connector visited Tubman University, where colleagues from FAO gave a Zoom presentation to the university's senior administration with a focus on AGORA, AGRIS, and AGROVOC. The Southeast region has the potential for agricultural research with Tubman University having a big agriculture college, and the Liberian government also operating an agriculture research and demonstration center at Harper.



Stephen S. Browne embarks on small flight from an outreach activity in Harper.

Summary:
 Number of workshops/trainings: 5
 Number of institutions visited: 15.
 Number of persons trained: 150.



Grace Msoffe (Country Connector) teaching on Research4Life while the PhD students do practical sessions during the Research4Life training at University of Dodoma.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

The visibility of the research from the United Republic of Tanzania is key to the country's economic growth and this is also supported by the Research4Life strategy. The Country Connectors kicked off with a first quarter plan and communications plan in alignment with the M&E framework and the understanding of the country. The Country Connectors focused on engagements with the local publishers to achieve this and in collaboration with the Content Strategy and Policy co-chairs, sent letters to local publishers regarding local journals in Research4Life.

This was used to invite the local publishers to an initial meeting on understanding Research4Life. On 17th March 2023, the Research4Life Country Connectors conducted virtual local publishers meeting and eight (8) local publisher institutions participated in the meeting. The meeting aimed to create awareness about the Research4Life programme and inform the publishers about the benefit of joining the Research4Life programme. It was co-facilitated by the Country Connectors and the Project Lead Coordinator.

On 23 March 2023, the Country Connectors created awareness about Research4Life programmes for Ph.D. students at the University of Dodoma, which was attended by 28 students. The Country Connectors also communicated with registered institutions requesting them to update their contact details as the previous contacts needed to be updated. The communications were done through email, WhatsApp, and text messages. As an outcome of this communication, institutions updated their contact information; the information was sent to the Research4Life help desk for updating the official records

of Research4Life. The activity of communicating with institutions continues.

Furthermore, through email and social media, the Research4Life Country Connectors disseminated and shared the Research4Life MOOC 8th edition announcements with the community, encouraging individuals to register and participate in the course.

A call for mini grants was done in the United Republic of Tanzania for all registered institutions. This boosted usage, increased skills building, helped update contact details, built the ambassador network, and extended the marketing and outreach of Research4Life.

A total of 27 applications were received and reviewed in May and the selection concluded using specified criteria. Three eligible institutions were selected for the award:

- Sokoine University of Agriculture
- Zanzibar University and
- Moshi Cooperative University

The awardees of the Research4Life mini-grants implemented capacity-building at their institutions through various training sessions in mid- and late-June. Support for the awardees of the Research4Life mini grants in implementing capacity building at their institutions was done continuously.

- On the 14th and 16th of June, the training on Research4Life was conducted at Zanzibar University. The objective of the training was to equip participants with information literacy skills and awareness of navigating the Research4Life collections. As the outcome of this



training, 55 participants (thirty-three were academic staff and twenty-two were postgraduate students) of Zanzibar University were trained.

- On the 21st, 22nd and 30th of June, the training on Research4Life was conducted for students pursuing a Bachelor of Information and Records Management at the Sokoine University of Agriculture. Since the students have some baseline skills in information literacy, this training focused on increasing their knowledge of navigating on Research4Life databases effectively. For instance, the students learned collection-specific browsing and searching. The training workshop involved two settings: presentations in lecture theatres and a hands-on computer laboratory session. The training was arranged in two settings due to the large class size; it was not easy to have adequate seating space in computer laboratories for all students simultaneously. As the outcome of this training, 142 students were trained on Research4Life.

- On 13th June, Moshi Cooperative University staff and postgraduate students were trained on using Research4life resources.

During this period, the dissemination of the announcement for the Research4Life Webinar on Introduction to Systematic Review was done with the Tanzanian institutions and messaging on various platforms to promote registration and participation in the webinar. The Webinar was conducted on 28th June 2023. Several participants from Tanzania attended.

Research4Life Country Connectors actively participated in the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology Teaching Colleges' electronic resources workshop from 18 to 21 July 2024. This four-day training workshop aimed to enhance access to electronic resources for tutors, librarians, and ICT personnel from all Teachers Colleges in Tanzania. The workshop, held at Morogoro Teachers' College, saw the participation of 174 individuals from 35 Teachers' Training Colleges nationwide. Due to this training, 35 teaching colleges were registered for the Research4Life programme.

Research4Life Country Connectors participated in the third national symposium of library services, book fair, and reading festival organised by the Tanzania Library Services Board from 19-21 September 2023. The symposium, held in the Mwanza region, aimed to promote writing talents, publishing activities, and cultivate a reading culture through innovative library services. Participants included librarians, researchers, educational institutions, research institutions, publishers, and students. As a result of the symposium, 8 institutions were assisted in registering for Research4Life.

The following quotes were obtained from participants who attended training at Zanzibar University, quoted saying:

“Now I am comfortable navigating all Research4Life collections”.

“This training will enable me to conduct my research comfortably”.

The Research4Life Country Connectors participated in the Research4Life Master Trainer Course for Country Connectors and in-country Ambassadors from 9 to 11 October 2023.

Dissemination efforts were undertaken to encourage researchers to register for the Research4Life Publishing and Research Communication (PRC) Short Course 2: “Writing Winning Grant Proposals: An Immersive Flipped Course” scheduled from 4th October 2023 to 19th November 2023.

The Research4Life Country Connectors participated in the Research4Life DOAJ Publisher Course on 3, 9, 17 and 24 November 2023. They also participated in the fifth COTUL scientific conference and workshop. This was a five-day conference and workshop for librarians from various Tanzania institutions held in Singida, Tanzania, from 6 to 10th November 2023.

The Research4Life Country Connectors organized an online meeting with Tanzania Research4Life ambassadors



Dr. Grace Msoffe presenting about Research4Life to the participants of the national symposium on library services, book fair and reading festival in Mwanza.



on 7 December 2023. Ten librarians from various institutions attended the meeting, which focused on the experiences, challenges, suggestions, and opinions of Research4Life ambassadors concerning the access and use of Research4Life in the United Republic of Tanzania. Several ambassadors could not join the meeting due to the holidays and examination period in the academic institutions.

The work in Tanzania has been focused on the low usage institutions, while working strategically with the high usage institutions in advancing advocacy, advanced research skills and working with the national associations to pair the two groups.

SIERRA LEONE

Research4Life has been a tremendous help within various registered institutions over the past year. It has provided access to a large volume of online educational resources and information for lecturers and students, especially students who have been using these resources for different projects and course work.

Njala University established communication with unregistered universities for implementation of a

Research4Life workshop in order to increase usage statistics. Aiming to increase the number of registered institutions (universities and colleges) for Research4Life, the team identified a local contact person at each institution that they will be working with in the library and the ICT Unit. Njala University computer lab has worked collaboratively with the library department to enforce the usage of Research4Life resources.

A series of meetings with lecturers and students to introduce them to the use of Research4Life resources also took place. Research4Life resources are accessible to everyone within Njala University. In every meeting, lecture, conference, and workshop held within the university, the use of Research4Life resources is included as part of the programme of activities to increase awareness (e.g., Open Distance learning (ODL) policy development workshop and the development of ODL with Open Educational Resources (OER) workshop recently held in Njala University for all Deans, Head of Departments, and key stakeholders.

The Institute of Public Administration (IPAM), University of Sierra Leone recently introduced a new course which is important for increasing the use of Research4Life resources, addressing emerging trends and needs in research, and promoting academic excellence and



growth. The introduction of this new course will expand the range of research and disciplines offered at IPAM, providing students with more opportunities to explore different fields of study.

There was a strategic focus on identifying focal persons in unregistered institution within Sierra Leone.

A WhatsApp group for all Country Connectors and users was created and makes communication easy. The WhatsApp group is used to send useful information and discussion issues only related to Research4Life activities.

The year had a focus on marketing and outreach, while also equipping students in the research years with practical tools on accessing Research4Life content and



Lectures at Njala University on Research4Life understanding related aspects of the research cycle.



The following were highlights of the year:

Research4Life Skills Training Workshop at Eastern Technical University, Kenema

The Research4Life Skills Training Workshop, held on 18 May, was organised to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct effective research. The workshop aimed to provide participants with practical tips, techniques, and resources to enhance their research capabilities.

The workshop was structured into multiple sessions, covering various aspects of research skills and development. It included a combination of presentations, interactive discussions, group exercises, and hands-on activities. The workshop received positive feedback from the participants, who appreciated the practical nature of the activities, the clarity of the presentations, and the expertise of the facilitators.

Institute Of Public Administration (IPAM) Library training for final year students Conducting a training session on the topic, "Guide to Information Retrieval

for a Successful Research and Dissertation" was a useful initiative of the IPAM Library. Such sessions play a crucial role in equipping final year students with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out effective research and produce high-quality dissertations.

The training explored all areas of effective research, including understanding research needs, formulating effective research queries, library resources and databases, citation and reference management, plagiarism, and a deep dive on Research4Life.

UNIMTEC University registration and training

UNIMTEC University was provided with basic training on how to access resources from Research4Life. There was also emphasis on exploring additional features such as citation tools, language options, and ways to save and organize findings, staying informed about updates, new resources, and any changes to the Research4Life programmes by using the official website, newsletters, or announcements.

The third quarter saw considerable progress in the activities of Research4Life, focusing on increased sensitization, outreach, and enforcement within academic institutions in Sierra Leone. Extensive awareness campaigns were conducted in universities and at national conferences. During this period, there were engagements with Vice-Chancellors and Principals of unregistered universities. There were local contact persons identified in each institution for collaboration on Research4Life registration.

The following formal engagements were undertaken within universities and with other stakeholders:

Earnest Bai Koroma University (EBKUST): Meetings held with university administration, faculty, ICT staff, and librarians. The Vice Chancellor instructed the university librarian to register the university. **Central University:** Consultative meetings held with VC and ICT Director; formal registration planned in mid-October 2023.

National Open Science Symposium: The presentation on Research4Life was well-received by stakeholders.

Policy makers, university leadership, academics, ICT, and librarians are now fully aware of R4L online resources in Sierra Leone.

The year concluded with a series of workshops (Central University, Earnest Bai Koroma University (Makeni),



National Open Science Workshop: 23-25 September 2023



Open Distance Learning Workshop, EBKUS

University of Makeni) into late December and a continuation in early January. This was supported virtually by the Country Connector Lead and the Senior Capacity Development Advisor. The year concluded with a series of workshops (Central University, Earnest Bai Koroma University (Makeni), University of Makeni) into late December and a continuation in early January. This was supported virtually by the Country Connector Lead and the Senior Capacity Development Advisor. The year concluded with a series of workshops (Central University, Earnest Bai Koroma University (Makeni), University of Makeni) into late December and a continuation in early January. This was supported virtually by the Country Connector Lead and the Senior Capacity Development Advisor.

KENYA

Early in the year, the team focused on identifying eligible institutions who were not yet registered or not using Research4Life (R4L) resources. These were classified according to the institution:

- Public University
- Professional schools
- Research institutions
- Teaching Hospitals/Health centres
- National Libraries
- Agriculture Extension centres
- NGOs

Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC) was engaged as an institution not using R4L resources. Additionally, the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) was registered for the first time after some outreach work with the institution.

Moi University included a Research4Life link on their library portal for both students and lecturers to be able to access these resources in their studies and for reference, teaching, research, and outreach activities.

Empowering African Universities through Research4Life and Collaborations

Throughout the year, the Country Connectors in Kenya continued to demonstrate the potential impact of local

collaborations with research and academia in advancing research, knowledge sharing, and academic excellence in Africa, through Research4Life.

Five recently completed registrations were supported in the second quarter for the following institutions:

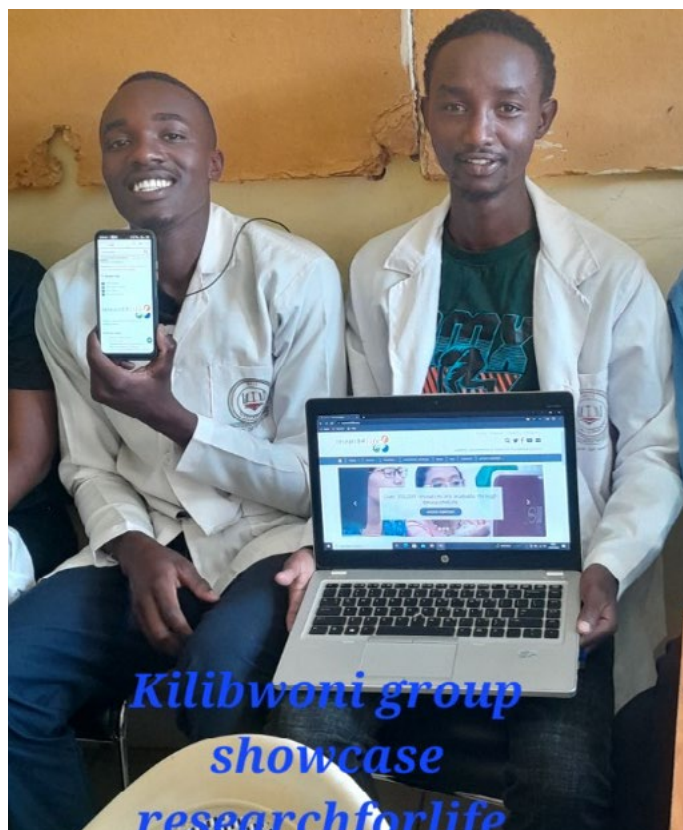
- Kaimosi Friends University
- Centre for Science and Technology Innovation CSTI
- Lwala Community Alliance
- Bureti Technical Training Institute
- Iten County and Referral Hospital

Efforts were made to reach out to institutions that had previously stopped using Research4Life resources to help them utilize them again.

Ongoing endeavors persist in the process of upgrading and sustaining institutional databases for contact information. Interaction was established with the Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Publishers Association during the Eldoret Regional Book Fair in 2023, specifically between May 31 and June 3. The focal point of this event centered around the theme of "Cultivating skills through the medium of Publishing," providing an occasion to connect and raise awareness around the Research4Life initiative for publishers in Kenya.

Additionally, communication has been initiated with the Kenya Library Association regarding a programme for all registered librarians.

The primary focus for the third quarter was to strategically target institutions within Uasin Gishu County and subsequently expand efforts to cover all counties in Kenya.



Students doing their research while in the field using Research4Life with the guidance of Prof. Joice Baliddawa

This strategic approach aligns with the Research4Life initiative's objective to deliver local interventions at both national and regional levels.

In September, R4L conducted presentations at the College Management Board meeting. The audience included the Principal, Deans, and board members. The aim was to sensitize them about the R4L resources, emphasizing how these resources could enhance research quality and output within the institution.

Updates from the R4L General Partners Meeting of 17 July 2023 were shared. Notably, it was highlighted that Kenya remains in the Group A category at least through the year 2024, entitling it to continued free access to resources.

During the College Academic Board meeting in September, presentations were made to the Deans and Heads of Departments. The objective was to increase awareness about Research4Life resources and how they can support teaching and research activities.

Ambassadors were also invited to register and participate in a short training course on "Writing Winning Grant Proposals."

The Research4Life Country Connectors Kenya conducted marketing and outreach activities in lapsed and low using National universities in the final quarter. Using lists from the R4L help desk a total of sixty-two (62) institutions were reached with communication done by email, phone calls, WhatsApp, and even physical visits to the institutions. During this activity, 2 Institutions got registered while some were waiting for responses from the R4L help desk, and contact lists were updated for the database. It was observed that several institutions were registered but un-using because of the high turnover.

In December, a training for librarians using R4L was conducted in order to build a network of ambassadors. One-on-one training was also held for postgraduate students. As part of the video project in collaboration with the Communications and Marketing team, a compilation of a video to show case the impact of R4L on students was completed.

A highlight of the final quarter was an audit conducted to gauge awareness of R4L amongst various institutions. It found that there are approximately 397 Institutions registered with R4L.

Other highlights included attending a R4L Capacity Development Committee Meeting in November, holding a workshop with postgraduate students on R4L access and conducting one-on-one trainings on with identified librarians in order to increase the number of country ambassadors.

BHUTAN

Research4Life was very active in Bhutan in the first quarter, with the following summary of key achievements:

- The Country Connector participated in regular Research4Life committee meetings,
- Dissemination of announcements, news, and information to various contact points,
- Outreach programme – conducted in the eastern districts with three new ambassadors identified,
- A list of local publishers identified,
- Feedback from higher secondary schools' contact points.

Additionally, various higher secondary schools in eastern Bhutan have now registered for Research4Life. A few of the contact points of the schools were engaged on their experiences with Research4Life. They were encouraged to explore presentations and resources available from the Research4Life website. Teachers from schools are part of the communication network, as ambassadors from the two educational colleges in the country disseminate all the information received such as webinars and short courses.

Activating IP-based access for the college was also suggested to prevent misuse of passwords. The processes to activate IP-based access was explained and they were directed to discuss with their ICT personnel. The final decision to activate IP-based access was left to the decision of the college's management or ICT personnel.

The Country Connector is part of the Research4Life Marketing and Communications, and Content Strategy and Policy Committees. During one of the meetings, the Country Connector raised the issue of collection gap especially in business subject area as shared by the users from a business college in Bhutan. The Connector agreed to work with the college and provide the committee with a list of resources required. The Country Connector discussed with the college and a list of business resources required (specific business databases e.g., JSTOR) by the college was reported back to the committee. Sarah Phibbs, the Director of Research4Life Publisher Partnerships, also helped explore the gaps and discussed with a business librarian at Oxford Brookes University. The business librarian recommended Business Source Complete from EBSCO as it includes country reports, market research reports (MarketLine) trade magazines, Bloomberg, and some other academic journals including Harvard Business Review. The committee continues to explore the various options and implications of the expanded content.

The Country Connector shared an announcement of the Research4Life MOOC 8th edition, webinar and news to all the contacts.

An outreach program was conducted for the colleges in eastern Bhutan. It was learnt that the library staff conduct advocacy programs for their users. However, they shared that they lack the in-depth knowledge of Research4Life policy and skills of using all the resources available. They were encouraged to read the license agreement in

detail to know more about the background and policy of Research4Life. They were informed about the availability of self-exploration presentations on the Research4Life website. They suggested that the Country Connectors network project conduct advanced workshops to enhance their skills in providing more reference-related services, which will enable them to help users find relevant resources more effectively.

Three ambassadors were identified and selected as they have attended previous Research4Life workshops organized in the country and also expressed their interest to promote Research4Life.

Higher secondary schools in eastern Bhutan registered for Research4Life. A few of the contact points of the schools were engaged on their experiences with Research4Life. Apart from the registration, they have not promoted to their users, especially teachers, as they were not able to make a presentation. They justified that they did not know more about Research4Life and have no experience, knowledge, or skills about information literacy. They were also encouraged to explore presentations and resources available from the Research4Life website. Teachers from schools are also in the communication network, as ambassadors from the two educational colleges in the country disseminate all the information received such as webinars and short courses.

The contact points, especially library assistants in tertiary institutions, are not able to follow-up if their users are making use of the resources or not. They are still not confident to train their users, especially the faculty and students. This is mainly because many of the library assistants in the tertiary institutions do not have a qualification in library or information science. They were encouraged to explore the readily available presentations to know the basics of how accessing scholarly information works.

There are fewer enquiries from the users of government and research institutions than expected despite advocacy programs and dissemination of information to the contact points. The Country Connector now maintains a close collaboration with all the library staff of tertiary institutions. They directly seek advice and directives when they need information or face problems in accessing resources.

In the second quarter of the year:

- The Country Connector participated in the regular Research4Life committee meetings,
- Held a virtual meeting with ambassadors,
- Disseminated news and information, and announcements of webinars and master-course for Asia to the contact points and ambassadors,
- Sent out invitations to a list of local publishers previously identified.

Ambassadors

A meeting with 6 ambassadors from various tertiary institutions was held on 22 June 2023. They shared that in their respective institutions, Research4Life was



prioritized and promoted to their users. A few of them reported that they shared about Research4Life with the teachers at nearby schools. They were willing to promote Research4Life in their community and districts if there was a minimal budget to support their basic logistical requirements.

The ambassadors requested an online mentorship programme to be organized by the Country Connector at least once a quarter and a face-to-face workshop once a year.

During the meeting, an agenda on finding a relevant type of organization that would better promote Research4Life was discussed. They shared that tertiary institutions should be in better position to promote Research4Life considering majority of the users are in tertiary institutions. It was discussed that the Country Connector with support from the ambassadors should visit tertiary institutions and train the users especially students as they lack skills and experiences of basic information literacy and accessing scholarly databases.

Institutional Repositories

After the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses webinar in June, the Country Connector received an invitation for a meeting by the Director of ProQuest to discuss the use of ProQuest's Theses and Dissertations through a free collaboration to promote graduates' theses publications from Bhutan. The Country Connector is currently exploring the Electronic Theses and Dissertation (ETD) dashboard and other features. This information has been shared with the ambassadors specifically, the possibilities of using ETD to promote the thesis publications of their colleges in ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global (PQDT). The ETD is currently explored with the continued challenge in Bhutan of not having institutional repositories and the skills required to implement and manage them. In line with ETD, a plan to implement institutional repository was discussed with the ambassadors. It will be followed-up further in our next meeting. Bhutan and United Republic of Tanzania have collaborated on a grant proposal and still seek funds to build skills and implement institutional repositories in Bhutan.

Connectivity and Communications

To improve network access, all the tertiary institutions and schools are connected to Druk Research and Education Network (DrukREN) <https://drukren.bt/> which provides stable and high-speed network access. This will help tertiary institutions and schools to access Research4Life resources seamlessly.



In improving user query resolutions, the ambassadors enquired again about IP-based access to be implemented in their colleges. The advantages of using IP-based access were explained and a few of them have managed to activate their IP-based access. The ambassadors were briefed on how to promote use of IP-based access. There is a query about the policy of graduates continuing to use the login credentials after they graduate.

Research4Life's Publishing and Research Communication Short Course, Research4Life Master Trainer Course for Asia, and other webinars were announced to all the contacts and ambassadors. The Country Connector attended the short course and webinars.

Local publishers and content gaps

A comprehensive list of institutions publishing journals locally was compiled. The publishers have been identified and an announcement about a meeting between the Research4Life representatives and the publishers was shared to institutions but not many confirmed their participation for the planned date. Since there was low registration from the publishers, the meeting was postponed to the following quarter.

In the third quarter, Bhutan actively engaged in regular committee meetings to enhance its contribution to the programme.

The Country Connector successfully identified and integrated new ambassadors into the Research4Life network. Productive meetings and follow-ups were conducted with the ambassadors to ensure effective communication and collaboration. The ambassadors played a pivotal role in disseminating news, information, and announcements about master courses to their respective networks.

The target demographics in this quarter included library assistants, students, teachers, lecturers, researchers, and other professionals. With the academic session in tertiary institutions commencing in August, ambassadors were encouraged to promote Research4Life among new students. Two new ambassadors from tertiary institutions were recruited and briefed about Research4Life.

In this quarter, ambassadors and contact points received regular updates on Research4Life developments, ensuring comprehensive information dissemination. The Country Connector initiated contact with local publishers and planned to follow up with communication through a new Gmail ID (as the prior one was blocked due to extensive mass mailings). Regular WhatsApp group meetings facilitated effective communication with ambassadors, addressing queries, clarifying policies, and providing guidance on utilizing Research4Life resources.

Announcements regarding Research4Life's Publishing and Research Communication Short Course, Master Trainer Course, and webinars were again shared widely, aiming for increased participation from Bhutan. Limited inquiries from government and research institutions continued, with most queries originating from tertiary institutions, despite extensive advocacy programmes.

During the year, ambassadors inquired about accessing full-text articles, and issues they faced during their presentations. They were provided with details of the functioning of Research4Life and were shown various methods for accessing full-text content. Furthermore, a demonstration on accessing databases was conducted to encourage user engagement with databases. The ambassadors continue to promote Research4Life in their respective institutions.

In October 2023, the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan commemorated World Evidence-Based Healthcare (EBHC) Day by hosting a webinar. The Country Connector delivered a presentation on Research4Life, highlighting how its resources can support healthcare professionals in utilizing evidence-based information. The webinar was attended by approximately 90 participants.

The Country Connector again presented Research4Life to the first-year students at Apollo Bhutan Institute of Nursing in Thimphu. Students were encouraged to use scientific resources available from Research4Life. Subsequent sessions are planned in 2024 for various colleges in Thimphu before gradually expanding to colleges in different regions.

A few ambassadors were informed about the Research4Life Virtual Master Trainer course for Country Connectors, Ambassadors and User Group Members from 9-11 October 2023. The Country Connector and some ambassadors from Bhutan attended the course.

The Country Connector, ambassadors and users from Bhutan attended the Research4Life Publishing and Research Communication (PRC) short course 2: "Writing winning grant proposals: An immersive flipped course". The course was conducted from 4 October till 19 November 2023.

The final quarter was prioritized mainly to engage local publishers. The Country Connector identified 20 publishers and their contact points. Out of the 20 identified publishers, 16 were found to be active. In an effort to enhance engagement with local publishers, an introductory meeting was organized in October. The meeting was attended by representatives from Research4Life, local publishers, the Lead Coordinator of the Country Connector project, and the Country Connector.

Following the introductory meeting with the local publishers, Research4Life in collaboration with Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ), organized an online Research4Life and DOAJ Publisher Course for the local publishers from 3rd till 24 November 2023. The course aimed to strengthen journal publications and enable the research from global south to be more visible and accessible. The Country Connector extensively shared the course announcement with the local publishers, and some representatives attended the course. A few representatives of local publishers who missed the course requested the course presentation resources, and the presentation slides were shared.

SENEGAL

The Université Cheikh Anta Diop has been engaged as the lead Country Connector for Senegal, with primary funding provided by Springer Nature. The initial engagement process took two weeks, which enabled both parties to understand the partnership deliverables while meeting each other's institutional requirements. The university in turn appointed two of its staff to work on the project implementation as part of the partnership.

The grant for Senegal enabled the participation in 2023 of one of the first cohort countries (United Republic of Tanzania) at the Research4Life General Partners Meeting (GPM) in Washington DC, which included a pre-workshop aimed at Country Connector engagement and planning for the future. This substitution for travel was agreed due to the finalization of host arrangements with a Senegal institution only right before the GPM.

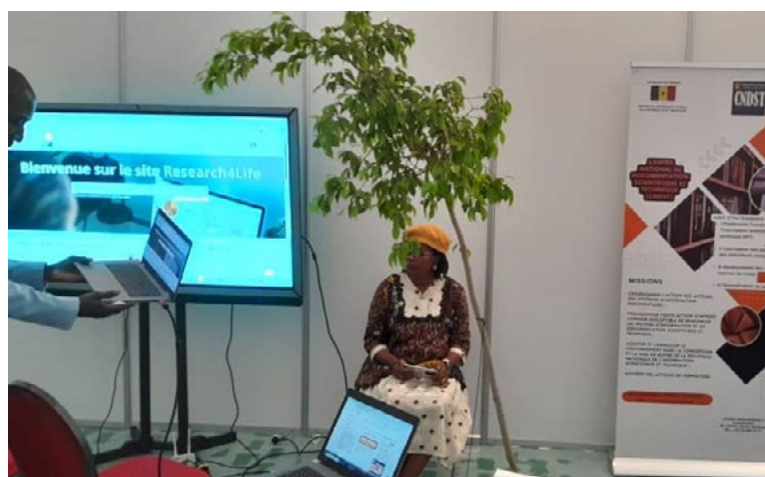
The orientation of the Country Connectors in Senegal continued throughout the third quarter while some planning work progresses for the fourth quarter. The two-lead staff have:

1. Taken the 3-day Master Course together with other country leads.
2. Familiarized themselves with the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
3. Developed a workplan for quarter four.
4. Identified initial ambassadors based at other institutions in the country.
5. Met key Research4Life Committees to understand priorities and plans.
6. Reviewed all the French training material for learning but also customization of key messaging for their target audiences.
7. Identified gaps in institutions that need to register for Research4Life.
8. Started working on a user needs survey to further customize the approaches to research capacity needs in the country.

The last quarter saw the implementation of the initial activities in the country. At national level a session was allocated to Research4Life at the Senegalese Consortium for Higher Education and Research Libraries (COBESS) workshop from November 23 to 25, 2023. The focus was the development of documentary research syllabuses in Senegalese universities. The session also enabled a discussion on some of the difficulties encountered by institutions in conducting research.



The Country Connectors also exhibited and presented at the 1st Edition of the Biennale of Research, Innovation, and Industrialization in Africa (BRII), held in Diamniadio from November 28 to 30, 2023.



The inclusion of a second French-speaking country in addition to the Democratic Republic of Congo, enables uptake of research content and in turn knowledge production in more languages. The grant provided by Springer Nature is enabling the objectives of the Country Connectors to be realized in Senegal while impacting the quality and quantity of research in the country and strengthening internal networking within the Connectors as a whole.





REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The Republic of Moldova was the second country to join the Research4Life programme during the third quarter this year. Research4Life partnered with Nicolae Testemitanu University to lead the Country Connector work in the Republic of Moldova. Two staff have been appointed from the library as the lead implementers and Country Connectors for the Republic of Moldova.

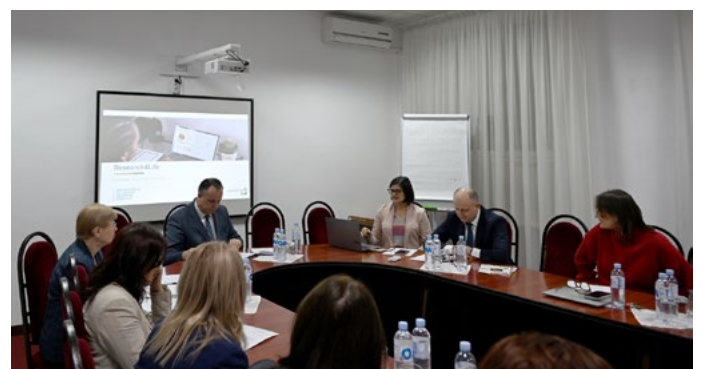
The Chisinau State Institute of Medicine (today Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy of the Republic of Moldova) was founded in 1945 and had one faculty – that of General Medicine. The main teaching block of the University (in the picture) is the former Military Hospital building.

Since 1990, the institution bears the name of Nicolae Testemitanu (1927-1986) – Emeritus, distinguished scientist, talented educator, former rector, and minister of health, who contributed substantially to the coordination and development of the health care system in the country. He was a promoter of the national revival, a prominent defender of the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova.

Nicolae Testemitanu University is the only university in the country that trains specialists with higher education for the national health system and other states. Throughout its activity, the University managed to create a history of excellence in education and research in the medical and pharmaceutical fields, becoming one of the most prestigious higher education institutions in the republic and region, institutionally accredited according to the standards of the World Federation for Medical Education.

The university has over 78 years of experience in training about 48 thousand doctors and pharmacists. As the work commenced, a strategy to advocate for the work and the programmes was driven by key engagement platforms with management and policy makers.

The Country Connectors had a session on Research4Life at the Festival of Research and Innovation, held under the theme “Science for peace and development: creativity, experience, perspectives”, organized by the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, in partnership with the National Agency for Research and Development in the context of the International Day of Science for Peace and Development.



During the event, Silvia Ciubrei, lead Country Connector, presented Research4Life, the five collections (Hinari, AGORA, OARE, ARDI and GOALI), the eligible countries and institutions, and the access/registration conditions for the country in 2024. The exhibition lasted until November 17 at the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, during which the Research4Life was exhibited.



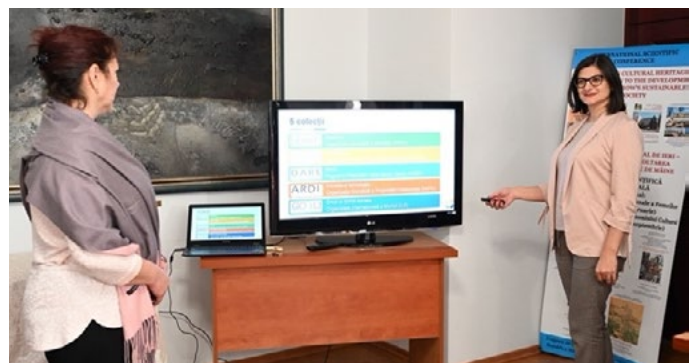


Moldova Academy of Science

A Science Day event organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova with the generic “European integration through research and innovation” took place on November 20, at the Republic Palace in Chisinau. Again, the Country Connectors presented Research4Life for this strategic audience.

About 300 participants took part in the event: representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova, rectors, and vice-rectors for the research activity of higher education institutions, inventors, researchers, doctoral students, and scientific and teaching staff from 33 institutions of higher education and research in the country.

At the institutional level, to ensure continued access to R4L resources, in early December the director of the Scientific Medical Library submitted a request, and Silvia Ciubrei presented an informative note about R4L and the



and a head of department of the MER participated in the meeting. A printed poster was distributed to all.

To conclude the year, The Country Connectors wrote an article for publication. The university newspaper “Medicus” published the article with the title “Research4Life - partnership for the Sustainable Development Goals”, for the November-December 2023 issue. The newspaper is published and distributed in 1000 copies in printed format, and the electronic version is available on the University website (<https://relatiipublice.usmf.md/ro/publicatii-comunicare-si-relatii-publice/Medicus>) and is distributed on social media.

access conditions in 2024 at the meeting of the members of the Board of Directors of University. This resulted in the Board of Directors deciding to pay the annual R4L Group B fee for the next two years (2024-2025). During the General Assembly of the Council of Rectors from the Republic of Moldova, Silvia Ciubrei, presented information about R4L to Rectors of 16 higher education institutions, the Minister of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER), the general secretary of state



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Université Evangélique en Afrique (UEA), established in 1991 in the city of Bukavu is the Country Connector host institution for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As its name suggests, the UEA is a university with an African dimension that aims to contribute to the development of the continent by training executives not only with a scientific ethos but also ethical and moral skills.

Two staff have been appointed to lead the work in the country:



Prof. Gustav Nachigera

Professor in Agro-ecology, holds a PhD in Agronomy and Biological engineering from the Université catholique de Louvain. He is also the coordinator of the inter-university Agro-ecology PhD program at the Université Evangélique en Afrique, Bukavu, DR Congo since 2022. He has been the Rector of the Université Evangélique en Afrique since 2008.



Dr. Bintu Ndusha

Dr. Bintu Ndusha is a Lecturer at Université Evangélique en Afrique. She has twelve years of experience working as a lecturer and has received training in adult teaching. The main tasks in her work include lectures, supervision of lab practical and field work for students and research. She has been also actively involved in the research on identifying elites indigenous soil microorganisms for inoculants biofertilizer production since 2013. She has been working together with her institution and IITA (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture) for collection, characterization, and testing of indigenous rhizobia strains to identify local strains that are suitable for inoculants production for farmers in her region and has authored many papers related to her research area.

Dr. Bintu Ndusha is also involved in research related to producing fertilizers from local available organic material. She completed her PhD program in Sustainable Soil Resource Management at the University of Nairobi (2016-2021) under the GTA (graduate teaching assistantship) program of RUFORUM. Her PhD research study was on "Identifying elites indigenous rhizobia strains and strategies that maximize the contribution of BNF for soybean production in South Kivu (Eastern D.R. Congo). This research aspect is a national priority in D.R. Congo. She won several grants such as ABCF (Africa Bioscience Challenge Fund) Fellowship from BeCA-ILRI, CORAF-WECARD/IITA from IDRC, GTA grant from Canergie corporation, OWSD (organisation for Women in Science for Developing countries) fellowship. Recently she obtained a postdoc fellowship from RUFORUM. Dr. Bintu Ndusha is also a PI of the project titled Rhizobia-mycorrhiza based bio fertilizers for smallholder's farmers in East Africa funded by ICIPE/Bioinnovate Africa.

The initial month of the engagement with the Country Connectors was comprised of orientation to the work and to the overall Research4Life team. This led to the Country Connectors successfully develop their workplan for the last quarter of the year, with full implementation of about 75% of the planned work. The quarter was a time for presidential elections in the country. This disrupted the planned physical meetings which were moved to 2024.

A virtual workshop targeted at librarians was held on 16 and 17th November using the Zoom platform for 2,5 hours each day. The workshop announcement was released on different platforms, whereby interested librarians were requested to register in advance in order to attend the workshop. Librarians from 22 institutions successfully registered and attended the workshop. Some of these institutions were registered for R4L and other were not. The workshop was facilitated in French with the support of trainers from the WHO Regional Office for Africa and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

It was noted that two days only and 2 and half hours per day for the workshop was not enough for the librarians' training. To enabled more practical hands on, participants recommended a physical workshop for enhanced competences. Furthermore, it was noted that this training is very important for librarians because one of their roles is to train Research4Life for their institutional users. Several ambassadors in DRC have expressed interest to take concrete action to support the Country Connector outcomes. In addition, the Country Connectors work with local universities vice chancellors for higher institutions.

"This first Research4Life workshop for librarians motivated us more as Country Connectors. There is a high interest for quality research in Democratic Republic of Congo" Dr. Bintu Ndusha,
DRC Country Connector



UKRAINE

In July 2023, an agreement was signed between Research4Life and the State Scientific and Technical Library of Ukraine for it to become a Research4Life Country Connector Associate. Associate status is for those countries who are currently doing well in the main six outcomes of the Country Connector project, and who want to be part of the project network without requiring Country Connectors financial support.

The initial series of webinars highlighting the opportunities offered by Research4Life programmes for Ukrainian higher learning institutions, research institutions, students, researchers occurred from 31st October to 6th November 2023. In total, over 600 participants registered and joined the event. Various user categories participated in the event, ranging from faculty members to students, including postgraduates, across various fields of knowledge. The webinars were conducted by Margarita Tsiura, the Research4Life Country Connector for Ukraine, who is also a visiting fellow of the German National Library. These webinars commenced with the first session on October 31, followed by the second on November 2, and concluded with the third on November 6. At the end of the webinar, participants received responses to the questions they had indicated in the registration form.

In the first webinar, participants received general information about Research4Life, including criteria for eligibility for countries and institutions, the registration process, access policy, available resources, features offered by the Research4Life website, technical support, and about Ukraine's participation in Research4Life. The first webinar was attended by 234 participants with 545 participants registered.

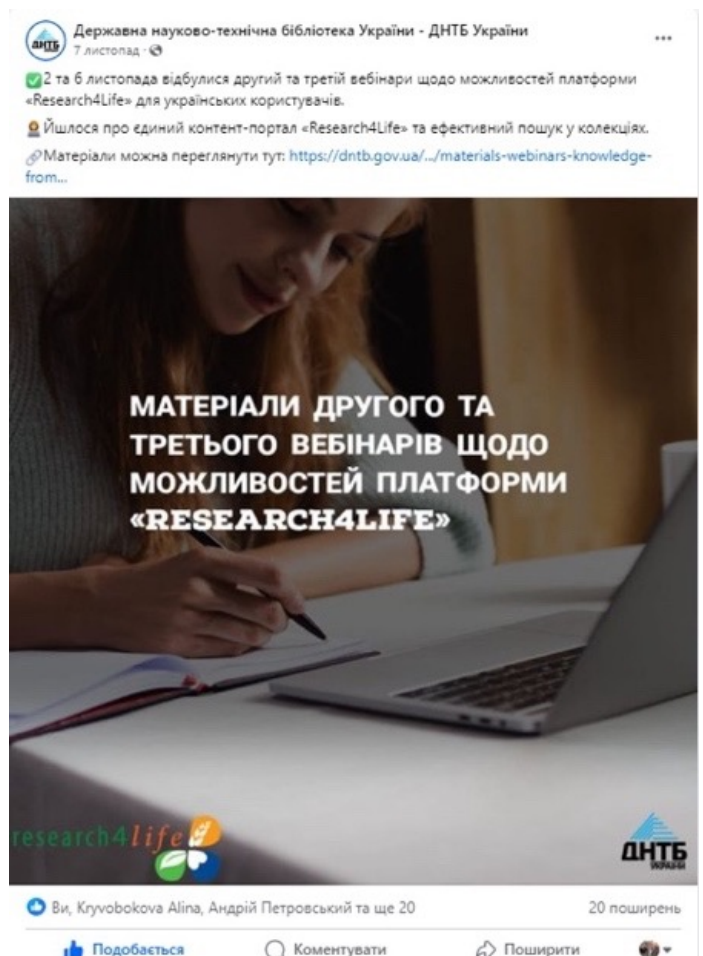
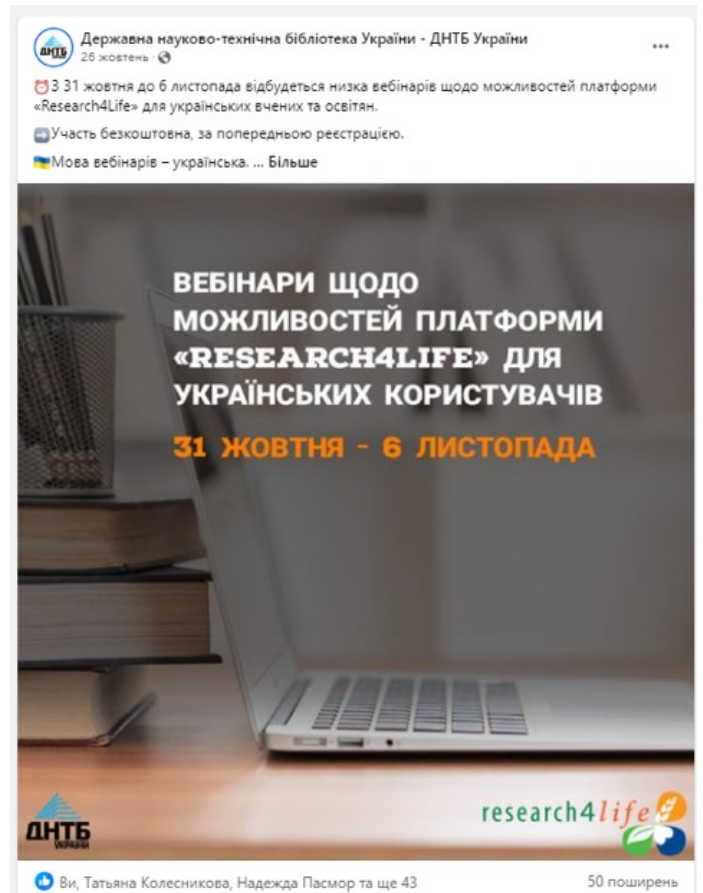
These webinars commenced with the first session on October 31, followed by the second on November 2, and concluded with the third on November 6. At the end of the webinar, participants received responses to the questions they had indicated in the registration form.

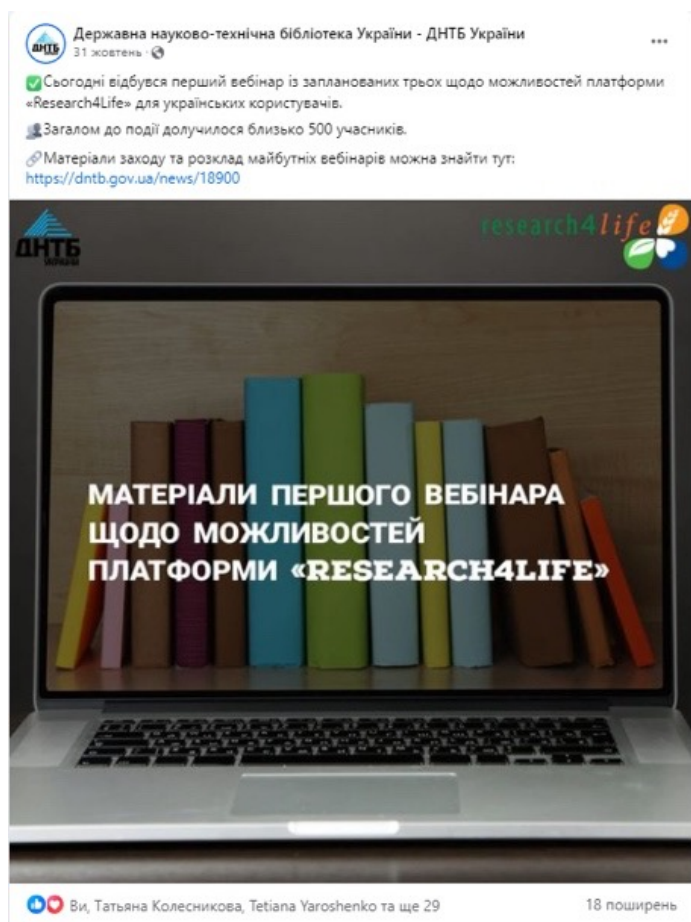
During the second webinar, participants received information about the Research4Life Unified Content Portal, including searching for relevant information, downloading content, and effective portal usage. The webinar was attended by 204 participants with 509 participants registered.

In the third webinar, participants learned how to effectively use Summon and Google Scholar to search for Research4Life resources. The webinar was attended by 197 participants with 533 participants registered.

The video recordings of the three webinars were posted on the YouTube channel of the State Scientific and Technical Library of Ukraine, and all registered participants received the presentations.

The webinars promotion campaign consisted of sharing information via email, the official websites, and social media of two institutions-the State Scientific and Technical



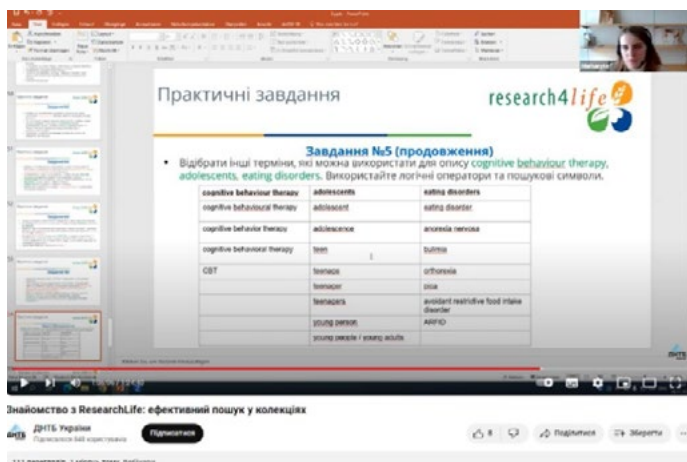
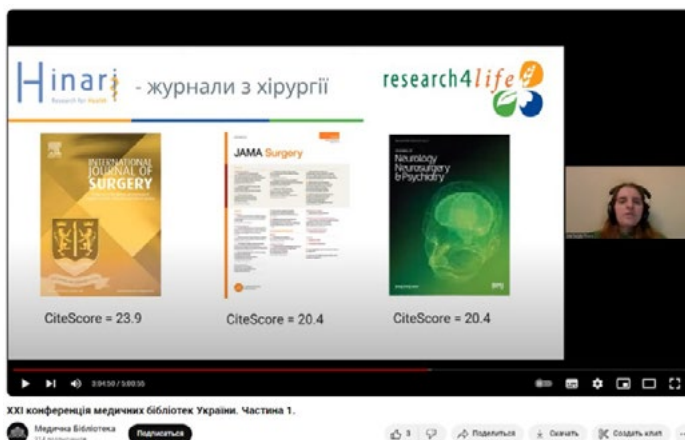
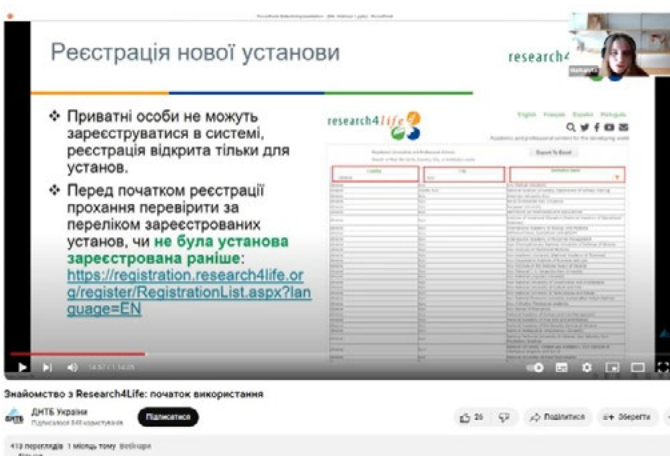
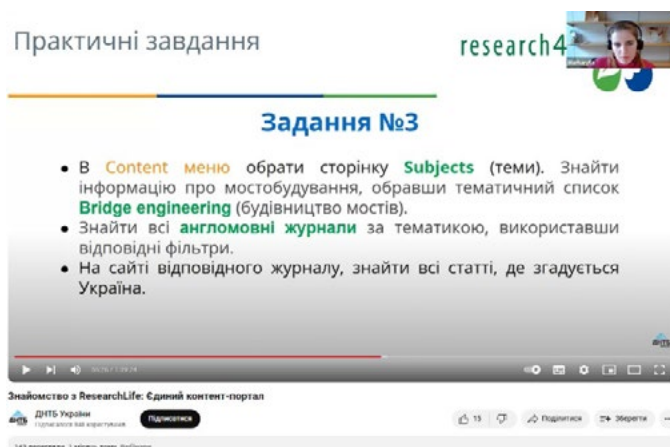


Library of Ukraine and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

On November 15, 2023, Country Connector Margarita Tsiura participated as a speaker in the XXI International Scientific-Practical Conference "TRANSFORMATION OF MEDICAL LIBRARIES IN UKRAINE IN TODAY'S REALITIES". Various library staffs, information science stakeholders, researchers and practitioners participated in the Conference. The Country Connector actively promoted R4L and its resources, discussing the opportunities provided by Research4Life for healthcare professionals and other stakeholders. The focus was particularly on access to the full-text medical and biological resources database, Hinari. The participants expressed considerable interest in the information and asked for a copy of the presentation. Everyone at the conference received the presentation.

Throughout the final quarter, the two Country Connectors have been actively communicating with institutions and individuals to reduce HelpDesk user queries. The Ukrainian Country Connectors use email, social media, and phone for the convenience of Ukrainian users. Furthermore, the Country Connectors have created a Telegram group to facilitate communication with our users and to promote Research4Life. Telegram is more user-friendly for Ukrainian users.

Research4Life HelpDesk updated some of Ukrainian institutions R4L connection and contact details following information provided the Connectors for five (5) institutions, including the Research Station of Pomology named L. P.





Symirenko of the Institute of Horticulture of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine, the Cherkasy State Business College, the Kherson State University, the Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics, and the Donetsk National Technical university. At the same time, the Country Connectors have created an online form. In early 2024, they plan to request all Ukrainian institutions to update their contact details, ensuring that the previous contacts are not outdated.

A Research4Life specific page has been created on the website of the State Scientific and Technical Library of Ukraine with the primary objective of facilitating the discovery of Research4Life e-resources available to the Ukrainian consortium. Specifically, it highlights content that is accessible for search and download, including a list of leading international publishers and scientific journals across various fields of knowledge. The page also provides information on accessible databases and resources tailored for medical professionals and practitioners. Additionally, the page offers guidance on the registration process for Research4Life, details on how to access Research4Life resources, and information about the Research4Life Country Connector in Ukraine, including communication processes. The content on this page is in Ukrainian. During the fourth quarter, the Country Connectors regularly updated information on this page.

In the coming year, in collaboration with the Scientific-Organizational Department of the State Scientific and Technical Library of Ukraine, Country Connectors plan to actively promote information from the official Research4Life (R4L) pages on various social media. Additionally, the two Country Connectors intend to create and share their own news in Ukrainian about Research4Life programmes, aiming to enhance the visibility and popularity of the accessible resources.

Actively seeking participants willing to share their success stories began in the last quarter of 2023. Country Connectors have identified potential participants and translated the guidance into Ukrainian. They have also initiated efforts to find ambassadors to expand the Ukrainian network.

The main challenges are that more than 500 organizations in Ukraine have registered for Research4Life collections, yet in many, there is either low use or a lack of awareness on how to effectively use the resources provided by Research4Life.

Webinars (information about event)

1. Website

- Information about event on the State Scientific and Technical Library of Ukraine website: <https://dntb.gov.ua/news/research4life-31-10-06-11>, <https://dntb.gov.ua/news/18900>, <https://dntb.gov.ua/news/materials-webinars-knowledge-from-research4life>.
- The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine website: <https://mon.gov.ua/news/vikoristannya-resursiv-platfomi-research4life-dlya-vchenih-ta-osvityan-provedut-seriyu-vebinariv-ukrayinskoyu-movoyu>

EL SALVADOR

In El Salvador, Research4Life partnered with a library association, the Consortium of University Libraries of El Salvador which is a non-religious, non-profit and a political association called Consorcio de Bibliotecas Universitarias de El Salvador, CBUES. One of the major actions of CBUES has been the joint purchase of electronic resources with the main objective of strengthening research and teaching capacity in El Salvador. Digitization of information resources is done cooperatively and under common standards of collection, dissemination, and conservation.

El Salvador is the first Spanish speaking country included in the Connector project, and the process of selection was supported by the colleagues at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Country Office. PAHO works closely with Research4Life in many of the Spanish member states.

“The signing of this agreement with the Consortium of University Libraries of El Salvador is a crucial step in fulfilling our commitment to strengthen local research and education capabilities,” said MSc. Marco Marroquín, president of CBUES. “This project will enable the construction of strong bridges between global information and local needs, thus fostering an environment conducive to academic advancement in El Salvador.”

The last quarter of the year saw the orientation and the implementation of work for the country. Two workshops were run in the quarter, one for the editors of local publications and another for the users with the latter running virtually. During the in-person workshop, invitations were extended to institutions not yet part of Research4Life. Additionally, already registered institutions were encouraged to fully utilize all available resources, with detailed guidance provided on their use.

Challenges:

- Identifying and contact eligible institutions not yet registered.
- Convince non-participating institutions of the benefits and value of Research4Life.
- Overcome linguistic and cultural barriers to ensure effective participation.

The aim to increase local communications resulted in an initiation for the publication of content related to activities in collaboration with CBUES to consolidate recognition as national-level facilitators.

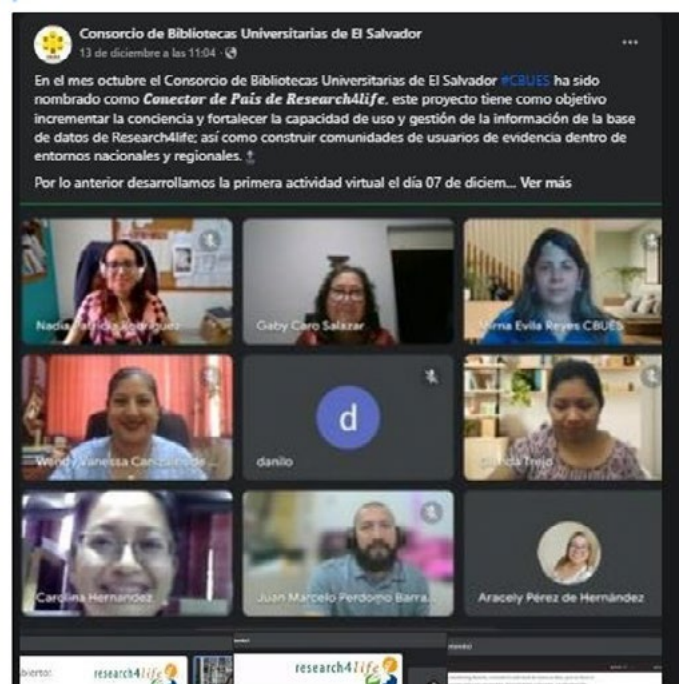
Challenges:

- Design effective communication strategies to reach a wide range of users.
- Adapt messages to address the specific needs and concerns of the Salvadoran community.
- Collaborate with local partners to increase the dissemination of information about Research4Life.

In the editor's workshop, promotion of Research4Life use in publications and detailed information on hosting documents in DOAJ was provided. The goal was to establish a solid foundation for future collaborations with Research4Life, involving key users and stakeholders, including local editors.

During the in-person workshop for users, librarians, and researchers, a proposal was presented for these users to become key ambassadors in El Salvador. Those who put their hands up will receive more detailed training to effectively fulfill this role.

Editor's Workshop:



"The socialization of academic repositories from Research for Life is fundamental for a current exercise of academic research and the development of scientific texts. I found the course focused and solid to be able to exercise a more autonomous work that allows us to use it with our students. Being a scientist is about managing resources to maximize results and this course helps us to sharpen our focus." Ms. Lorena Juárez Saavedra, Social Communicator and researcher

Impact and media

Links to the workshop publications posted in Facebook and Website:

1. Editor's Workshop:

<https://www.facebook.com/cbuesSv/posts/pfbid0FjqyeQ7fRYwxbPV953p2PXFy69EJLEeurD1L1Ydn17TGCEtbBxFkRDSdBdoodsdl>
<https://www.facebook.com/cbuesSv/posts/pfbid02NV9HL6ntW77EsBrE5nYUo4zYKDkAXtsRFuB51DycwJRSDMvzy993YhsLcneM8pLul>

3. Website publication:

[Proyectos conectores de país Research4Life – CBUES](#)



Senior Capacity Building Advisor

The Senior Capacity Building Advisor plays a key role in supporting the Project Coordinator and the Country Connectors. The advisor meets with the coordinator every two weeks and as many times as requested by the Country Connectors, with structured meetings during the quarters. The advisor also supports all capacity building activities in the countries in various ways.

During the reporting period the advisor was active in the following areas:

- Assisted with workshop in Ghana, April, and June,
- Workshop in Sierra Leone – 18 May. Taught lessons: Research4Life Summon Searching and Google Scholar; Research4Life Training Materials,
- Kenya - participated in 1st ambassador meeting focused on training material and other resources available from R4L; discussed broader focus of R4L per the 2022 Strategic Plan,
- Participated in 2 Country Connector internal meetings - March and July,
- Updated the MOOC participants lists for the countries - after 8th MOOC; this is used to identify potential ambassadors and participants for in-country training – June 2023,
- Assisted with planning of Country Connectors' meeting at the GPM; presented an overview of Capacity Development broadened role regarding the key points of the 2022 Strategic Plan; noted the incorporation of the UN's Strategic Development goals,
- Currently supporting the activities that are promoting local publishing.
 - o Co-developed an introductory presentation that links R4L with DOAJ and how this will be valuable to country-based publishers/editors who want to expand access to their journals,
 - o this introductory presentation can be used at the initial in-country publisher/ editor meetings.

For the additional 2023 countries, Senior Advisor Capacity Building, distributed the lists of MOOCs 'participants who have successfully completed the exam'. These lists are useful for identifying ambassadors within each country. Also delivered was the link to Country Connectors folder that contains several training, promotion, and marketing material PowerPoint presentations.

For the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador and Senegal, the introductory meetings (via Teams) with the Country Connectors were completed. The discussion

included training options plus an overview of the R4L training, marketing and promotion materials that are downloadable from the Research4Life training page.

Additional 2023 activities included supporting training programs in Bhutan, the DRC, Ghana, Sierra Leone. Such activities included developing specific agendas, editing, and organizing training presentations and, when requested, participating as a virtual lecturer.

In the fourth quarter of 2023, the training material has been formalized into a group of documents starting with English versions of a 5-hour instructional program and specific PowerPoint presentations plus a "useful English tools and links" document. This material has been replicated in French and Spanish and forwarded to the DRC, Senegal, and El Salvador Connectors. Specific PowerPoint presentations include:

- Generic program outline
- Research4Life overview
- Research4Life Unified Content Portal
- Search across Research4Life collections (Summon and Google Scholar)
- Scientific Landscape, Identifying and Using Information resources,
- Copyright, licensing, and ethical considerations
- Citing, reference management and collaboration tools/Zotero overview

The English material has been used in Ghana and Sierra Leone in which the training coordinator participated as a virtual trainer. Two additional workshops are scheduled for Sierra Leone in late January 2024. This material will be reorganized into language specific folders and made available to all the country connectors. It can be used as a template for developing one-day courses conducted by individual country connectors or affiliated ambassadors.

The goal of the Research4Life and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) project is to promote publishing activities in the global south. By joining the DOAJ, the publishers and editors conform to several criteria that will enhance the quality of and access to their journals including being available in the R4L content portal.

In collaboration with Gehane al Garraya and Mahmoud Khalifa, the Senior Advisor Capacity Building developed the R4L and DOAJ linkage PowerPoint presentation. This has been used in several countries for discussions with publishers and editors. The coordinator served as a facilitator with the DOAJ ambassadors and helped coordinate the initial DOAJ workshop. This training was organized by Blessing Mawire and, in November 2023 taught by Ina Smith and Susan Veldsman (DOAJ ambassadors). As previously mentioned, the four-session workshop was focused on training/educating publishers and editors in these countries. During 2024, this workshop will be replicated/expanded to other countries.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the addition of Senegal and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) marks a significant milestone for Research4Life, representing the inclusion of the first French-speaking countries. This was strengthened by the expansion to El Salvador bringing in the Spanish-speaking countries. This shows the strength of the rubrics and processes used in the selection of the countries. Working across various geographic regions and languages contributes to an equitable increased research content uptake, knowledge production in multiple languages, and achievement of the global development goals.

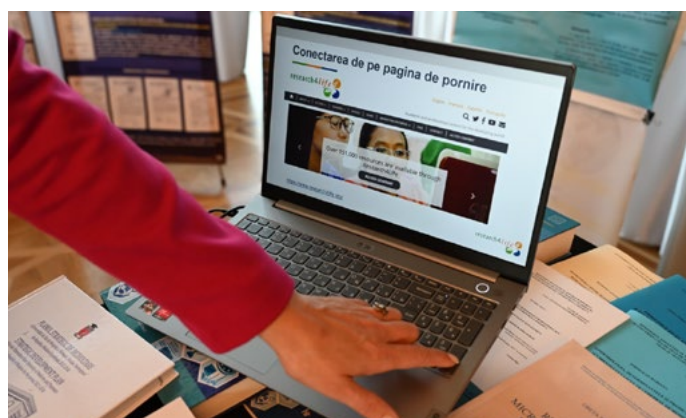
The Research4Life General Partners Meeting in Washington DC, along with the Country Connectors strategy meeting, enabled the Country Connectors to engage closely with the wider partnership, while providing a platform for strategic engagement and knowledge sharing amongst the countries. The participation of Country Connectors, country ambassadors, and User Group members in a tailored Master Course reflects the internal need for continued adaptive capacity-building.

All the countries have shown persistent efforts to overcome challenges and expand Research4Life's reach. It was a year of proactive engagement, successful follow through on work plans, and achievement of indicators that underscore the program's impact.

The grant from Springer Nature is instrumental in realizing Country Connectors' objectives in Senegal and more funding partners will enable the initiative to expand to more regions, while strengthening the continued work in the ongoing countries.

Research4Life has moved from a one-way direction of users receiving content to a two way engagement which helps understand the impact of the uptake, while enabling the visibility of the research coming from the users. This is achieved by working closely with the local publishers and policy makers to strengthen their capacities, provide platforms for collaboration and access, while advocating for better recognition by policy makers of the local publications.

Looking ahead, the Country Connectors continue to extend outcomes, deepen the current work, strengthen partnerships and collaborations and enhance the South-to-South linkages. In 2024, the aim is to have an additional five countries or more funds permitting and collaborate with more countries that are ready to be join with an Associate status.



ANNEX 1

Allocated Funding for 2023

A summary of the funds expended in the first two years of the project are provided here for transparency, along with some of the key funders showing how their funds were allocated in the year.

Summary of Activities and BUDGET	2022 expended	2023 expended	2023 Elsevier Foundation	2023 Springer Nature	2023 American Chemical Society	remainder of fund sources not specified were general friends of Research4life
Project Oversight Activity 1	\$ 59'049	\$ 74'858	\$ 33'770	\$ 5'938		
Advice & Mentoring for Skills Building Activity 2	\$ 10'000	\$ 10'545	\$ 15'000	\$ -		
Country Connectors Activity 1	\$ 7'280	\$ 51'761	\$ 22'966	\$ 4'910	\$ 4'000	
Overhead	\$ 13'410	\$ 19'272	\$ 9'064	\$ 792		
Grand Total	\$ 89'739	\$ 156'436	\$ 78'800	\$ 11'640	\$ 4'000	
Notes			includes additional travel grants	some funds carried over to 2024	travel grant	

Elsevier Foundation's contributions support five countries: United Republic of Tanzania, Bhutan, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and in 2023, provided additional support for travel to the GPM by Ghana and Kenya).

Springer Nature's contributions support one country: Senegal (and in 2023, this support for travel to the GPM by United Republic of Tanzania).

American Chemical Society's travel grant supported travel to the GPM by Bhutan.

We would be remiss not to point out that there are significant in-kind contributions not represented here, including those from WHO, WIPO, FAO, DOAJ, and the host institutions and associations where the Country Connectors are embedded.

Research4Life Country Connectors Annual Report 2023

