Research4Life Country Connectors

Budget: $70,000

Timeframe: 2022-2024

Sponsor: The Elsevier Foundation

Primary outcome

The Research4Life Country Connectors project delivers local interventions at national and regional levels to enhance access and improve awareness about Research4Life resources ultimately improving research quality and output in the Global South.

Overview

In order to solve the great challenges outlined by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it is critical that researchers from around the world, especially the Global South, are able to fully contribute their ideas and solutions. Research4Life (R4L) was launched over 2 decades ago to enhance the scholarship, teaching, research and policymaking of researchers, faculty, scientists, and medical specialists in lower income countries. The Research4Life Country Connectors project delivers a targeted training program to strengthen the capacity of Research4Life information use and management, building communities of evidence users.

The Elsevier Foundation is providing catalytic support to launch this approach across 7 countries including: Bhutan, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Eswatini. The Research4Life Country Connectors support national user communities by building local networks and partnerships, and addresses gaps in access to research, training and research output in lower-income countries. At the same time, it also provides an optimal framework for understanding factors influencing the rate of usage of Research4Life resources.

Goals

- Increased usage of Research4Life
- Increased publications and presentations among user/active institutions compared to previous two years
- Increased local and regional communications on Research4Life
- Increased local publisher engagements
- Improved user query resolutions at country level
- Increased network of country and regional mentorship.

Activities and milestones

Year 1 Implementation Goals achieved for 6 countries:

- Countries and Institutions profiling
- Coordinating knowledge sharing and creating a community of Country Connectors
- Master Training of Country Connectors and Ambassadors
- Country workplans and Communications plans developed
- Outreach to low using and unusing countries & institutions
- Identification of local publishers
- Communication with Help Desk, addressing user queries and translating information to local languages
- Identifying unregistered institutions
- Engagements with Research4Life committees to understand strategy implementation
- Budgeting per activity and tracking of usage of funds
- Identifying and engaging Ambassadors
- Making presentations and training about the project at key events, and communicating with local stakeholders

Future plans

Expanded funding is required to further scale Country Connectors to more countries. An alternate approach is to scale by implementing in more regions covered by Research4Life. This would enable CC to reinforce as many countries as possible allowing them to mature to higher levels of information use, network support, research quality and quantity.

The ideal target is for 80 countries with 50% active and supported, with the remaining 50% moving into an Emeritus or Associate status.

- Emeritus status is reached when a country has matured to a level where it can still do well without a formally supported Country Connector. This is measured using the targets in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- Associate status is for those countries who are currently doing well in the main six outcomes of the Country Connector project, despite not having formally defined or supported Country Connectors.

Country Connectors also aims to provide more fostering of independent South to South collaborations through its network. Throughout 2022-3, initial collaborations are already emerging and monitored using a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework at a country level.

"Country Connectors provides South-to-South knowledge transfer by Research4Life users who are are truly embedded, accountable and driving change in their own communities." — YLANN SCHEMM, Executive Director, The Elsevier Foundation