



| Foundation

Report 2024



Catalyzing advances in **Science & Social Innovation**

Dear Friends of the Bayer Foundation,

The urgent need for innovative solutions that would allow societies to thrive while enabling sustainable development has become increasingly clear. The world faces mounting challenges, including public health crises and environmental degradation, which are compounded by socio-economic disparities and international conflicts. We are reliant on brilliant minds engaged in the pursuit of excellence to make impactful breakthroughs in science and social innovation. At the Bayer Foundation, our mission is to create and curate vibrant ecosystems for innovation at the intersection of health, food security, and environment. Through our partnerships and awards, we aim to shine a light on researchers, social entrepreneurs and organizations engaged in impactful work in their communities. Our goal is to enable them to scale their ideas by providing resources and capabilities so that they can in turn have greater impact on society. Our mission is driven by our company's vision of "Health for All, Hunger for None" as well as real-life challenges faced by social innovators and researchers.

I am honored to have the opportunity to lead the Bayer Foundation, an organization I have long admired for its global impact on science education and social innovation. I am grateful for the tireless efforts of my team at the Foundation working together with the common purpose of enabling our partners and awardees to succeed. On behalf of the team at the Bayer Foundation, I extend my gratitude to Dr. Monika Lessl for her outstanding contributions and leadership as the former Executive Director of the Foundation. I also extend my congratulations to Monika on her retirement after an amazing career spanning 30 years at Bayer. I look forward to her contributions as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation.

I extend my gratitude to Prof. Edith Heard, Director General of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), Director & Chief Executive of the Francis Crick Institute and Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees for the Bayer Science & Education Foundation and to Prof. André Habisch, Dean of Faculty at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Bayer Cares Foundation for their outstanding leadership and contributions to the Bayer Foundation. I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Over the past two years, the Bayer Foundation has collaborated with many partners as well as exceptional researchers and social innovators to promote scientific excellence and social impact. The accomplishments described in this report demonstrate that despite the many challenges we face in the world today, exceptional individuals who are deeply committed to the pursuit of excellence in science and social entrepreneurship are indeed able to succeed irrespective of their location or background when they are able to participate in an ecosystem of innovation that provides support for scaling their efforts. The individuals we have had the opportunity to partner with are successfully navigating their challenges and bringing valuable services and goods to their communities which in many cases are in economically underserved parts of the world. The Bayer Foundation is proud to be able to support these exceptional leaders in their quest for excellence and impact. We could not have done this without the support of our committed partner organizations. Through such collaborations, we at the Bayer Foundation aim to continue to amplify our collective impact.



Chitkala Kalidas, PhD
Executive Director, Bayer Foundation



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Bayer Foundation

Vision & Overview



Science Portfolio

- Breakthrough Science
- Equity in Science

Social Innovation Portfolio

- Social Impact Start-up Academy
- Women Empowerment Award
- Social Innovation Ecosystem Fund

Our Vision

Bayer Foundation's vision is to catalyze advances in science and social innovation for a world where there is Health for All, Hunger for None.

Who We Are

As Bayer's corporate foundation, Bayer Foundation generates impact by supporting breakthroughs in science and social innovation that advance societal progress worldwide.

- The Foundation's mission is to support scientists and social innovators in making the world better and fairer, following its vision of catalyzing advances in science and social innovation for a world with Health for All, Hunger for none.
- Fundamental research and cutting-edge advances in science pave the way for societal progress, enabling long-lasting change and improving lives.

- Ensuring that scientific and innovative breakthroughs meet the needs of a global population and gain broad social acceptance is crucial for meaningful progress.

What We Do

Bayer Foundation supports aspiring scientists, social entrepreneurs, and impact organizations who work toward breakthrough innovations at the intersection of health, nutrition / sustainable agriculture, and environment.

Partners



Partners



We are grateful to the partners helping us to achieve our mission.

Social Innovation & Science

Impact

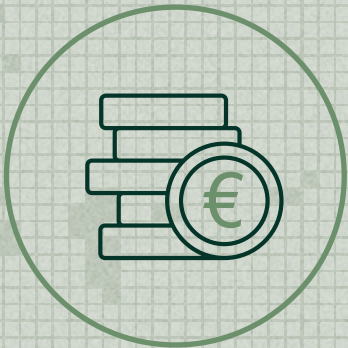
2023/2024



Access to health and care for everyone. A more nutritious, accessible food system. The Bayer Foundation exists to fund research and foster the development of new solutions in areas like these. I'm inspired by the network of entrepreneurs and researchers the foundation supports. And we're all grateful for their contributions to ,Health for All, Hunger for None.

Bill Anderson
CEO of Bayer

Total funds:
19.62 M EUR
in grants spent through Bayer Foundation's programs.



Co-funding:
18.79 M EUR
leveraged through partnerships



We reached
2.2 M people
in **57** countries



We awarded over
230 people with fellowships and awards
of which more than **50%** were awarded to **women.**



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Bayer Foundation

Highlights

In 2023 and 2024, exciting initiatives brought our vision of catalyzing advances in science and social innovation to life. This section highlights selected events from the past two years.

Celebrating breakthrough science

Every year, the Foundation honors extraordinary scientists for their groundbreaking work and achievements in fundamental scientific research, providing solutions to the challenges we face as a society.



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It gives me great pride to recognize the award winners as they are truly breaking boundaries and inspire others to follow.

Stefan Oelrich,
Member Board of Management,
Bayer AG & Executive Director,
Bayer Foundation

In early 2024, five distinguished scientists were honored at the Science Awards Celebration. Themed “Fascination for the Molecules of Life”, over 150 guests gathered at Bayer’s headquarters in Leverkusen, Germany, to celebrate the awardees and learn more about their research.

Accompanied by Bayer scientists, the awardees presented their work, showcasing the diverse facets of scientific inquiry. Topics ranged from “Searching for immunity molecules across the tree of life”, “Developing molecules for emerging and tropical diseases”, “The life cycles of molecules: synthesis, recycling, and recovery”, to “Finding and formulating new molecules of life”, highlighting the discovery of new therapeutic molecules within the human microbiome.

At the celebration ceremony, the winners of the Hansen Family Award and the Early Excellence in Science Awards were honored:

- **The Hansen Family Award** went to **Prof. Claudia Höbartner** (University of Würzburg) for her achievements in catalytic nucleic acids.
- **The Early Excellence in Science Awards** were given to:
 - **Dr. Erin Stache** from Princeton University (USA) for Chemistry
 - **Dr. Gal Ofir** from the Max Planck Institute for Biology in Tübingen (Germany) for Biology
 - **Dr. Vivi Maketa** from the University of Kinshasa (DR Congo) for Medical Science
 - **Dr. Michael Skinnider**, Princeton University (USA) for Data Science

Candidates are nominated by senior members of eminent scientific institutions from across the globe or by scientific leaders in research and development at Bayer. They are selected by an independent panel of scientific experts, the Bayer Foundation Science Council.



Read more about Dr. Vivi Maketa on page 20 of this report or visit our [website](#).



Social Innovation Days 2024— Bringing together entrepreneurs for global impact

In the area of social innovation, our partners' work and contributions are truly impressive on an individual level. But when they join forces to address pressing challenges in health, agriculture, and social entrepreneurship, we believe their potential is even greater.

In 2024, Bayer Foundation's flagship event—the Social Innovation Days—was once again an opportunity for our partners to convene, connect, and catalyze solutions to global challenges.

Over two days, 144 participants from 33 countries shared news and views, explored new partnership and funding opportunities, and discussed issues in key areas such as women's economic empowerment and access to funding for women entrepreneurs.

A major focal point was the USD 1.7 trillion global funding gap for women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Between 2019 and 2023, only 1.5% of start-up funds in Africa went to women-led businesses. Bayer Foundation's Women Economic Empowerment program in Kaduna State, Nigeria, has shone a light on efforts to support women through credit facilities and skills training in rural communities.

The event concluded with the Women Empowerment Award, which recognized 15 exceptional women social entrepreneurs from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific for their innovative contributions to health, agriculture, and social impact.

Read more about the Women Empowerment Award on page 30.



We must ensure that social businesses are not a parking lot for women, but a springboard for growth.

Abimbola Adebakin,
CEO of Advantage Health Africa

At Bayer Foundation, we support excellent researchers as well as impactful individuals and organizations with the resources and platforms they need to scale their ideas. This includes social entrepreneurs working on high-impact community projects and scientists conducting fundamental research with the potential to revolutionize approaches to build lasting impact for our future. We are proud to present nine outstanding initiatives that further our shared vision of Health for All, Hunger for None.

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Bayer Foundation

Insights

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I place a strong emphasis on ensuring the research benefits the communities in hands-on ways.

Dr. Vivi Maketa,
Professor at the University
of Kinshasa, DR Congo

Empowering early excellence

Bayer Foundation presented the Early Excellence in Science Awards in 2023. Meet Dr. Vivi Maketa, winner of the Medical Science category.

Interview by Sophie Fessl

Dr. Vivi Maketa received the 2023 Early Excellence in Science Award in the Medical Science category for her exceptional contributions to the design and implementation of research projects on infectious and neglected diseases.

Maketa is a professor at the Department of Tropical Medicine at the University of Kinshasa, DR Congo, where she is dedicated to demonstrating the safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy of novel drugs and vaccines.

What is the goal of your research?

Maketa: My goal is to generate knowledge and create interventions that can truly improve the health and well-being of the communities I work with, particularly in the areas of tropical and neglected diseases. I aim to ensure that the studies I'm involved in have a tangible, positive impact on people's lives. I make sure the studies are easy to grasp and that the communities are actively engaged.

What has been your biggest success so far?

I am most proud of being able to serve as a bridge between international research consortia and the communities where the studies take place. I've worked on Ebola, malaria, COVID-19, and other critical health issues, always with a community-focused approach. At the same time, I place a strong emphasis on ensuring the research benefits the communities in hands-on ways. This includes providing ancillary care to trial participants, donating medical supplies, and working to strengthen local healthcare systems.

What does receiving the Bayer Early Excellence in Science Award mean to you?

As someone who comes from a country that is not always at the forefront of global scientific recognition, this award has been a powerful confirmation of the hard work and impact of my research. It's a testament to the fact that if you maintain rigorous standards, work tirelessly, and stay focused on making a real difference, your achievements can be recognized on the global stage, regardless of where you're from.

What opportunities have arisen for you as a result of the award?

The award has helped expand my professional network and brought invitations to speak at prestigious conferences. I have been invited to not only be part of a panel at the American Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene Annual Meeting 2024, but also to give a presentation at the meeting. The award and the online presentation I delivered have raised my profile in so many ways.

Bayer Foundation's Early Excellence in Science Awards honor talented early career scientists (up to seven years after completion of their PhD or MD) from all over the world for pioneering research achievements. The award has four categories: Biology, Chemistry, Medical Science, and Data Science. The winners in each category receive prize money of EUR 10,000.

Bayer Foundation Fellow Sharvari Somayaji: How the fellowship sparked her passion and paved the way for her PhD

In 2023 and 2024, around 70 top scientists from all over the world were awarded Bayer Foundation fellowships to conduct research at leading institutions across the globe. Sharvari Somayaji is one of the emerging talents in science.

After earning her bachelor's degree in Biotechnology, Chemistry, and Zoology in her home country of India, Sharvari relocated to Frankfurt am Main, Germany, to pursue her master's in Physical Biology of Cells and Cell Interactions at Goethe University Frankfurt. **During her studies, she was awarded the Bayer Foundation Fellowship for Drug Discovery, which gave her the opportunity to conduct research at the University of British Columbia in Canada.** This fellowship is testament to the scientific community's confidence in her research.

Sharvari describes her time living and working abroad through the fellowship as one of the most enriching experiences of her life, contributing significantly to her personal and professional growth. She reflects: **"The fellowship not only provided me with invaluable skills, but also helped me make connections with so many people in industry as well as in academia and the entrepreneurial ecosystem here in Vancouver."**

Sharvari's scientific journey continued beyond her master's degree. The experience gained during her fellowship deepened her interest in research, ultimately leading her to embark on her PhD at the University of British Columbia. She explains, **"By the end of the fellowship, I had found my area of interest and was enjoying my research so much that when they asked me to stay on in the lab as a PhD student, I happily accepted the offer."**

By providing unique opportunities for personal and professional development, **Bayer Foundation empowers early career scientists to cultivate essential skills and foster meaningful relationships.** With equity and collaboration at its core, the Foundation aims to support a variety of talents, particularly those from diverse backgrounds.



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The fellowship not only allowed me to find my area of interest but also paved the way for me to start my PhD.

Sharvari Somayaji,
Bayer Foundation Fellow

Empowering tomorrow's innovators through inclusive STEM education

Over the past two years, Bayer Foundation's Science@School program has supported 92 schools of different types across Germany, directly benefiting 10,660 students from diverse backgrounds.



By providing funding of EUR 556,000, Bayer Foundation has supported extra-curricular science projects that underscore inclusivity and ensure that science education is accessible to learners of all ages and abilities. These projects cover a wide range of topics, including programming, robotics, energy and sustainability, and provide engaging, hands-on experiences.

Bayer Foundation has been running this program since 2007. Recent developments have underscored the critical need for scientific literacy, making this initiative more important than ever. Faced with global challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, and public health emergencies, scientific understanding is crucial—not only for students' futures, but also for creating informed, resilient societies.

A standout from the 2024 funding round was a secondary school project entitled "Digital School Garden." This project involves the construction of a school garden that uses digital sensors to monitor and analyze the growing conditions for the vegetables and fruits planted in the garden. By measuring temperature, humidity, soil moisture, and pH levels, the digital garden will provide valuable data that can be used in science classes or for project work, while also raising students' awareness of sustainability and resource-conscious agriculture.

Dr. Carsten Mayer who launched the project at the school—Hohenstaufen-Gymnasium Kaiserslautern—firmly believes that, **"Science projects involving practical activities that allow students to see concrete results and at the same time incorporate state-of-the-art advances in digitalization motivate the young people enormously and can lay the groundwork for successful career and study choices."**

Dr. Mayer and his students plan to show current measurement data from the installed sensors on a display in the school building, furnishing the school community with long-term information and raising awareness of the scientific nature of the project. Hopefully, following a successful harvest, a break-time market can be held several times a year to sell the fruits and vegetables grown to the school community.



Bayer Foundation is looking forward to seeing more exciting projects like the digital school garden. Schools in Germany can apply to receive a maximum of EUR 20,000 per project for extra-curricular STEM activities. Applications are open on our [website](#) from February to April each year.

Insights and perspectives of early career scientists unveiled

Dedicated to fostering a supportive environment for the next generation of scientists, we collaborated with Impact Intelligence to hear directly from early career scientists (ECS) working in STEM about the challenges they face on their professional journeys.

Focused on ECS in Germany and seven selected African countries (including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa), the study used AI-driven analytics to filter a vast amount of data from academic publications and social media as well as hundreds of surveys and in-depth interviews.

Financial constraints are a major issue, with virtually one in two respondents struggling to secure funding and essential research tools. Early career scientists also experience intense academic pressure exacerbated by difficulties in finding permanent positions and the constant need to publish. Mental health and work-life balance are concerns for many, while some face gender bias and cultural barriers.

Our study found that geographical disparities are stark: In Germany, early career scientists contend more with job security and heavy workloads, while financial limitations are more pronounced challenges across Africa. Furthermore, women in science face unique challenges, including underrepresentation and the struggle to balance family responsibilities with career ambitions.

The study reflects the true experiences of early career scientists, highlighting the complex challenges they face on their professional paths. One of the key proposed solution including structured mentorship programs for career development as well as exchange and collaboration with other labs and institutions show that our capacity-building programs are effective and aligned with young scientists' major needs. On a broader ecosystem level, the findings underscore the need for a deeper understanding of these difficulties in order to foster a more supportive and equitable

research environment. Bayer Foundation is dedicated to exploring additional activities that address these challenges, ensuring that the next generation of scientists can thrive.



I think it's really this uncertainty and the instability of my academic situation—it's kind of always in the back of my mind and constantly creating stress.

Quote from an early career scientist
taken from one of the in-depth interviews

Universal Challenge

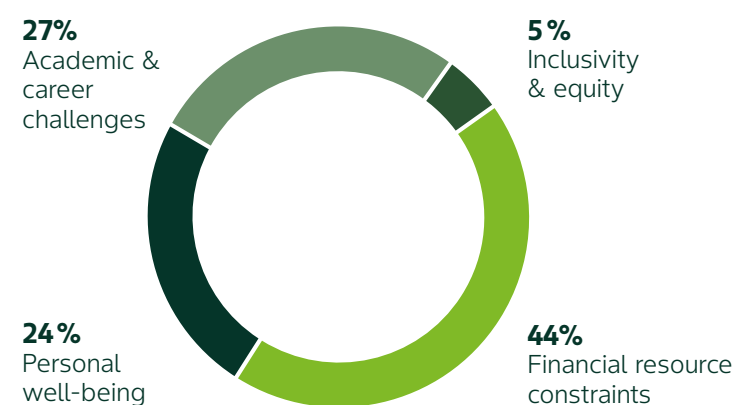


Figure: Percentage distribution of challenges faced



Empowering women in science: The Central African Women and Science Award Program

In Central Africa, women remain significantly under-represented in scientific fields, with participation rates as low as 3.4% in Chad, 8.7% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and 12% in the Republic of the Congo. Francine Ntouni, a leading Congolese parasitologist and the founding president of the Congolese Foundation for Medical Research (FCRM), is on a mission to change this situation. With more than 30 years' experience, she emphasizes the vital role women scientists play in addressing Africa's developmental challenges.

Despite existing policies aimed at promoting women's participation in science, many barriers remain, including gender biases and poorly defined career paths. The lack of national programs specifically targeting women in science further complicates efforts to attract and retain female talent.

Since 2014, the FCRM has run the "Women and Science" program, which aims to raise awareness and provide

support to female scientists. This initiative includes public campaigns, scholarships for master's students, and encouragement prizes for women scientists. In 2024, the FCRM, in collaboration with Bayer Foundation, launched the first sub-regional "Women and Science" award program for doctoral students and mother scientists across several Central African countries.

Under Ntouni's leadership, the award recognized eleven exceptional PhD students as well as four dedicated women scientists and mothers, highlighting their contributions to the scientific community.

As gender biases and insufficient support continue to hinder women's scientific careers, initiatives like this award are crucial. They not only empower individual scientists but also contribute to the scientific growth of the Central African region. By fostering a culture of inclusivity, we help unlock the potential of women in science, ultimately benefiting the entire continent.

Impact-driven entrepreneurship education: Supporting change through student collaborations

The Social Impact Start-up Academy (SISTAC) was set up to promote the success of impact start-ups and early-stage innovation.

SISTAC connects students and employees with impact start-ups in the health and food security field through action learning. This not only helps learners to develop practical skills but also enables impact enterprises to test their business models, creating a win-win scenario.

Recently, SISTAC's activities have gained momentum across its four pillars:

Student programs

The Social Innovation Bootcamp kicks off collaboration between impact start-ups and master's students at Germany's Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. In April 2024, the Bootcamp hosted five African Women Empowerment Award winners to kickstart a three-month cooperation with the students. At the end of the semester, the students proposed a business solution to help fine-tune the start-ups' business models.

Corporate programs

In 2023, SISTAC matched an interdisciplinary group of Audi employees with eWAKA, a Kenyan start-up specializing in electric last-mile transport. The team devised a cutting-edge B2B platform and gave recommendations to enhance eWAKA's business model. The program also facilitated mutual learning with the development of a valuable business solution from a range of initial ideas, proving to be a real gamechanger for the Audi team.

Global network

A recent partnership with the Miller Center uses action learning in impact entrepreneurship education through a global scholar network and joint research publications. Following the Miller Center's attendance at the 2024 Social Innovation Bootcamp and the partnership launch at the Social Innovation Days in Berlin, SISTAC is looking forward to a two-year collaboration to educate the next generation of social innovators.

Academic publishing

A SISTAC research group involving several universities and Bayer Foundation focuses on impact entrepreneurship education and women's entrepreneurship. In 2023 and 2024, the group presented its work at conferences in Lisbon, Tokyo, and Berlin. Among other activities, they are now preparing a research project on artificial intelligence and action learning together with the Miller Center.



As SISTAC expands these initiatives, it is inviting more partners to join the journey. The organization helps companies cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset, innovate rapidly, and become sustainability pioneers. Please contact Dr. Eva Wack to explore possible collaborations: eva.wack@sistac.world

Women Empowerment Award 2024: Supporting women entrepreneurs in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America to drive social change

Bayer Foundation celebrated its fourth cohort of Women Empowerment Award winners at the Social Innovation Days in Berlin.

Established in 2021, this award aims to highlight women entrepreneurs as role models and address the financial support gap, which currently sees women entrepreneurs receiving just one-sixth of the funding of their male counterparts. Starting in 2025, the award will be renamed the “Women Entrepreneurs Award.”

In cooperation with Impact Hub Network, we are supporting 15 women entrepreneurs pioneering health, food security, and climate solutions across Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America. Prior to the award ceremony, the women entrepreneurs spent a fulfilling in-person cohort day at Impact Hub Berlin with some of our previous winners.

“The experiences of the previous cohort alumni were super encouraging. I was impressed by the blend of awardees aged under and over 35—so much to learn within a cohort with different perspectives,” said Joyce Kamande, co-founder of Safi Organics in Kenya, Africa. Mayara Borges, co-founder of Prorede3 in Brazil, had an incredible experience: “Discovering Impact Hub was really cool! The space reserved for the event was also fantastic, and the award ceremony was a dream! The lectures and cases presented were inspiring and the networking was extremely enriching.”

Astrid Paramita who represented FoodCycle Indonesia said that receiving the award was a personal acknowledgement. “In Indonesia, it is unusual for a woman to be the breadwinner. It’s great to meet the other 14 winners. We come from so many different backgrounds but share the same challenges. They understand what my journey is about”, Paramita said.

Program benefits for our awardees:

- EUR 25,000 cash support
- Six-month accelerator program
- Sponsored trip to meet the other awardees and investors
- Visibility and recognition
- Alumni network
- Access to Impact Hub Network



Women entrepreneurs are driving transformative change in communities around the world. Their resilience, creativity, and commitment to solving local challenges are catalysts for progress, enabling more inclusive and sustainable growth. Through the Bayer Foundation, we are proud to support these changemakers as they bring progress and inspire others to drive a better future.

Rodrigo Santos,
President of Bayer Crop Science &
Executive Director, Bayer Foundation



Deep dive:
Women Empowerment Award White Paper 2024
Women navigating the business landscape require support. We collaborate with Impact Intelligence to identify key areas in which supporting organizations can offer more timely and effective interventions to women entrepreneurs in low- and middle-income countries. This annual research is published in our Women Empowerment Award White Paper.

The white paper analyzed more than 2,200 applications for the 2024 Women Empowerment Award.

- Key insights of the analysis:**
- 1. Gender bias and discrimination tended to be more pronounced among younger and less experienced applicants.**
While gender bias and discrimination remained the most significant challenge across the board, the analysis revealed that age and experience influence the significance of these challenges for the women entrepreneurs.
 - 2. Women entrepreneurs emphasized a need for tailored support and networking programs.**
The 2024 applicants highlighted networks and partnerships as representing the most significant support gap. Examining their challenges from a regional perspective revealed distinct differences, highlighting the lack of tailored support to address specific needs.
 - 3. Women entrepreneurs want to be part of the solution to gender-related challenges.**
The 2024 applicants were primarily motivated by a desire to address gender-related challenges and empower other women through their businesses. This shift from “help me to help myself” to “help me to help others” signals an encouraging turn toward collective empowerment and social impact.



Click the QR Code for more info about the white paper.

Supporting social enterprises and innovative NGOs: Social Innovation Ecosystem Fund

Established in 2019, the Social Innovation Ecosystem Fund (SIEF) aims to improve the life of underserved communities by scaling social innovations across low- and middle-income countries to foster sustainable entrepreneurship and build a social innovation ecosystem. From 2019 to 2022, the fund focused

solely on social innovation in Sub-Saharan Africa. Starting in 2023, Bayer Foundation extended this grant vehicle to support communities in Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East, while still maintaining its engagement in Africa. Three of our partnerships for this fund are spotlighted here.

Latin America

Empowering female farmers in Peru through digital innovation

As the gatekeepers of family nutrition and crop diversity, women play a pivotal yet often underappreciated role in Peru's food system. **To address this, Producers Direct, a global smallholder-owned not-for-profit, is pioneering Farm Direct.** This AgriTech solution empowers female smallholders in Peru through a digital platform that transcends the typical agricultural marketplace by offering a blend of in-person and digital services. It provides real-time climate and market data, personalized agronomic and financial advice, market access, and financing. Women are prioritized to reduce risk, increase productivity, and drive financial inclusion.

Farm Direct has made a significant impact, increasing the income of farmers selling surplus crops across Latin America by 40% in the first six months of 2023.

"Our tool has been designed by farmers for farmers. This is critical in an ecosystem where AgriTech tools have to be trusted by smallholders if they are to be adopted and achieve a longer-term impact. Human-centered design and ongoing user testing have resulted in high adoption and retention rates on our Farm Direct digital platform", says Producers Direct CEO Claire Rhodes.

Luz, a 37-year-old farmer from Chirinos, exemplifies the benefits of Farm Direct. She grows bananas, coffee, cabbage, and tomatoes at more than 1,500 meters above sea level: "Diversifying your crops makes sense because you can adjust your activities to different seasons. For example, during the summer, you can plant crops that are more resistant to the heat. Or you can gradually test which crop has a good yield, and which crops can withstand the heat and which can't."

Leodán Sosa García, a Youth Agent since May 2023, highlights how the platform eliminates time-consuming trips to markets and avoids exploitation by middlemen. By connecting directly with commercial buyers, Youth Agents help farmers negotiate better prices, thereby reducing costs and increasing profits.

Farm Direct also captures detailed transaction data, which gives farmers valuable insights into market trends and enables informed decision-making.

Supported by Bayer and Bayer Foundation since 2022, Producers Direct aims to scale Farm Direct to reach 10,000 Peruvian women farmers by 2025.

This expansion will help the organization reach break-even point, ensuring sustainable field operations. CEO Claire Rhodes notes that the partnership has been instrumental in scaling the platform, transforming the lives of female smallholders by boosting incomes, strengthening climate resilience, and reducing food loss, hence ultimately uplifting entire communities.

Farm Direct is not just about technology, it's about equipping female farmers with the tools they need to thrive and fostering a more inclusive and resilient agricultural ecosystem in Peru.



Africa

Women Economic Empowerment Program

A three-year initiative, the “**Women Economic Empowerment Program**” has been launched in rural Nigeria with the goal of enhancing women’s health, stabilizing smallholder farmers’ livelihoods, and implementing empowerment strategies for Nigerian women. Led by Bayer Foundation in partnership with Nigerian enterprises and foundations, the program aims to increase women’s income by 30% and create 2,500 community health worker roles under the **Healthy Entrepreneurs** model, reaching over 500,000 families. This collaborative effort involves several key implementing partners:

1. Advantage Health Africa (AHA):
AHA is a health technology and pharmaceutical distribution company that works to improve access to essential medicines and health services across Nigeria. Through its innovative solutions, such as the MyCare Nigeria platform, AHA addresses gaps in rural healthcare by connecting underserved communities with high-quality medical products and services. As part of this initiative, AHA will play a crucial role in ensuring rural health facilities are stocked with affordable medicines and essential health products.

2. Healthy Entrepreneurs:
Known for its community-based health model, Healthy Entrepreneurs trains and equips local health workers with medical supplies and expertise to deliver essential healthcare services in remote areas. Their model fosters income generation and skills development for health entrepreneurs. As part of this program, they will implement a scalable network of community health workers, directly contributing to health access and livelihood stability for rural Nigerian women.

3. AFEX:
As Nigeria’s leading agricultural commodities exchange, AFEX works to enhance food security, facilitate access to finance, and create transparent market structures for smallholder farmers. Through this initiative, AFEX will provide smallholder farmers—especially women—with

improved market access, better pricing, and training resources to enhance their agricultural productivity and income sustainability.

4. Coamana:
Coamana is an agricultural and economic empowerment organization focused on supporting rural farmers and entrepreneurs with the tools and resources they need to thrive. Leveraging Coamana’s expertise, this program will equip Nigerian women with agricultural training, access to inputs, and market linkages to improve crop yields and ensure stable incomes.

5. Jennifer Etuh Foundation:
Dedicated to improving healthcare and education for vulnerable populations, the Jennifer Etuh Foundation focuses on addressing systemic gaps in access to quality health services. As a partner in this initiative, the foundation will help deliver community health programs, ensuring that women and families in rural areas have access to essential healthcare services and education.



The project has really helped secure my income as I now sell one or two products almost every day. Even in my absence, when I come back from work, my son will say ‘Mommy, they bought this, see the money for this.’ So, I’m really happy.

Lois S. Sarki,
Kaduna WEE Beneficiary



They taught us how to plant inside sacks. They taught us how to make nursery beds. We planted cabbage, chili peppers, and tomatoes. At first, they taught us how to do these things. Before, we didn’t know how to plant tomatoes because we did not have a garden. So now we have been taught. With these sacks we can do more, and it will help us in our lives. It will reduce our spending on what we buy. So, if we do it ourselves, it will help us, our family, and the whole community. We say thank you.

Baratu Benson,
Kaduna WEE Beneficiary



Two days after the training, I was sleeping and my neighbor knocked on my door in the middle of the night because their baby was vomiting and was running a high body temperature. I was able to run a malaria test for the baby that night, and I gave him Artemether tabs to take as well as PCM syrup. So, I was able to introduce this program to her. I said, okay, now I’m selling these medications. I’m now a Community Health Entrepreneur. From that day on, people in my compound come to me and ask me to run some tests for them and give them medication.

Huldah Joseph,
Kaduna WEE Beneficiary

Introducing the Climate and Health Lighthouse Fund: A collaborative effort to bridge the funding gap in Asia

Bayer Foundation and AVPN Limited Asia's largest social investment network and ecosystem builder, have joined forces to launch the Climate and Health Lighthouse Fund.

This initiative comes at a crucial moment. According to the “Climate and Health Opportunity Primer” report, there is a substantial shortfall in financing for climate adaptation in relation to human health. Bayer Foundation supported AVPN and Dalberg Advisers in preparing this report, which estimates that **developing countries will require USD 20 billion annually until 2030 for climate adaptation related to health**—with 93% of this need remaining unmet. In the Asia-Pacific region, the gap exceeds USD 3 billion, which is more than six times the current funding levels.

“The World Health Organization estimates that 3.6 billion people live in areas highly susceptible to climate change, with climate events projected to cause two billion disability-adjusted life years by 2050. Asia is expected to bear 30% of this burden. Our goal is to center human experiences in our approach, especially regarding health impacts related to climate change”, says Aravindan Srinivasan, Executive Director of Climate Action Platform at AVPN.

The report goes on to highlight that social investors can influence the future by making targeted investments, forming strategic partnerships, and building ecosystems that protect community health from the impacts of climate change. “That’s why **we are raising a pooled fund of USD 5 million to incubate, validate, and co-invest in innovative solutions**”, explains Dr. Peng Zhong, Social Innovation Director at Bayer Foundation.

The fund will provide support for innovative solutions. Between 20 and 40 shortlisted applicants will receive flexible funding, ranging from USD 50,000 to USD 200,000 per organization, to catalyze their impact goals in the climate and health sectors. The fund will also provide scalable, capacity-building support to all applicants to make sure everyone benefits by applying.

“This fund is the first of its kind in Asia”, says Madhavika Bajoria, Executive Director of the Health and Nutrition Platform at AVPN. She adds: “AVPN will unite a pool of funders and technical partners with a focus on health or climate issues. By combining these areas of expertise, we can create a shared agenda that addresses the intersection of these two critical topics. We view this fund as a catalyst for ecosystem development and a stepping stone to unlocking more significant funding.”

④

2025

Outlook

As Bayer's corporate foundation, Bayer Foundation will remain committed to making a positive impact across the globe by supporting breakthroughs in science and social innovations.

Our aim is to empower

scientists and social innovators
to create a better and fairer world
with the goal of Health for All,
Hunger for None

We will continue to focus on promoting fundamental research and entrepreneurial solutions in health and agriculture, working closely with partners to increase equity, trust, and collaboration. We remain dedicated to promoting diversity, particularly women's empowerment in science and entrepreneurship.

Bayer Foundation has an exciting year ahead in 2025. Initial collaborations have already kicked off at the beginning of the year. For example, together with our partner Pula, we aim to help 10 million smallholder farmers become more resilient to climate change impacts across seven countries by 2030. The initial catalytic funding of Bayer Foundation will help build private-public collaborations and shape the agri-insurance market in emerging regions of Africa and Asia. Similarly, we mobilized additional resources with our catalytic funding in collaborations with partners like AVPN, to invest in impactful innovations at the nexus of climate and health. Together with WeShare Forward Foundation, we are launching the

Women Entrepreneurs Funding, a groundbreaking endowment dedicated to empowering women-led social enterprises in emerging countries through flexible and innovative impact financing models. Furthermore, we are excited that in 2025, we will expand our scientific fellowship program to support exceptional students in conducting international research projects and initiatives that explore the intersection of climate change and health to further foster research and initiatives that address the health impacts of climate change.

We will support grassroots social enterprises and scientific projects, as well as establish international partnerships to enable successful innovations globally. We aim to broaden our geographical reach and continue making qualitative and quantitative impact across communities. By continuously building and leveraging our network, we are striving to expand our positive impact even further.



Our Organization

Bayer Foundation encompasses two legal entities, the Bayer Science and Education Foundation and the Bayer Cares Foundation.

Leadership

Executive Committee



Chitkala Kalidas
for Science &
Social Innovation



Stefan Oelrich
for Science



Rodrigo Santos
for Social Innovation



Kyra Constanze Pauly
for Science &
Social Innovation

Managing Director

Foundation team



Simone Jonek
Foundation Office
Lead



Rawan Alkurdi
Foundation Office &
Program Support



Peng Zhong
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Innovation & Engagement



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Manager



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Our Boards

Bayer Foundation has two Boards of Trustees, namely the Board of Trustees of the Science & Education Foundation and the Board of Trustees of the Bayer Cares Foundation.

Members Board of Trustees Science and Education:

Prof. Edith Heard – Chairwoman
Monika Lessl
Robert Reiter
Christian Rommel

In addition, the **Foundation’s Science Council** selects the winners of the Foundation’s science awards. It also provides advice to help shape the Foundation’s programs, ensuring that they reflect advances in the life sciences. The members can be found on our [homepage](#).

Members Board of Trustees Science and Education:

Prof. André Habisch – Chairman
Monika Lessl
Michael Preuss
Matthias Berninger

Bayer Foundation Information

Bayer Cares Foundation and Bayer Science and Education Foundation operate under the public umbrella brand name “Bayer Foundation”.

Represented by Executive Committee:

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Executive Director of Bayer Cares Foundation and Bayer Science and Education Foundation, SVP, Bayer AG

Stefan Oelrich
Executive Director of Bayer Science and Education Foundation, Member of the Board of Management of Bayer AG

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