Improving inclusivity for researchers in emerging markets

STM US Annual Conference, 11th April 2019
Andrea Powell, Publisher Coordinator, Research4Life

Or, to put it another way....

- How can we create a truly inclusive research communication ecosystem, not just by enabling access to content but also by also by providing access to publishing opportunities for researchers in emerging markets?

- How can we tap into more researchers from emerging markets to improve the diversity and appeal of our publications, increase our pool of reviewers and encourage good practice in early career researchers?

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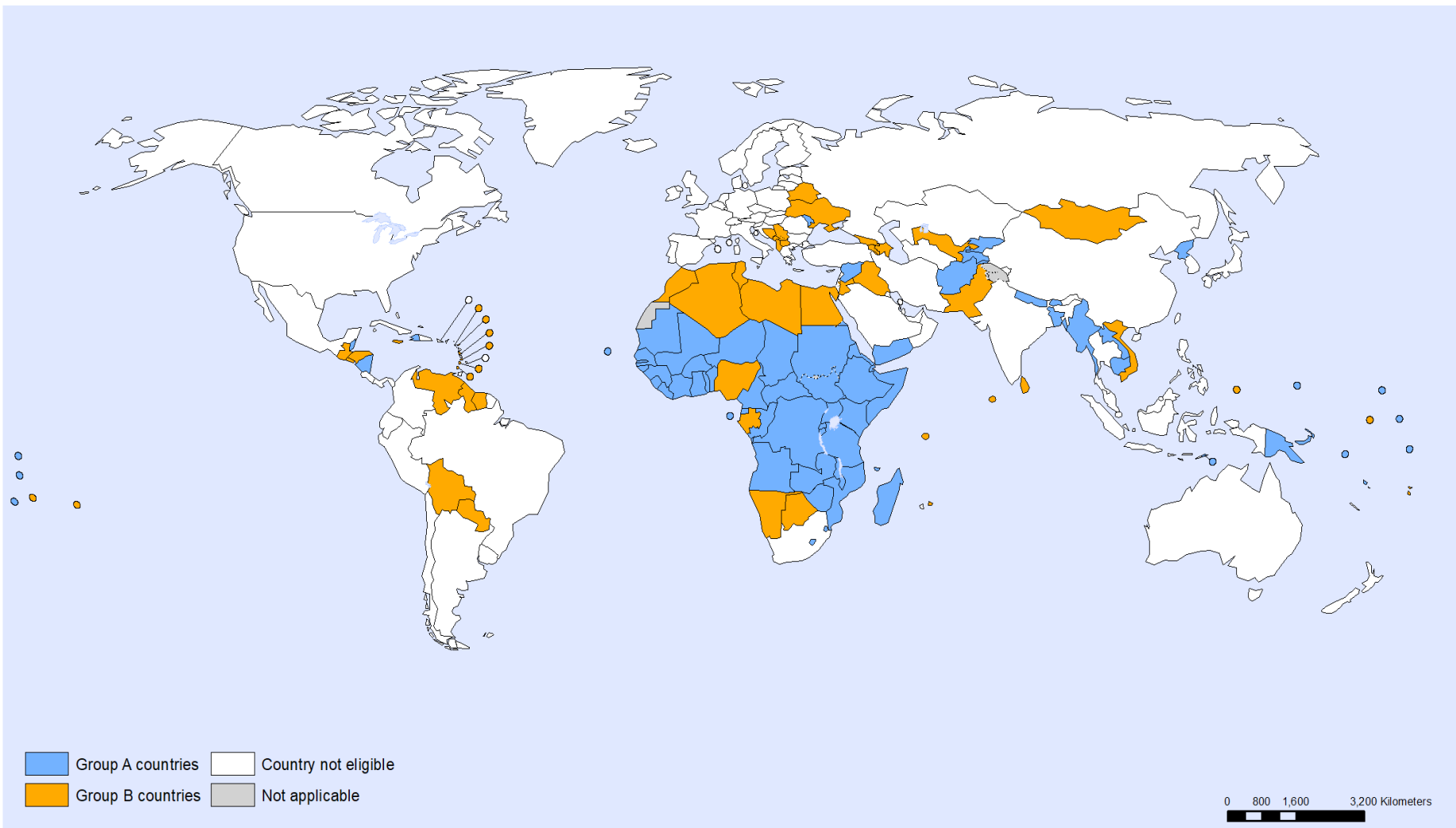# What is the goal of Research4Life?

The Research4Life initiative aims to reduce the knowledge gap between industrialized countries and developing countries by providing affordable access to critical scientific research from some 21,000 journals, 69,000 books, and 120 other information resources from some 200 publishers.

Over 8900 institutions in developing countries are currently registered for access to this content.

First programme, Hinari, launched 2002

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Countries, areas and territories eligible for Research4Life

Legend:
- Group A countries (blue)
- Group B countries (orange)
- Country not eligible (white)
- Not applicable (grey)

Scale: 0 – 800 – 1,600 – 3,200 Kilometers

Data Source: World Health Organization
Map Production: Information Evidence and Research (IER)
World Health Organization

World Health Organization

Breakdown of institutions registered

- Universities   24.7%
- Research Institutes   19.2%
- Government Offices   16.7%
- Teaching hospitals   16.5%
- National NGOs   8.2%
- Vocational Training Centres   7.8%
- Healthcare Services   4.4%
- National Libraries   1.9%
- Agricultural Extension Centres   0.8%
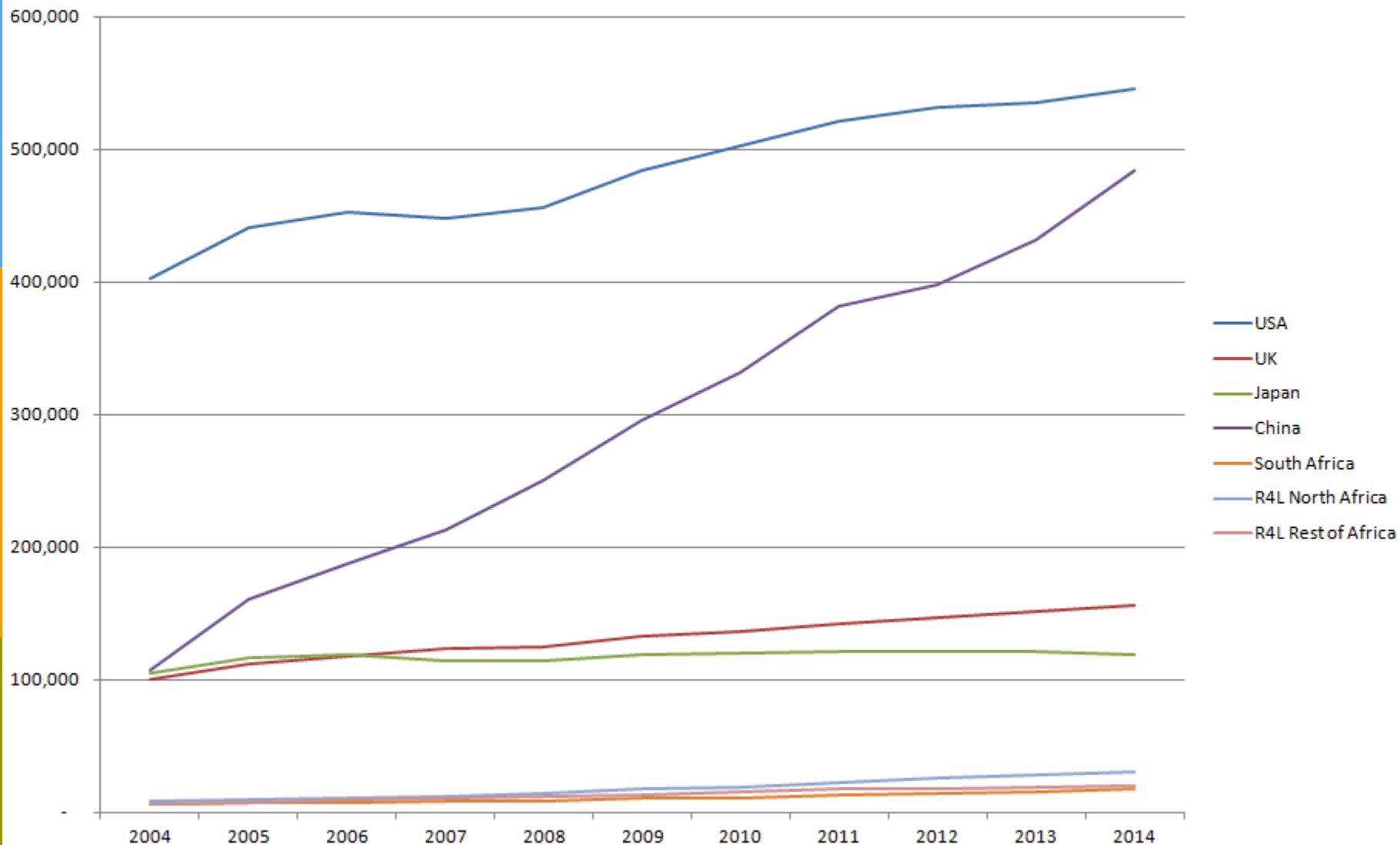
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Research4Life Programmes

How is Research4Life promoted?

- ❑ c. $40 per annum spent on Marketing & Communications, using all usual channels and promotional activities, supplemented by publishers

- ❑ Regular competitions, often sponsored by publishers, to recognise Unsung Heroes and Research Advocacy Champions, in the library and the laboratory

- ❑ c. $90k per annum spent on training, including the development of online materials and advocacy toolkits
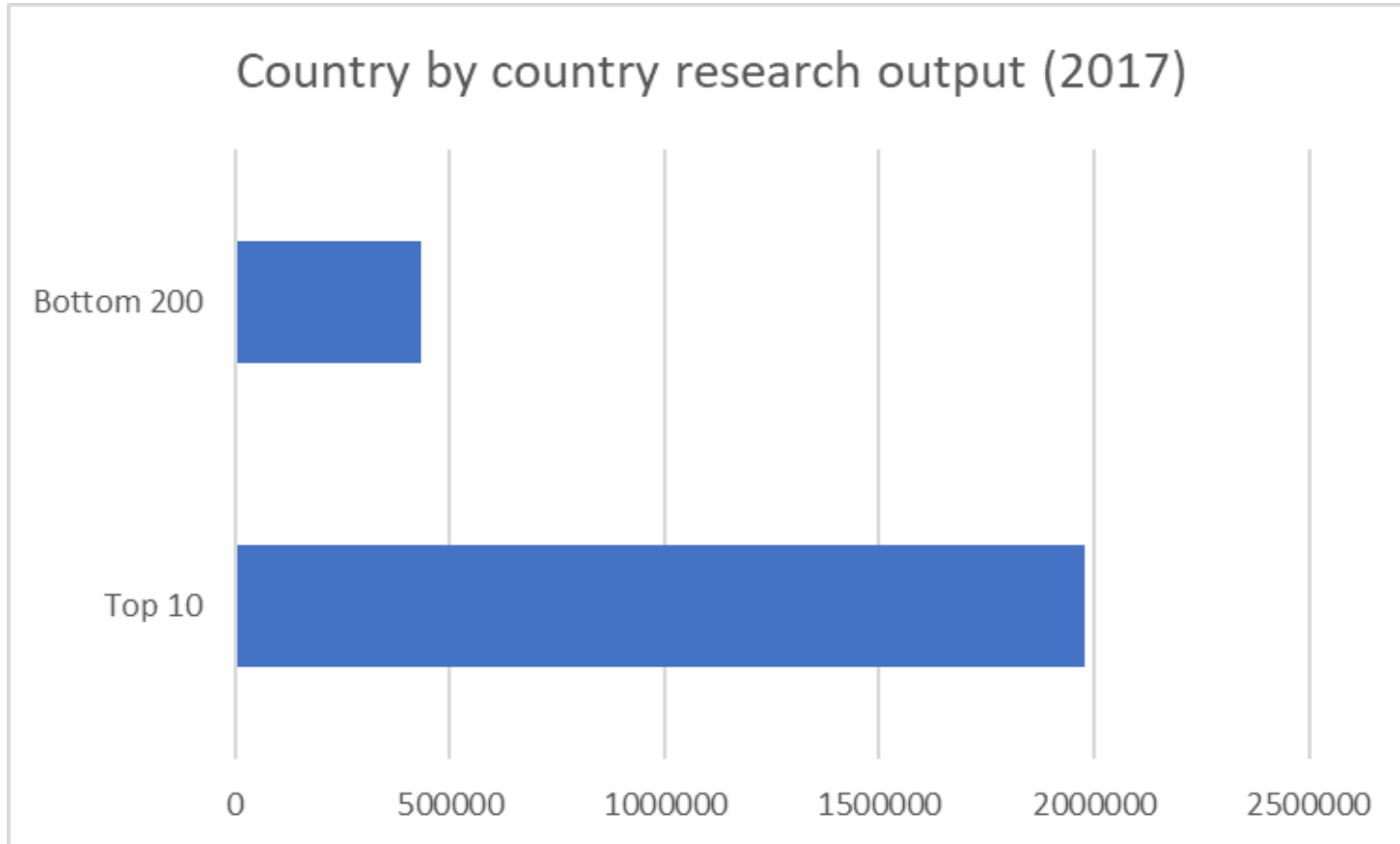
- ❑ Partner in-kind outreach efforts

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So what's the problem?

Research Articles published 2004-2014

Or to put it another way…

Country by country research output (2017)

Source: Scopus

Lack of diversity in peer review

- Publons Global State of Peer Review report published in Sept 2018 revealed that researchers from emerging regions are under-represented in the peer review process

- Journal editors tend to be located in the Global North and hence tend to invite reviewers from their own geographical regions

- Fewer invitations to review means fewer opportunities to see the latest research trends, to learn what journals are looking for, to build professional networks and to develop critical skills

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Daily challenges faced

- Researchers in the Global South face significant obstacles at all stages:

  - Accessing research
  - Conducting research
  - Communicating research
  - Linking research to policy

- See [report](#) from Researcher to Reader conference

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Stories from the sharp end

□ Dr Haseeb Irfanullah, Editor of Bangladesh Journal of Plant Taxonomy

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Two steps forward, one step back…

- BanglaJOL platform launched in 2007, and now hosts 142 journals, and 21,600+ articles
- In 2016, 30 journal editors participated in a workshop and developed a roadmap to raise standards in journal publishing in Bangladesh

- Since then, nothing has happened, due to lack of leadership and ownership
- Only 7 BanglaJOL titles have been awarded 2 Stars by the JPPS assessment framework
- 47% of titles are classed as "Inactive"
- Only 3 titles have an Impact Factor

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What are the key obstacles?

- Lack of financial sustainability, with too much reliance on volunteer effort
- Lack of understanding in government of the link between scholarly communication and progress towards achievement of the SDGs
- Little connection made between research and policy
- Promotion criteria at public universities is not dependent on publication in good quality journals
- Lack of experience and international isolation
- No funds to pay APCs to give local research greater exposure internationally

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THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

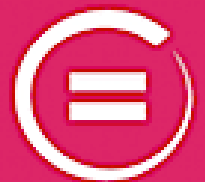| 1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES				12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE AND JUSTICE STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The influence of the SDGs

- Implicit in the agenda is the understanding that knowledge-sharing and access to ICTs are *catalysts for* development, not development outcomes in their own right

- Goal 17 includes several objectives relating to the support infrastructure needed to achieve the goals, the evidence required to measure their success and the collaborations that will drive delivery of outcomes

- This explicitly includes access to research outputs

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Is Research Focus shifting?

- New *Web of Science Group* report (1st April) analyses publications specifically referencing the SDGs as influencing the research performed

- Growing evidence that research policy is increasingly focused on achieving the indicators set out in the SDG Agenda (all 232 of them)

- Researchers from the Global South must be an equal part of this programme, not just passive beneficiaries
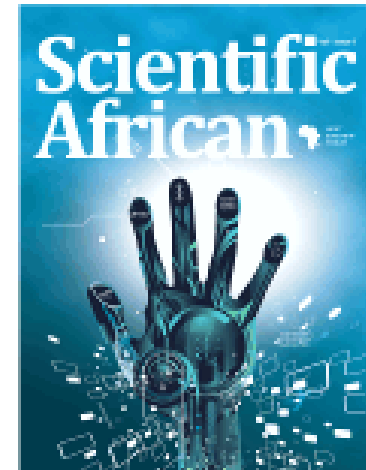
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Signs of change?

- The **Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa** (AESA) aims to shift centre of gravity for African science to Africa, awarding research grants and developing policy & strategy

- Nearly $100m has been awarded to 11 leading African researchers to implement cutting-edge programmes in 40 institutions across 21 countries

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Signs of progress?

AJOL hosts over 500 peer-reviewed journals from 31 African countries

Scientific African is owned by the Next Einstein Forum and is published by Elsevier

A potential game-changer for R4L

Objectives of DAR

- Put in place the necessary capacities to create and/or scale up access to **and use of** scientific and technical knowledge.

- **Provide training** for librarians, university teachers, graduate students, researchers, IT specialists and other relevant constituencies.

- **Create measurable results** quickly through intensive, country-wide campaigns in 12 targeted LDCs to integrate use of published research in all relevant activities.

- Focus on South-South collaboration and greater participation in the scholarly communications ecosystem

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Why is DAR so important?

- Leverages existing initiatives
- Has potential to bring significant additional funding to Research4Life including budget to support technology upgrades
- Underpins the whole SDG agenda and raises the profile of research communication and its role in policy-making
- Engages with in-country institutions to ensure activities are appropriate and sensitised to local needs
- Gathers evidence in a systematic way

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Levelling the Playing Field

- Researchers need equality of access, not just to content, but to workflow tools and other resources

- Researchers need to be able to build their networks by participating in the publication process (e.g. as reviewers or editors)

- Research from the Global South needs to be taken seriously, which may mean using different ways to evaluate it

- Researchers need the skills to navigate the scholarly communication ecosystem

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Tangible steps we can take

- We cannot solve all of the world's problems, but we can collectively address the lack of equality in the current research communication ecosystem

- It is in all our interests to encourage good practices and to widen the pool of talent

- Recent discussions have identified some specific ways for the research publishing community to improve inclusivity and support the SDGs

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How can you contribute?

- Support a project to improve transparency around publishers' policies on APC waivers for their Open Access publications;

- Offer mentoring for researchers in emerging markets in all aspects of research communication, including peer review and the use of social media;

- Support Research4Life to expand its range of content and to include discovery tools, training materials and other workflow solutions;

- Keep raising awareness, especially by including speakers from developing countries in conference programmes.

- When considering diversity, be sure to include economic and geographical factors

What next for Research4Life?

- ❑ Expansion of content particularly in under-represented disciplines

- ❑ Position as a springboard for improving access to publishing opportunity, not just access to content

- ❑ Greater financial sustainability through new partnerships and funding sources

- ❑ Improved impact assessment and evidence gathering

- ❑ More usage!

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For More Information

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