

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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New white paper explores how the transition to Open Access could be made more equitable for the Global South

The Research4Life initiative has expanded in scope since 2002 to provide free or very low-cost access to the current research literature in over 10,000 registered institutions in eligible countries, helping address research inequalities from the readership side.

Given an increasing focus on UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a global transition in scholarly publishing models towards Open Access, a newly published white paper: ['Achieving an equitable transition to open access for researchers in lower and middle-income countries'](#) examines how the playing field can be levelled from the authorship side also, permitting knowledge production in lower and middle-income countries (LMICs) to find a wider audience.

Published as part of the [ICSR Perspectives](#) series. The short report has been authored by Andrea Powell STM's Outreach Director and Publisher Coordinator for Research4Life, Rob Johnson Director of Research Consulting and Rachel Herbert Senior Research Evaluation Manager at Elsevier.

It summarises that in 2018, 75% of all publications from authors in [Research4Life countries](#) were still published under a subscription model. It also notes that while Gold OA is the most frequently utilised model, the current lack of funding and poor understanding of article publication charge (APC) waivers were both barriers to a wider adoption of OA within the Global South.

Speaking of the launch of the publication Andrea Powell from Research4Life said “This timely ICSR Perspectives report examines the barriers to adoption of Open Access and considers the steps needed to ensure that a transition to OA does not inadvertently widen the knowledge gap between North and South. The analysis presented suggests practical ways in which researchers in LMICs can be supported in making the transition whilst also ensuring that the outcomes of this evolution are no less inclusive than the current model.”

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

1) *‘Achieving an equitable transition to open access for researchers in lower and middle-income countries’* is published as a partnership between the [International Center for the Study of Research](#), [STM](#) and [Research4Life](#)

2) The International Center for the Study of Research

The mission of the International Center for the Study of Research (ICSR) is to further the study of research and thus to contribute to the evidence base supporting the practice of research strategy, evaluation and policy. Our vision is a world in which decisions informed by such evidence benefit research and society.

3) STM

At STM we support our members in their mission to advance research worldwide. Our over 140 members based in over 20 countries around the world collectively publish 66% of all journal articles and tens of thousands of monographs and reference works. As academic and professional publishers, learned societies, university presses, start-ups and established players we work together to serve society by developing standards and technology to ensure research is of high quality, trustworthy and easy to access. We promote the contribution that publishers make to innovation, openness and the sharing of knowledge and embrace change to support the growth and sustainability of the research ecosystem. As a common good, we provide data and analysis for all involved in the global activity of research.

4) Research4Life

Research4Life is a public-private partnership of WHO, FAO, UNEP, WIPO, ILO, Cornell and Yale Universities, the International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers and up to 160 international publishers. The goal of Research4Life is to reduce the knowledge gap between high-income countries and low- and middle-income countries by providing affordable access to scholarly, professional and research information. Since 2002, the five programs – Research for Health (Hinari), Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Research in the Environment (OARE), Research for Development and Innovation (ARDI) and Research for Global Justice (GOALI) – have provided researchers at more than 10,000 institutions in more than 120 low- and middle-income countries with free or low-cost online access to up 100,400 leading journals and books in the fields of health, agriculture, environment, applied sciences and legal information.