



Foundation

# Report 2022



Catalyzing advances in **Science & Social Innovation**



## Dear Friends of Bayer Foundation,

We are living through times of ever new and escalating challenges, but also through times of exciting opportunities. Now more than ever, we need solutions that ensure the growing global population can thrive and we can build a world with health for all and hunger for none within the planetary boundaries.

At Bayer Foundation, we support the scientists and social innovators striving to develop these solutions. Their work is a testimony to the fact that science is a fundamental pillar of societal progress. It creates a firm foundation for cutting-edge innovation from which social entrepreneurs can bring about long-lasting societal progress: progress that impacts people and communities, coupled with innovation that meets the needs of a global and diverse population. Bayer Foundation's greatest strength therefore lies in its holistic approach: We support tomorrow's changemakers, and we do so at the interface between science and social innovation.

In this spirit, the recent launch of a joint project with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation to expand scientific capacity in sub-Saharan Africa marked a true milestone moment for us. It is great to be supporting young researchers in defining and resolving the most relevant regional challenges. I am also particularly proud of our programs to foster female empowerment and boost the role of women in science and social innovation.

At the same time, we firmly believe that collaboration is one of the most powerful driving forces for promoting trust and innovation. In this report, we present numerous examples of our programs and activities that are designed to break silos, boost social entrepreneurship, facilitate holistic perspectives and constructive debate as well as empower scientists and social entrepreneurs to make their ideas a reality and create a fairer tomorrow.

**There is a lot to do. But I am optimistic  
that this fairer tomorrow is within our grasp.**



**Dr. Monika Lessl,**  
Executive Director Bayer Foundation



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# Impact

## 2021/2022

### Social Innovation Impact 2021/2022

To “measure what matters” to the society with our interventions, we strive for an “active”, data-driven Impact Measurement and Management (IMM) approach:

a combination of self-reported data from our partners together with external evaluation and validation. In a first step, we engaged with 60 Decibels, an innovative end-to-end IMM provider, to gather performance data from our direct beneficiaries via customized phone survey.

The response of the beneficiary communities tells us whether the intervention we funded worked, how much it improved their quality of life and what needs to change to make it better. If you would like to see the results of our first reports in detail, you can find them on our website within our news & stories section.

Total Funds:

€ **9.5** million

in grants spent through Social Innovation programs in

**13** countries

across sub-Saharan Africa

Co-funding:

€ **11.5** million

leveraged through partnerships



People reached:

**2.8** million people

(out of this 2.5 million smallholders)



“

I feel proud of Bayer Foundation’s impact and I am inspired by the **transformative progress** the scientists and social innovators working with the Foundation can drive forward. Helping them **to make the world better and fairer is what Bayer Foundation is all about.**”

**Sarena Lin,**  
Member Executive Committee, Bayer Foundation,  
and Member Board of Management, Bayer AG

## Science Impact 2021/2022

**Bayer Foundation is committed to making science more equitable for all, helping to pave the way for a fairer tomorrow.**

Whether it is providing unique opportunities for fantastic scientists from low- and middle-income countries or helping teachers make science accessible to all students, regardless of whether they want to be scientists or not, we seek to make science more accessible to all. We do this through all of our programs, irrespective of gender, age, race, geographical location or any other factor.

### Bayer Foundation Fellowships

**69**  **fellowships**  
in total with a value of  
**€523,000**

**Female Scholars:**  
**37**

**24**  **Students**  
with nationality from \*low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) having received a Bayer Foundation Fellowship

### With Alexander von Humboldt Foundation



**17 PhD/Postdoc** fellowships to people  
from Africa with grants value **€698,000**

### Science @ School Program



Total schools  
in Germany supported

**71** with grants value  
**€423,000**



**12**  
**Scientific Awards**  
with a total amount of  
**€278,000**

### With Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard Foundation



**4 fellowships** total value **€20,000**

supporting talented young women with children in the field of natural sciences, experimental research, and medicine

\*LMIC = low and middle income countries. Defined by World Bank List of Economies 2020



# Bayer Foundation Highlights

In 2021 and 2022, exciting events and initiatives brought our vision of catalyzing advances in science and social innovation to life. This section showcases selected highlights from our collaborations with trusted partners over the past two years.





# ights



# Social Innovation Day Harvesting A Healthier Future —

After a break of two and a half years, we invited our partners to our second Social Innovation Day in Berlin in June 2022. On the agenda: two days filled with fascinating presentations, discussions and numerous opportunities to network and exchange ideas surrounding the theme of “Harvesting a healthier future.”





The Social Innovation Day not only brought together like-minded changemakers, it also allowed investors to provide resources and meet with inspiring social innovation leaders, many of them women. We firmly believe that one of the smartest ways to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals is to invest in women leaders.

The event highlighted their essential role in supporting inclusive economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. By providing an opportunity for all partners to meet and to truly connect, Bayer Foundation aims to bring down some of the barriers faced by female entrepreneurs, such as access to finance and mentoring.



Thank you for such an inspiring two-day meetup of friends, partners and colleagues! It was one of the most valuable conferences I have attended, and I absolutely loved connecting with you all. I'm excited for our future synergies and collaborations.

**Eleni Theodorou,**  
We Share Forward Foundation



These last few days have been inspiring and hugely motivating. Great to meet so many people doing good in the world. May we meet again (soon)!

**Sanku, a company on a mission to end malnutrition in Africa was represented by**

**Leah Tronel,**  
Director of development,  
SANKU – Project Healthy Children



You can watch recordings of this two-day event, including the inspirational opening keynote, on Bayer Foundation's YouTube channel.

# Bringing cutting-edge scientific research to the classroom

**In 2022, Bayer Foundation launched the "MI(N)T Gestalter" network for teachers of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to help them provide children with innovative and inclusive STEM lessons. With the aim of building a strong network between teachers and professional scientists, Bayer Foundation's first Teacher Day was held in September in Leverkusen, Germany, on the topic of "Contemporary Science – When science and technology merge".**

Scientists from the fields of agriculture and pharmaceuticals provided exciting insights into cutting-edge research as well as the biological & data science revolution in the life sciences. In addition, inspiring presentations on innovative school projects funded by Bayer Foundation gave participants the opportunity to learn from each other. The event augments Bayer Foundation's well-established Science@School program, which supported 39 school projects around Bayer sites in Germany in 2022 with total funding of €218,000. The next application round is scheduled for spring 2023.

**Inclusive science education is at the core of our actions** – not to recruit the next generation of scientists, but to provide everyone with the knowledge and confidence to engage in the scientific debates of our time. At Bayer Foundation, we are convinced that **science is for everyone**, not just scientists. By empowering teachers – the most important multipliers – through our programs, we pave the way for **equity and trust in science**. This is the only way to create a more positive and active relationship between society and science and to meet the challenges the world faces going forward.



If you introduce children to science at an early enough stage, they will find it fascinating rather than going on to be frustrated by the 'difficult' science subjects at high school.

**Anna Gerliz,**

a teacher at Overath Elementary School near Cologne, Germany, whose project was selected to receive funding from the program.



Further details about the **Science@School program** and the application process can be found on <https://www.bayer-foundation.com/science/stem-education>

# Bayer Foundation @ Berlin Science Week: Who owns science? —

**Berlin Science Week is an annual festival that brings together a diverse range of people from research, business, politics, the arts and civil society to discuss science. Following its participation in 2021, Bayer Foundation again contributed in 2022, exploring the question of how science can be made more equitable with the aim of improving engagement with science across society.**

Access to science can be influenced by anything from race and gender through to geographical location. Exclusion results in a lack of trust in science among certain communities and biases in the way research is conducted. Recognizing that this needs to change motivated Bayer Foundation to organize a panel discussion at Berlin Science Week on the question of **“Who Owns Science?”**.

All panelists agreed that, as it currently stands, science is inequitable. There was a general consensus that science could be used to transcend cultural barriers and that greater diversity would not only improve scientific research by incorporating a range of different perspectives, but also inspire those from communities currently underrepresented. It is for these reasons that Bayer Foundation is working to make science more equitable.

“

We won't have good access to science for everybody until everybody is represented in science.

**Theo Anagnostopoulos,**

moderator of the “Who Owns Science?” series, professional science communicator and elected National Geographic Explorer





# Bayer Foundation — Insig

At Bayer Foundation, we are convinced that meaningful impact is achieved when when we empower people. Through our activities, we aim to support brilliant minds and foster ideas leading to solutions for lasting and equitable social change. We are proud to present six outstanding initiatives that are paving the way to a fairer tomorrow.



A woman with short brown hair, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt, is speaking at a podium. She has a small microphone clipped to her lip and is looking to her left with a slight smile. The background is a blurred projection of colorful abstract shapes. A large, white, sans-serif text 'ights' is overlaid on the lower half of the image, partially cut off on the left side.

# ights

# Empowering female entrepreneurs:

## Meet the women revolutionizing health, nutrition and agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa

In January 2022, we partnered with Get in the Ring, a global startup competition, for Bayer Foundation's Women Empowerment Award 2022.

**Through this award, we set out to empower female entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa to scale their innovations in health, nutrition and agriculture. After four months and over 500 applications, we selected five winners whom we proudly announced during the Social Innovation Day 2022.**

One of the winners was Yvette Ishimwe, co-founder of IRIBA Water Group, a social enterprise based in Rwanda. Yvette and her team are on a mission to make clean water available through affordable treatment technologies. In a nutshell, the enterprise installs water ATMs in urban and rural communities, allowing low-income earners in these communities to access clean water easily and affordably. The 65 faucet points are managed by women and young people who earn a decent wage for their work.



“

Our team works around the clock to provide **sustainable solutions** for everyone, including **vulnerable communities** in Rwanda and neighboring countries, to **easily access affordable, clean and safe water.**

**Yvette Ishimwe,**  
Co-founder of IRIBA Water Group





In addition to their smart ATM system, which uses solely reusable water cups and containers, the social enterprise installs customized water purification machines in schools based on a lease model, letting students and teachers access clean drinking water at all times.

The annual Women Empowerment Award was launched in 2021. Through this award, Bayer Foundation recognizes and celebrates the fact that many of the latest innovations in health, nutrition and agriculture contributing to better food production and quality of life in sub-Saharan Africa are driven by female entrepreneurs. One of the five awardees in 2021 was Whispa Health, a Nigerian startup focused on sexual and reproductive health.

“This award is very much needed, as women accounts for 58% of Africa’s self-employed population. Their innovations in health and nutrition are driving change and shaping the continent’s future. But, as also reported by our applicants, there is still a significant funding gap between female entrepreneurs and their male counterparts”

**Dr. Monika Lessl,**  
Executive Director of Bayer Foundation



“

The award is unique in the sense that it doesn’t only provide funding. It also **offers great mentorship, training and networks.** I believe strongly in the power of partnerships because this helps our company to remain asset-lean and scale quickly.

**Morenike Fajemisin,**  
CEO and founder of Whispa Health

# Scaling digital services to reach five million farmers in East Africa

Bayer Foundation has committed to supporting the global aid organization Mercy Corps in expanding their Agrifin Digital Farmer program (ADF) to at least five million farmers in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Nigeria.

Smallholder farmers across Africa face numerous challenges, including poor access to information, investment, inputs and critical services such as irrigation, which have a substantial negative impact on productivity. Given that 95% of agriculture

in sub-Saharan Africa is rain-fed, farmers are highly vulnerable to climate change. Increasing droughts and floods along with pests like fall armyworm and desert locust leave farmers in a precarious position on the front line of food systems.

**The digitalization of products and services essential to the growth of smallholder farming communities represents a major opportunity to enhance their livelihoods. Whether through tropical weather forecasting, farm advisory services, smallholder crop insurance or mobile banking, the delivery of services vital to unbanked and uninsured farmers in rural communities across sub-Saharan Africa is crucial to improving their well-being. These services mitigate climate risks, strengthen economic resilience, improve yields and empower women.**



Photo Credit: Mercy Corps AgriFin



Since 2012, Mercy Corps Agrifin has developed an ecosystem of some 140 NGOs, startups, corporates, social enterprises and government organizations dedicated to digitalizing smallholder agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa.

One of the ecosystem’s main goals is to bring together partners with mutual interests who provide complementary services that drive digital innovation for smallholders. Global or mature organizations account for around two-thirds of the ecosystem, with the remaining third composed of startups or growing organizations (such as Bayer Foundation’s 2022 Women Empowerment Award winner Farm to Feed).

Examples of the advantages gained by the ecosystem’s complementarity include tropical weather forecasting company ignatia, which provides daily, monthly or seasonal SMS-based weather updates to rural farmers across West Africa. ignatia uses open-source satellite data from NASA for their weather predictions. Another highly beneficial innovation developed through the ecosystem is the digital public good Sprout, an open-content agriculture database and platform where global agriculture experts and farmer-facing organizations share digital-ready content and services designed to build smallholder farmer skills. Last but not least, Agrifin has enabled smallholder farmer crop insurance provider Pula to pilot its services with the Zimbabwean government. This has resulted in more than one million previously uninsured farmers now benefiting from coverage.



To catalyze the impact of this ecosystem and double its reach, **Bayer Foundation** and the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** have jointly invested more than

**US\$12 million**

in expanding **scalable digital models** across the region.



These models will reach

**5 million**  **smallholder farmers** by 2025. (at least 40% of whom will be women)

Around

**2.4 million**  **farmers** are already benefiting as of February 2023.





# Digital Health Ecosystem to Support Community Health Workers in Sub-Saharan Africa

For half of the world's population, healthcare is out of reach. This healthcare gap is bridged by 3.3 million community health workers. Unfortunately, community health workers receive little assistance from the formal health system and potentially supportive technological developments are ineffectively applied.

Photo Credit: PATH



The Digital Health Ecosystem project was launched in sub-Saharan Africa in 2022 in collaboration with the non-profit organizations Medic and PATH and co-funded by USAID and Bayer Foundation. It works with local stakeholders to overcome the technical, political and economic barriers to equipping every health worker with appropriate, sustainable digital tools. Through a global network building on the Community Health Toolkit (CHT), the project aims to change the way digital tools for community health are built and deployed. The Digital Health Ecosystem will also support local digital health entrepreneurs and organizations in establishing scalable and sustainable business models. In turn, the digital tools can support primary health care delivery across sub-Saharan Africa. Today, the CHT alone supports more than 41,000 health workers who are providing care to more than 5.4 million registered households across 15 countries in Africa and Asia. CHT-equipped health workers logged 22.7 million caring actions in 2021 and have supported nearly 70 million caring actions since the first activation of the CHT.

In July 2022, the project identified 113 viable digital health organizations from 26 African countries. Four organizations have been selected to receive US\$250,000 of funding to develop and implement scalable digital health products utilizing the CHT. In addition, tested models will be available to pinpoint packages to support them.



**Leah Ekbladh,**  
PATH

Local innovators are in touch with the contexts and realities of low-resource settings. With support from our donors and partners, innovators will now face fewer barriers in scaling businesses that support health care workers.

# Professor Kai Johnsson, Director of the Chemical Biology Department at the Max Planck Institute for Medical Research in Heidelberg, Germany

Alternating with the Otto Bayer Award, the Hansen Family Award honors world-leading scientists from German-speaking countries every two years for their cutting-edge achievements in medical sciences. This award with prize money of €75,000 was named after former Bayer CEO Dr. Kurt Hansen, a trained chemist who was a firm believer in the power of scientific talent for the long-term success of Bayer AG.







Patrick Cramer, Werner Baumann, Kai Johnsson, Monika Lessl

In 2021, the members of Bayer Foundation's Science Council selected Professor Kai Johnsson of the Max-Planck Institute for Medical Research in Heidelberg as the winner of this prestigious award for **his ground-breaking research on making the hidden life of cells visible**. One of his fundamental achievements is protein labeling in living cells using SNAP-tag technology. SNAP-tag is a small protein that can be specifically labeled with bright fluorophores. It can be fused to any cellular protein. This enables scientists to paint proteins in living cells with selected colors. These proteins can then be visualized with a fluorescent microscope and their movements tracked directly in the cells. Scientists use SNAP-tag to explore questions in a variety of research fields ranging from cancer to neurobiology.

Asked what motivates him to undertake research in this field, Kai Johnsson points out that a multitude of biological processes that take place in living cells remain invisible to us. This precludes the molecular understanding of numerous biological processes, including those that play a role in human diseases. That is why Kai Johnsson and his team develop methods to make biological molecules visible and bring light into the darkness of the cell.

His current work focuses on biosensors, which can be used to quantify the concentration of key metabolites either in living cells or in patient samples. Such quantification is not only a prerequisite for a molecular understanding of biological processes but also needed in medical applications – for example, in diagnostics.

**“We see breakthrough innovations at the intersection of biology, chemistry and artificial intelligence – all highly relevant areas for future and sustainable solutions in health and nutrition.”**

**Werner Baumann,**  
Chairman Board of Management (CEO), Bayer AG

Professor Johnsson has already founded four startup companies. He is convinced that commercialization of **new technologies and tools** developed in basic research paves the way to making them available to many **other research institutions as well as for applications in medicine and the biotech industry**.

When asked what societal responsibility of science means to him, he states:

**“I think a prerequisite for the well-being of our society is that all of its members feel responsible for it – this is especially true for scientists, as society puts us in a very privileged position where we can pursue our passion. I believe that we scientists therefore have the responsibility to reflect on how our work could ultimately benefit society, whether through the development of new technologies, the creation of new knowledge or through the training of young scientists. I see this as my responsibility as a scientist.”**



To learn more about the research conducted by Professor Johnsson and his team, you can watch his lecture as part of our **Boundary-Breaking Science Lecture Series** on Bayer Foundation's YouTube channel. In this series launched in 2021, we invite the winners of our science awards to present and discuss their brilliant research in depth.



## **Antje Boetius, Professor at the University of Bremen and Director of the Alfred-Wegener-Institut Helmholtz Zentrum für Polar- und Meeresforschung, Germany**

Antje Boetius was named the first winner of the Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker Award. This award was established in 2021 in honor of Professor Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker's 80th birthday and his contributions to the dialog between science and society.

**The award for enhancing the impact of science for the benefit of society comes with prize money of €3,000, plus €10,000 for future projects. Antje Boetius received the award in recognition of her outstanding**

**public engagement, policy advice and scientific communication across a broad range of topics, notably the impact of climate change, biodiversity loss and ocean health.**



Antje Boetius' research focuses on the impacts of climate change on the Earth's oceans and polar regions. As a deep-sea researcher, her work also involves finding previously undiscovered habitats in the deep sea. Her studies on the ecological impacts of deep-sea mining highlight the long-term consequences of disrupting the ocean floor. Another goal of her research is to analyze and assess the importance of marine microbial biodiversity for a broad range of functions. She leads the Joint Research Group for Deep-Sea Ecology and Technology at the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology in which she and her team are developing new robotic instruments for in-situ studies of marine ecosystems.

Like Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, Antje Boetius is a very prominent science ambassador. She communicates science to the public and discusses its role in meeting the urgent challenges of humankind, especially climate change and biodiversity loss. She additionally writes and communicates on questions concerning diversity and equal opportunities in research, sustainability strategies and transformation processes. Moreover, she is an expert on science and culture in the Anthropocene and collaborates with artists, authors and publicists to explore questions on societal transformation and its repercussions for the arts and culture.

**Professor Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker chaired the Board of Trustees of Bayer Foundation from 2007 to 2019.**

The German biochemist is an outstanding, world-renowned scientist who in the early stages of his career had already conducted ground-breaking research in the life sciences at top international scientific institutions, including the ETH Zurich in Switzerland, the University of California Berkeley in the US and the Karolinska Institute in Sweden.

After returning to Germany, he became a professor at the universities of Cologne and Munich. At Munich University, he founded the famous Gene Center Munich, an institution that tackles key questions in the life and biomedical sciences using state-of-the-art techniques ranging from structural to systems biology. He has also made a substantial contribution to the organization and administration of science, both in Germany as president of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and at European level as first Secretary General of the European Research Council and Secretary General of the Human Frontier Science Program.

**Throughout his career, Professor Winnacker has increasingly recognized the importance of science communication and of engaging closely with the public. He sees trust in science as the key to tackling society's challenges, including climate change mitigation and adaptation.**

Winnacker says:

“The problems are huge and can only be solved by science. These challenges have to be understood – or tried to be understood – through suitable scientific questions.”



▶ Antje Boetius received the award at Bayer Foundation's Science Awards ceremony in Leverkusen, Germany, on January 30, 2023. You can watch the award ceremony on our YouTube channel.



# Breaking down walls for tomorrow's female leaders

Research continues to show that women are highly underrepresented in science. Bayer Foundation's commitment to help close the gender gap in science led to the development of the Female Science Talents program in cooperation with the Falling Walls Foundation. The aim of this program is to promote female leadership in the areas of science, business and society. To date, the program has brought together 201 talented female scientists from 72 diverse fields of research and 56 different countries to learn, network and offer each other support.







## The problem

Women are underrepresented, underpaid and hardly ever promoted to permanent senior roles in science, whether in academia or industry. Despite increasing awareness of gender disparities, recent data from the EU suggests that, at the current rate of progress, we are still an estimated 99 years away from achieving gender equality.

Bayer Foundation is committed to helping close the gender gap. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will not only make a crucial contribution to the world's economic growth, it will also lead to more inclusive and innovative scientific solutions, benefiting society as a whole. "By developing the skills and confidence of early career female scientists, we will build greater diversity into the landscape of scientific leaders of tomorrow," says Simone Jonek, who leads the program at Bayer Foundation.

One of the main goals of the program is to bring established female leaders together with younger scientists at the start of their careers. This not only shows the young scientists that it is possible to pursue a leadership role, but the yearly event itself helps them to build an all-female network of scientists. **"A strong network is important for everyone pursuing a leadership role,"** says Dr. Emily Mackay, a Program Lead in Manufacturing Science and Technology at Bayer AG and one of the role models during the program. **"Surround yourself with a diverse range of people who can provide you with critical feedback as well as support and advice,"** she adds.

## About the program

Bayer Foundation is a founding supporter of Female Science Talents, a program developed together with the Falling Walls Foundation. The program broadly promotes female leadership in science, business and society through a global platform that drives inclusive excellence as well as the promotion of exceptional talent.

The program is supported by a group of inspiring female role models – leading women from across a range of our organizations – including Bayer Foundation's Executive Director Monika Lessl. Through workshops, roundtables and the newly launched "intensive track," it helps talented young female scientists to achieve their goals, evolve their career ambitions and fulfill their dreams.

**The new "intensive track" is designed to provide close support to 20 exceptionally talented young women. They will have the opportunity to meet outstanding women leaders, will be paired with high-profile mentors and will benefit from intensive personal development training as well as the opportunity to speak at the Falling Walls Conference held each year in November. The mentoring is of a reciprocal nature and connects talented women with high-caliber female role models with a view to exchanging perspectives and mutually inspiring each other. Additionally, participants gain access to exclusive "Female Science Talents" networking events.**

## Highlights Partners



# Humboldt Research Hubs: African-German science partnerships for pandemic preparedness

The experience of the past three years has shown that being prepared for and able to respond quickly to pandemics can help save lives and minimize the impact of global health crises on societies and economies. Another key lesson for policy makers and scientists is the importance of international cross-border collaboration in pandemic management.

**One promising example of this type of collaboration are the new Humboldt Research Hubs, established to build scientific capacity in sub-Saharan Africa as well as strengthen networks between African and German scientists to help overcome the recent pandemic and tackle future health crises. These hubs are part of a new program launched by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which Bayer Foundation supports.**

The research hubs are headed by brilliant alumni of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Fellowships currently working in leading positions at African universities and research institutions. They contribute their scientific vision and ideas to developing research concepts for better pandemic preparedness and management.



With outstanding researchers from the African Humboldt network in the academic lead, the hubs aim to support sustainable collaboration between alumni in Africa and German researchers.

**Charlotte Bäuml,**  
Alexander von Humboldt Foundation



The Humboldt Research Hub funded by the Bayer Foundation is led by Prof. Dr. Olusola Ojurongbe of the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Nigeria. Dubbed the “Center for Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases (CERID)”, the hub aims to **“strengthen Nigeria’s capabilities and systems to enable a rapid and effective response to infectious diseases with epidemic or pandemic potential arising within the countries or those imported from overseas,”** says Prof. Ojurongbe.

Together with his team, Prof. Ojurongbe focuses on genomic research using genomics to detect and characterize infectious pathogens in collaboration with Prof. Thirumalaisamy Velavan of University Hospital Tübingen, Germany, and Prof. Mohamed Osman of the University of Khartoum, Sudan. In one such project, the researchers are studying the impact and implications of co-infection with COVID-19 and Malaria. Malaria is thought to alter the clinical picture of COVID-19, while interference from COVID-19 is postulated to increase malaria-related morbidity. Prof. Ojurongbe and his team are investigating this interaction to guide the diagnosis, treatment and control of malaria and COVID-19.

In addition, the hub collaborates with primary and tertiary hospitals for diagnosis support and research, and trains postgraduate students and scientists on the molecular surveillance of infectious diseases.

Prof. Ojurongbe says: “We also train field health workers to accurately diagnose and collect samples of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.” The laboratory and trained personnel will contribute to controlling emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases in Africa and elsewhere. Looking ahead, Prof. Ojurongbe expects CERID **“to become a regional research hub that is fully involved in the surveillance and monitoring of emerging infectious diseases.”**

“Especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we see the strengthening of research capacity in the Global South as crucial to tackling global challenges,” says Charlotte Bäuml of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Humboldt Research Hubs focus on the person rather than the project: If a new infectious disease with epidemic or pandemic potential arises, the capacity built up via the Research Hubs can be used to meet new questions and challenges head on. She adds: “We have trust in our alumni and give them the freedom to decide. Our alumni know best what is needed locally.”



Six Humboldt Research Hubs were **established in 2021**, one of which is financed by Bayer Foundation, with the remaining five funded by Germany’s Federal Foreign Office. Each hub receives up to **€750,000** over a period of five years, with funding also going toward expanding scientific infrastructure and employing or integrating young researchers – prospective future applicants for Humboldt Foundation Fellowships.



## Highlights Partners



# Meet Obiageli ,Oby‘ Ezekwesili – economic policy expert, human rights advocate and activist

Obiageli ‘Oby’ Ezekwesili has an impressive number of titles. She is mostly known as a senior economic policy expert and former Minister of Education of Nigeria. But to leave it at that would disregard all the other important work she does.

So, let us take a moment to highlight the fact that she is also co-founder of #BringBackOurGirls – a group of citizens advocating for the search and rescue of abducted girls as well as the fight against Boko Haram and insurgent violence in Nigeria. And that’s not all. She also leads two other key initiatives: “Human Capital Africa,” focusing on

childhood literacy and numeracy in Africa, and the “School of Politics, Policy and Governance (SPPG),” which is training a new generation of African political leaders. Needless to say, we were delighted when ‘Oby’ agreed to officially open Bayer Foundation’s Social Innovation Day in Berlin in June 2022.



“I have known Bayer Foundation for a few years now,” Obiageli Ezekwesili said during her keynote speech. “In 2019, when I was a fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy, I was introduced to Monika Lessl, Executive Director of Bayer Foundation. The conversation we had turned out to be a very interesting one. During that period, I was always trying to figure out the nexus between the poor quality of politics and economic development, and I didn’t really expect a company like Bayer to be able to help me with that. But as a fellow I was asked to meet leaders within the private sector, and so I did.”

The meeting made ‘Oby’ realize that the private sector can really play an active role in improving governance and economic development. “It pleases me that a private company such as Bayer wants to create social impact by reaching those beyond the ones that can pay for their services and products. In rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, too many people are left behind.

**The private sector and governments need to understand that, in order to remove these bottlenecks, they must collaborate with civil society to help tackle issues that are linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. These can only be solved when we act in the spirit of partnership and collaboration.”**

In her address, Obiageli Ezekwesili acknowledged that civil society actors often start out as community-based problem-solvers. “There is absolutely no way that the private sector alone, or the government alone, can solve the issues. That is why the presence of community-based solutions has become critical,” she added.

Bayer Foundation actively celebrates social entrepreneurs who work incredibly hard to bring their innovations to deprived communities. But reaching those who live on less than US\$2 a day is no small feat. And despite the best intentions, these social solutions lack the resources to exist at scale.

**“Small solutions are no longer beautiful; the time has come for scale,”** Obiageli Ezekwesili passionately stated during her keynote speech. Looking at the audience, she added: “Each of you has found an incredibly smart solution to a social problem. I can see that now you can’t wait to conquer the continent. And you might think that you need funding in order to scale. But that is not necessarily true. The first two resources that you need are partnerships and knowledge, not finance. Finding the right partner gives you leverage, opens doors that were previously closed.”

In her final words, Obiageli Ezekwesili thanked the room for being “impatient optimists.” “It is thanks to these partnerships that I refuse to be hopeless. It’s because of people like you, daily figuring out paths to solve problems from a social enterprise perspective, that social change can happen. May your road be rough.”



# Outlook 2023

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We aim to continuously empower the scientists and social entrepreneurs committed to making our world a better place and to paving the way for a fairer tomorrow.

**In these hyperconnected times, our holistic approach is a real asset. We promote fundamental research and scientific breakthroughs while also supporting system change through entrepreneurial solutions. We are proud of our progress in building trust and equity in science globally.**

That also goes for our social innovation work around key focus areas in sub-Saharan Africa – for instance, building inclusive health systems, increasing smallholder farmer resilience, fostering cross-sectoral collaborations and strengthening women’s economic empowerment. Alongside impact measurement and frequent publications in the form of white papers and reports, these insights are shared with our community to enhance learning and collaboration.





## Staying the course and deepening our impact with a substantially broader geographic scope

While staying true to our strategy and continuously driving success in our key focus areas, we believe our holistic approach could be successfully applied beyond sub-Saharan Africa. Bayer Foundation is to increase its geographic scope to support more social entrepreneurs in the global South countries in APAC and Latin America. **This represents a great opportunity to increase our impact and make our platform an even more effective driver of change.** Looking ahead, Bayer Foundation's unique approach,

together with its increased geographic scope, opens up a wide range of opportunities. **In these eventful times, we are looking forward to supporting even more changemakers around the globe and contributing to a fairer tomorrow.**

# Our Organization

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

## Leadership Executive Committee



**Monika Lessl**



**Sarena Lin**

## Foundation team



**Simone Jonek**  
Management Foundation  
Office & Programs



**Peng Zhong**  
Director Social Innovation



**Stefan Wilhelm**  
Associate Director  
Social Impact



**Julie Lüttgen**  
Program Manager



**Michael Metzloff**  
Strategic Advisor



**Allyson Schoennenbeck**  
Trainee



**Karl Collins**  
Director Science  
(until Jan 2023)



**Lars zur Muehlen**  
Digital Communication  
and Foundation Programs  
(until Mar 2023)



**Milana Trepetova**  
Intern Science Programs  
(until Feb 2023)



**Victoire Jeanson**  
Intern Social  
Innovation Programs  
(until Feb 2023)



## 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. The Boards and their members can be found on our homepage.

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 they reflect advances in the life sciences.

# Bayer Foundation Information

## Bayer Cares Foundation and Bayer Science and Education Foundation

### Represented by Executive Committee:

Monika Lessl

Executive Director of Bayer Cares Foundation and Bayer Science and Education Foundation, SVP, Corporate R&D and Social Innovation of Bayer AG

Sarena Lin

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

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51368 Leverkusen

bayer.foundation@bayer.com

Amtsgericht Köln HRB 48248

### Bayer Cares Foundation:

Turnover tax ID: 230/5762/0505

Registered at Transparency Register

The Bayer Cares Foundation is an independent foundation established under civil law and is exempt from corporate income tax under Section 5, Paragraph 1, No. 9 of the German Corporate Income Tax Act and from trade tax

under Section 3, No. 6 of the German Trade Tax Act because it promotes charitable purposes, youth welfare, assistance for the elderly, nature conservation and landscape preservation, and environmental protection.

### Bayer Science and Education Foundation:

Turnover tax ID: 230/5762/0491

Registered at Transparency Register

The Bayer Science and Education Foundation is an independent foundation established under civil law and is exempt from corporate income tax pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 1, No. 9 of the German Corporate Income Tax Act and from trade tax pursuant to Section 3, No. 6 of the German Trade Tax Act for the promotion of science and research, education, training, and student assistance. § tax pursuant to Section 3 No. 6 of the German Trade Tax Act. from trade tax.

Edited by:

Peng Zhong

Simone Jonek

Bayer Foundation



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