



Five Exceptional Researchers win the 2025 L'Oréal–UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards

Paris, 26 May 2025 - The Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO are proud to announce the names of the five international laureates of the 2025 L'Oréal–UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards.

On 12 June at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, these researchers will be recognised for their pioneering contributions to physical sciences, mathematics and computer science. Together, these Laureates embody the profound impact of women in science by conducting outstanding research, advancing our understanding of the world, tackling global challenges and inspiring future generations, particularly young women, to push the boundaries of knowledge and innovation.

Their work is driving scientific progress in areas such as real-time health monitoring, data security, green energy, the fundamental understanding of the universe, and air pollution — breakthroughs with the potential to revolutionize technology, strengthen global resilience, and improve quality of life.

Each year, the L'Oréal–UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards honour five exceptional women, representing each of the following regions: Africa and the Arab States; Asia and the Pacific; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; North America.

For this 27th edition, the Laureates were selected from a pool of 466 nominees, through a rigorous evaluation process conducted by an independent jury chaired by **Professor Artur Ávila**, Professor at the Institute of Mathematics University of Zurich (Switzerland), Extraordinary Researcher at *Instituto de Mathematica Pura e Aplicada* (Brazil) and Fields Medal winner in 2014.

LAUREATES OF THE 2025 L'ORÉAL-UNESCO FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

LAUREATE FOR AFRICA AND THE ARAB STATES

Professor Priscilla Baker, Analytical Chemistry

Professor of Chemistry, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa



Rewarded for her outstanding contribution in the field of highly sensitive electrochemical microsensors for detecting contaminants in the environment, with applications in pharmaceuticals, food, health and energy. Her dedication as a mentor in analytical electrochemistry has empowered students and early-career scientists to undertake innovative research projects in this field.

LAUREATE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Professor Xiaoyun Wang, Applied Mathematics

Chen-Ning Yang Professorship, Institute for Advanced Study, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China



Rewarded for her significant contribution to cryptography and cryptographic mathematics, critical for secure data communication and storage. Her breakthrough work showed essential flaws on *hash functions*, which are widely used in communication protocols and led to the invention of the new hash function standards. Today, these standards are used for bank cards, computer passwords, and e-commerce. The visibility of her revolutionary work has encouraged many female students to pursue a research career in mathematics and network security.

LAUREATE FOR EUROPE

Professor Claudia Felser, Condensed Matter Physics

Director and Scientific Member, Max Planck Institute for Chemical Physics of Solids, Dresden, Germany



Rewarded for her pioneering work at the crossroads of physics, mathematics and chemistry that led to the discovery and creation of new magnetic materials with great promise for future green energy technologies. Her visionary approach has paved the way for the new field of “topological quantum chemistry” and sparked a revolution in the field of relativistic matter. Her outstanding dedication and impact have built a bridge from fundamental science to real-world challenges in data storage and green energy technologies. She is a leading figure in communicating the relevance of science to the public, including by encouraging and mentoring young generations, especially women, to pursue a career in science.

LAUREATE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Professor María Teresa Dova, Particle and Fields Physics

Professor at Physics Department, Faculty of Exact Sciences, National University of La Plata, and Senior Researcher at National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), La Plata, Argentina



Rewarded for her key contributions to high energy physics including the discovery and characterization of the Higgs boson, the search for new physics and her remarkable work in the study of cosmic ray physics. Her leadership in the field and her exceptional dedication to mentoring young scientists have inspired a new generation and led Argentina to play a major role in experimental physics worldwide.

LAUREATE FOR NORTH AMERICA

Professor Barbara Finlayson-Pitts, Environmental Science

Distinguished Professor Emerita, Chemistry Department and Founder/Co-Director, Atmospheric Integrated Research Institute, University of California, Irvine, United States of America.



Rewarded for her groundbreaking research revealing new processes in the formation of air pollution as photochemical smog, she established the molecular basis of reactions at the interfaces between atmosphere and airborne particles. Her unique ability to translate fundamental findings into real-life applications have led to seminal contributions to public policy and regulations on atmospheric chemistry, ultimately improving air quality. Her enthusiasm made her a passionate and remarkable professor and mentor.

27 YEARS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Today, women still only account for just over one in three researchers globally (31.1%) according to UNESCO data.¹

That is why the Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO have been working together for 27 years through the *For Women in Science* Programme to empower and promote women in science. By supporting them to overcome barriers and advance their careers, this long-lasting partnership enables women scientists to contribute to pushing the frontiers of knowledge and solving the major challenges of our time – for the benefit of all.

Since its creation, the L'Oréal–UNESCO *For Women in Science* Programme has **celebrated and supported more than 4700 women for the excellence of their research**, including 137 laureates of the International Awards and more than 4500 young female researchers. Among the Laureates, seven have received a Nobel Prize in science.

“In a world facing unprecedented challenges - climate change, health crises, digital security - science is more essential than ever. And at the heart of this urgency, we need women” says **Pauline Avenel-Lam, Executive Director of the Fondation L'Oréal**. “For 27 years, the L'Oréal–UNESCO *For Women in Science* program has supported talented women who contribute to solving the greatest challenges of our time. By honoring the 2025 Laureates, we recognize their contribution to scientific progress and their crucial role in meeting the challenges of tomorrow.”

“UNESCO's commitment to gender equality in science is at the heart of our mission to advance knowledge globally. We believe that joining forces with our partners to empower women in science is key to build a sustainable future and addressing the complex challenges facing our world.”, said **Lidia Brito, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences at UNESCO**. “The L'Oréal–UNESCO *For Women in Science* Programme provides women scientists with the recognition, support, and opportunities they deserve. By celebrating the 2025 Laureates and each new generation of female researchers, we move closer to a world where the contributions of women are fully valued in every scientific field, and where we all benefit from their achievements.”

About the Fondation L'Oréal

The Fondation L'Oréal supports and empowers women to shape their future and make a difference in society. It focuses its action on two main areas: science and inclusive beauty.

Science: encouraging women's scientific excellence and inspiring future generations.

The Fondation L'Oréal is committed to supporting women scientists at every stage of their careers, from sparking vocations at a young age to recognizing excellence in established researchers. This commitment translates into an intergenerational approach and dedicated programmes. In partnership with UNESCO, Fondation L'Oréal has run the international *For Women in Science* programme since 1998. This programme aims to accelerate the careers of women scientists, remove the obstacles they face, and inspire younger generations to embrace scientific careers. To date, the programme has supported more than 4,700 researchers from over 140 countries, promoting scientific excellence and encouraging many young women to pursue scientific studies. The Fondation L'Oréal also invests in the future of women in science through its *For Girls in Science* programme. This programme aims to inspire scientific vocations in young girls by raising their awareness of the scientific challenges of tomorrow and introducing them to inspiring female role models. The goal is to support and encourage the next generation of female scientists, giving them the keys to succeed in scientific fields.

Inclusive Beauty: restoring self-esteem and promoting professional integration.

Convinced that beauty contributes to the process of rebuilding lives, the Fondation L'Oréal helps vulnerable women to improve their self-esteem through free beauty and wellness treatments. These treatments help restore their self-esteem and help them regain confidence. At the same time, the Fondation L'Oréal promotes the professional integration of vulnerable women through excellent training in beauty professions. On average, 16,000 women benefit from these treatments each year, and more than 67,000 people have been trained in beauty professions since the programme's launch.

About UNESCO

With 194 Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization contributes to peace and security by leading multilateral cooperation on education, science, culture, communication and information. Headquartered in Paris, UNESCO has 53 field offices and employs over 2300 people. UNESCO oversees more than 2000 World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks; networks of Creative, Learning, Inclusive and Sustainable Cities; and over 13 000 associated schools, university chairs, training and research institutions. Its Director-General is Audrey Azoulay.

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” – UNESCO Constitution, 1945.

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¹ UNESCO (2025) Status and trends of women in science: New insights and sectoral perspectives. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.