



2020 SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA YOUNG TALENTS AWARDS L'ORÉAL-UNESCO FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE: 20 AFRICAN WOMEN RESEARCHERS HIGHLIGHTED FOR THEIR SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

Paris, November 23rd, 2020 – The Fondation L'Oréal together with UNESCO is revealing today the 11th Sub-Saharan Africa Young Talent Awards L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science*, which rewards 20 women researchers for the academic excellence of their work. Coming from 16 countries, these 15 PhD students and 5 post-doctorates embody, through their backgrounds and research subjects, all the diversity and potential of tomorrow's African science. For the first time, Young Talents from Congo and Malawi are featured on the list.

A HISTORIC COMMITMENT TO WOMEN IN SCIENCE, MORE NEEDED THAN EVER IN TIMES OF CRISIS

The jury of the 2020 Sub-Saharan Africa Young Talents Awards, chaired by Professor Nelson Torto, Executive Director of the African Academy of Sciences, selected these 20 Young Talents from nearly 330 applications. They all have in common the excellence of their projects and the desire to contribute to fuelling innovation in Africa. They are joining the community of 3,400 women researchers around the world who have been supported by the *For Women in Science* program since its creation in 1998.

Thanks to these Awards, young women researchers are receiving financial support, through **grants of €10,000 for PhD students and €15,000 for post-doctorates, in order to enable them to pursue and consolidate their research work.**

Alexandra Palt, Executive Vice-President of the Fondation L'Oréal, says: "The need for research by Africans for Africa has never been greater to address the challenges facing the continent. To overcome the current crisis, Africa's research sector must accelerate its transformation by becoming even more digitally connected and empowering young women who wish to pursue scientific careers."

It is estimated that over 875 million students worldwide have been affected by the COVID-19-related school closures, with the majority in Sub-Saharan Africa¹. **Only 2.4% of the world's researchers are African scientists, 31% of whom are women².**

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Through the research areas of the Young Talents, the 2020 Sub-Saharan Awards reveal several fundamental trends in the continent's science, all closely linked to the challenges it is facing.

From medicine to biology and computer science, the themes of their research work are highly topical: infectious diseases, combating climate change or enhancing food security.

¹ <https://en.unesco.org/news/ga-african-countries-must-build-back-equal-girls-education-learn-covid-19-crisis>

² UNESCO Science Report : towards 2030 (2015).

[Discover the 2020 Sub-Saharan Africa Young Talents](#)

About the Sub-Saharan Africa Young Talents Awards

Since the creation of the *For Women in Science* Sub-Saharan Africa regional program in 2010, L'Oréal and UNESCO have highlighted 159 outstanding women scientists, including 11 Laureates of the *For Women in Science* International Awards and 134 Young Talents at the doctoral and post-doctoral levels. Since 2019, South Africa also has a specific program supporting 7 young women researchers (5 PhD students and 2 post-doctorates) each year.

About the Fondation L'Oréal

The Fondation L'Oréal works for the benefit of women around the world, supporting them and enabling them to achieve their goals in two major areas that sit at the heart of the Group's culture: scientific research and inclusive beauty.

Created in 1998 and led by the Fondation L'Oréal in partnership with UNESCO, the *For Women in Science* program aims to improve the representation of women in scientific careers, based on the conviction that the world needs science, and science needs women. Over 22 years, the program has supported and raised the profile of more than 3,400 researchers from 116 countries.

Convinced that beauty is central to the process of personal development and a vector of social inclusion, the Fondation L'Oréal also develops free training excellence courses in beauty care for vulnerable people. It also provides access to beauty and wellbeing services in medical and social settings to help people suffering from physical, mental or social issues, and for patients who have undergone reconstructive surgery.

About UNESCO

Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) supports international scientific cooperation as a catalyst for sustainable development and for peace between people. UNESCO assists countries in the development of their public policies and in building their capabilities in the fields of science, technology, innovation and scientific education. In addition, UNESCO leads several intergovernmental programs for the sustainable management of freshwater, ocean and terrestrial resources, for biodiversity protection and to promote science's role in combating climate change and natural disasters. To meet these goals, UNESCO is committed to ending discrimination of all kinds and to promoting equality between women and men.

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