

FALLING WALLS FOUNDATION

Falling Walls & Elsevier Foundation announce Women Breakthrough Award 2023 Laureates

- Today the Falling Walls Foundation and the Elsevier Foundation presented the winners of their inaugural “Women Breakthrough of the Year” award.
- The newly established 3000 Euro prize is awarded to female scientists for their visionary research and commitment to issues of gender justice and equality in science.
- The laureates include Atinuke Chimene from Canada and Marwa Shumo from Germany (Innovation), Sudeshna Das from India (Gender Mainstreaming) and Simangele Shakwane from South Africa (Empowerment).
- The laureates will present their scientific breakthroughs on 7 November 2023, as part of the International Fall Gathering at the Falling Walls Science Summit in Berlin.

Berlin, 9 October 2023. Today the Falling Walls Foundation and the Elsevier Foundation have announced the inaugural Women Breakthrough Award 2023 laureates in the categories Innovation, Gender Mainstreaming and Empowerment. The Award is designed to recognize women scientists for their visionary research in fields related to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while also demonstrating commitment to issues of gender justice and equality in science.

Ylann Schemm, Executive Director of the Elsevier Foundation, explained that “*Not only have the winners developed innovative ways to tackle some of the world’s biggest challenges, but they have also carried out their work in a way that delivers equity, empowerment and support to women, children, and underserved communities. It has been a privilege to develop the Women Breakthrough Awards with Falling Walls and recognize these impressive women working to deliver tangible change.*”

Four laureates were elected out of 82 submissions from 39 countries by a distinguished jury composed of **Rana Dajani** (Hashemite University), **Imke Rajamani** (Hamburg Sustainability Conference) and **Injonge Karangwa** (previously University of Global Health Equity), **Ylann Schemm** and **Domiziana Francescon** (The Elsevier Foundation). In the Innovation category, two laureates have been jointly awarded a prize for their collaborative submission, highlighting the significant role of teamwork in advancing scientific research.

Each of the four laureates will take part in an Award Ceremony hosted during the International Fall Gathering on **7 November 2023** at the Falling Walls Science Summit in Berlin. The International Fall Gathering is one of Female Science Talents yearly flagship events created for their 20 Intensive Track Talents, where prominent women researchers and leaders discuss topics related to gender equality in science, business, and society.

The recipients of the Women Breakthrough Award 2023 are:

Category: Innovation

Atinuke Chineme - University of Calgary, and **Marwa Shumo**, Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn & Intensive Track Champion 2022.

The Power of Black Soldier Fly for Bioconversion and Feed Production

Atinuke Chineme and Marwa Shumo jointly introduced a pilot project that incorporates black soldier flies (*Hermetia illucens*) into circular economy models for biowaste conversion and animal feed production. The project aims at empowering underprivileged communities and women across Sub-Saharan Africa, while contributing to waste recycling, food security, sustainability and climate change mitigation.

Category: Gender Mainstreaming

Sudeshna Das - Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

AI to Identify Gender Bias in School Textbooks

Sudeshna Das has pioneered an AI-driven framework designed to identify gender biased text in school textbooks aimed at reducing the harmful effects of gender biased discourse on children. Analysing textbooks from India, Bangladesh, South Africa, and the USA, this initiative holds promise for worldwide implementation.

Category: Empowerment

Simangele Shakwane - University of South Africa

A Culturally Sensitive Model for Intimate Care Facilitation in Nursing Care

Simangele Shakwane has developed an innovative model for facilitating intimate care in nursing education through humanistic simulation techniques and culturally sensitive approaches, to ensure inclusive and equitable nursing practices. Currently, the model is undergoing active implementation and evaluation in Nursing Education Institutions in South Africa.

About Female Science Talents

Female Science Talents promotes inclusive excellence and leadership in science and business. The project provides workshops, mentoring and networking opportunities for outstanding women researchers with strong science backgrounds to help them break through to leadership positions.

falling-walls.com/female-science-talents/

About Falling Walls Foundation

The Falling Walls Foundation is inspired by the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and the dawn of a new era of freedom. The non-profit foundation promotes breakthrough thinking and builds a growing network of leaders from science, business, and the public sector to tackle great challenges and make ground-breaking ideas accessible to society. The non-profit charity under the German law is supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Government of Berlin, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Museum für Naturkunde and PD (advisor to the public sector) as well as numerous acclaimed academic institutions, foundations, companies, and NGOs.

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About The Elsevier Foundation

The [Elsevier Foundation](http://elsevierfoundation.org/) contributes over \$1.5 million a year to non-profit organizations through partnerships which incubate new approaches, highlight inequities and catalyse change toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Funded by Elsevier, a global information analytics company specializing in science and health, the Elsevier Foundation is part of Elsevier's wider corporate responsibility program. By leveraging Elsevier's networks and unique insights in content, data and analytics, the Elsevier Foundation is able to expand its impact in gender, health, climate action and reduced inequalities. Since 2005, the Elsevier Foundation has contributed over \$16 million in grants to over 100 partners in 70 countries around the world. In addition, the Elsevier Foundation offers a special fund to support disaster relief, matching employees' donations and volunteering to enable employees to work closely with Foundation partners and support their communities.

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