



24th EDITION OF THE L'ORÉAL-UNESCO FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

*5 exceptional women scientists rewarded
for their pioneering work in Life and Environmental Sciences*

Paris, September 30, 2021 – As it has done every year since 1998, the Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO are unveiling the winners of the 24th L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards, which honors five eminent women scientists from five major regions of the world with exceptional careers.

UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES TACKLED BY EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN SCIENTISTS

The last few years have shown more than ever the importance of science in meeting the major challenges that are facing the world, and for science to be effective, it must rely on all talents. The Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO are therefore particularly proud to announce **the five 2022 Laureates of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards in the Life and Environmental Sciences categories:**

- for Latin America and the Caribbean, **Professor Maria Guadalupe Guzmán Tirado**, for her pioneering work to more comprehensively understand and prevent dengue;
- for North America, **Professor Katalin Karikó** for her pioneering work that led to the development of the RNA vaccine technology;
- for Asia and the Pacific, **Professor Hailan Hu**, for her major discoveries in neuroscience, particularly focused on depression;
- for Africa and the Arab States, **Professor Agnès Binagwaho**, for her remarkable contribution to the noticeable improvement of the Rwandan health system;
- for Europe, **Professor Ángela Nieto**, for her fundamental discoveries on the molecular basis of embryonic development.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

On September 15th, 16th and 17th, the International Jury consisting of 11 outstanding researchers in Life and Environmental Sciences and chaired by Professor Brigitte Kiefer, Professor of the Psychiatry Department at McGill University (Canada) and Research Director at INSERM (France), deliberated over the 59 short-listed nominees out of 358 candidates, before selecting the 5 International Awards Laureates, one from each major region of the world.

THE WORLD NEEDS SCIENCE AND SCIENCE NEEDS WOMEN

Based on the conviction that the world needs science and science needs women, the Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO are committed to the promotion of women in science to make them more visible, to make their talent known and to inspire careers for future generations.

According to the latest UNESCO Science Report published in June, although the number of women in scientific careers is increasing, reaching just over 33% of researchers¹ worldwide, this evolution is still too slow and the glass ceiling remains a reality in research: in Europe, 86% of senior academic positions in science are held by men², and less than 4% of Nobel prizes in science have been awarded to women.

¹ UNESCO (2021), UNESCO Science Report: the Race Against Time for Smarter Development. UNESCO Publishing, Paris

² She Figures, 2018.

Each year, the Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO celebrate the scientific excellence of five eminent women researchers, each from a major region of the world. Since the creation of the *For Women in Science* program in 1998, 122 Laureates and more than 3,800 talented young scientists, doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows, have been supported and honored in more than 110 countries.

2022 LAUREATES OF THE FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE L'ORÉAL-UNESCO INTERNATIONAL AWARDS



LAUREATE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Professor Maria Guadalupe Guzmán Tirado - Infectious Diseases

Director of the Research Center of the Pedro Kouri Institute (IPK) Institute of Tropical Medicine, Havana, Cuba

Awarded for her pioneering work on the devastating human infections caused by the dengue virus, one of the world's most important diseases in terms of morbidity and mortality. Her research has led to a better understanding of its pathogenesis, diagnostic, surveillance and prevention.



LAUREATE FOR NORTH AMERICA

Professor Katalin Karikó - Biochemistry

Adjunct Professor at the Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, United States of America, and Senior Vice President at BioNTech RNA Pharmaceuticals

Awarded for her groundbreaking development of a non-inflammatory mRNA, which can be a potent vaccine and is essential for recently producing effective COVID-19 vaccines. Her work has paved the way for future therapies in complex diseases such as cancer, heart failure, stroke, anemia and autoimmune diseases.



LAUREATE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Professor Hailan Hu - Neuroscience

Professor and Executive Director of the Neuroscience Center of Zhejiang University School of Medicine, China

Awarded for her pioneering discoveries in neurobiology that have revolutionized our understanding of social emotional behavior and mental disorders. Her groundbreaking work has deciphered the mechanism of depression and informed the development of next-generation antidepressants.



LAUREATE FOR AFRICA AND THE ARAB STATES

Professor Agnès Binagwaho - Public Health

Professor of Pediatrics and Vice-Chancellor of Global Health Equity University, Kigali, Rwanda

Awarded for her critical role in establishing, advocating for, and creating a new model of equitable public health care for the most vulnerable in Rwanda, Africa, and the world. Her work and her unwavering commitment to public health are driving access to HIV, malaria and tuberculosis, and under five health services, and universal health coverage more broadly.



LAUREATE FOR EUROPE

Professor Ángela Nieto - Embryology

Professor at the Institute of Neuroscience (CSIC-UMH), San Juan de Alicante, Spain

Awarded for her fundamental discoveries on how cells change identity during embryonic development to disseminate and form different tissues. Her work has paved the way for the understanding of how cancer spreads to other organs and forms metastasis.

About the Fondation L'Oréal

The Fondation L'Oréal supports and empowers women to shape their future and make a difference in society, focusing on three major areas: scientific research and inclusive beauty and climate action.

Since 1998, the L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science* program has worked to empower more women scientists to overcome barriers to progression and participate in solving the great challenges of our time, for the benefit of all. For 23 years, it has supported more than 3,800 women researchers from over 110 countries, rewarding scientific excellence and inspiring younger generations of women to pursue science as a career.

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. It also enables underprivileged women to gain access to employment with dedicated vocational beauty training. On average, around 16,000 people have access to these free treatments every year and more than 18,000 people have taken part in professional beauty training, since the beginning of the program.

Finally, women are affected by persistent gender-based discrimination and inequalities, exacerbated by climate change. While they are on the frontline of the crisis, they remain under-represented in climate decision-making. The Women and Climate program of the Fondation L'Oréal supports, in particular, women who are developing climate action projects addressing the urgent climate crisis and raises awareness of the importance of gender-sensitive climate solutions.

About UNESCO

Since its creation in 1945, UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has worked to create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on respect for common values. UNESCO's mission is to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through its unique expertise in education, science, culture, communication and information. The Organization has two global priorities: Africa and gender equality.

UNESCO is the only UN specialized agency with a specific mandate in the sciences, symbolized by the "S" in its acronym. Through its science-related programs, UNESCO contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, helps developing countries build their scientific and technological capacities, and supports Member States in their efforts to develop science policies and programs. It also supports Member States in their efforts to develop effective public policies that integrate local and indigenous knowledge systems.

UNESCO promotes scientific research and expertise in developing countries. The Organization leads several intergovernmental programs on sustainable management of freshwater, ocean and terrestrial resources, biodiversity conservation, and the use of science to address climate change and disaster risk reduction.

With its national and regional offices on all continents, UNESCO supports international scientific cooperation and works with many partners at the global, regional and national levels. Through its partners, the Organization can draw on resources, know-how and expertise to promote its ideals and values and to strengthen the impact and visibility of its action in all its fields of competence.

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