



WFSJ

World Federation of Science Journalists

Annual Report 2022





UN Consultative Status

The World Federation of Science Journalists was granted consultative status with the United Nations. This special recognition allows non-governmental organizations to work through the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to gain enhanced access to all aspects of this massive international body and its work.

The UN regards this approach as a useful way of enlisting the expertise or informed advice of NGOs to apply their longstanding experience in particular regions and fields. For those same NGOs, consultative status provides an exceptional opportunity to express their views and influence ECOSOC activities.

In practice, this means representatives of the WFSJ will be able to attend UN-organized conferences and events, where they can offer written or oral statements and even organize side events.

In this way, the WFSJ becomes well placed to promote mutual understanding between cultures through dialogue, including a broad spectrum of ethical, social, environmental, diversity, economic, and health issues that our members regularly encounter in their work. Above all, the role of science journalism in society can now be highlighted for an even wider audience.



Working with you-know-WHO

The WFSJ's Health Committee has embarked on a project with the World Health Organisation (WHO). The experience of the pandemic has triple-underlined a lesson we all know too well: the communication of science is critical to success in targeting health issues. The WHO has laid plans to improve science communication with a manual targeting a range of actors.

"Translating science into messages, recommendations and actions that are easily comprehensible, accessible and relevant to different audiences is a vital element of health emergency preparedness. An ongoing dialogue between researchers, the public, the media, the health workforce and decision-makers is crucial to increase understanding, trust and engagement in science and public health measures based on such science," writes the team putting the manual together.



Standing together in solidarity

The WFSJ Solidarity Fund has so far supported 13 science journalists from Ukraine, Rwanda, and Malawi who are facing great difficulties. We would like to thank all donors for their kindness. We're truly grateful for their generous support.

The UK's ABSW contributed almost £6,000 to the Solidarity Fund. Chair Andy Extance said: "The ABSW stands by the science journalists of Ukraine, and science journalists all over the world when their safety is threatened by war. "I encourage other associations and science journalists to contribute to this important effort from the WFSJ."

The Solidarity Fund was set up to offer financial assistance in a range of emergency cases where the financial well-being and personal safety of journalists are compromised by violence, displacement, injuries, natural disasters, or outbreaks of disease. As its name implies, this initiative is an example of journalist-to-journalist solidarity, providing relief to those in danger and need wherever they might happen to be.

Here's how you can continue to support the WFSJ Solidarity Fund: <https://wfsj.org/donate/>



Mark a mathematical milestone — in person!

The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters is offering scholarships to science journalists with an interest in mathematics, who will be invited to take part in the presentation of this year's Abel Prize in Oslo, Norway. Two scholarship recipients will have the opportunity to attend several days' worth of events, including keynote presentations, a gala banquet, and the official presentation of the award by the King, as well as a chance to interview some of the world's leading mathematicians. Two travel grants offered to members of WFSJ in 2022. The scholarship winners from the World Federation of Science Journalists to attend the Abel Prize Week in Norway were Andrei Mihai and Nataliya Demina.



Louise Behan Reporting Grants

The WFSJ launched the Louise Behan Reporting Grants from 2019, with kind support and encouragement from Louise Behan and Canada's [International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#).

Grant objective

The Louise Behan Reporting Grants support science journalists in low-income countries (as defined by the World Bank) to report on stories of importance to that country or region.

If you live in a lower income country and are passionate about a science story you are pursuing, apply for a [Louise Behan Reporting Grant](#) to help you reach your goal. As part of the WFSJ's longstanding commitment to training journalists in all parts of the world, this initiative supports those in the Global South who are reporting on matters of interest in their country or region.

Depending on the volume and quality of entries, two or three awards of between US\$750 and US\$1,000 will be made annually. This support is intended to enhance the career of each recipient, as well as to enhance the quality of science journalism in the recipient's country. It is an objective that was strongly held by the late Louise Behan, who spent her career with Canada's International Development Research Centre and provided money from her estate to create this grant program.

<https://wfsj.org/news/from-the-chilean-mining-industrys-use-of-water-to-a-methane-spewing-lake-in-rwanda-this-years-louise-behan-reporting-grants-cover-the-globe/>



Kavli Prize Week was held in Norway

It is an immense honor for the WFSJ to be able to participate in Kavli Prize Week 2022. We are grateful to [The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters](#), the event organizers, and the [Kavli Foundation](#) for their commitment and support to science journalism.

Since 2012, 25 fellows – science journalists from all over the world – have had the unique opportunity to attend and report on the excellence in science from Norway.

Kavli Prize Week is both a biennial celebration of science as well as an opportunity for dialogues on significant research in the fields of astrophysics, nanoscience and neuroscience. Held primarily in Oslo, its signature event is the Kavli Prize Ceremony.

A Kavli Prize Week for 2022 WFSJ fellows, Nicolás Bustamante Hernández (Colombia), Jelena Kalinić (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Senne Starckx (Belgium/Flanders) and Jessica Ahedor (Ghana), was particularly inspirational and in many ways a privilege for science journalists. In a casual atmosphere, fellows could hear the laureates explain their pioneering research, listen to their lectures in Oslo and Trondheim and participate in all events. Simply, it was one unforgettable week!



Global Science Journalism Report 2022

The WFSJ was part of an international initiative to take the pulse of science writers around the world at a difficult time for this profession. A survey of some 633 individuals revealed who is engaged in this line of work and how they feel about its prospects. A majority of the respondents were optimistic about the future of the field, which many regard as healthy if not thriving.

Other insights shed light on the working conditions associated with science journalism, which can vary widely. Although this [detailed portrait](#) was published on SciDev.Net, the findings also led to an academic paper for the [Journal of Science Communication](#).

Collaborators in this survey included the Brazilian Institute of Public Communication of Science and Technology/House of Oswaldo Cruz, the London School of Economics, the ISCTE-Lisbon University, the Australian National Centre of Public Awareness of Science, the Center for Ethics in Science and Journalism, and SciComm X.

This work began as a joint initiative of The Kavli Foundation, the World Federation of Science Journalists, and Brazil's National Institute of Public Communication of Science and Technology. A pilot study in Latin America and the Caribbean captured the view of 180 science journalists, who answered simple questions as well as providing extensive commentary on various topics.

The results of this initial survey were interpreted to produce an academic publication, which members of the WFSJ will be able to review and discuss in future meetings. Based on the success of this first effort, the current global survey was launched, with the ultimate goal of yielding an even more comprehensive publication. These documents will then provide WFSJ with the reference material to deliberate on a formal Statement of Guiding Principles, which will become a cornerstone of how the organization regards the conduct and purpose of science journalism.



WSF 2022 in Cape Town

South Africa has created space for scientists to contribute to its foreign policy and ensure that science diplomacy features in the country's diplomatic relations.

The theme, "Science for Social Justice", talked through how science is connected to greater social issues, and how it can contribute to equitable treatment and the fair allocation of resources, support human rights, and respond to issues associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, among other global challenges.

The World Science Forum (WSF) is a global biennial meeting. It was established by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The Government of Québec announced at European City of Science Leiden (ESOF 2022) that in partnership with the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), it would run a global call for media & science communicator applications to receive travel grants to attend WSF Cape Town. The Department of Science & Innovation (DSI) also came on-board to finance hotel accommodation for successful candidates, so that the Fonds de Recherche du Québec's grants could stretch even further.

This process was a major success, the largest of its kind ever run by the WFSJ with nearly 400 applications. As a result, we had media attendees from Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Yemen, Iran, Italy, USA, UK, Canada, Northern Macedonia, Poland, Bulgaria, Germany, Cameroon, Nigeria at WSF.

<https://wfsj.org/news/wsf-2022-in-cape-town-the-first-hosted-on-the-african-continent/>



Moving forward with WCSJ 2023 Medellín

Among the most frustrating consequences of the pandemic has been the barriers it presented to the WFSJ's planning for the World Conference of Science Journalists in Medellín, Colombia. The pandemic's ongoing impact led to changing the event's date twice and prevented planners from investigating the venues that would be associated with it. In spite of the difficulties posed by any kind of international travel, the WFSJ was able to send a team to Colombia in November, where a great deal of progress was made in short order.

The [most exciting development](#) was the identification of Medellín's dramatic botanical gardens as the primary conference site. Conference committee members regard this enticing setting as representative of the destinations that will characterize professional meetings in a post-pandemic world where the prospect of travel is no longer taken for granted. Learn more about this fantastic experience at the [official website for the World Conference of Science Journalists](#).



Spark Grant Initiative

As a tribute to the spirit and success of the past two World Conferences of Science Journalism, the five organizations responsible for these events launched a program inviting other Member Associations to take part in a similar strengthening of the science journalism community.

The [Spark Grant Initiative](#) (SGI) offered grants of up to US\$20,000 for proposals that would be far broader in scope and impact than any individual efforts in science reporting. Dozens of these proposals were put forward, which made for interesting reading and discussion by the SGI committee.

The resulting activities should become part of the list of accomplishments we will be celebrating a year from now. Watch for the announcement of the inaugural round of SGI projects in mid-January.

Himalayan Climate Boot Camp

Science and environment journalists from Nepal, India and Bangladesh come back from a unique expedition to the Everest region that will result in nuanced science reporting from the tough and underreported terrain.

The boot camp provided an opportunity for journalist fellows to interact with local policymakers, conservation officers, environmental managers, security personnel, Sherpa porters, women agricultural workers and entrepreneurs, school teachers and students as well as trekking guides working in the Lukla, Monju, Phakding, Khumbu, Khumjung and Namche areas of the Himalayan region, and understand the socio-cultural, economic and political dimensions of climate change.

<https://wfsj.org/news/himalayan-climate-boot-camp-comes-to-a-thrilling-end/>

French-speaking science journalists converge to Senegal for the first international conference

The first international conference of francophone science journalists is expected to attract to Senegal's capital Dakar roughly sixty French-speaking science journalists from three continents. From 10 to 16 october 2022, around 60 French-speaking science journalists from several African countries, Québec and Europe will discuss about the challenges of the profession in the face of the climate emergency, thanks to the joint effort by the French-speaking Africa science journalists' network (RJSAF), the French Association of Science Journalists in the news media (AJSPI), the Swiss Association of Science Journalism (SASJ) and the Quebec Association of Science Communication (ACS).

<https://wfsj.org/news/french-speaking-science-journalists-converge-to-senegal-for-the-first-international-conference/>

Zimbabwe National Association of Science Journalists (ZNASIJ)

India - Science Journalists Association of India (SJAI)

The WFSJ is pleased to welcome the Science Journalists Association of India as its latest member. Based in the national capital of Delhi, this new organization was legally registered last September, although as inaugural president Subhra Priyadarshini explains, its roots go back much further.

The Covid-19 pandemic dragged out the exercise for another couple of years, as bureaucratic processes ground to a halt. With the official recognition of the Indian government and now membership in the WFSJ, Priyadarshini is eager to act on the SJAI's mandate.

SJAI has assembled a database of some 50 professional journalists working full-time or as freelancers. With upward of 143,000 registered newspapers and periodicals across the country, Priyadarshini and her colleagues see plenty of room to broaden the impact of science journalism in India. At the same time, these practitioners face the familiar challenges of building a paying audience for their stories, as well as competing with the effects of misinformation.

Réseau des Journalistes Scientifiques d'Afrique Francophone (RJSF)

The French-speaking Africa science journalists' network (RJSF) is a non-profit association created in July 2019, in Lausanne, Switzerland, during the French workshop at the 11th World Conference of Science Journalists. The network aims at valuing, improving and promoting high-quality science journalism within French-speaking African countries. Our network brings together and facilitates collaboration between francophone science journalists. We organize conferences, workshops, and meetings with scientists and offer training, scholarships, prizes and competitions to science journalists. We encourage the dissemination of scientific information within the French-speaking world.