



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENT

Supporting Women in Science

Calling early career women scholars
to learn, lead, inspire, impact



About the Project

'Supporting Women in Science' project aims to enhance future research capacity of early-career women researchers/practitioners and help reduce inequities. It will provide a platform to advance female scholarly leadership for tomorrow.

This innovative program at the Institute for Global Health & Development, Aga Khan University in partnership with the University of Oxford, will select early-career women scientists from South Central Asia and East Africa for mentorship, training, and career development. This four-year project is supported by a generous grant from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and consists of a structured program with the following steps:

1. Application to join the program and registration of candidates
2. Self-learning courses (including a core set of modules) over 6 months using online modules with built self-assessment and exit certificates
3. Application for Research Fellowship (distant learning) after qualifying the entry test with blended training at the University of Oxford and the Aga Khan University's campuses in Pakistan and East Africa under the mentorship of global experts
4. A fully funded research grant with capacity development and oversight of 12 months.



Objectives

The objectives of the 'Supporting Women in Science' project are to enhance the research capacity and scholarly output of early-career female scientists, curtail the current substantial gender differentials and biases in research and scientific leadership, especially in the Low- & Middle-Income countries, and to prioritize capacity building in reproductive, maternal, fetal, and newborn health and nutrition sciences, climate change, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Areas of Focus

The key areas of focus would be:

- Sexual and reproductive health (SRH)
- Pregnancy, perinatal and newborn care
- Maternal and child nutrition challenges
- Optimizing child and adolescent growth and development
- Climate change and its impact on maternal, newborn, and child health
- Health and health-related SDGs implementation and monitoring

Overview of the Application Process

The programme will be delivered in phased approach:

I. Application call and selection

Early-career women faculty from the regions of South-Central Asia and East Africa with a commitment to pursue a research career in sexual reproductive health, feto-maternal medicine, perinatal and newborn health and nutrition, climate change, and SDGs will be asked to apply. A select group of women scientists/researchers and practitioners will be shortlisted for the self-learning training modules.

II. Evaluation through self-learning certified courses

Select candidates would be asked to take a set of online courses. Offered by the University of Oxford and the Aga Khan University, the course catalogue will comprise of mandatory and elective courses. Formal evaluation will be based on a combination of participatory analysis, followed by an InterSCALE membership certification of online learning.

III. Fellowship with University of Oxford or Aga Khan University

A panel of 15 InterSCALE fellows will be shortlisted based on the summative core course evaluation from the previous step. The selected candidates would be invited to a one-year 'distant-learning blended research fellowship' at University of Oxford or Aga Khan University (Karachi and Nairobi) with an assigned supervisor. The fellows would develop a research protocol for a grant of 12 months. All fellowship applicants would be required to provide a proof of clearance in an English proficiency online course available at AKU.

IV. Supervised, fully funded research project

InterSCALE fellows will be funded for supervised funded research project of 12 months with a named mentor.

V. Presentations at international conferences or select webinars

These candidates would also be given an opportunity to present their work at an international conference or webinar.

Application Process

Online applications will open soon. Applications must be submitted with complete supporting documents and information. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Eligibility Criteria

Early-career women researchers/practitioners:

- Working at a reputed institute of South-Central Asia and East Africa
- Positioned as Assistant professor and below, or pursuing a postdoctoral fellowship
- Holding an academic degree and training from a recognized institution
- Demonstrating ability and promise for research in reproductive maternal, fetal, and newborn health, nutrition and development and climate change and SDGs
- Undertaking hypothesis-driven research in Low- & Middle-Income countries of South-Central Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa

Research Partners

This research project is jointly implemented by the Institute for Global Health and Development at the Aga Khan University, Centre for Global Child Health at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), and University of Oxford, with the funding support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Distinguished University Professor and Founding Director, Institute for Global Health and Development and Dr. Jai K. Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Paediatrics and Child Health & Assistant Director, Institute for Global Health Development are the leads of the program.

