

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Through its At-Risk Scholars Initiative, Rainbow Working Group and various collaborations, the GYA works to promote scientific freedom and responsibility
- “Right to Science” publication explores the potential for young scientist organisations to play a central role in implementing the right to science
- Save the date for the 2024 Annual General Meeting and International Conference of Young Scientists, 7-10 May 2024

This bulletin provides an overview and highlights of the activities of the Global Young Academy in the third quarter of 2023, and complements our monthly newsletters (archive available [here](#); [subscribe here](#)), which provide more comprehensive details.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- [Learn more about our professional development workshop for at-risk scholars](#)
- [Share this link to our At-Risk Scholars Initiative Mentoring Programme](#)
- [Read the “The Right to Science: From Principle to Practice and the Role of National Science Academies”](#)
- [Download GYA Connections 11, which examines the theme Innovative Technologies](#)

GYA AND STRATEGIC PARTNERS STRIVE TO PROMOTE FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN SCIENCE

Infringements on the freedom of science can lead to restrictions in research funding and communication, and in extreme cases to scholars leaving their home countries. Beyond the effects these can have on individual scholars, such infringements also have wider societal consequences. In the scientific world, awareness is increasing for the need to support scholars who leave their country to escape war or conflict.

Other less visible factors can also lead to discrimination or persecution, such as research in a politically undesired field like climate science or gender studies, or a scholar’s own ethnicity, gender or sexual identity. Since its founding, scientific freedom has been a core value of the GYA, and activities in this area continue to develop, in collaboration with strategic partners.

One of these activities is the well-established GYA strategic project “[At-Risk Scholars Initiative](#)” (ARSI). Launched in 2017, the ARSI provides professional peer mentorship to at-risk scholars. Through its [Mentoring Programme](#), the initiative aims to help displaced scholars re-integrate into a scholarly work environment by supporting the development of research skills and connections relevant to their host countries. Mentorship entails at least a one-year commitment by mentors, who then provide advice and access to their networks to assist mentees with career, educational, and professional development, as appropriate. Partnership and exchange with the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF), Scholars at Risk (SAR), the Philipp-Schwarz Initiative, and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) have been crucial to the continuing development of the programme.

The ARSI also established a membership programme to support exceptional early- to mid-career researchers’ applications to the GYA. Started as a pilot, the endorsement programme was evaluated and approved in 2021 as a permanent membership pathway. Since 2019, five at-risk scholars have been successfully selected as new GYA members using this mechanism.

The GYA also regularly convenes online and in-person workshops to support career development and professional skills for those trying to maneuver themselves through a new academic context. One recurring workshop at Wolfson College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom, takes place annually thanks to secured funding and solid partnerships with the Council for At-Risk Scholars (Cara), the Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) and the recently launched United Kingdom Young Academy (UKYA), as well as the ongoing engagement of ARSI members - particularly that of GYA alumna and past Executive Committee member [S. Karly Kehoe](#) (St Mary’s University, Canada) and alumnus and past Co-Chair [Moritz Riede](#) (Oxford University, United Kingdom).

Additionally, in collaboration with the International Science Council (ISC), GYA members including [Saja Al Zoubi](#) (St. Mary’s University, Canada) contributed to an article titled “[The scientific knowledge being lost to conflict](#)”, as well as to the podcast series “[Science in Times of Crisis](#)”.

Another area of GYA engagement closely related to scientific freedom is the [GYA Rainbow Working Group](#), established in 2018. The group provides a space within the GYA to discuss issues related to the various levels of discrimination faced by minorities in general and LGBTQIA+ in particular within the academic world.

Through a variety of activities, the group provides a platform that aims to raise awareness of diversity among scientists. Most recently, the group prepared a [poster exhibition for the 2023 AGM](#), which portrays successful LGBTQ+ scientists, their leadership and contributions. The GYA Rainbow Group is currently exploring a collaboration with the ISC to support a statement.

Considering scientific freedom more broadly, at its most recent [Annual General Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda](#), the GYA General Assembly discussed the importance of academic freedom and its precarity in many parts of the world. Many GYA members have personally experienced subtle to extreme restrictions on scientific freedom in their own careers and societies.

In the past, the GYA has actively responded to acute conflict situations that threaten scientists and scientific freedom, for example with ad-hoc Statements on developments in the [Ukraine](#), [Iran](#) and [Afghanistan](#).

On the question of what else might the GYA do in this realm, as a global academy of early- to mid-career researchers, many of whom are still navigating the pressure of precarious career paths in academia in different contexts around the world, there was consensus that the GYA should actively contribute to dialogues about what academic freedom means, why it is important, and how it can be upheld. At the same time, the GYA must consistently consider the safety of its members.

“RIGHT TO SCIENCE”

From the perspective of human rights, ideas for implementation of the right to science, embedded in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, are gaining more attention in the science community. The GYA has contributed to this discussion in the past years, through the ARSI, in connection with Young Academies, and in [UN fora](#).

Recent conversations between the GYA Executive Committee and UNESCO have returned the relevance of this topic to the forefront and could be a potential field of collaboration between the two organisations.

The role of Young Academies in this field is the topic of a book chapter titled “The Right to Science: From Principle to Practice and the Role of National Science Academies”, co-authored by GYA member [Teresa de la Puente](#) (néé Stoepler; U.S. National Academy of Sciences, United States). The chapter appears in the book titled “The Right to Science: Then and Now”.

The book chapter explores the potential for (young) scientist organisations – for example, National Academies, as well as the GYA and National Young Academies – to play a role in the implementation of Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The chapter analyses the results of a survey of science academies, in which the GYA and NYAs took part. The results of the survey were also presented and discussed

at the 2019 World Science Forum. Science organisations’ engagement on issues which touch upon economic, social or cultural rights are in the focus. Importantly, the survey revealed that although many in these organisations were not aware of Article 15, the essence of the “right to science” is at the core of their work and missions.

The chapter “The Right to Science: From Principle to Practice and the Role of National Science Academies” is [available here](#) (Open Access, Cambridge University Press), and the book “The Right to Science: Then and Now” can be [downloaded here](#).

SAVE THE DATE: 7-10 MAY 2024

The [2024 Annual General Meeting \(AGM\) and International Conference of Young Scientists](#) “Transformative and Inclusive Science for a Sustainable Future” will take place from 7-10 May 2024 in Washington, D.C., United States. The event will be hosted by the New Voices in Science, Engineering, and Medicine at the U.S. National Academies.

More information on the programme will be communicated soon.

ABOUT THE GYA

The vision of the GYA is *science for all; science for the future*, and its mission is to give a voice to young scientists and researchers around the world. The GYA, founded in 2010, is an independent science academy of 200 outstanding early- to mid-career researchers from six continents who are selected from across disciplines based on their academic excellence and commitment to engage with society. GYA members serve five-year terms, and the GYA presently counts members and alumni from 101 countries. The GYA administrative Office is publicly funded and hosted at the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. The wide array of GYA activities are supported by a range of international public and private funders. This publication was made possible with the help of GYA’s core funding from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the German State of Saxony-Anhalt.

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