

NEWSLETTER

Letter from the co-founder of WiM



By **Dr. Elena Gómez-Díaz**

The **Women in Malaria (WiM)** initiative was founded in 2018 with a **vision**: to build a [diverse and inclusive community of women and non-binary scientists in malaria research](#). A community where to find sorority, that lifts each other up, fosters collaboration, and amplifies voices that have too often been silent or unheard.

The Women in Malaria **mission** is to support and empower women and gender minorities working to advance malaria research and control. **Why do WiM mission and values matter?** Because gender-based violence, barriers, biases, and stereotypes persist in science. Women and underrepresented genders continue to face inequities and discrimination - not because of their abilities, but simply for being women or non-binary. WiM exists to challenge these systemic injustices and to create a space where everyone can thrive. More generally we believe that gender equality and diversity are crucial for advancing science efficiently and effectively.

Our activity is organised into three main objectives:

- (i) To increase the **visibility** of WiM members through our database, the newsletter, social media and WiM sketches;
- (ii) To **connect** women through our workspace and the organisation of WiM conferences ([Lancet Infect Dis](#); [Trends Parasitol](#));
- (iii) To **support** and **empower** women, with a particular focus on LMICs, by providing sponsorship, grants and training as well as career mentorship.

We are very enthusiastic about the years that come, if you want to contribute and be active part of these activities [contact us](#).

World Malaria Day

Women have long been underrepresented and underacknowledged in STEM, yet their contributions to malaria research have been nothing short of transformative. This World Malaria Day, we celebrate the progress made and honour women who have driven innovation in the fight against malaria.



From the laboratory to the frontlines of healthcare delivery, women across the globe are shaping how we understand, prevent, and treat this disease. Yet, significant barriers remain that limit the full participation of women and other discriminated genders in science and global health. These same groups also bear a disproportionate burden of malaria itself, particularly pregnant women and young children.

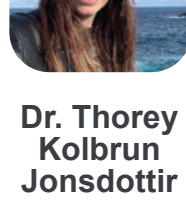
Real progress in malaria control has been made over the past decades, but the rate of progress has plateaued in several countries. Biological hurdles, cuts to research and programme funding, ongoing conflicts and climate change are all contributing to this. Among these headwinds, however, encouraging developments are being scaled up, such as vaccine rollouts, new-generation bednets and expanding chemoprevention strategies.

An inclusive scientific community is a stronger one. By fostering environments where all voices are heard and supported, we can accelerate progress toward a world free from malaria. This World Malaria Day, let us commit to promoting gender equity in STEM and beyond.

- by Leen N. Vanheer

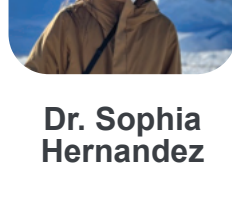
Sketch by Thorey K Jonsdottir & Sophia Raine C Hernandez

Meet the WiM Communications Committee



Dr. Thorey Kolbrun Jonsdottir

WiM Communication/ Media Chair



Dr. Sophia Hernandez

WiM Communication/ Media



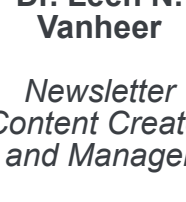
Dr. Brook Jensen

WiM Communication/ Database



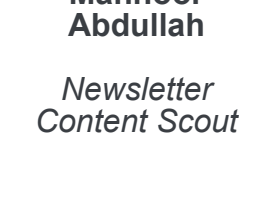
Cynthia Eze

Social Media Manager



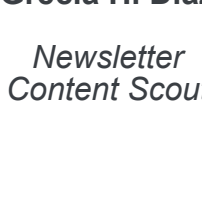
Dr. Leen N. Vanheer

Newsletter Content Creator and Manager



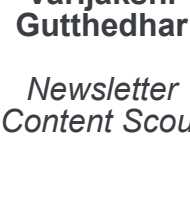
Mahnoor Abdullah

Newsletter Content Scout



Grecia H. Diaz

Newsletter Content Scout



Varijakshi Gutthedar

Newsletter Content Scout

WiM Sketch of the month

Today we celebrate World Malaria Day and want to highlight the work of two Target Malaria researchers nominated for the WiM sketches.

Krystal Mwesiga Birungi is an entomologist and works as a Research and Outreach Associate at the Target Malaria Uganda. Krystal has a degree in both Zoology and Botany (Makerere University) and has been researching population dynamics, species composition and behaviour of *Anopheles gambiae* sensu lato (s.l.) populations in Uganda. [Read more about Krystal and her scientific career.](#)

Dr. Federica Bernardini is a Research Associate and works at Imperial College London. Federica works on developing new tools for vector control to help prevent the spread of malaria. Currently, Federica's research is focused on both hybrid incompatibility of *Anopheles* mosquitoes as well as developing vector control strategies for *Anopheles gambiae* and *Anopheles arabiensis*. [Read more about Federica and her scientific career.](#)

- by Thorey K Jonsdottir & Sophia Raine C Hernandez



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No.10

Malaria

Day



Federica Bernardini



Krystal Mwesiga Birungi



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WiM Database

We are introducing a new format for our WiM database designed to improve usability, accessibility, and data protection. The [sign-up process](#) for the database will remain the same.

which will be updated every few months. To ensure protection of members' information, the database restricts downloading, printing, and copying.

We hope you enjoy exploring and using this [new database](#).

- by Brook Jensen

Newsletter and social media content suggestions

Would you like to see WiM cover certain topics in the WiM newsletter or on our social media? We welcome your ideas and encourage you to provide your suggestions by filling out this [brief survey](#).

The Comic Corner



Next newsletter will be published in July 2026

