

Progress report Gioventù Funds 2024

Chair Group Global Nutrition Wageningen University

Reporting period: January 1st - December 31st, 2024

Reporting date: February 28th, 2025

1. Summary

In December 2024 the Chairgroup Global Nutrition, Wageningen University, received a gift of EUR 29,996 from Gioventù foundation. The aim for its use is to support study and research of students and researchers from African countries. Most support is provided to female students and researchers. The 2024 work plan proposed research activities on projects in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi.

Research activities in Malawi started successfully in 2024, and are running well. EUR 3,006 has been spent so far; activities are continuing into 2025.

As we have been late with our request to Gioventù, not all planned activities could commence in 2024. Besides the project activities in Malawi with Ms Kesso van Zutphen, which will continue into 2025, there are two other activities planned for 2025: Ms Taonga Chirwa will finalise the write up of her research, and Ms Tsitsi Chimhashu is planning to implement her proof of concept study. Both activities are to take place in the second quarter of 2025.

Below, in paragraph 4 (next steps), we will lay out other priority plans for 2025. We would be very grateful if we could apply for additional funding for these plans in 2025. A separate proposal will be developed to do so.

2. Progress and results

Ms Kesso van Zutphen (academic supervision: Hans Verhoef, Alida Melse) is conducting her PhD research based in Malawi, where she is implementing a randomized double-placebo-controlled trial with a 2x2 factorial design to assess the effects of daily supplementation with iron-containing multiple micronutrients and ibuprofen during menstruation on menstrual blood loss, menstrual duration, iron status, physical endurance (shuttle run test) and indicators of quality of life (e.g., menstrual pain, depression, missed school hours) in adolescent girls. The underlying hypotheses are that ibuprofen will reduce blood loss by 25%, and iron supplementation will improve iron status but increase blood loss. In 2024, EUR 3,006 was spent on air transport to Malawi for the delivery of multiple micronutrients, which were produced and packaged in Heerenveen. In 2025, until date, we have spent funds on a loudspeaker for use with shuttle run test, and on a heavy-duty tent, for field work for the same research. These last two expenditures will be reported in our next financial report, together with other expenses, covering the period 1 January – 30 June 2025.

3. Financial report 2024

		2024 (EUR)		
	Activity	Budget 2024	Expenditures 2024	Balance as per 31/12/2024
1	Proof of concept kinetic study with preformed vitamin A, with the aim to develop a method to assess the vitamin A equivalency of pro-vitamin A from natural sources by Ms Tsitsi Chimhashu , from Zimbabwe, at WUR.	9,996	0	9,996
2	Nutritional intake study in Zambia for research on healthy diets and fermented foods, by Ms Taonga Chirwa from Zambia.	10,000	0	10,000
3	Randomized trial with daily iron supplementation/ibuprofen during menstruation among Malawian adolescent girls . Change: as Ms Beatrice had to leave the project, these funds are now be used for Ms Kesso van Zutphen implementing the research.	10,000	3,006	6,994
	Total	29,996	3,006	26,990

4. Next steps

In the first half of 2025, the remaining activities planned under the 2024 funding will be implemented:

- Ms Taonga Chirwa will finalise the write up of her research on nutritional intake in Zambia, with the support of professor Elise Talsma.
- Ms Tsitsi Chimhashu will implement her proof of concept study to develop a method to assess the vitamin A equivalency of pro-vitamin A from natural sources. She will do this under the guidance of professor Alida Melse.
- Ms Kesso van Zutphen will continue her research on the effects of daily iron supplementation and use of ibuprofen during menstruation on menstrual blood loss, duration of menstruation, daily iron loss, and indicators of quality of life among for adolescent girls in Malawi. She will do this under the guidance of professor Hans Verhoef and professor Alida Melse.

At the same time, in 2025 we would also like to propose the following activities which are high on our agenda. **We will develop a new proposal to Gioventù foundation for 2025 funding.** We would be very grateful if the following could be supported:

- Ms Ester Omosa, external sandwich PhD student from the International Livestock research Institute (ILRI), Nairobi; to support her two months stay at WUR to finalise

thesis write-up on 'Food environment, food choice motives and diet consumption in Pastoralist settings in Kenya'.

- Mr Mamadou Bah, PhD candidate from Gambia, to support his PhD related travel costs
- Scholarships for students from African countries to attend a course on Food Systems in South Africa, in 2026. The course is jointly developed between North-West University in South Africa and Wageningen University.
- Production of several video outputs by a professional documentary maker, on the project implemented by Ms Kesso van Zutphen in Malawi, with a view that these will be used for a scientific publication (protocol for biochemical measurement of menstrual blood loss), advocacy purposes, educational purposes and a teaser in scientific conferences. A concept note with target audiences, key messages and ideas for content for each of these items is available upon request.