# IMPACT REPORT 2019 - 2022



ALBA NETWORK Towards diversity and equity in brain sciences

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 Message from the Chair
- O4 Background & Mission
- 06 Growth & Reach
- 07 Awareness & Advocacy
- 12 Visibility & Recognition
- **15** Networking & Mentoring
- 18 Our Partners & Allies



### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2022 has been an incredible year for the ALBA Network with the list of events and webinars, prizes and papers, and much, much more, too long to elaborate in detail. Membership continues to grow past 1200, from 78 countries at the last count. These members have made possible everything we do, especially via the working groups, tackling so many different issues and challenges, and working to equity and improve diversity, inclusion in neuroscience. Also making everything possible are the amazing ALBA staff, our funders, especially our founding partners - FENS, IBRO and SfN - and all the fantastic other networks and groups we have partnered with on so many activities.

Perhaps my personal favourite activity was the ALBA tree at the FENS Forum in Paris this summer, which started wintry and bare-branched but inspired so many to attach their diversity wishes that it soon was in full flower. But the tree also illustrated how much there is left to do. There are many inequities remaining in science, across many different axes of diversity. We can't do everything, all at once, on our own. But together we can begin to change the world, or at least the neuroscience world, to make it a wonderfully diverse, joyfully equitable and warmly inclusive place to feel part of.



Dr Laura Andreae ALBA Chair 2022-23

### BACKGROUND

According to a 2017 UNESCO report, women accounted for less than 30% of the world's researchers. Despite the progress in the promotion of diversity in brain research, striking inequalities persist when it comes to access to high-level positions, invitation to conferences, career advancement, prize nominations and participation in academic decision-making.

To address this issue, the ALBA Network was created in 2018 with the aim of establishing a global network to promote equity and diversity in the brain sciences.

Naming the network ALBA, meaning sunrise in several languages, thus relates to the recognition that our scientific communities are beginning to acknowledge the importance of incorporating diversity and ensuring equity in the way we deal with science. Although traditionally the field of neuroscience has been lagging behind in these topics, we consider that we are currently living an extraordinary momentum when progress starts happening. Therefore, the ALBA Network has the ambition to be an emerging energy that helps in catalysing this promising movement towards a definitive change so that all brain scientists have equal opportunities to thrive.

66

Being on hiring, evaluation and promotion committees. and being in positions of leadership, it became clear to me that the system disfavoured women and other underrepresented groups.



Prof. Carmen Sandi ALBA Founder



2019 FENS Regional Meeting, Belgrade, Serbia Official launch and first event to present the ALBA network and raise awareness on gender issues in neuroscience

# MISSION

#### Advocate for and foster an inclusive and self-aware brain research community

The ALBA network believes that diversity is a fundamental component of excellence in brain sciences, and that access to education, training, resources, mentorship and jobs should be based on an individual's potential, not on their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion or culture. However, we know inequities exist, and talented scientists are excluded from opportunities in brain sciences because of these factors and personal choices that bear no relationship to their potential to succeed. ALBA recognises the geographical, cultural and historical differences in the groups of individuals that are underrepresented across countries and within subfields of brain sciences. We expect the scientific community to present at least the same or even a greater diversity than in their respective countries. We are committed to supporting and advocating for actions and policies that foster equity, diversity and inclusion in brain sciences across the globe. These elements form the basis of our four pillars of actions.

### Awareness & Advocacy

- Establishing a Declaration on Equity & Inclusion
- Webinars addressing region-specific and global diversity issues
- Advocating for an inclusive research environment with policymakers, funding agencies & institutions

### Data & Resources

- Curating a centralised resource of diverse scientist profiles and available data on bias, underrepresentation and effective strategies countering discrimination
- Promoting the collection and analysis of data on various forms of scientific underrepresentation

### Visibility & Recognition

- Establishing awards to recognise outstanding contributions to science and diversity from underrepresented neuroscientists
- Highlighting success stories of individuals and organisations to create role models

### Networking & Mentoring

- Hosting workshops, panel discussions and networking events at major conferences
- Creating a mentoring framework to promote the careers of underrepresented community members

## **GROWTH & REACH**

### | MEMBERSHIP

ALBA represents a global diverse network of individual members from the neuroscience community who are involved in research, education, communication and advocacy and are committed to supporting and advocating for actions and policies that foster diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in brain sciences across the globe. As a member, individuals can attend the annual ALBA General Assembly, contribute to the planning and implementation of DEI initiatives, represent ALBA at events and panel discussions to provide data and insights on various aspects and trends of underrepresentation, and have access to customised diversity and inclusion training programs and workshops.



78 Countries



#### **ALBA members at a glance** Growth, geographic and gender distribution



The networking aspect has been instrumental to enhancing my confidence and connectedness with colleagues in the broad field of neuroscience.



ALBA connects us with a thoughtful community with the common goal of improving DEI in brain sciences. 66

I have also considerably improved my knowledge and understanding of DEI challenges and concrete actions to take.

### **| ALBA DECLARATION ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

Α landmark document that outlines concrete actions that can be taken at the and individual level institutional to counteract bias and create an inclusive workplace culture, the ALBA Declaration on Equity and inclusion was launched in the January 2021 at Society for Neuroscience (SfN) Global Connectome.

A fully referenced, hyperlinked version of the Declaration is available online where each action point is elaborated upon, describing the issue addressed and highlighting relevant resources (data, testimonies and good practices) on how best to undertake these actions.

#### We are all biased. What can we do?

- · Proactively solicit applications from underrepresented groups
- Ensure balanced committee representation to ninimize biased gatekeeping
- Use consistent, well-defined evaluation criteria
- Learn to identify and avoid biased language, for example in letters of recommendation, teaching evaluations, etc.
- Consider double-blind reviewing or separate streaming of applications to strive for equitable success rates

Establish transparent career structures

· Implement clear advancement criteria • Ensure equal pay for equivalent positions

· Explicitly recognize service contributions

Consider broadening career paths to provide opportunities beyond PI role

#### An inclusive workplace culture is a healthy environment for all.

#### Establish a positive workplace environment

#### Adopt and enforce a code of conduct

Establish a working group that includes key stakeholders & members of leadership

• Have a policy. Adopt a written Equity, Diversity & Inclusion policy. Share it widely

Be data-driven. Continuously collect data to monitor
 progress & test solutions

• Raise awareness. Provide unconscious bias training

 Amplify the voices of minoritized colleagues in both formal and informal settings al settings

Nominate individuals from diverse backgrounds for prestigious events, awards, & recognition

Set concrete goals & identify relevant actions

- Follow the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity
- Endorse the DORA Declaration on Research Assessment

Provide onboarding/ orientation for new employees
to navigate organizational & local cultural norms

• Establish a mentoring system

#### Promote healthy work-life balance

- Schedule all events during appropriate working hours · Allow for flexible hours and teleworking where possible
- · Facilitate access to child/family care (through onsite facilities and/or subsidization where possible

Ensure equitable service loads for teaching, advising, and committees

### 66

The Declaration was drafted to be both impactful and broad enough to be widely adopted. We believe that adopting these principles will benefit all members of the research community.



**Dr Megan Carey** ALBA Chair, 2021-22



#### **ALBA** Declaration signatories

Geographic distribution of individual (a) and organisational (b) signatories

### | BEST PRACTICES

### Workshop on racial broaching

In the scientific workforce, racial bias has been shown to influence the ability of faculty to objectively evaluate grant applications and the perception of which research topics are worthy of funding. Despite the evidence, there is hesitancy to talk about race when addressing diversity. This workshop aimed at providing agency and empowering the ALBA Team with the right tools to hold difficult and sensitive conversations about race at the workplace.

Dr Sherilynn J Black (Duke University, USA) led the session by outlining the problematics encountered during dialogue about race relations, the various styles of racial broaching and different strategies to build capacity as a culturally aware leader. The workshop was attended by about 40 ALBA members and received extremely positive feedback.

### 66

Approach the communication with the humility and understanding that you don't have things figured out and that power does not equal competency with racialised conversations.



**Dr Sherilynn J Black** Duke University, USA



Sherilynn's comments and knowledge were very helpful and gave names to things I have observed often.

**Dr Lora Sweeney** ALBA Ambassador



**ALBA workshop on racial broaching** Online session for ALBA Board of Directors, Advisors, Ambassadors and Volunteers

### **ALBA Guidelines**

As a step towards influencing research culture in a positive way and increasing diversity in conference participation and prize nominations, ALBA published recommendations for how to meaningfully increase diversity and inclusivity at conferences and how to submit nominations to The Brain Prize, tailored to its specific goals.

### REGIONAL DIVERSITY

Diversity and inequity have a different meaning depending on a country's culture and history. To obtain a multifaceted view of the region- and culture-specific issues faced by neuroscientists of different demographics, ALBA launched a global webinar series to identify challenges in six regions and to explore possible context-specific solutions.

### ALBA-Black in N(euro) networking

### **DEI challenges &** solutions in Central & Eastern Europe

Organised at 2021 **FENS** Regional Meeting

Attendees: 81 Post-event views: 126

#### **Bias in Indian STEM**

ALBA-sponsored event at 2021 NeuroFemIndia conference

Attendees: 30 Post-event views: 1293 Subtitled in Hindi, Tamil

**Diversity in brain** research in East & gender perspective

Attendees: 60

Online networking event organised with Black In Neuro (BiN)

Attendees: 60 Middle East & North

### What are the main barriers to succeed in Latin America

Based on 2020 IBRO-LARC report "Evaluation of gender inequities in Latin American neuroscience community"

Attendees: 83 Post-event views: 111

Challenges &

Africa (MENA)

Live-captioned & subtitled in Arabic

Attendees: 52

opportunities for

brain scientists in

Post-event views: 285

What it takes to succeed as a neuroscientist in Africa

Organised with World Women in Neuroscience (WWN)

Attendees: 96 Post-event views: 70 South-East Asia: a

Post-event views: 92

66

Despite being an Argentinean female researcher. I was surprised to discover new factors contributing to inequity in my own region.

### 66

The webinar on challenges in Africa was very informative, the speakers addressed each topic very well and I loved the practicality in their talks.

### **| EXPANDING DEFINITIONS OF DIVERSITY**

One of the key objectives of ALBA is to raise awareness of certain specific forms of bias and discrimination that are sometimes invisible or have received less attention within the spectrum of DEI. Various online events were organised to highlight the biased and racialised ways of thinking in research and academia, and to explore solutions to increase the representation and visibility of individuals across the racial, disability, and gender and sexual diversity spectrum in neuroscience.

## Do I have to act like a man to succeed in science?

ALBA partnered with the Heidelberg Pain Consortium to organise a panel discussion at their 2021 Gender and Science Meet between leading female scientists and young investigators. They examined how a diversity of behavioural, social and leadership attributes and attitudes can best be harnessed to create a professionally-balanced and successful environment, with a perspective to foster gender equality in science leadership. With registrations exceeding maximum capacity, this event attracted 485 attendees.

# Navigating academia as an LGBTQIA+ neuroscientist

Organised at the 2021 FENS Regional Meeting, this special event featured a panel of established neuroscientists who identify as LGBTQIA+. They discussed the key challenges and biases faced by the community at the workplace and outlined actions to promote equal opportunities and work environments that afford them safety and respectful visibility. With 161 registrations and 91 attendees, this event was a success.

# Artificial Intelligence and Racism – What are the implications for scientific research?

Shakir Mohamed (senior research scientist, DeepMind, UK) gave a keynote speech and illustrated the ways in which race is entangled in AI research using examples from healthcare, language technologies and policing. This was followed by a discussion on the types of technologies we can or should develop, bias in data, how we measure performance, and where scientific responsibility lies. The webinar attracted more than 100 registrations and 62 participants.

### Exposing the Impostor Phenomenon in neuroscience

Dr Andrei Cimpian (NYU, USA) and members of the ALBA Imposter Syndrome (IS) Taskforce led the discussion on the manifestation of IS in the academic community while providing insights into the different factors that contribute to its persistence. They also discussed results (133) from an anonymous survey sent beforehand to the general public as a way to self-assess how they relate to the phenomenon. The webinar attracted 71 attendees.

#### Breaking down the ivory tower of ableism

With this webinar series, ALBA aims to give a platform to scientists with disabilities across countries and neuroscience disciplines, to highlight their research and reflect on how to promote inclusive working environments and accessibility to research. The series was kicked off with a talk by Prof. Onur Güntürkün (Ruhr-Universität Bochum, DE) and attracted 46 attendees.

### FEATURES

This article introduced the ALBA network to the global community and emphasised the importance of international efforts effectively coordinated in promoting diversity in science.

NEURONLINE SfN's home for learning and discussion SfN

The Global Scientific Community Needs to Promote Diversity in **Research Together** 

SOURCE: ALBA NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE



First published: 29 May 2021 | https://doi.org/10.1111/ejn.15332 | Citations: 1

The ALBA network was featured in the "Diversity Matters Series" of the European Journal of Neuroscience (EJN), an initiative to present the work of organisations across the world in the neurosciences whose primary commitment is to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### Neuron

me 109, Issue 21, 3 November 2021, Pages 3358-3360

NeuroView COVID-19, stress, and inequities in (neuro)science

Carmen Sandi <sup>1, 3</sup> 유 쯔, Megan R. Carey <sup>2, 3</sup> 유 쯔



Chairs of the ALBA network reflected on how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated inequalities in science and academia, disproportionately affecting the careers of researchers from underrepresented groups.

nature neuroscience Comment | Published: 16 August 2022

#### Addressing the opportunity gap in the Latin American neuroscience community

Ana Silva 🖂, Keerthana Iyer, Francesca Cirulli, Elaine Del-Bel, Zulma Dueñas, Edna Matta-Camacho, José Luis Peña, Gregory J. Quirk, Valeria Ramirez-Castañeda & Carmen Sandi 🖂

Neuroscientists in Latin America face unique challenges tied to their cultural and socioeconomic identity that reduce the impact of their scientific contributions. This commentary reviewed the issues currently faced by the community and outlined key actions to overcome the barriers impeding their global inclusion, visibility and success.

# VISIBILITY & RECOGNITION

### AWARDS AND GRANTS

### ALBA-FKNE-YIBRO Diversity Access Grants

Founded together with the FENS Kavli Network of Excellence (FKNE) and Young IBRO, these grants offered waived registration fees to attend the FENS Forum 2020. A total of 286 recipients received the grant: 100 from Africa, 101 from South America, 58 from Asia and 27 from Europe and the Middle East.

### ALBA-Elsevier Award Lecture in Brain Sciences

Sponsored Elsevier, this award by recognises outstanding research achievements of an active scientist working at the frontiers of brain research in underrepresented countries among neuroscience publications and conferences. Past winners include Prof. Seung-Hee Lee (KR, 2021), Dr María Elena Avale (AR, 2022).

66

This award will be a great opportunity to expose our work to the broader neuroscience community and to promote the careers of myself and other female neuroscientists in Korea.



**Prof. Seung Hee Lee** Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology





#### **ALBA-FKNE Diversity Prize**

Founded together with FKNE Scholars, this award highlights a scientist or group that has made outstanding contributions to the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion in the brain sciences. Past winners include Prof. Erin Schuman (DE, 2020), Prof. Marian Joëls (NL, 2021), Dr Mahmoud Bukar Maina (UK, 2022).



Africa has the greatest genetic diversity, yet African models barely exist in global neuroscience. I hope that this recognition will facilitate new collaboration opportunities in my research on diversifying stem cell models from African residents for neurologic disease research.



Dr Mahmoud Bukar Maina University of Sussex, UK



# VISIBILITY & RECOGNITION

### **| INTERSECTIONAL ROLE MODELS**

#### **ALBA Diversity Podcast**

The ALBA diversity podcast, an initiative by the ALBA Promotion of Diversity Task Force, highlights diverse profiles of neuroscientists across different career stages, professional paths and backgrounds, to better understand their personal journeys, and what keeps them going as individuals and as neuroscientists in today's world.

Podcaster, neuroscientist, science communicator and founding Indian science member of collectives BiasWatchIndia and IndSciComm, Dr Shruti Muralidhar researchers interviewed who emigrated from their home country and became a minority in their work country, discussing the kinds of barriers they had to overcome while establishing their careers. Migration being the central theme, all episodes underlined the importance of recognising one's own implicit biases and promoting a research culture that is inclusive of individuals that lie at the intersection of multiple identities. All episodes are accompanied bv an English transcript and can be streamed or downloaded on standard podcast listening apps.



Awards are a recognition of your science and mentorship, but the other side is also to inspire young people.



**Prof. Huda Zoghbi** Baylor College of Medicine



I was aware that I had skills due to my disability that others did not.



**Dr Noèlia Fernández Castillo** University of Barcelona

### 66

Being a religious person is not contradictory to being a scientist. Science is my way of thinking. Religion is my way of living.



**Dr Maryam Ziaei** Norwegian University of Science and Technology



One of the issues with being an LGBTQ+ individual in STEM is the invisibility.



**Prof. Mehmet Kurt** University of Washington

12 Episodes

1207

Total downloads



Countries reached

# VISIBILITY & RECOGNITION

### | HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS STORIES

### ALBA Interview series





With the help of a grant from Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, the ALBA Network conducted short interviews of diverse profiles of scientists explaining their research interests, challenges and biases faced as they progressed in their career paths. The videos are available on ALBA's YouTube channel in English and French.

# **NETWORKING & MENTORING**

### | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT













# **NETWORKING & MENTORING**

### **| COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



The ALBA Tree invited all delegates at the FENS Forum 2022 to make a wish for a more equitable, inclusive and diverse neuroscience community, and to share ideas on how the ALBA Network can prioritise and meet its DEI goals in the coming years. We received an overwhelming number of wishes and identified powerful, recurring themes in line with ALBA's mission.



66

Increase representation of women in leadership roles and speaker line-ups.

66

Support work-life balance and career continuity for scientist-parents. Make science more accessible to economically disadvantaged researchers.

66 Redefine excellence to encourage more collaboration and open science, and less competition.

### 66

Call out toxic lab culture before reaching psychological breaking point.

66

### **NETWORKING & MENTORING**

### | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT











































### **OUR PARTNERS & ALLIES**

### **| DIVERSE VOICES**

As neuroscientists in post-colonial Africa where inequality, cultural barriers, stigmatisation of gender-fluid, minority and disabled scientists are still real limiting factors to the success of brain scientists, we have benefited immensely from ALBA's promotion of inclusivity, diversity, and equity in the region. ALBA webinars and events have started some important conversations and reflections on challenges that neuroscientists face in our region and how we can overcome them.

**Dr Rachael Dangarembizi** University of Cape Town, Member of IBRO-ARC

The visibility of Colegio Colombiano de Neurociencias (COLNE) as an organisation that brings together scientists and promotes the development of neuroscience in Colombia, has had greater participation and visibility thanks to the support of ALBA, with whom we are working on projects that allow our diaspora to return and contribute to academic, scientific and social of our country.

#### **Dr Zulma Dueñas** National University of Colombia

ALBA network provides excellent educational and bibliographic resources. Inspired by ALBA's event on gender bias, we organised our very own Gender Bias workshop to share this knowledge within our own community and throughout France. Owing to the ALBA network, we were able to transform this grassroots movement into an institutional advisory committee.

> Gender Equity Committee Paris Brain Institute

The founding of the ALBA network was a decisive step in the right direction and in the last years has already significantly contributed on individual as well as societal levels to promote best practices, highlight individuals as well as groups endorsing those practices and offer a contact point for scientists worldwide. I believe it is therefore of greatest importance to continue this program, as it is still very much needed and anything other than a renewal of the ALBA program would be a devastating signal.

> Dr Mathias Schmidt Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry, EBBS Past-President

Supporting ALBA network is key. ALBA has a unique role in coordinating, organising and supporting a long needed change to increase diversity in academia. As a mid-career female (and foreign) PI, one can easily feel lost and without sufficient handles to guide any meaningful change within one's institute. ALBA offers fantastic resources to facilitate such actions.

> **Dr Aniko Korosi** University of Amsterdam

As President of the Swiss Society for Neuroscience (SSN), I am enthusiastic about the ALBA Network's missions and the success it has already had. Switzerland has been chosen for an ALBA pilot project to map diversity in the Swiss neuroscience community. This project has received nationwide support and it is endorsed by the SSN.

#### **Dr Anita Lüthi** University of Lausanne, SSN President

## **OUR PARTNERS & ALLIES**

### | DIVERSE VOICES

The ALBA Network has been instrumental in prompting the European Behavioural Pharmacology Society (EBPS) to think more deeply about diversity, equity, and inclusion. In particular, the emphasis on collecting data in order to identify problem areas and generate a plan for improvement was especially important for the leadership of EBPS to hear.

**Dr Shelly Flagel** University of Michigan, EBPS President-Elect By fostering and supporting practices to counteract bias, ALBA is promoting a major change in the brain science community. This consist in both enhancing equity and inclusion and improving the quality of science by making the contributions of minorities emerge. In such a short time frame, ALBA has made an incredible impact on the scientific community that will be even greater in the near future.

Dr Igor Branchi Istituto Superiore di Sanità, EBBS President

The activities of the ALBA Network are a visible sign - for our community and the outer world - that we do care about our colleagues who could face adverse effects on their careers because of their gender, race, immigration status, or faith. Through ALBA's actions, some long-standing, systemic problems with representation in our community are acknowledged and addressed, ensuring that we attract talent from all walks of life, making us all more dynamic and productive.

### Dr Ewelina Knapska

Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology, Polish Neuroscience Society Vice President

ALBA network provides a forum to reflect on discrimination and gender issues in brain research, and best practices on how to avoid them. These are central themes for improving the neuroscience research culture. It is vital that the work initiated by ALBA is continued, to guarantee that scientists and institutions have independent support to voice and handle such relevant issues.

> **Dr Ana Luisa Carvalho** University of Coimbra

Supporting ALBA in its efforts to advocate for diversity and equity is crucial for two main reasons: First, science only thrives when based on diverse ideas. Second, there is a major gap in promoting and recognising the efforts of women and other underrepresented groups in neuroscience. ALBA has proven its ability to have a major impact on both fronts.

> Dr Yiota Poirazi Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology

As a scientist of south Indian ethnicity in Europe, I have first-hand experience of how the academic environment can be unwelcoming, unfair and inequitable because of not fitting into a particular stereotype. The ALBA network enabled me to build on my own meaning-making as a minority scientist to lead a working group to promote diversity and inclusion. ALBA is a fundamental and indispensable catalyst for DEI in global neuroscience."

> Dr Srikanth Ramaswamy Newcastle University



# **ALBA NETWORK**

### **IMPACT REPORT** 2019-2022

Rue d'Egmont 11, 1000 Brussels

www.alba.network

info@alba.network

### The ALBA Network is supported by

FENS





#### Twitter https://twitter.com/network alba





Facebook https://www.facebook.com/AlbaNetBrain



SOCIETY for NEUROSCIENCE

& sponsored by





#### LinkedIn



https://www.linkedin.com/company/ alba-network/



#### YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC dXrd8RGkXS9-E3r6GYggIA