

Young Nutritionists Shine in Elevator Pitch Contest



At the Micronutrient Forum held in Cancun, Mexico, from October 24–28, 2016, *Sight and Life* used the elevator pitch contest format to stimulate fresh thinking about micronutrient innovation and entrepreneurship among students.

An elevator pitch is a critical part of the entrepreneurial process. The term describes an imagined scenario in which an entrepreneur accidentally meets a potential investor in an eleva-

tor and has convey his or her ‘pitch’ or business concept during the course of the brief ride they take together. Although drawn from the business world, this concept is increasingly relevant to young scientists, who during their careers will need to articulate their innovative scientific concepts in a manner that is concise and persuasive.

During the screening stage for the competition, graduate and post-doctoral students were invited to submit their ideas on the theme ‘The Future of Micronutrient Innovation’ across diverse categories in nutrition-related products, services and technologies. From the 90 submissions received from students in 18 countries, ten bold ideas were selected for presentation. The finalists were sponsored by *Sight and Life* and the Tata Trusts, who mentored them as they prepared to present their ideas to a panel of experts, in front of an audience of conference participants. The three winners – Muzi Na, a post-doctoral student; Nicholas Myers, a PhD student; and Bella Girovich, a master’s student – put across their innovative concepts in true elevator pitch style at the Gala Dinner, taking just 90 seconds each.



Jury and participants at the Elevator Pitch Contest in Cancun, Mexico.

Back row, left to right: Kalpana Beesabathuni, Lead – Technology & Entrepreneurship, *Sight and Life* Foundation; Bella Girovich, Team Measure Mats, Emory University; Anna Pichler, Team Happy Water, University of San Francisco; Philip James, Team Next Generation Supplement Design, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; Shantanu Pathak, Team CareNx Innovations, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay; Nicholas Myers, Team Paper Analytical Devices, University of Notre Dame; Sabri Bromage, Team Leveraging Academic Networks for Dietary Surveys, Harvard University; Anne Williams, Team Jeevan Churri, Emory University.

Front row, left to right: Parul Christian, Senior Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Katharine Kreis, VP of International Development, PATH; Martin Short, CEO, The Power of Nutrition; Rajan Sankar, Director of Nutrition, Tata Trusts; Klaus Kraemer, Managing Director, *Sight and Life* Foundation; Jessica Ayensu, Team Nut-dieters, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology; Lini Sholihah, Team Managing Microhpon, Wageningen Research Foundation; Muzi Na, Team Empower Grandparents, University of California Davis; Siran He, Leila Larson, Elizabeth Rhodes, Team Jeevan Churri, Emory University.

Jury member (not in the picture): Rickey Yada, Dean of Land and Food Systems, The University of British Columbia.

Ten bold and creative ideas on the future of micronutrient innovation

Team name	Description of concept
Nut-dieters	Healthy snacks for adolescents in Ghana using insect protein
Microhpon	Household aquaponics for food and nutrition security in Indonesia
Empower Grandparents	Empowering grandparents in rural China, giving smart messages through mobile phones
Jeevan Churri	Bangles that can combat anemia and malaria as a wedding gift for Indian brides
Measure Mats	Rapid measurement of infant weight, length & body position
Happy Water	Bringing clean and nutritious water to people, one cup at a time
Next Generation Supplement	Targeting infant epigenetics using a novel micronutrient supplement
CareNx Innovations	Rapid point-of-care screening of micronutrient deficiencies at less than 10% the cost of traditional screening
Paper Analytical Devices	A low-cost, rapid lab-on-paper to measure iodine levels in salt and urine
Leveraging Academic Networks for Dietary Surveys	An effective, student-centered network for dietary surveys in Mongolia