

1st International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA)

Parallel session:

Impact on science and education in capacity building in the development world

17 December 2021 (09.00 – 11.00 EAT)

Organized by:

- TWAS: The World Academy of Sciences – for the advancement of science in developing countries
- OWSD: The Organization for Women in science for the Developing World
- IAP: InterAcademy Partnership
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Session Summary:

This parallel session discusses the impact of Covid-19 on science and education in capacity building in the developing world based on experience of TWAS, OWSD, and IAP in the past biennium. The speakers will explore the impact of the pandemic on research in Africa, also looking specifically at how women scientists in the developing world have adapted, and finally providing an overview of how African academies responded, with a case-study from the Mauritius Academy of Science and Technology.

Link to connect:

The link to register is: https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_78mtqLA5Q5SqxQzFs6rdmw

Chair: Professor Romain Murenzi, Executive Director, UNESCO-TWAS

Speakers:

Dr. Max Paoli, TWAS Programme Coordinator:

Impact of COVID-19 on research in Africa: lessons learned

The pandemic has had evident negative effects on applications across TWAS Capacity Building Programmes indicating a clear impact on research in Africa. Education was similarly affected. However, this impact is highly uneven and very much linked to infrastructure: availability of both electrical power and internet connectivity are directly related to ability and opportunity to engage with activities for science and technology. In addition, the covid health crisis highlighted the importance of digitalization across various sectors. Perhaps, one of the most important lessons, and not only for Africa but globally, is the need for a better Science-Policy dialogue which is key for preparedness and sustainable growth.

Dr. Tonya Blowers, OWSD Programme Coordinator:

COVID 19 Research and Resilience: how women scientists in the developing world have adapted

Tonya Blowers, Coordinator of the Organization for Women in science for the Developing World will present results and follow up from a survey of over 1,400 OWSD members from 85 countries undertaken at the beginning of the global pandemic, who describe how their work and studies, their family and home lives, and their mental well being have been affected by the pandemic. She will also focus on one or two individual stories that demonstrate the innovation, resilience but also specific challenges that women are facing in continuing their research, applying for grants and publishing at this time. Blowers will draw on an article to be published in December 2021, entitled "Resilient Women Scientists and the Covid-19 Pandemic: an OWSD Analysis," co-written by OWSD President Jennifer Thomson, OWSD Coordinator Tonya Blowers, and OWSD Communications Officer Erin Johnson, appearing in a Special Issue of the Economica Politica Journal of Analytical and Institutional Economics (EPOL) on 'Pandemics, Women and the Global South', as well, as up to the minute accounts presented in a poster session dedicated to the effects of the pandemic, held during the OWSD 6th General Assembly in November 2021.

Dr. Peter McGrath, IAP Coordinator and Dr. Deoraj Caussy, Mauritius Academy of Science and Technology (MAST):

COVID-19 and academies of science in Africa: Impacts and responses

The InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) brings together nearly 150 academies of science, medicine and engineering. Academies in the network work together to provide independent expert advice on scientific, technological & health issues. IAP also works through four Regional Networks of academies: of particular interest here is the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) which includes 28 member academies from across the continent. A short overview of IAP, with a focus on NASAC, will be presented.

Then, an overview of how African academies responded to the COVID-19 pandemic will be provided, including how they supplied science advice and reached out to the public in different national contexts, and how they were themselves prepared and/or adapted, to the pandemic situation. A more in-depth review will be provided from the point of view of the Mauritian Academy of Science and Technology (MAST).