

ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD ZIMBABWE NATIONAL



WSD

CHAPTER



27 May 2020

Report

COVID-19: POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IMPACT TO FEMALE SCIENCE STUDENTS

The Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World Zimbabwe National Chapter hosted a very phenomenal lady, Professor Olubukola Oluranti Babalola, the OWSD Africa Vice President. She delivered a presentation on the topic- COVID-19: Positive or negative impact to female students using the online platform.

Dr. Zviregei Jiri, OWSDZNC Vice Chair opened up the online event welcoming participants on the platform. She recognized the success of women in science including Dr Engineer Fortunate Farirai who attained her Doctorate during this pandemic. She showed dedication, commitment and proved to be a model to women that it is possible and nothing can hold your dream back. She also highlighted that OWSDZNC is in the process of mobilizing funds for the two university scholarships they offered to future young leaders in science. She also acknowledged the University of Zimbabwe, Faculty of Science and Innovation center who pledged the first semester tuition for the University scholarship. She encouraged members to take part in the fundraising of scholarship funds.

Professor Babalola gave a remarkable presentation on COVID-19: Positive or negative impact to female students using the online platform. She gave a profound quote, “they are decades where nothing happens and they are weeks where decades happen.” The COVID-19 according to Professor Babalola swiped like white fire around the World creating havoc. A lot of students, business people and the health institution have been distracted by the COVID-19. Amidst all these, females have also tried to work from home under the nose of female duties like cleaning, cooking etc. This has affected women who are doing research as they fail to submit manuscripts compared to their male counterparts. There is reduced activities on female science students and the gender gap is growing wider and wider. Professor Babalola expressed great concern with female students especially those in agriculture and who are doing field based research which need to be observed from the start of the project to the end to have meaningful results, are affected deeply. Project

delays will influence some female science students to drop out. She gave hope and encouragement to all female scientists as she explained that, “Behind every dark cloud there is a silver lining.”

The presentation ended by a question and answer session with participants sharing their views on the topic. Sarudzai Muyambo OWSDZNC Committee summed up the event by giving remarkable closing remarks. She expressed gratitude towards Professor Babalola for creating time to presenting and sharing with young women. The presentation as she noted was comprehensive and she encouraged women to fight through this difficult moment and turn the curses to blessings. She encouraged women to embrace change and flexibility, stay connected and plan your thesis, learn new skills and apply for grants, expand your knowledge. Women should continue to support each other.

Compiled by: Amanda Muza Administrator for OWSDZNC

