

# DISCUSSIONS REPORT

## Research in SITE and Gender Round Table



Jointly hosted by:

Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World - South African National Chapter (OWSD-SANC)

South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS)

Durban University of Technology (DUT)

**Venue:** Southern Sun Elangeni Maharaj, Durban

**Room:** Suite 4

**Date:** 15 – 16 May 2017



GenderInSITE



## Acknowledgements

This short report is the summary of the proceedings from the Research in SITE and Gender Round Table which took place from 15 to 16 May 2017 at the Southern Sun Elangeni Maharaj, Durban, South Africa.

The round table was initiated out of the recognition that there needs to be a more integrated approach to research and innovation with gender as a cross-cutting issue. This meeting focussed more so on women working in the higher education sphere due to the composition of the participants. Discussions underpinned the following issues:

1. Fostering gender balance in research teams, in order to close the gaps in the participation of women.
2. Ensuring gender balance in decision-making in research and ethics committees, in order to close the gap of under-represented sex in panels and advisory groups.
3. Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation (R&I) content, so as to improve the scientific quality and societal relevance of produced knowledge, technology and/or innovation.

The round table was made possible through funding from GenderInSITE (Gender in science, innovation, technology and engineering), an international initiative to promote the role of women in SITE and the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

We acknowledge support received from the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World - South African National Chapter (OWSD-SANC) Executive Committee, the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS), DUT and the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf).

We also thank all the workshop participants (Annexure A) in their different roles, for enriching the discussions and sharing their experiences.

OWSD-SANC recognises Prof Sibusiso Moyo, DUT and OWSD-SANC ExCo Member; Ms Vaneshree Govender, DUT; ASSAf staff Mr Stanley Maphosa, International Liaison Manager; Ms Edith Shikumo, Young Scientist Liaison Officer and SAYAS Secretariat; and Ms Marvin Mandiwana, Liaison, Team Assistant, in their various roles and for their contributions to the realisation of this project.



**Prof Jennifer Thomson**  
**President, OWSD-SANC**

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## SUMMARY

The Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World - South African National Chapter (OWSD-SANC), the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) and the Durban University of Technology (DUT) jointly hosted a two-day round table for women in Science Innovation Technology and Engineering (SITE) research in Durban on 15 to 16 May 2017. The workshop brought together women scientists, academics, researchers and doctoral and postdoctoral students from different institutions in South Africa and one from Zimbabwe.

The purpose of the round table was to interrogate why women lagged behind in SITE, strengthen participants' basic knowledge on gender issues and to find solutions to promote and support women in science and research.

The presenters and participants shared personal and professional experiences, perceptions and research findings which clearly indicated why and how women are suppressed in SITE research. Lack of support, mentoring, acknowledgement, respect, and working in a patriarchal context were identified as some of the barriers to the advancement of women in SITE and to research excellence.

Strategies to overcome these barriers included role modelling, mentoring, networking and applying a gender lens to all policies and programmes.

## Welcome Address

Professor Sibusiso Moyo

Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Engagement, Associate Director & Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics, Statistics & Physics, DUT, OWSD-SANC ExCo

Professor Moyo welcomed all on behalf of OWSD-SANC, SAYAS & DUT; the organisers of this round table. She thanked the co-ordinators and all who were responsible for making it possible.

The purpose of the round table was:

1. to encourage, promote and support women in science and research
2. to promote gender equality

Key findings of a report on gender research indicate that:

- Women are less likely to collaborate internationally and across sectors on research;
- Women tend to publish in teams;
- More men than women travel to national and international conferences and workshops;
- Women tend to do more interdisciplinary research than men who focus on a particular field.

The indicators above need to be further researched to ascertain reasons and provide the support that women need.

Why then is research in SITE important?

Women as scientists and researchers do not pursue their careers for various reasons. Africa and South Africa need women to make a difference. Mentors and mentorship programmes are crucial for overcoming challenges in career progression.

## OPENING REMARKS

Professor Jennifer Thomson

Emeritus Professor, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, University of  
Cape Town, OWSD-SANC President

Professor Thomson attributed her success as a world renowned scientist to making some difficult choices, like not having a family, as this would have hampered her career as a female scientist; was not daunted by, and did not give up on any challenge, and took advantage of every opportunity to advance her career. Her message was clear to all women – push the barriers!

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) was urged to fast-track the inclusion and participation of women in executive positions. ASSAf was urged to emulate the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences which has made a concerted effort to change the gender balance by having an extra round of nominations for female scientists<sup>1</sup>.

Gender balance can be achieved by encouraging and supporting women in research in various ways, taking into account their family responsibilities. Mothers should be accommodated and encouraged through the provision of child-care centres, caregivers, and scheduling meetings/events that do not encroach on family time.

Every opportunity to advance the Women in Science (WIS)/research agenda and gender mainstreaming for WIS should be pursued. We should not miss opportunities to advance the gender agenda through various forums and spaces, especially top structures of governments and institutions. For example, GenderInSITE has submitted eight points to the Minister of Science and Technology for inclusion in the White Paper on Gender Equity.

Every university must have a Gender Desk to support, encourage and promote women in research, and although some do exist, we need to ensure that they are fulfilling their purpose. One way of monitoring and evaluating their function is to demand an annual report of what was done and what they are doing for women. Men must also be included in promoting gender equity.

Women have power which they should harness to advance their careers in science and research.

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<sup>1</sup> The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences selected 26 new members in 2017. They include the extra nomination round for women scientists and scholars held in honour of the Netherlands' first female professor, Johanna Westerdijk, who gave her inaugural address as professor one hundred years ago this year. This decision signalled the Academy's wish to see more women in key positions in Dutch research and academia. Access: <https://www.knaw.nl/en/news/news/academy-increases-number-of-women-members>

## SESSION 1

### Panel Discussion

#### Topic: Why Gender in SITE research

Facilitator: Mr Stanley Maphosa, International Liaison Manager, ASSAf

#### PANEL:

1. Prof Jennifer Thomson
2. Dr Nozipho Motsa, Agronomy Lecturer, University of Zululand, OWSD-SANC Member
3. Dr Kira Erwin, Senior Lecturer, DUT - Urban Futures Centre

The presentations clearly indicated, through numerous examples, studies, and personal experiences that women are marginalised in SITE and how research, which does not include women, does not produce valid and reliable results or findings.

#### Key points of presentations:

- Studies in human health that use animals in research indicate that even animals react differently to male and female researchers.
- Differences in men's and women's research are that men focus on research or undertake research that is commercially oriented and women do research for social upliftment.
- Collaboration in research is important if needed, but cannot be forced.
- Women tend to do multi-disciplinary research as opposed to men who research in a particular field; women do not get recognition for this.
- Stereotyping is common.
- Women researchers have to face many challenges compared to male counterparts and have to work harder to prove their worth.
- Women researchers are also discriminated against in terms of the levels and kinds of research undertaken in different fields, e.g. in Crop science the high-value crops are dominated by males.
- Although women are innovative in fields that they dominate, e.g. in Food Science, men are almost always applauded and recognised for innovation.
- Women are generally disadvantaged for positions of promotion as they peak later than men because of family responsibilities.
- Cultural norms and practices are seen and experienced as barriers to women's education in general.
- Women are not popular as heads or chairs as they operate or manage differently to men.
- Women need more than just representation; although representation is important it does not have an impact on its own.
- Although women are competent in their fields they are discriminated against because of their struggle to balance their academic and family responsibilities.
- Good and supportive mentors are crucial – experience indicates that if mentors are of the same race or same gender, better support and encouragement are provided.
- Mentors should be role models in the field who can share their experiences and struggles with young researchers.

- Disparities in salaries for men and women are still prevalent.
- Regardless of being peers, women are generally expected to undertake lower level or administrative tasks.
- Women academics should have a support network for women with families.
- Maternity leave policy of four months unpaid leave impacts negatively on all South African women – it needs to change.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Key points:**

What can be done to support women in academia?

- Funders and policymakers must support women with families to attend conferences, workshops, etc.
- Young women should be inspired, motivated and supported.
- Young scientists who want to undertake innovative research are not acknowledged by older people.
- Professional jealousy and red tape suppress career advancement.
- Women in academia must initiate mentorship programmes for female students (and fellow colleagues) at their particular institutions.
- Showcasing brilliant female scientists. An Inspirational book on African women's scientists mentoring experiences will be published soon by the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC).
- Mentoring programmes are patriarchal – collaboration expected with older male scientists.
- Peer mentorship is important for doctoral programmes.
- Women in science need to support each other, share experiences and make a difference.
- Encourage the consideration of breaks in research such as the NRF-rating application, for example, which has a section that allows for a narrative to explain breaks from research such as birth of children, etc.
- Multidisciplinary research is tacitly discouraged in ratings applications as reviewers often raise this as a negative issue and prefer a focus on a specialised area.



## SESSION 2

### Presentation 1

#### Topic: Misconceptions of gender in research

Ms Bernice Bancole, OWSD-SANC Member, PhD Student, UKZN

#### Why gender matters?

The problem is not the difference between men and women as such, but the difference in how they are valued. Certain aspects associated with 'masculinity' still tend to be valued more highly. The result is inequality of opportunities, segregation and discrimination.

#### Challenges that are faced by women

- Women's social responsibilities are perceived as a loss for an organisation.
- Job discrimination because women get pregnant.
- Recruitment criteria are also discriminatory and restrictive and limit opportunities.
- Gender stereotypes.

#### Advantages of integrating gender in research

- Each gender has a unique contribution to make.
- Stimulates better performing teams.
- Gender equality (e.g. in STEM learning and careers) will strengthen diversity of research and the national economy.
- Contributes to wealth of indigenous knowledge.

#### How systems are working toward misconceptions

- Job advertisements stating: "women encouraged to apply" or "equal-employer".
- Changes in the infrastructure for equal participation are often perceived as being favourable due to gender and not on merit.
- Gender stereotypes, e.g. engineering, mathematics are still male-dominated.
- SITE is closed to women.

#### CONCLUSION

- Excellent research needs gender equity, effectiveness and validity.
- Including both women and men allows your research to be of a higher quality.
- Considering gender dimensions allows best talent and potential from the entire team.
- Policies should focus on gender balance NOT bias.
- Do our organisations or research plans consider gender balance?

- Women should not fear being assertive and should support each other.
- Women should be included/recruited on the basis of quality, not for the sake of representation.
- Equal qualification does not mean equal capability regardless of gender.

## Presentation 2

### Topic: Case study example of the Urban Futures Centre and engagement

Dr Kira Erwin, Senior lecturer, DUT - Urban Futures Centre

The Urban Futures Centre at DUT (UFC@DUT) is based in the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment. The UFC@DUT is an interdisciplinary laboratory that not only builds theory, but also tests out ideas and interventions in ways that are not prescribed and determined by dominant stakeholders, be they government officials, academics or large social movements. The UFC@DUT seeks to find new solutions to problems, and to do so in collaboration with those most affected by the complexities that characterise urban spaces. The UFC@DUT serves as the central node for a network of projects, institutions, practitioners and academics interested in the future of cities locally (in Durban and South Africa) and globally. It currently houses a set of local and international research collaboration projects, including two community engagement projects. Underpinning the workings and activities of the centre is a concern with the real people who live in cities, and their futures. [http://www.dut.ac.za/faculty/engineering/urban\\_futures/projects/](http://www.dut.ac.za/faculty/engineering/urban_futures/projects/)

#### Key features and learnings of the Urban Futures Centre projects:

- Consists of an all women researchers team and one male postdoctoral student.
- Equality does not equal social justice in terms of gender.
- Shifting gender power relations in research must have a multi-pronged approach.
- The Street-Level Drug Use Project – In paying attention to how gender shapes the lives of participants, it was seeing that different livelihood strategies are used as people both use and subvert gender stereotypes.
- Narratives of homes and neighbourhoods are useful to craft context.
- Oral histories of women, including migrant women, should be captured along with how they navigate power structures.
- Migrant women whose children are born in the country have major struggles, i.e. getting official documents processed, access to education,
- Find solutions to how cities should include migrants.

Access: [http://www.dut.ac.za/faculty/engineering/urban\\_futures/projects/](http://www.dut.ac.za/faculty/engineering/urban_futures/projects/)

Kenneth Gardens Community Project is a joint DUT/community partnership that focuses on the Kenneth Gardens estate, Durban's largest municipal subsidised low-cost housing estate. The project has both research and community engagement components, and sees these components as integral to each other rather than as separate spheres of interaction.

Two non-profit organisations (NPOs) have been created and are managed by residents, which comprises only women. All programmes are headed by women because the work

is emotional work. From oral histories conducted, there was only one story of a woman NOT abused.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Facilitator: Mr Stanley Maphosa**

### **Key points of discussion around the UFC projects:**

- Participants use a gender stereotype for livelihood, probably because women are resilient as they manage family lives.
- Interesting fact is that the political space of Kenneth Gardens Community Project is headed by a man and the social work is headed by a woman. Women are very patient, quiet activists, who do not want fame and glory and not interested in playing the political game.
- Projects are funded and controlled by DUT for a period of three years after which the communities find their own funding to sustain the programmes.
- Interaction with universities creates various issues for researchers: such engagement work does not count, is time consuming, stressful, not valued by the university and not acknowledged when applying for National Research Foundation (NRF) funding.
- Importance of having a pillar, but no monitoring and evaluation in place in our universities.
- Universities encourage women as researchers but do not provide accommodation for families; university accommodation is closed during vacation.

## SESSION 3

### Presentation 1

**Topic:** Ethical research and gender equity

Ms Nneka Akwu, OWSD Member, UKZN

**Key points:**

- Research should be ethical so that its benefits are shared with all.
- Respect for people when engaging in research.
- Need to ascertain preference of men and women.
- Selective abortion is biased – aborting if it's a female child.
- Drug trials on women who are not warned about the adverse side effects.
- Drug discovery is skewed, e.g. for prostate cancer which is beneficial for men.

**Recommendations:**

- Development of internal conventions, declarations and codes of conduct.
- Enforcement of adherence to codes of conduct.
- Consultation and active involvement of stakeholders and end users.
- Although critical yet complex beliefs and values should be included.
- Advocate 'biology is not destiny'.

### Presentation 2

**Topic:** The missing links and challenges to achieving gender parity in research

Dr Sylvia Kaye, Senior Lecturer, Peacebuilding Programme, DUT

**Key points:**

- Gender equity is possible but the question is: How to get from unequal to equal? What's missing?
- Aim of researching various social problems should be from a peace and social justice perspective rather than some material product - achieve 'positive peace' rather than 'negative peace' where structures and systems remain the same.
- Believing that inequality exists regardless of the external conditions and thus there is no hope for change can be limiting.
- Women don't want conflict, they want peace.
- Solutions:
  - Research designed to effect change should not be biased.
  - Men and women should work together to bring about change, to build a peaceful society, empowering each other.
  - The research approach recommended is participatory action research (PAR) so that attitude and behaviour changes are effected and people who experience problems are empowered to take charge.

- The missing link is we need to change the way we perceive things - help work towards achieving peace.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Facilitator: Dr Fadzai Mutseyekwa**

Director of Innovations, Research, M&E, JSI Research & Training Institute, MCHIP Project ZIMYAS (Zimbabwe Young Academy of Science)

#### **Key points:**

- Unethical to suppress research on any topic. For example, a research proposal on “why women remain in abusive relationships” was not accepted by a committee of seven men. Women must be courageous, be true to what we believe in, for the benefit of society. They must make every effort to support their topics with facts and figures and strongly contest the decision. Opportunities could be sought to collaborate with men in order to contribute to a just society.
- An example of ‘negative peace’ (a concept noted by Dr Kaye) is when one remains in an abusive or adulterous relationship in order to maintain the relationship.
- Staying in abusive relationships may have a cultural slant where women cannot talk openly about their physical problems. There needs to be a changed mind-set against this barrier about how we express ourselves.
- An example of unethical research: drug trials on Namibian women resulted in sterility as measurements during the research phase used males who required higher dosages.
- Studies on abortion have shown that women are still vulnerable as they will not speak for themselves. Consent is a huge barrier.
- Ethical considerations are also critical when working with plants and animals - unethical when they don't benefit society.
- The conundrum is political versus social constructs – whose agenda is being advanced for whose benefit? Is the agenda-advancing research for the benefit of society?
- Greatest challenge is to conquer the barriers and bring about positive peace.

## SESSION 4

### Two Breakaway Groups

### Discussion Topic: Mitigating against gaps and strategies for building research excellence in Africa

#### Gaps identified

Some of the reasons for gaps in building research excellence include:

- policies are written by men
- gender lens not applied
- inflexibility of policies
- lack of monitoring and evaluation
- limitations and lack of resources
- no networking and collaboration
- lack of mentorship
- lack of role models
- women are not acknowledged and respected

#### Solutions

Strategies for building research excellence include:

- provide an enabling environment
- provide early mentorship programmes for girls and women
- network with colleagues in Africa
- acknowledge and respect women researchers
- create spaces to speak to men
- repackage the term gender and market differently to encourage men to collaborate
- provide peer support for inspiration
- share information, experiences and stories using social media
- increase publishing
- sensitise men by starting with own families and friends
- institute regular monitoring and evaluation
- ignore derogatory comments and focus on end goals
- have the courage to express one's views and ideas
- support and advance other women
- lobby for gender focus in all policies
- address policymakers and the top echelons of government where the power lies.

#### How do you address gender implications in SITE?

- Top structures in academia must have the political will to place women high on their agenda.
- We must have the will to change the *status quo* so that women do not lag behind.
- Despite policies and constitutions, problems still exist, therefore monitor implementation and targets met.

- There must be a concerted effort to support women in academia at all levels – institutional and faculty.
- Also monitor policy and evaluate statistics – to ensure it is being implemented.
- Monitoring and evaluation is crucial. Need to produce statistics to prove that women are being advanced in leadership, research, SITE.

**DAY 1 -Closing Remarks**  
**Professor Moyo**

There is a need to share and publicise initiatives that are being worked on to broaden network of women researchers and create opportunities in the country.

These initiatives must extend countrywide and beyond our borders to the rest of the continent.

DAY 2 – 16 MAY 2017

SESSION 1

## Presentation 1

**TOPIC:** Setting the scene for SDH case study discussion

Ms Janine White, School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand

### **Overview of Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Workshop Report, November 2016<sup>2</sup>**

Discussion of SDH in this forum is crucial because gender is a fundamental source of discrimination in health and this forum can contribute recommendations for solutions. This round-table can make valid input to the policy recommendations on SDH by applying a gender lens.

#### **Purpose of the SDH Workshop**

Health inequity is an issue in all countries and has to be addressed through attaining social determinants of health if the sustainable development goals (SDGs) are to be attained. The workshop therefore:

- deliberated on policy engagements on SDH in Africa;
- produced a conference statement with recommendations on how to formulate and implement policies that address SDH in Africa.

Key recommendations of the workshop called for a focus on the following five themes:

- Data and Methodology
- Urbanisation
- Health in all Focus
- Scaling up Innovation
- Shared Learning Across Africa

#### **Why gender mainstreaming in SITE?**

Involves three key entry points:

- Science for women – ensure that policies and programmes ensure women are encouraged and supported so that there are equal benefits to women and men.
- Women in science – promotion of women's contributions in science, technology and innovation.
- Women in innovation – should encourage and support particular innovative solutions from national to grassroots level.

Applying the gender lens to social determinants of health provides opportunities to advance gender equity and transform institutions and relationships by:

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<sup>2</sup> This report focuses on SDH and is the proceedings of a workshop held on 7 to 8 November 2016 that deliberated on various policy engagements on SDH in Africa and interrogated shortfalls thereof. Access the full report at: <http://www.sayas.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SDH-Workshop-Final.pdf>



- The recognition of the different roles and responsibilities of men and women as shaped by society and cultural norms.
- Interrogating how gender and sex affect health. Research indicates that women are disproportionately infected by HIV and that the risk of infection is higher for women. One of the reasons being that condoms are not acceptable or frowned upon in certain cultures.
- Stereotypes associated with women and the dynamics of sex – women are vilified for promiscuity and for men it is acceptable.

Applying the gender lens provides opportunities to:

- Advocate for gendered health and put gender on the agenda.
- Transform relationships and institutions by providing innovative solutions.
- Encourage policies, programmes and interventions to promote health equality so that all benefit.
- Recognise the role of young scientists in applying a gender lens to SDH as important especially for advocating gender health.
- What women research and how we research is influenced by one's gender.
- Women can be leaders in solving Africa's problems, especially health problems by providing creative and innovative solutions.

## Presentation 2

### TOPIC: Framing gender in research

Dr Naomi Nkealah, Senior Lecturer, Department of English Studies, Unisa, SAYAS Member

#### Key points:

- Research on SDH must have a strong gender focus but also a focus on migrant women.
- Gender element in health research is important because:
  - Women give birth, perform the mothering and nurturing roles which are related to numerous health issues and struggles.
  - Women have limited or no access to medical care.
  - Migrant women's experiences are worse – illustrated with three case histories which resulted in fatalities due to negligence, harassment and red tape.
- How can research influence health practitioners to treat all patients, including immigrant women humanely?
- Policies state that every patient has a right to fair treatment – which does not always translate into practise.
- Research needs to bring about attitude change, not just policy change.
- Cross-disciplinary research across human sciences, social sciences and medical sciences is required to bring about real change.
- Polarisation not only between men and women but also between women and women:
  - Polarisation between gendered citizens and gendered non-citizens.
  - Polarisations between professional women in the formal sector and presumed unprofessional women in communities.

- Within these polarisations, migrant women are debased and dehumanised in their quest for medical attention.
- Xenophobic violence and woman-on-woman violence is indicative of deep fissures within our community of women.
- There is a need to research all these internal barriers that rupture the principles of equality that we want to enforce.
- Power relations between doctors and nurses and the adverse effects on health care need research.
- The problems are not just limited to health sciences but generally to human and social sciences.
- Gender and immigration problems include language as a barrier.
- Language barrier limits access to medical care and results in serious consequences because of miscommunication between foreign patients and local doctors and *vice versa*.
- Gender research requires self-reflection.

## Presentation 3

### TOPIC: Gender and SDH: Minding the gaps

Prof Puleng Segalo, Head of Research and Graduate Studies, College of Human Sciences, Unisa, SAYAS Member

Experiences in working in the research office at the University of South Africa (Unisa) are an eye-opener to researchers' unawareness of resources and opportunities available to them due to:

- Lack of mentorship.
- Not enough communication within departments.
- Not knowing how to access resources.
- Problems with how information is communicated and to whom – not passed down the line from heads of departments.
- Interesting revelation was that the majority were women who were not informed.
- There must be a concerted effort to fully inform all potential researchers if we want excellence in research.

#### Why is health important?

- Health in its broader sense includes psychological, spiritual, and the physical – a holistic approach to well-being.
- Good health helps one to reach one's full potential.
- Health disparities are more prevalent in girls and women, and therefore vulnerable to abuse.
- There has been a shift in women's position in society on a symbolic or representative level. More women are going into male-dominated professions, but the spaces that were conducive for men are not conducive for women to function optimally – resulting in many challenges and frustrations for women.
- Structures and spaces must change.

#### Gender disparities between men and women:

- Men take more risks and therefore have a high mortality rate.

- Societal differences rather than biological health disparities in health affect mortality rates of men and women more so.
- Women have additional challenges of childbirth; are more at risk because they do not go for routine health checks.
- Socialisation is largely responsible for how gender is perceived - how children get socialised into different roles, social norms are different for men and women.
- Gender is a social construct; boys play with certain toys and girls with others – girls must look pretty – this is how they socialised.
- Should interchange roles to entrench gender equality early, in schools.
- Difficult to change mindset at workplaces.
- Gender equality must be worked into policies.
- Men are raised to be breadwinners and protectors and if they cannot then they see themselves as failures; leads to violence and other social problems.
- Inaccurate recognition is painful not only to psyche but sense of being.
- Women's contribution is received with suspicion especially in male-dominated fields which then leads to frustration and contributes to health disparities.
- Sex, biology and gender contributes to differences in health and illness.
- Social factors associated with health are feelings of powerlessness, lack of access to resources, constrained roles and income inequality.
- Social connectedness and social capital contribute to challenges and frustration of women – men have their clubs and social gatherings where women are not welcomed.
- Income inequality is another source of frustration for women.
- Balancing work and home responsibilities causes stress and fatigue.

### **Gender politics**

- A huge challenge experienced by women is gender-based violence (GBV).
- South Africa has the highest rate of GBV in the world, costing the country between R28.4 - R42.4 billion a year<sup>3</sup> according to a 2014 KPMG Report titled: *Too costly to ignore*.
- GBV is linked to men's position in society, especially black men. If they are criminalised or their masculinity is not acknowledged or they are unemployed, they get frustrated.
- There is a need to understand how men's experiences are rooted in particular socio-economic and historical contexts.
- There are many physical, emotional, psychological consequences of GBV on women's health and well-being such as absenteeism, resignation or death leading to a loss of productivity.

### **Way forward**

- There is global concern with the slow pace of change with women's rights. Neglect of women's rights means that the social and economic potential of half the population is underused (UN Women 2011, Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet).
- Challenges faced by women in academic institutions, and GBV need to be addressed. Need to find spaces to deal with these issues.
- How many institutions have a Gender Desk? How many have support groups?

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<sup>3</sup> Access Report at: <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/za/pdf/2017/01/za-Too-costly-to-ignore.pdf>

- Gender has to be embedded in policies – especially relating to challenges faced by women.

## Discussion

Facilitator: Dr Fadzai Mutseyekwa

### Key points:

- Majority of women in health sector occupy lower ranks.
- As most doctors are male, health issues brought to their attention by nurses are not addressed.
- There are very few women gynaecologists - problem for women to speak freely about problems. More women gynaecologists can bring in diversity.
- The educational status of mothers plays a significant role in improving the health of their families.
- Suitability/adequacy of nurses training questioned in terms of their attitudes and apathy.
- Public health care has failed in South Africa – issues of race, gender, xenophobia, power relations are seriously impacting on good health care. Although many programmes have been developed and policies formulated, there is no implementation. We need to become agents of change.
- How do we prevent women from victimising women as in the case of nurses? Need to look at the humanity of people and not just gender differences.
- Despite violence being a regular occurrence at some institutions, no action is taken.
- Sexual harassment policies exist but do not explicitly define what constitutes sexual harassment – different interpretations according to different world views and cultures.
- Gender Desks need to be established and monitored, investigations conducted and timeous action taken. Gender Desks have been established and are fully functional at some institutions. Some NGOs establish shelters in communities.
- How can men and women be equal citizens? Is this practical?
  - Conscientise and educate people on gender equality in all spaces and all sites – home, school, workplace, social, cultural, political forums.
  - Encourage critical thinking and the courage to speak up.
  - Keep fighting unjust systems.
  - Create networks to share views, knowledge and information.
  - Make a difference in little spaces.
  - Create opportunities for these dialogues to continue in our workspaces.

## SESSION 2

### Two Breakaway Groups

#### Discussion Topic: Interrogating the missing gender question in the statement

Facilitator: Dr Fadzai Mutseyekwa

Groups to critique and contribute to the recommendations in the document: **Gauteng Declaration on SDH in Africa** by applying the gender lens.

### REPORT TO PLENARY

#### Key points for consideration:

##### 1. Lack of policy coherence:

- Women's rights continue to be violated.
- Health not only for social justice but gender justice as well.
- Gender should be foregrounded not embedded.
- Need to go beyond symbolic participation and representation of women.
- Women to participate at policymaking level.
- Women are operating in a patriarchal political system where men make decisions.

##### 2. Data limitations:

- Limited data; insufficient and skewed.
- No focus on gender – only sex and demographics.
- Data must be drawn from research, outcomes and intervention.

##### 3. Limitations in methodology

- Include other methods such as PAR (bridges the gap of epistemology) not just quantitative and qualitative.
- Acknowledge communities especially women (who play a critical role) as sources of knowledge.
- Difficult to get accurate data from informants especially on gender issues.

##### 4. Urbanisation as a curse

- Women are at the intersection, including women migrant workers - children at risk, health issues like HIV, abortions.
- Family disintegration – women away from families.
- Gender-based violence perpetuated.
- Informal settlements become worse for women due to gender implications.
- Women disadvantaged by a lack of access to resources, land, housing.

##### 5. Curating history and lack of comparative studies in Africa

- Knowledge from communities should be sourced and women included as co-researchers and collaborators.
- Oral history and indigenous health knowledge to be documented.
- Indigenous knowledge is crucial for SDH.
- African males and females have own indigenous health knowledge – do not intersect.
- Sharing and documenting indigenous knowledge.

#### **6. Inability to scale up innovations in health**

- Indigenous knowledge is not harnessed.
- Community projects need funding, support, infrastructure, sustainability, accountability and monitoring.

#### **7. Sub-optimal health system**

- Gendered lens crucial in dealing with health challenges.
- Women's unique health needs to be prioritised.
- Holistic focus on wellness.
- Health included in all policies.
- Indigenous health policy combined with modern health.

### **Way Forward & Vote of Thanks**

**Ms Edith Shikumo, SAYAS Secretariat**

It is important to apply the gender lens to all policies, programmes, projects to advance gender equity and women's rights. We need to provide innovative solutions.

Women can be leaders in solving Africa's problems, especially health problems.

Important to keep this network active and establish more networks throughout South Africa and Africa in order to make a difference.

Thanked hosting organisations, all the presenters and participants for lively discussions and sharing personal experiences.

## Annexure A

### List of Participants

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1	Prof Sibusiso Moyo	Durban University of Technology (DUT), OWSD –SANC ExCo
2	Prof Jennifer Thomson	OWSD-SANC President
3	Mr Stanley Maphosa	ASSAf
4	Ms Edith Shikumo	SAYAS Secretariat/ASSAf
5	Dr Nozipho Motsa	University of Zululand, OWSD Member
6	Dr Kira Erwin	DUT - Urban Futures Centre
7	Ms Bernice Bancole	University of KwaZulu-Natal, OWSD Member
8	Ms Nneka Akwu	University of KwaZulu-Natal, OWSD Member
9	Dr Sylvia Kaye	Durban University of Technology
10	Dr Fadzai Mutseyekwa	Zimbabwe Young Academy of Science
11	Ms Janine White	University of the Witwatersrand
12	Dr Naomi Nkealah	Unisa, SAYAS Member
13	Prof Puleng Segalo	Unisa, SAYAS Member
14	Ms Vaneshree Govender	Durban University of Technology
15	Ms Marvin Mandiwana	ASSAf