AFRICAN REGION

Of the IUBMB Trainee Initiative

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Personal Experiences

Attended 3 Separate Universities

Far more Females than Males in the Biological Sciences

Very few Females in Mathematics, Physics, Engineering etc.

No prominent programmes to encourage females in STEM

–some postdoc applications only hiring females (but this promotes gender discrimination)
WOMEN IN SCIENCE

COMMON CHALLENGES

- Gender norms and stereotypes – women not taken seriously because “A woman’s place is in the home”
- Lack of Role Models – successful women seen as “aggressive” and “masculine”
- Online and Offline harassment - hostile work environments
- Discriminatory practices – pay gaps, less recognition and bias in promotions and grants etc.
- Low connectivity and access (in Africa)
In Africa

• Definite societal gender roles preventing females entering STEM fields – women stay at home and tend to family life. Cultural expectancies

• Financial struggles and access to tertiary education (even secondary education) and infrastructure (internet etc.)

• Hostile study/work environment and women told they Can’t do a man’s job (and they believe it!)
Reducing the Gender Gap at School Level

- Roots-up approach: Implementing education schemes to teach young girls about science from school level and avoid gender bias.
- Scholarships – i.e. L’Oreal UNESCO / AWSE
- Science fairs and outreach programs to promote gender equality in institutional policies.
- Work to change cultural norms by breaking the societal ideation of “women’s place is in the home”
- Promoting and increasing visibility of women scientists as role models and professions to aspire to.
• Promote cyber security and combat online violence against women and girls through policies, laws and public awareness.

• Include scientific, digital and financial literacy programmes in school curricula and introduce girls to STEM fields from a young age.

• Increase visibility and the accessibility of women and girls in STEM and launch mentoring schemes.