

# The Moment for Women

A magazine for girls and women





# The Moment for Women

is a gender lens magazine – published monthly by **Moment for Women Alliance** to tell the stories of women and girls around the world. The Magazine focuses on Women's human rights, health, economic and inclusive governance among others.

### Join the conversation and share your story:

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# **WELCOME!**



To the first edition of The Moment for Women Magazine!

We are happy to share with you news and stories covering a wide range of issues from Health, Fashion, Lifestyle, Relationships, Politics and Critical Issues to name a few.

Inside this month's issue we talk about the challenges of sexuality education in today's society, domestic violence - where we hear about the experiences of a beautiful, easy-going lady and the lasting effects on children and how Covid-19 is affecting women.

We take a look at the inclusion of Nigerian Women in tech driven businesses and offer our readers FREE access to Women Tech Virtual Global Conference 2020!

Happy reading!

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  Show

# News around the world

Take a quick look at what's happening during Covid-19 in other areas



Maradisi, a little village in southeast Georgia where women have come together to farm the land of a local family. Each member of the family were being treated for Covid-19 in hospiital, while their potato field was

growing wild with weeds. The local women took it upon themselves to come together to hoe the fields in order to save the potato crop, the only source of income for the family.

75.5%
Female Health
Care Workers
are infected Spain

# 

Over 300 youth volunteers are part of a task force set up by HerStory across the Arab States region. They are documenting misinformation, collecting news stories on the impact of the pandemic on women, and updating Wikipedia articles about

Covid-19. The articles and informaton collected (over 600 and counting), will be used to inform prevention programmes against stereotyping of women and to address the misinformation around the impact of Covid-19 on women and girls.

52%
Females who are unable to seek medical care - Pakistan

Stats from <u>UNWomen.org</u>

Emerging data shows that since the outbreak, violence against women and girls,

and particularly domestic violence, has **INTENSIFIED** 

Casa Da Mulhor Prasiloira is (45% increase in São Paulo

Casa Da Mulher Brasileira is a safe haven for survivors of violence in Brazil. The first center opened in 2015 and now there are 7 across the country. Reports around the world show a catastrophic rise in domestic violence (45% increase in Sāo Paulo alone) and these safe spaces are more vital than before. Despite lockdown restrictions, the Casa has remained open 24/7 with some services running remotely.



With lockdown measures in place, women farmers in Dominica have been unable to sell their produce. Through a UN strategy to connect farmers to new outlets there is now a weekly distribution list where retailers and individuals can place orders, enabling the women to still earn an income.

# Covid-19 and Gender

The fight against the spread of Corona Virus must be gender sensitive, African Girls Empowerment Network tells Nigerian Government

n Africa, a young feminine civil society organization, African Girls Empowerment Network is calling for women and girls protection during COVID-19 Pandemic. In its advocacy and open letter issued to the Nigerian Government and relevant stakeholders in May 2020, the organization decried the current health and economic situation of young women and girls and demanded that urgent action should be taken to avert further negative impact of COVID-19 on the women and girls.

Our girls and young women, including those living with HIV and with disabilities, already face a number of gender-based violence including domestic, sexual exploitation, forced child marriage, and restricted access to sexual and reproductive health services, which put their lives at danger daily. Now, in the face of COVID-19, their welfare and fundamental rights are even more threatened. The COVID-19 health crisis has worsened hunger as a result of financial instability in the households and relocation of governmental services initially allocated to boost the Nigerian economy, among

other factors, which will inexorably push girls into transactional sex and child, early and forced marriage to subsist and support their families. As seen before during the Ebola outbreak in neighboring countries, school closures during COVID-19 will raise the drop-out rate among girls, increase the gender gap in education, deprive girls of a safe place away from their abusers and lead to increased risk of sexual exploitation, early and unintended pregnancy, and child forced marriage. Also, access to sexual and health reproductive services, such as access to family planning, contraceptives, in the various parts of the country, particularly in the rural and displaced setting, has been affected due to the pandemic, which will increase the number of unwanted pregnancies and put at risk the lives of those girls and young women that may undertake unsafe abortions.

In its 10 point demand, African Girls Empowerment Network said the fight against the spread of Corona Virus must be gender sensitive.

"Our girls and women must not be



forgotten in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we must secure the protection of girls' and young women's rights during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, we urge you:

- 1. Put women at the center of the decision-making of the COVID-19 response in the country.
- Establish and implement a gendersensitive agenda that will tackle the COVID-19 and post COVID-19 impact on our girls and women in short- and longterm.
- 3. Allocate resources directly to most vulnerable households through a

transparent means including bank transfer to ease the burden and hunger on women and girls during the lockdown.

- 4. Provide protection measures for our girls and women against domestic violence including child marriage, female circumcision, rape and guarantee access to justice to prosecute their perpetrators during and after the lockdown.
- 5. Ensure access to sexual and health reproductive services as part of the essential services during the lockdown.
- 6. Facilitate school reincorporation of girls, with a focus on pregnant girls and young mothers to return to school in case

Women must have an equal voice in the decisionmaking and response to the COVID-19 crisis

**#AGEcares** 

of teenage pregnancy during and after the lockdown.

- 7. Work towards gathering data (through the appropriate agencies) from girls and women about how COVID-19 crisis impacts on their lives to aid in implementing the gender-sensitive intervention as well as post-COVID-19 response.
- 8. Ensure women and girls access safe menstrual health management and protection against sexual abuse in all the COVID-19 Isolation centers across the country.
- Report back to citizens including

those in the hard-to-reach communities how gender-sensitive approaches are implemented during the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 pandemic through the various media platforms and direct communication with community leaders, grassroots organizations that work to defend and preserve our girls' and women's rights.

**10.** Ensure that all the above-mentioned points are taken into action particularly in the marginalized, displaced, and vulnerable setting including the refugees/IDPs camps.

To learn more about the open letter and the demands of the organization visit the website and <u>sign our letter</u>.

### About African Girls Empowerment Network

AGE Network is a registered young feminine frontline human right non-profit organization focused on reducing gender inequality in Africa.

The Network advances young women and girls' rights-education, leadership, economic and productive resources including women's right to inheritance and ownership of landed property and political participation of young women and women with disabilities in Nigeria as well as promoting the health and wellbeing of young women and girls. To learn more about the organization' works and for partnership kindly visit our <a href="Facebook page">Facebook page</a>, <a href="Twitter">Twitter</a> and <a href="website">website</a>



As stay-at-home orders expand to contain the spread of the virus, women with violent partners increasingly find themselves isolated from the people and resources that can help them.

87,000 women

were intentionally killed in 2017. The majority of these killings were committed by an intimate partner or family member of the victim. Violence against women and girls is pervasive but at the same time widely under-reported. Less

than 40% of women who experience violence report these crimes or seek help of any sort.

The global cost of violence against women had previously been estimated at approximately.

US\$1.5 trillion

That figure can only be rising as violence increases now, and continues in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The surge in COVID-19 cases is straining even the most advanced and best-resourced health systems to the breaking point, including those at the front line in violence response.



Domestic violence shelters are reaching capacity, or unable to take new victims due to lockdown and social distancing measures. In other cases, they are being re-purposed to serve as health centers.

### National responses to COVID-19 must include:



Services to address
violence against women
and girls, including
increased resources to
support shelters, hotlines
and online counselling.
These essential services
should be expanded
and adapted to the crisis
context to ensure survivors'
access to support.



A strong message from law enforcement that impunity will not be tolerated. Police and Justice actors must ensure that incidents of VAWG are given high priority and care must be taken to address the manifestations of violence emerging in the context of COVID 19.



Psychosocial support for women and girls affected by the outbreak, gender-based violence survivors, frontline health workers and other frontline social support staff must be prioritized.



Source: <u>UNWomen.org</u>

# State of Emergency

Declare a STATE of Emergency on Violence against women and girls in Nigeria, says Child & youth Protection Foundation

buja- Nigeria, The Nigerian civil society organization, Child & Youth Protection Foundation has called on the federal Government to declare a STATE of Emergency on Sexual and Gender based violence in Nigeria, this comes as the country is currently recording high

incidents of gang raping, systemic attacks and sexual violence on young women and girls following the outbreak of Corona Virus pandemic lockdown.

In a series of advocacy media campaigns shared by the organization on June 5, 2020



# DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY ON SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA IMMEDIATELY!

#StateofEmergencyGBV

in placard to protest violence against girls and women, CYP Foundation said, "End all forms of Violence against girls and women" "#You have a duty to protect girls and women, do your work!" "#Women demand an end to police and rape violence" and "#State of emergency GBV"

This is a welcomed development and we trust that the relevant stakeholders will take a step to protect girls and women's rights in Nigeria.

# Digital Disruption:

# Inclusion of Nigerian Women in Tech Driven Businesses

**BY** Mariam Banwo Barry

frica has started riding on the new wave of a digital revolution. From the travel industry to retail, transportation and entertainment, digital disruption is changing the face of several industries. The retail industry has in recent times been rattled by the gradual shift to online shopping. Several brick and mortar stores have been hit by this giant wave, resulting in the folding up of multiple businesses. Using the music industry as a case study, an industry that has enjoyed the rewards of digital disruption. A practical example, Sony went from selling vinyl record albums to selling CDs at walk-in stores and moved to the sales of digital music to customers via smartphones. This type of "digital disruption" is hitting all industries and you have to find out whether you and your company are prepared for the transformation.

Another dramatic change in the last few years has been how companies now look forward to different types of leadership. Several companies are now looking toward leaders who are willing to embrace new technologies. Therefore, it is imperative that today's leaders be prepared (dynamic

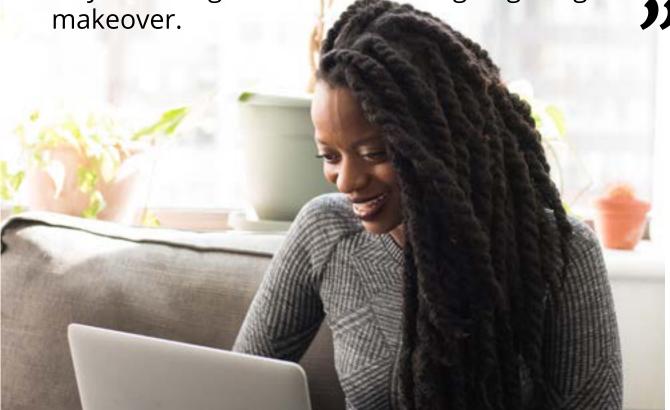
and forward thinking), as companies make a shift from traditional ways of doing business to undergoing a digital makeover. According to several recent studies, despite the multiple calls from economic, political and societal experts to promote the inclusion of women in business, the future of many women in the workforce is uncertain.

While digital disruption means an increase in the number of opportunities, this also means a number of jobs are in line to be restructured or entirely replaced by technology in coming years, women in low skilled occupations such as sales are more likely to be impacted by automation and artificial intelligence technology.

Therefore it is necessary to equip and prepare women in business to understand the fundamentals of technology and gain new skill-sets which will keep them relevant in today's workforce.

Although women are increasingly becoming key drivers in the rapid expansion and increasing development of a tech driven market and economy, there is still a long way to go. A few of the

It is imperative that today's leaders be prepared, as companies make a shift from traditional ways of doing business to undergoing a digital



large tech driven companies like Omatek, Mainstreet Technologies and Jumia Group Nigeria boast of female Nigerian managing directors and CEOs.

- Omatek (founded by the late Florence Seriki, the first Nigerian IT firm to be listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange.)
- Juliet Anammah is the CEO of Jumia Nigeria, Africa's e-commerce giant.
  Omolara Adagunodo is the MD of Jumia
  Travel Nigeria, Africa's largest hotel booking
  portal that connects you to hotels in
  Nigeria and several other countries across
  Africa.
- Olamide Bada is the MD of Jumia Food, a food delivery service that connects you to restaurants in Nigeria and over 40 countries.
- Funke Opeke of Mainstreet Technologies is the CEO of MainOne Cable Company, a submarine communications cable

stretching from Portugal to South Africa with landings along the route in Accra, Ghana and Lagos, Nigeria.

 Nimi Akinkugbe is the CEO of Bestman Games, the leading African games company and distributor of Hasbro games for over 40 African countries.

These are key examples of women who have risen against all odds to become the face of some of the giant technology driven brands in the country with influence across Africa.

The ability to adapt is critical in a constantly changing environment. Women should seek out mentors who have the knowledge base required to coach them in new technologies. So that when equipped, women can join the digital revolution and the world in making quicker, better and more informed decisions.

# Global Conference 2020

Connecting over 100,000 women, minorities and their allies in tech

aking place June 10-12 in over 181 countries with WomenTech Global Ambassadors and community members, serveral of which are from Nigeria, WomenTech will host a virtual conference where over **100,00 women** will connect with each other. Featuring keynotes, engaging panels, technical workshops, and a tech job fair with face-to-face networking sessions along with lots of interesting talks. All made possible after a successful crowdsourcing campaign.

Asked why she was organizing the virtual event in an interview with Forbes, Anna Radulovski, Founder and CEO at WomenTech Network, Coding Girls and Tech Family Ventures stated "Women are more vulnerable in times of disruption, be it through a crisis as COVID-19 or job automation, as evidenced by the UN, more women work in low-paying, insecure and informal jobs without health insurance, thus compromising women's ability to make a living and meet their families'

basic needs". In the same interview she explained "This is why by uniting 100.000 women in tech we act as a catalyst, inspiring women to enter, grow and excel in technology to become part of a solution by leading with purpose, humanity and impact."

With Covid-19 already changing the way many businesses operate, the theme of the conference is around the Future of Work, looking at the aftermath of the pandemic and how tech innovation and disruption are driving the change.

The conference has three tracks:

### Work (R) Evolution

looking at how the future of work will be, how we can grow and keep up with worklife integration and how we can prevent compromising company values and culture ensuring team morale.

### **Tech Innovation**

womentech

network

focusing on how technology will impact our future, how the evolution of cloud

> technologies will change the way we work and live, and the risks and challenges

### WOMEN TECH GLOBAL CONFERENCE 2020

JUNE 10-12 VIRTUAL 10:00 AM EDT/PDT/CET

### Join in for FREE!

on behalf of Moment for Women

on the way to financial inclusion and how will FinTech affect the financial industry.

### Purpose, Humanity and Collaboration

looks at what the key learnings from COVID-19 are for humandkind, how can we ensure that technology is serving humanity and nature and how can we support each other to overcome difficult times together.

Readers of Moment for Women will have FREE access to the virtual event. To join, either click the image at the top of this page or use this link and it will take you to

the website where you can reserve your spot. Moment for Women is a community partner of the Global Conference alongside 9 other Nigerian partners and many others globally.

There are over 300 speakers at the event on a variety of topics and we'll be there reporting on what's happening and taking part in discussions. We hope to see you there too!

# Girls and Sex Education

The Challenges of comprehensive sexuality education in the society

BY Chisom Akumefule

hen we talk about sex education, we intend to unveil all information about the human sexual anatomy in relation to the different gender roles. As a young person, obtaining clear information about one's sexuality is important and far essential as making major decisions in life.

The challenge, however, is that there are much-misguided information about sex which is been spread by different sources in media; the number one platform patronized especially by today's youth. Thus many young people have been misguided and misinformed about sex. Some believe that sex is a remedy for certain emotional and psychological problems such as depression, insecurity, frustration, anger, vengeance, bitterness, jealousy, loneliness etc. and a result of these perceptions, the rate of sexual abuse and harassment are increasing by the day, especially among young people. The truth is that young people are often curious about sex.

They want to know more about their sexuality as they develop into maturity. This curiosity has led some to seek findings from wrong sources such as peer pressure, pornographic pictures, and videos, indecent magazines, etc.

Their curiosity and in some cases being naïve has led many young people into

inappropriate sexual practices. Take for instance, a 14 year old girl who is curious about sex and decides to find answers from the internet, however she searches the internet and sees some pornographic pictures and videos while surfing the net, she begins to imagine sex to be the way she watched it and eventually she starts practicing sex with her distant cousin who is only 12 years old.

Now the above scenario is not just a fiction story, in fact, it has happened before and still occurs today, all because many people have been misguided about the concept of 'sex'.

Another challenge to comprehensive sexuality education is the failure of parents/teachers/guardians in fulfilling their roles as sex educators to young people. The fallout in the responsibility of parents who are meant to be primary sex educators of their wards and key guardians has utterly destroyed the lives of the many children.

Comprehensive sexuality education should be encouraged in schools, learning centers, at home, religious houses, and orphanage homes and in the society at large. Comprehensive sexuality education is the responsibility of every parent, teacher, guardian and religious leader. It is everybody's responsibility to fulfill in the society.

# End Child Marriage

Nigeria Civil Society Organizations form a National Coalition to End Child Marriage

buja Nigeria- Civil Society
Organizations launch National
Coalition to End Child Marriage in Nigeria.
The key Civil Society Organizations working to end child and early forced marriage and other harmful traditional practices in Nigeria have formed a National Coalition as "Civil Society Coalition to End Child Marriage in Nigeria" to nip the practice in the bud and to protect the human rights of children in the country.

The Coalition of the National Partnership was officially launched on 24 May 2019 in Abuja Nigeria following a 4 day Civil Society Capacity strengthening workshop organized by WACSI- West Africa Civil Society Institute, Accra Ghana supported by Girls Not Brides, Uk and Ford Foundation for Civil Society Organizations working to end child marriage in Nigeria.

The Coalition meeting and workshop had in attendance key dignitaries and INGOs including Ms. Mundia Situmbeko- Girls Not Brides' Africa Engagement Officer, Ms. Ali Tiloh B. Essossinam- a representative of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on Child Protection, Mr Laban Onisimus from PLAN International,

Save the Children, ActionAID, Ms. Omolara Barogun from West Africa Civil Society Institute- WACSI, and key National NGOs and members of Civil Society Organizations working to end child marriage and harmful traditional practices in Nigeria including African Girls Empowerment Network, Baobab women, Centre for Girls Education, Daughters of Abraham Foundation, SOAR initiative, International Centre for Sexual Reproductive Rights, Girls voices Initiative, Girl Power Initiative, Action Health Incorporated, Child and Youth Protection Foundation, Balance Stewardship Reproductive Foundation, Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative, Nigeria Network of NGOs, Development, Research, Project Centre, Education as Vaccine, Society for the improvement of rural people, Isa Wali empowerment Initiative, FAHIMTHA Women Empowerment, Girl Child Concern.

The Steering Committee of the Coalition was set up drawn from the member organizations representing each geopolitical zone in Nigeria and the secretariat is at Action AID Nigeria office Abuja.



During the convening in Abuja, Ma'am Ali Tiloh, a representative of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on Child Protection while speaking on ECOWAS child protection framework and road-map towards ending child marriage in West Africa also thanked the participant organizations for their commitment for the protection of children in Nigeria; "At ECOWAS, Child Marriage is one the 5 Child Protection Priority Frameworks from 2018 to 2023, and the 10 Pillars of the Child protection framework include working in partnership and cooperation with key stakeholders and civil society organizations mobilization."

"To achieve the goals of ECOWAS Road-

Map to #EndChildMarriage and protect the human rights of children in West Africa we will continue to seek your partnership and cooperation as civil society organizations and we say thank you for the great work that you have done for the protection of children's rights in Nigeria". Ms. Tiloh said.

Meanwhile, WACSI Accra Ghana and Girls Not Brides Uk have pledged their support for the infant Coalition as it grows to adulthood to enable it to achieve its goals of ending child marriage in Nigeria and this was disclosed by the representatives of the organizations- Ms. Omolara and Mundia during the Coalition meeting in Abuja on May 24, 2019; "Feel free to reach out to us at WACSI, we will be glad to support the



Photo: AGE Network

coalition in any possible way that we can and of course, we still have a little financial support for the coalition between now and December 2019." Ms. Omolara said "The Girls Not Brides secretariat will continue to provide the necessary technical support to the Nigeria National partnership irrespective of your status whether you are a formal or informal coalition," Ms. Mundia said.

# Domestic Violence

You are not doing it FOR your children, you are doing it TO your children

BY Omobolanle Adedeji

s a teenager I have seen teenagers like me get beaten by their boyfriend, when you speak with them they always have an excuse why the guy beat them blue-black, you hear things like "he beats me because he saw me speaking with another guy, if he didn't love me he wouldn't be jealous" "if I didn't provoke him, he wouldn't hit me" "he hit me out of love" etc and you wonder what happened to them or their brain.

As a young lady I see these trends continue with women giving excuses as to why they were beaten up by the same person that was supposed to protect them from danger, as the program officer for an NGO that supports women in violent situations, I have the privilege of speaking with different women, some of which are domestic violence victims, when you ask them why they allow their husbands to beat them for years and not take action, they all say the same thing, although in different ways, "I AM DOING THIS FOR MY CHILDREN". This brings me to a sad story.

Bimpe is a very beautiful, peaceful and easy going lady, back in the University, Bimpe met Goke in 200level and it was like love at first sight, 300level Bimpe's friends started seeing marks on her body and she would always dismiss it, giving 1 excuse or the other, her best friend Bolu knew that Goke is the source of the marks and scars, Bolu advised Bimpe several times to leave Goke

but Bimpe wouldn't have it, she believes no man will love her, she thinks she is not beautiful enough for another guy to ask her out and love her, she also believes that a man hitting a woman is not abnormal, after all her dad always hit her mum and they love each other.

After graduation Bimpe got a job with an international organization and her pay was the envy of all, Goke on the other hand is still searching for a job and always pour out his frustration on Bimpe who supports him. Eventually Goke got a job and proposed to Bimpe and in no time the wedding plan rolled in and beautiful and elegant is not enough to describe what the wedding was, everyone was happy for Bimpe except her best friend and chief bridesmaid. Years passed, Bimpe had 3 kids, 2 girls and a boy, Nifemi, Feranmi and Olaife.

Nifemi, Bimpe's first daughter got admitted into the University and as faith will have it she got into a relationship with a guy who believes hitting a woman is the best thing to keep her in check, Nifemi's friends try to convince her to leave the guy but Nifemi finds it really difficult to understand what her friends are saying because a man hitting a woman is normal in her world, she sees grandpa hitting grandma and her dad hitting her mum, so to her what her friends are saying is weird. Nifemi got married and the beating increased, one fateful afternoon Nifemi's husband beat her as

usual, she missed her step and hit her head on the pillar and died instantly.

Bimpe's second daughter detests the idea of marriage and does not mix too much with men because of her experience at home, good, pleasant and genuine men come her way but she just believes they are all like her grandfather, father and brother. Feranmi is presently a 45 year old woman who sees marriage as the worst thing that happened to humanity.

Olaife Bimpe and Goke's last child and only boy is also a worn beater, a woman having a different opinion to his deserves a beating, a lady telling him no, needs a slap even if not his wife, things has to be done his way.

There are so many Bimpes in our society, giving excuses day in day out for domestic violence, protecting the identity of their abusers, staying back in abusive relationship convincing themselves everyday that "I am doing this for my children" no matter, you are not helping your children, you are exposing them to danger, you are exposing them to mental and emotional stress and you are teaching them that abuse is normal.

Parents who grew up in an unhappy home know all too well how unsettling, if not petrifying, it can be to a child to witness violence. Witnessing can mean seeing actual incidents of physical/and or sexual abuse. It can mean hearing threats or fighting noises from another room. Children may also observe the aftermath of physical abuse such as blood, bruises, tears, torn clothing, and broken items.



The physical, psychological and emotional effects of domestic violence on children can be severe and long-lasting. According to the Lagos mums, these are the most prominent effects of domestic violence on children.

O1 FEAR Children who are exposed to battering become fearful. They are always on guard, watching and waiting for the next event to occur. They never know what will trigger the abuse, and therefore, they never feel safe.

# **02**GUILT & DEPRESSION

They may blame themselves for the abuse thinking if they had not done or said a particular thing, the abuse would not have occurred.

### 03 WITHDRAWL & ISOLATION

Children of abuse feel isolated and vulnerable. They are starved for attention, affection and approval. They develop low self esteem. Because mom is struggling to survive and dad is so consumed with controlling everyone, they are both not present for their children. These children become physically, emotionally and psychologically abandoned.

04 ANGER They may also become angry at their siblings or their mother for triggering the abuse or at both the abuser for the violence and at the mother for being unable to prevent the violence. They may feel rage, embarrassment, and humiliation.

05 ANXIETY The children may exhibit signs of anxiety and develop a short attention span which may result in poor school performance and attendance. They may experience developmental delays in speech, motor or cognitive skills.

## 06 VIOLENCE

Remember the phrase "Violence begets violence" – Children exposed to domestic violence tend to also use violence to express themselves displaying increased aggression with peers or mother. They can become self-injuring. Boys who witness their mothers' abuse are more likely to batter their female partners as adults than boys raised in non-violent homes. For girls, adolescence may result in the belief that threats and violence are the norm in relationships.

# 07 DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE

Exposure to domestic violence can have a long-lasting negative effect on a child's development and future life choices. They themselves may turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to understand or cope with their feelings.

# 08 NIGHTMARES OR INSOMNIA

For a child working through his/her feelings about these stressful events of witnessing domestic violence, nightmares and insomnia are a normal response.

### 09 JUEVENILE DELINQUENCY

Parental conflict is a consistent pattern of family risk factors associated with the development of delinquent behavior in young children also known as teenage crime.

### 10 RUNAWAYS

Abuse by family members make running away appear to be the best option for teenagers who are unable to find help to change an abusive home life.

### 11 CONSTANT COLD, HEADACHES

Constant cold, headaches and stress from home have been known to trigger migraines in children.

# STEM Girls Talk Show

### Episode 2 featuring Professor Rabia Sa'id & Mrs Aderonke Obafaye - Nigerian Scientists

BY Alice Pitalis & Viola Dawson

n May 29, we hosted the second episode of the STEM Girls Talk Show. As we reflected on the challenges of being a woman in STEM and the importance of female role models in the field, we couldn't have hoped for better guests than Professor Rabia Sa'id (R) and Mrs Aderonke Obafaye (A) - two amazing Nigerian scientists in the field of atmospheric physics.

Winner of the Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World, listed on the BBC 100 inspirational women of 2015, and featured as one of the 100 Women in Tech in Nigeria in 2020, Prof Rabia Sa'id has been an inspiration for many young female scientists, including Mrs Obafaye. A scientist of the Centre for Atmospheric Research, National Space Research and Development Agency, Mrs Obafaye is herself very much active in promoting active participation of girls and women in STEM.

We have selected a few show extracts\* for you to read. You can watch the full show on AGE YouTube channel

# Why did you choose atmospheric Physics?

R: Because I lived in northern Nigeria where there is a lot of dust so I got curious about the impact of dust aerosols on people's breathing conditions. Also, the issue of climate change attracted me a lot. I felt the desire to go deeper, to look at what impacts dust aerosols in the atmosphere have on climate change, and to find out what we can do to fight global warming.

A: I wanted to understand what happens in the upper part of the atmosphere and how it affects every aspect of our life - from communication to agriculture, from interactions with our loved ones to air travel.

# When you were younger, who was your role model?

R: Marie Curie. I was so fascinated with her because of the role she played. I had this feeling that I was going to become a great scientist. I heard that she worked with her husband so I thought, okay, I want to become a great scientist with my husband and we can work together.

What books or films would you

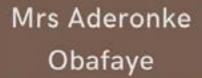


# STEM Girls Talk Show - ep. 2

Meet our guests of the week



Professor and Atmospheric physicist. Winner of the Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World in 2015, listed on the BBC 100 inspirational women of 2015, and was featured as one of 100 Women in Tech in Nigeria on the occasion of the International Womens Day 2020.



Scientist at the Centre for Atmospheric Research of the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA).

She is a member of several professional bodies that promote STEM and executive director of Popularisation of Emerging Science & Technology INITIATIVE.

### recommend to girls approaching STEM?

A: "Lilavati's daughters", a collection of biographical essays on women scientists of India. It really changed my perspective, because many of the women who featured in the book are from humble backgrounds but they didn't let their background define them. Another book is "A hundred reasons to be a scientist". And there's also a movie, "Hidden figures", that really reminds that women don't have to believe in social and cultural stereotypes but women can pursue what they want. And talking about role models, I'd say I have one with me today, Prof. Rabia!

As a woman in the field of STEM, have

### you ever felt under pressure?

R: It's not a direct pressure. The pressure is subtle, it's more a subtle feeling. You get this feeling that you are not taken seriously because you're women. And also, you feel you're not given the encouragement to get to the peak, to the top, to decision-making positions. Often you'll find that women are made deputies rather than heads - you feel you can only ever be an assistant.

# As a girl and then a young woman studying physics, have you ever felt boys made fun of you?

A: One thing I noticed is that we were always the minority, I mean, the girls. When I was at university, I was one of the

only two girls of my class. Sometimes guys teased us asking why we were studying physics. But it was okay. I just smiled and didn't let that stop me.

# Do you think that women from less privileged backgrounds have enough opportunities to pursue STEM fields?

A: Your background should be what spurs you to become someone great. There are many examples of people coming from humble backgrounds who are now scientists. The resources are available: all the books, links, websites, everything. You should maximize whatever opportunities you have. You shouldn't look down upon yourself, you should believe in your dreams.

Please give a piece of advice to girls and young women pursuing STEM.

R: When we were starting out, we didn't

have all the resources there are now. Girls should take advantage of this time and of all the available resources. It's not going to be easy, it's not going to be served on a plate of gold, but if they put in their best efforts, then they can succeed.

A: Pursue your dreams, your dreams are valid. Do not allow anybody to talk you down, let your head be raised. Be ready for opportunities, seize every opportunity, even if you have no idea how to go about it, take it first, then you'll learn how to do it!

\*Please note that the answers are not exact transcriptions, but have been edited to fit the article format.

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