



The Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD)
South African National Chapter (SA NC)
cordially invite you to a discussion on

Building human capabilities in STI: The importance of active mentorship in supporting and building women research leaders in South Africa and the African region at large

Date: 8 December 2023
Time: 09:00 – 10:30
Venue: CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria
RSVP: [Click here](#) to register

BACKGROUND

Women continuously face exclusion and inequality in areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to date. This exclusion means that many of them might have had limited access to funding, mentorship, support, and platforms that would have allowed them to connect with likeminded individuals in their respective fields and also denied them of the opportunity of sharing their research. The lack of active mentorship programmes between emerging and leading renowned women scientists has made it even more challenging for emerging women scientists to build their careers within STEM and develop leadership qualities. Mentorship is one of the strongest tools between a mentor and mentees that aids in paving the way towards a suitable career path within STEM post tertiary education and PhD. The session will deliberate on why mentorship programmes are important and the benefit of having a mentor as an evolving woman in science. Additionally, the aim for the session is to deliberate on the role that various stakeholders can play in:

- Raising awareness and participation of women in STEM in mentorship programmes;
- Increasing the number of women mentors/mentees within different research fields in STEM; allowing mentorship access and support from other women.
- Raising awareness and recruitment of women to OWSD SA NC and OWSD international.

PROGRAMME

09:00-09:05 Welcome Remarks: Dr Natisha Dukhi, OWSD SA NC

09:05-09:15 Introduction of the Session Topic and the Panelists: Dr Natisha Dukhi

09:15-10:10 Panel discussion:

The importance of active mentorship in supporting and building women research leaders in South Africa and the Africa region at large.

- Prof Babalola Olubukola, OWSD Vice-President (African Region)
- Dr Caroline Pule, Chairperson, OWSD SA NC
- Prof Refilwe Phaswana-Mafuya, UJ
- Dr Edith Phalane, UJ
- Dr Awelani Mutshembe, OWSD SA NC

10:10 - 10:25 Q&A: facilitated Dr Natisha Dukhi

10:25 - 10:30 Closing Remarks: Dr Caroline Pule, Chairperson, OWSD SA NC

Remember to register for the Science Forum South Africa to attend this, and other events



Dr Natisha Dukhi is a Senior Research Specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa. She graduated in 2005 with a master's in Medical Science (*cum laude*) - University of KwaZulu-Natal. She has spent over a decade working as a Medical Scientist, lecturing in Human Anatomy, Physiology, Pathophysiology and Nutrition at various universities in SA. Since 2009, she has been involved with community health and NGOs, and in 2016, she graduated with a PhD (Public Health) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Her affiliations include exco for South African Young Academy of Science member, African Academy of Sciences (AAS) Affiliate, Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA) and OWSD SA National Chapter, Fellow and President of African ChangeMakers South Africa, Fellow of the Southern Africa and Africa Science Leadership Programmes, among others.



Prof Olubukola Oluranti Babalola, the Vice-President of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) and Vice-President of the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) (Africa region), is an NRF-rated scientist, an MBA graduate, a Research Director and Principal Investigator at North-West University. After a PhD with a Fellowship from the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and OWSD, she had postdoctoral experiences at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, and the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. She has over 21 years of experience focusing on rhizosphere metagenomics. She is a member of many editorial boards and an International Advisor to several others. Olubukola has completed the supervision of 31 doctoral fellows, 24 masters, and numerous Honors students



Dr Caroline Pule is an enthusiastic Medical Scientist who is passionate about medical science research, global health, and ensuring we have a disease-free nation, loves challenges and demonstrates the power of hard work, She obtained her PhD in Medical Sciences (Molecular Biology) from Stellenbosch University, and is currently affiliated with TASK Applied Science, Tuberculosis (TB) Clinical Research Institute in Cape Town, South Africa as a Senior Medical Scientist and TB lab specialist conceptualizing and overseeing MIC and Antimicrobial Resistance projects; TB clinical trials studies focused in testing the efficacy of new anti-TB drugs for pulmonary TB and old anti-TB drugs in combinations for the possible development of more effective TB regimens for drug resistant TB treatment.

Additionally, Dr Caroline also occupies leadership positions in multiple organizations focused on TB eradication, academia, women in STEM empowerment and leadership. She is a Chairperson of the Organisation of Women in Science in the Developing World, SA National Chapter (OWSD SANC) and a former UCT-Harvard Programme of Global Surgery and Social Change (PGSSC) Research Fellow. In 2021, she received an honorary Excellence Award in Public Health: Medicine and Research, presented by the Charlotte Manny-Maxeke Institute (CMMI); on her research focusing on understanding the biology of drug-resistant TB, which its research findings might lead to the development of a novel TB drug targets. She was not only honoured for the importance and value she puts on education and research but also for her outreach engagements with communities around her including being a volunteer with the Mould Empower Serve charity organisation during COVID-19 pandemic log-downs.



Prof Refilwe Phaswana-Mafuya (PhD, PGD (Epi), MSc (Epi)) is a qualified epidemiologist and public health scientist. She is the director of the SAMRC/UJ Pan African Centre for Epidemics Research and a professor of epidemiology and public health in the FHS at UJ. She is also a part-time epidemiology lecturer/research supervisor on the MSc Biology and MSc Reproductive Health Programme at Pan African University of Life and Earth Sciences Institute, African Union. Further, she is a mentor in the Future Professors Programme Phase II which is part of the DHET University Capacity Building Programme.

Before assuming the above-mentioned roles, Refilwe served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation (NWU). Additionally, she served as the acting executive director, research director, and chief research manager at the HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Research Programme (HSRC) for nearly 13 years. Refilwe is NRF rated scientist from 2012 to date, ASSAf merited scientist from 2008 to date and AAS fellow from 2018 to date. She recently published a research mentorship book (2023), navigating academia book (2023) 2 and Vision Never Dies (2021). She was awarded the NSTF award for research and its outputs in recognition of his contribution to SET 15 years after completing PhD.



Dr Edith Phalane is a Research Manager/ Specialist Scientist at the South African Medical Research Council/ University of Johannesburg Pan African Centre for Epidemics Research (PACER) Extramural Unit. She also serves as a co-supervisor on the Master of Public Health and PhD in Public Health Programme at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Johannesburg. Prior to this, she was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the same University, Faculty of Health Sciences. She hold a PhD in Physiology from the North-West University.



Dr Awelani Mutshembele, a specialist scientist at the SAMRC-TB platform, is a distinguished figure in the field of molecular biology, with a focus on cutting-edge technologies for diagnostics and treatment. Her extensive body of work encompasses a wide array of subjects, underpinned by an unwavering commitment to scientific excellence. She's engaged in committees such as the SAMRC-Research Capacity Development (RCD) committee and her role in the Organization for Women in Science in South Africa National Chapter (OWSD-SANC) underscore her commitment to advancing scientific capacity and promoting gender equity in the field.