

NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee

Webinar I on Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in support of the SDGs.

Roundtable 2: Water and gender in climate change-education and training in water technologies on the African continent

24 May 2022

Report by: Lesha Witmer, International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW), alternate NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee and Women for Water Partnership (WfWP) – facilitator.

Contributors:

Ms Laura Veronica Imburgia, UNESCO-WWAP Senior Programme Specialist of the Water and Gender Component- Water, Women, Science and Policy. Ms Oriana Romano –OECD Head of Unit, Water Governance and Circular Economy, Urban Policies, and Sustainable Development Division of the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities Femmes et Entreprenariat. Mr Mehdi Lahlou-FMTS, University of Rabat, Association for the Right to Water - ACME-Morocco “Water and Women in Morocco . Ms Leticia Ackun, Gender specialist, Africa Water Association (AWA), Côte d’Ivoire- AFWA’s and the network’s view on the role of STEM, education, vocational training, mentoring in general. Mr Neil Dhot, Executive Director, AquaFed Executive Director – Private Operator approaches to Tech Education and Training.

On average 50 participants incl. contributors.

Facts and Messages

- ✚ As research shows time and again, women make the difference in getting effective and appropriate projects of the ground.
- ✚ Currently between 17 – 20% (1:5) of the paid jobs in the water domain are filled by females; only 14,9% of water managers at different levels are women. We have to get the women out of the informal economy; recognition of earlier acquired competences and better access to vocational training is key for that
- ✚ There is a high need for more women getting an education in the STEM fields both at academic and vocational / mid – level education. More women graduate at academic level but still not many with a STEM background.
- ✚ When they do have the diplomas it is hard for them to get a job (although the sector has a huge lack of qualified people)!
- ✚ There is a high need for role-models and mentors and encouragement by parents and teachers to ensure that (young) women enter into fields like water, energy, etc. Also the media could play a much better role here (see the examples of the pictures where technical equipment is always attributed to males).
- ✚ Together they can tackle the stereotypes and gender bias. However that needs educating them to send the right messages.
- ✚ Sectors like water and energy are not attractive for women because of working conditions and bias. Human Resource policies have to change in terms of recruitment policies, career-opportunities, working conditions etc.
- ✚ Initiatives like <https://en.unesco.org/news/call-action-accelerate-gender-equality-water-domain> are badly needed and deserve our support
- ✚ Funding has to be allocated up-front they make programs to ensure awareness raising, change of attitudes, mentorship etc. possible.

What's next?

The discussion is not finished. We need to explore better opportunities for mentorship. Design a program to talk to teachers about their "bias". Figure out how to reach parents.

I would suggest we explore this further in a next webinar.