

Women in Health Leadership Symposium Report – 3 March 2022



The third *Women in Health Leadership Symposium: Tanzania Chapter*, attended by 95 female health professionals including medical students, postgraduate students, and faculty members took place on 3 March 2022 in Mwanza, Tanzania. Hosted by Bugando Medical Center, Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, Mwanza College of Health and Allied Sciences, and Weill Cornell Medicine, this was the latest milestone in a series of women’s health leadership conferences that have been held in Tanzania since 2017. Participants represented six countries and multiple institutions throughout Tanzania and East Africa. They were motivated, inspired, and challenged to discuss how to work together to address gender-based barriers limiting the advancement of women into health leadership positions.

The theme for this year’s conference was “E-media, Gender and Leadership for Women in Health.” In the opening session, journalist Carol Ndosi discussed the importance of building digital literacy to increase women’s visibility online and explained how women in health can communicate their research and health information effectively. In the second session, advocate Cecilia Assey addressed barriers faced by women in leadership in Tanzania, the legal framework for women’s rights, and strategies to increase women’s participation in leadership and decision-making positions in health. She is leading an initiative to increase reporting and accountability for violence against women in the workplace.

In the afternoon, keynote speaker Dr. Neema Mduma shared her experiences in a talk titled, “Challenges



Faced and Lessons Learned as a Woman Scientist in Tanzania.” Dr. Mduma, a computer scientist and lecturer at the Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology, described her career trajectory and challenges encountered as one of very few women in the field of machine learning in Tanzania. A guest speaker from Adilisha, Ladislaus Musiba, highlighted the organization’s work to support girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Picture caption: Dr. Neema Nduma presenting on “Lessons learned as a female scientist in Tanzania”.

The conference concluded with a round-table discussion of “A Way Forward: How we can advance women in health leadership positions,” chaired by Dr. Adolfine Hokororo and Prof. Domenica Morona.

In this session, women collaborated in small groups to propose solutions to tackle gender-based barriers at work. Women recommended several strategies to address these issues, including: the inclusion of men in surveys, conversations and workshops to gain insight into their perspectives surrounding the advancement of women into leadership positions; the development of gender parity awareness lecture series; the establishment of annual gender discrimination and sexual harassment online trainings; and ongoing women’s leadership training programs to empower and equip the next generation of female leaders in Tanzania.



Picture caption: Third-year students Agatha Anthony and Sophia Chacha attended the conference.