

Inspirational Women in Science Series
International Women's Day 8th March 2019
#BalanceforBetter

The RCS asked four female Associate Fellows working in the field of science to answer some questions about their experiences. There is still a great deal of gender bias in the world of science, so we wanted to share the stories of these incredible women to inspire others looking to create better gender balance in the world.

Adekemi Adeniyani



What do you do?

I am the founder and Executive director of Dentoville Foundation. In 2018, I decided to connect my skills and drive to give something back so I started Dentoville Foundation; an organization that promotes and delivers free oral healthcare to rural areas.

How did you become interested in science?

Growing up I was faced with an inferiority complex at the tender age of 6. I would often shy away from speaking in public even when I knew what to say: this was not just because I was afraid of being rejected by my peers, but also because I was unsure if public speaking was acceptable for a young girl. However, my mum (who was a great nurse as well as a heroic figure to my 6 year old self) became the inspiration for my quest into the sciences and becoming a great leader. So it was no surprise to me that 20 years later I achieved my dental degree through resilience and hard work.

Please share your greatest achievement to date.

After graduation, I co-founded KompleteWoman, an organization that mentors young girls in discovering their purpose at an early age, through which we empowered 5 teenage mothers with the KompleteWoman Slum Empowerment Project. Furthermore, in 2014 I was selected among the Associate Fellows of The Royal Commonwealth Society and was also selected as one of the Fellows of Young African Leaders Initiative RLC Accra in 2016. I am currently a 2019 Atlantic Fellow for Health Equity at the George Washington University in the USA. I have had to adapt to diverse leadership roles since I was young and this has ignited excellence and increased my circle of influence

What are your career goals and aspirations?

My career goal is to implement strategies and leadership skills gained during my Atlantic Fellowship, to run free mobile dental camps in rural areas. I am passionate about mentoring so I would also like to mentor people in rural communities (who are interested), on how to successfully collaborate with diverse communities. My 10 year career goal is to create a state of art dental facility with advanced dental equipment to deliver free dental treatment to under-privileged communities - together with free surgical procedures to children with Orofacial Cleft Palate. My long-term goal is to become an expert public health dental professional that has made a drastic impact on the oral health status in Nigeria. I want to be seen to be positively affecting various communities in Nigeria through innovative and collaborative programs.

What is the biggest challenge you have faced being a woman in science?

One of the greatest challenges I face as a woman in Health Science has been dealing with the gender stereotype that leads some to believe that men are doctors while females are nurses. We as women must be determined to close the gender gap in sciences by taking the leap of faith, swimming against all odds and rising to the top.

Do you have any advice for women and girls wanting to become involved in science?

If you are considering going into sciences as a woman, I must say you are on a path to building something great and harnessing your potential.

Who is a woman in science that you admire and why?

One woman in health science that I admire is Dr. Christina Rosenthal; she became a dentist even when the odds were against her as a woman of colour from a poor background in Memphis Tennessee. Her hard work and determination propelled her forward and now she creates an awesome platform for young people that want to become doctors someday.

Can you share an interesting fact from your field of expertise?

Dentistry is fun and creative. Dentists are super heroes who work on the hardest substance in the human body.

Why do you think it's important for women and girls to pursue a career in the sciences?

We need more women leaders in sciences, not just to get more women into sciences, but also to make them global leaders that the new generation can look up to.