

Women in Sage: Global Scholars Meet at Makerere to Deliberate the Development of Mathematics

Scholars from Africa and beyond on 4th-8th September 2023 met at Makerere University to deliberate on innovations, solutions and developments that facilitate the growth and expansion of Mathematics.

Held under the auspices of Women in SAGE on the theme ***“SageMath: Free for all Mathematicians”***, the meeting drew participants from Uganda, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso.

Women in Sage is part of the long tradition of conferences on Mathematics with SageMath Software. Since 2007, more than 100 Sage Days have been organized around the world. During these days, participants discover the SageMath software, develop their programming skills and contribute to the development of the software.

The Women in Sage days organised at Makerere University with support from the African Women in Mathematics Association (AWMA), and the Eastern Africa Network for Women in Basic Sciences - Uganda Chapter (EANWoBAS-U)/ Uganda Women Mathematicians (UGAWOM) bring together African mathematicians to work as a team, share their motivation, and discover women that can be considered as role models. Other activities include launching new programming skills and research projects and collaborations between mathematicians from different African countries; creating mentoring networks for young women embarking on mathematical research; and teaching new programming skills to African women mathematicians.

Addressing participants at the workshop, the Head, Department of Mathematics, Prof. Godwin Kakuba decried the small number of women in Mathematics, calling for more interventions to increase the number. He appreciated all development partners supporting the development of the subject of Mathematics. Similarly, the Principal, College of Natural Sciences, Makerere University Prof. Winston Tumps Ireeta called for interventions to interest more girls and women in Mathematics. He appreciated the organizers of the Sage workshops noting that they are a great avenue for increasing the number of women in Mathematics.

According to Dr Olivia Nabawanda, one of the conveners, the main objective of the workshop was to bring together women mathematicians to share experiences, get inspired by different role models, and to establish networks with the aim of promoting the subject of Mathematics.

In her remarks, Prof. Elisha Lorenzo Garcia from Switzerland, and an ardent supporter of the Women in Sage initiative applauded the participants, noting that they had a significant role to play in the development of Mathematics. “Women have a lot to contribute to the Mathematics community as well as the socio-economic transformation of nation states.”

Highlighting the achievements of their Association, the President of Uganda Women Mathematicians, Prof. Betty Nanyonga Kivumbi, emphasised the need to promote and encourage more women to embrace Mathematics.

The workshop was among others supported by Makerere University, Busitema University, CIMPA, European Mathematics Society, Journal of Number Theory, International Mathematics Union, Number Theory Foundation (NTF), African Women Mathematicians Association and International Mathematics Union. It was coordinated by Dr Alex Bamunoba from the Department of Mathematics, Makerere University.

