



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UNIT FOR
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Synopsis.

Webinar Series on Gender and Social Justice: University of the Free State – Qwaqwa Campus

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on gender equality: reflections and debates

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on so many of our communities worldwide. Among other issues, the pandemic has had extensive complications for gender equality, especially in the ‘Third World’ countries where socio-economic inequalities are already a strain. With this crisis, we have come to witness that multidimensional gender inequalities and gender gaps within our societies have intensified, giving rise to massive challenges across various entities of society. These are challenges of which the tremendous consequences are often felt by women and children; where, for example, women are often faced with the burden of integrating their work with increased care responsibilities for their children, and sometimes also for the elderly as they are working remotely from home. All of these responsibilities often have a burdening and humongous impact on working mothers. Some realised with disappointment that the integration of work and home did not necessarily reduce the pressure of ‘a double day’ for women. The double responsibility placed on women continues to reinforce gender roles in our societies and further pushes away the success of closing the gap on gender equality prospects in our society.

The principal objective of this conversation is to probe how the COVID-19 pandemic affects women and men differently in the world of work (and at home). This conversation aims to highlight the specific challenges facing women and men as they work remotely from home during this crisis. This gendered analysis of the pandemic is important, as pre-existing gender inequalities often worsen during times of

crisis. The webinar aims to initiate conversations that could influence further research questions and research methods, given the rupture of routine both in gender relations and research methodologies. The conversations should yield short- and long-term measures that must be considered by various entities, such as the government, institutions of higher learning, and communities, to advance gender equality and research on gender during and after the COVID-19 crisis.