

A TOOLKIT

FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA



Association for the
Development of Education in Africa

Working Group on **Higher Education**

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IN AFRICA**

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Printed in Accra

August 2006

ISBN 9988-589-32-8

Electronic version available at:

<http://www.aau.org>

<http://www.ADEAnet.org>

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Preface

Over the past decade African higher education institutions, universities in particular, have been keen to mainstream gender into their core functions of teaching and research, as well as administration. As a result, many have introduced gender courses in various faculties and departments. It is not uncommon to find a university with half a dozen gender-related courses, scattered through faculties as disparate as Agriculture, Law, Medicine, Education, Sociology, Theology, etc., reflecting the commitment of individual lecturers, deans, and Vice Chancellors. Seldom has there been a concerted, synchronized policy and plan for integrating gender into university functions as a whole.

There are of course exceptions to this pattern. Makerere University, which is probably the most advanced in integrating gender throughout the University's functions, started the process in 1991. Universities in South Africa have equally longstanding equity policies and programmes aimed at redressing the serious imbalances of apartheid, addressing gender issues in the process. The Africa Gender Institute, based at the University of Cape Town, South Africa has been a catalyst for conducting and publishing research on gender from all over Africa. The trend is gaining momentum throughout the continent as other institutions mobilise the support needed to embark on systematic programmes to mainstream gender.

These efforts notwithstanding, gender-mainstreaming initiatives in higher education in Africa are far from adequate and there is very limited capacity within institutions, particularly with respect to mainstreaming gender in their human resource development policies and academic programs. It is against this background that the Working Group on Higher Education (WGHE) of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) decided to fund the development of a Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in Higher Education in Africa in response to a felt need and to catalyse the Gender Core Program of the Association of African Universities (AAU), which hosts the Working Group.

The Toolkit, which is made up of the ten modules includes as an Appendix, a Literature Review, as well as Module 1 Basic Facts about Gender; Module 2 Forming Policies and Strategies; Module 3 Gender Sensitisation of Tertiary Institutions: the Role of Human Resources Development and Management; Module 4 Mainstreaming Gender in the Curriculum; Module 5 Research and Gender Sensitive Research Methods; Module 6 Faculty and Support Programs; Module 7 Student Access and Retention; Module 8 Gender Violence and Sexual Harassment; Module 9 Disaggregated Data; Module 10 Resource Mobilization for Gender Equity.

The Association of African Universities and the Working Group on Higher Education hope that the institutions which will benefit from the training workshops planned, using the Toolkit, will, for their part, take proactive steps to mainstream gender in their core functions, not only to ensure better institutional governance and human rights but as a means of achieving equitable development and use of the most highly skilled human capital to accelerate the continent's socio-economic development.



Akilagpa Sawyerr
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Acknowledgements

The Working Group on Higher Education (WGHE) of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), and the Association of African Universities (AAU) wish to acknowledge the professionalism of Dr Fay Chung in the development of the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in Higher Education in Africa. The assistance and input which Professor Rudo Gaidzanwa, Department of Sociology, University of Zimbabwe, Mercy Ngoro, Lecturer, Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe and Chiyedza Nyahuye, independent Consultant gave to Dr Chung, cannot go unmentioned. Three institutional reviewers whose contributions substantially improved the modules and the literature review deserve particular mention. They are Professor Abiola Odejide, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Ibadan, Dr Fenella Mukangara, Acting Director, University of Dar es Salaam Gender Centre, Mrs. Mary Materu-Behitsa, Head, Information Communication and Technology Section, University of Dar es Salaam Library. A number of higher education institutions responded favourably to provide information through the questionnaires that the Consultant developed jointly with Mrs. Alice Sena Lamptey, the WGHE Coordinator, with interviews as in the case of Makerere University and the National University of Lesotho, and through information available on their websites. A training manual is bland without graphics and artwork. The Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in Higher Education in Africa owes its colour and liveliness to Mr. Graham Doudu a postgraduate student of the Legon Centre for International Affairs (LECIA), University of Ghana, who worked tirelessly with WGHE and AAU staff, specifically, Dr Pascal Hoba, Head, Communication and Services Department, Professor Olushola Oyewole, Project Officer, Research and Programs Department, Mr. Ben Eshun, Operations Assistant, Communications and Services Department, Mrs. Annick Agbotame, WGHE Program Operations Assistant and Mr. Virtus Aziale, Information Technology Technical Assistant, Communications and Services Department, to design and finalise the artwork. Finally, development of this Toolkit would not have been possible without the funding that WGHE members provided through the Work Program Budget and the extra budgetary allocation that The Ford Foundation gave through the AAU.

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Literature Review

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Association of African Universities
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AGI	African Gender Institute
AU	African Union
CAMED	Campaign for Female Education
CD ROM	Compact Disc-Read-Only Memory
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERTWID	Centre for Research Training and Information on Women and Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
COREVIP	Conference of Rectors Vice Chancellors and Presidents
DVD	Digital Video Disc/ Digital Versatile Disc
FAWE	Federation of African Women Educationalists
GMD	Gender Mainstreaming Division
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune deficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IDRC	International Development Research Center
IGS	Institute of Gender Studies
IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NUST	National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCOSAI	Southern African Development Community Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
WGHE	Working Group on Higher Education
NORAD	Norwegian Development Cooperation Agency

OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

Module 1

Basic Facts About Gender



Module 1

Basic Facts About Gender

Expected Outcomes

1. Academic leaders, managers, staff and students familiarized and educated on the basic facts and concepts about gender so that they can understand issues of gender concern in institutions of higher education. This can be measured through the inclusion of gender issues into course outlines, teaching and research.
2. Academic leaders, managers and students sensitized to the basic gender dynamics inherent in teaching and learning processes as measured in their course content and teaching methods.
3. Basic gender concepts imparted to students and staff who are involved in developing and managing interventions that will enhance gender equity and justice in institutions of higher education. Indicators for measuring how far gender equity and justice have been incorporated into the institution developed and utilized.
4. Students' and staff's ability to recognize and incorporate gender issues into their personal and professional lives enhanced beyond the institutions of higher education into the private, NGO and other sectors. Better linkages will be established between the academic institution and its surrounding institutions.

Institutional Context

In many African institutions of higher education, gender issues are regarded with fear and trepidation. There is demonisation of gender activists and dismissal of gender issues as western, donor-inspired and un-African. These attitudes often mask ignorance about gender issues and fear of exposure of this ignorance. In addition, gender biases, which exist in the wider society, are internalised and acted out in higher education contexts.

While many institutions have encountered donors and partners who indulge in 'gender-speak', institutions may acquiesce in making some grudging gestures and statements about gender as a means of securing donor funding while continuing with business as usual in their daily operations. This results in token 'gender gestures' such as appointing one or two females as deans, managers and administrators, while the business of the institution continues in its gender-blind or gender biased manner.

Thus, institutions may be characterized by gender violence, hostility to women, aggression towards older students and students with disabilities and authoritarian governance by senior male administrators and managers. In Dar es Salaam, it took the suicide of a female student to

galvanize the institution into interrogating its gender climate (1990). In the University of Zimbabwe, the violent beating up of a woman visitor forced the University to face up to the high level of violence and insecurity on the campus, making it unsafe for women students to go to the library in the evening. The University had to form a strategy to deal with the male student violence against women very urgently (1990). In Montreal, Marc Lepine, an engineering student, gunned down women students in a lecture theatre because he considered them feminists (1989). In the quest for gender justice, it is imperative that higher education institutions build gender-sensitive cultures that will further the realization of the ideals of these institutions. A starting point may be through the institution's examination of its vision, mission and strategic planning in terms of how it can introduce gender sensitive policies and practices.

Box 1A

A Sexist Puzzle

“A man and his son were involved in an accident in which the father died and the son was badly injured. At the hospital, when the surgeon on call was supposed to operate on the boy, the surgeon declined, arguing, “This is my son. I cannot operate on him.”

Most people argue that the surgeon is the uncle, the stepfather, godfather of the boy. They cannot come to terms with the possibility that the surgeon is the boy's mother because of the deep-seated nature of gender stereotypes about what men and women can do, be or should do in everyday life.

The section below defines basic gender concepts, building on them to explain their usage, the problems that might arise in their use and their appropriateness for different situations and institutions. Each institution can adopt the usages that suit their individual circumstances.

Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed relationships between men and women. Societies determine what resources men and women will access jointly or separately, what work men and women shall perform and for what rewards, what types of knowledge are appropriate for men and for women and how and where this knowledge is acquired. Gender is about relationships and these relationships change over time, space and circumstances. Gender relationships are different because cultures, religions, ethnicities and classes that men and women belong to are different. Each institution has its own gender culture, that is relationships between women and men, for example who holds the more powerful positions, has access to more resources, has stronger networks which they can appropriate to their own ends.

Activity 1A

Examine the gender culture of your institution. Compare the gender culture to that of a factory or a church near your institution. List the gender similarities and differences that you have observed and discuss the reasons why they are similar or different.

Sex

The term 'sex' refers to biological differences between men and women. Thus, a person is a male or female regardless of their race, class, age or ethnicity. However, the social meaning attached to a person's sex may differ depending on whether they are Akan, Tonga, Xhosa, Ganda, Luhya, or Shona.

Activity 1B

How do higher education institutions perpetuate or transform the importance of sex in the pursuit of knowledge? For example, you can look at which academic fields are popularised for male as opposed to female students and vice-versa. Use your institution to illustrate your responses.

Gender roles

These are clusters of socially or culturally defined and learned expectations about how people will behave in specific situations. Thus, social definitions of masculine or feminine roles, will determine what behaviours that person will exhibit at a given time. Gender roles are usually created out of over-simplified beliefs that males and females possess distinct physical and psychological characteristics. In higher education, there are prescribed roles and a student, a lecturer, a head of department, a dean and a professor will all, usually, have knowledge about what roles they have to fulfill. However, not all people will perceive gender roles in the same manner. In many societies, male roles are associated with physical aggressiveness and providing food, shelter and clothing for wives and children.

Activity 1C

Examine the differences between gender role expectations in higher education and in other organizations such as the army, the police and the air force.

Gender stereotypes

A stereotype is a rigid and over-simplified definition of a group of people in which all members of that group are labeled with similar characteristics. In the story cited at the beginning of this module, the stereotype of men as surgeons stands in the way of people recognizing or considering a very obvious possibility that if a person who is a surgeon says about a patient, "This is my son," that surgeon is the patient's mother since the father has died in the accident. Stereotypes stand in the way of our perceptions of reality and social change.

People tend to internalize stereotypes as standards of behaviour and as such, do not go beyond traditional roles. Stereotypes produce behaviour patterns that conform to expectations. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy by which a person internalizes a label and starts operating accordingly. An example is that many girls aim to be nurses, as they see this as a suitable career for women, whereas they do not aim to be doctors, because they believe this is reserved for men. Another aspect of stereotyping is when people behave in a certain way in order to gain acceptance.

In a society, stereotypes are used as standards for evaluating categories of people, in terms of their mental capabilities, social roles, position and qualities possessed. When stereotypes are used in this way, they lead to discrimination and prejudice. In education institutions, stereotypes result in certain fields being reserved for certain group. For example, scientific and technical fields may be seen as male preserves. In workplaces, certain jobs are reserved for a certain sex, managers and directors are men, secretaries and personal assistants are women. Women who decide to break free of these stereotypes often encounter glass ceilings, sticky floors and revolving doors which are gate-keeping mechanisms which hinder their advancement into positions of authority in terms of decision making and their effectiveness as agents of change. Gender stereotypes inhibit women from realizing their full potential because of societal barriers.

Stereotypes influence people's attitudes towards men and women in different ways, positively and negatively. Stereotypes have a strong influence in decision-making about distribution of valued resources such as funding for research for lecturers and scholarships for students. Stereotypes affect both men and women, for they do not take into consideration the complexities of human beings.

Productive work

Productive work refers to the tasks performed by men and women for payment whether in cash or in other goods. It refers to work with an exchange value and subsistence production with a use value and a potential for exchange. Women perform productive work when they weed, plough and mulch fields and harvest crops as well as when they are employed as garment workers in factories. Men perform this work in factories, mines and in agriculture. However, there is a general under-valuation of the work that is performed by women because it is performed in the home for the consumption or benefit of spouses, children and other relatives and is not paid for in cash. In Third World countries, women perform a significant amount of productive work.

Reproductive work

Reproductive work refers to the bearing and rearing of children, the domestic labour performed by women to maintain, nurture and reconstitute the labour force generationally. It also includes the care and maintenance of dependent members of households such as the elderly, the sick, the disabled and the incapable. It also refers to the care for children, husbands, relatives, working members of households and communities.

Gender division of labour

The gender division of labour refers to the organization of labour on the assumption that men perform specific roles such as those of providers and breadwinners in the productive or wage labour sector outside the home and that women provide domestic labour as housewives within the home and the household where they organize, reproduce and nurture the members of the household and community. This is a model used extensively by western states. In many Third World countries, states have assumed the model to be applicable even though the realities show that in Africa, women provide labour in commercial and subsistence agriculture as well as reproductive labour within and outside the home. Conversely, there might not be sufficient wage labour for all men in the Third World, resulting in men's failure to be providers and breadwinners.

Gender violence

Gender violence manifests itself in situations where women and men struggle for resources, influence and power in everyday settings. In institutions of higher learning, gender violence takes the form of sexual harassment of women staff and students, by their peers, superiors and others. There is also systematic exclusion of women from executive authority, unfairness in the allocation of research, teaching and other resources, exclusion from specific courses and hostility to gender activism in higher education.

Gender awareness

Gender awareness refers to the situation where all players in an organization or institution recognize the importance of gender and its effects on their objectives, plans and programs. Gender awareness may or may not be translated into practice so that a gender-aware institution may not progress to develop gender-sensitive policies and programs.

Gender sensitivity

Gender sensitivity is the translation of awareness into practices, which result in changes in the perceptions, plans and activities of institutions and organizations. A gender aware institution is not necessarily a gender sensitive one because awareness might not necessarily generate any will or resolve to act on the basis of the gender awareness. In fact, it is possible for gender awareness to generate resistance, obstruction and other practices that make gendering an

institution difficult.

In attempting to make institutions more gender sensitive, gender policies are usually developed in order to guide action and ensure that the stated objectives of the policy are realised. Various stakeholders who will carry out this process need to be clearly defined and allocated specific tasks and resources to achieve desired outcomes within a specific time frame.

Gender blindness

This term refers to the conscious development of objectives, plans and programs in an organization or institution with no effort to recognize or incorporate gender issues that might influence the functioning of that organization, the production of plans, the implementation of programs and the outcomes of the programs. Gender blindness is present when organizations function as if gender did not matter and is best exemplified by the insistence that an institution focus on 'people' rather than on men and women. Gender blindness often reinforces and is practiced by people who do not or refuse to consider gender as a factor in institutional settings.

Gender gap

This term is often used to refer to the difference in the scores between men and women on attitudes, interests, behaviors, knowledge and perspectives on particular issues such as policy preferences and voting preferences. The gender gap may be attributable to women's difference or distance in perspective or independence from men in opinions, perceptions, economic interests and social and psychological autonomy. The gender gap may also vary according to class, race, age, marital status, religion and other factors. In racially discriminatory systems, men and women of a specific race may show little or no difference in their stances on specific issues such as employment. In such cases, we might say that there is no gender gap between men and women on this issue.

Practical gender needs

These are needs that if met, help women to fulfill their identified and accepted roles in their societies. Practical gender needs may originate from women's subordinate social positions and meeting them does not necessarily change the relationships between men and women. Practical needs may relate to women's duties to fetch water for cooking and cleaning, nurse and feed small children, the elderly and the men. These needs are usually expressed because of pressing problems that stand in the way of women fulfilling their gender roles. While the provision of water wells and boreholes may meet women's practical gender needs, water is needed and used by all members of communities although donors, state parties and agencies may say that they are "meeting women's needs" when they provide clean water for communities.

Strategic gender needs

These are needs that if met, transform women's subordinate positions to men in their communities. These needs may relate to legal rights, equal pay, right to open a bank account, reproductive rights such as the right to choose contraception, determine numbers of children and the right to control their own bodies. Meeting women's strategic needs facilitates women's equality with men. Strategic needs are met when women mobilize to remove systemic and systematic gender discrimination, which goes beyond individual groups of women in specific localities.

Gender equality

Gender equality refers to the allocation of resources, opportunities, support and encouragement without any discrimination on the basis of biology, between men and women. However, because of sexual and gender divisions of labour and other arrangements that occur in many societies, it may be difficult to plan for and realize equality according to the above definition because men and women may eat different food, wear different clothes, attend different institutions and access different types of resources. Sometimes, even if men and women are accorded equal quantities of resources, equality may not be achievable because of prior disadvantage or historical discrimination, which cannot be erased within a short time. So, even if men and women are accorded the same educational opportunities in a given year after centuries of gender discrimination, equality will not be realized until all the people who have been disadvantaged or advantaged have passed through the educational and career system that was unequal. Today, the concept of equality acknowledges that different treatment of women and men may sometimes be required to achieve sameness of results, because of the different life conditions or to compensate for past discrimination.

Gender equity

We use the concept of gender equity as a component of gender equality because of the realization that many societies are organized in gendered ways, making it difficult to organize and plan for simple and mechanical equality in inputs and quantities of resources. Regardless of the differences in the gender divisions of labour, resources, opportunities, treatment and potential and other factors, the rewards accruing to men and women for similar work, skills and knowledge, have to be of the same quality and reflect the inputs they have contributed. Outcomes reflecting similar or equal inputs, just and fair valuation of men and women's efforts lead to gender equity, justice and fairness. Thus, even if men and women attend different schools, to achieve gender equity and justice, investment in females' schools needs to be fair, equivalent or similar to that in males' schools. The outcomes must reflect the intention as well as the realization of fairness and justice regardless of the gender of the beneficiaries. Thus, when women argue for gender equality, they are not necessarily referring to the need for men and women to be allocated the same quantities or objects and resources as men. Rather, they are demanding the same quality and quantity of opportunities, support and treatment as those accorded to men in similar circumstances so that they too, can fulfill their aspirations no matter how similar or different from men's their values and priorities might be.

Gender audit

A gender audit is undertaken in order to understand what the situations of women are relative to those of men in a given institution. It may focus on the gender gaps in enrolment, retention and achievement by men and women. It may also focus on staffing of academics, management and administrative posts by men and women. Your institution may consider undertaking a gender audit in order to understand the possibilities and constraints that exist and hamper the implementation of its gender justice agenda.

Activity 1D

Conduct a gender audit of student enrolment, management and administrative posts.

Gender policy

A gender policy is developed out of recognition that there are gendered deficiencies in the operation of institutions and organizations. A gender policy is an instrument for tackling those deficiencies in an organized manner with stated goals, time frames for achieving them, methodologies for achievement of goals and strategies and programs through which the policy will be applied. A gender policy will state its goals, whether they are to achieve parity in enrolment, retention and achievement for students, staff and other players in higher education. Only when institutions mainstream women's concerns and gender gaps are narrowed or eradicated, can gender policies become unnecessary.

Gender budgeting

Gender budget is critical for ensuring that resource allocation takes place in a gender sensitive manner. Gender budget involves the examination of all expenditures and revenues from a gender perspective. This implies that all expenditure is examined for its relevance, accessibility, impacts and consequences for women and men. For example, when an institution devotes a percentage of its budget to provision of accommodation or scholarships, how much of it will benefit women? When an institution budgets for a crèche for staff children, what is the impact on the male and female workforce? Gender budgeting raises fundamental questions about economic governance and the participation of men and women, rich and poor, young and old and minorities and other marginalized peoples. Gender budgeting raises important questions such as those relating to women's unpaid labour and its importance in economic life and development. Similarly, in higher education institutions, some academics perform invisible and undervalued labour in counseling, nurturing and helping students who are sick, orphaned or overburdened with parental duties or in monitoring the physical facilities in halls of residence. This work is not recognised or paid. Labour that is spent in lobbying and advocating change for specific groups is also not recognized despite the price paid by the marginalized groups in struggling for justice when others are getting on with their careers.

Gendering the budget is a process that allows players to recognize what an institution's gender priorities and commitments are because it tells us how an institution spends the revenue collected from both men and women.

Activity 1E

Provide a bar graph showing the budget of your institution in 2005, and make inferences about its sensitivity to gender concerns.

Gender mainstreaming

This is the process whereby gender concerns are raised routinely within the everyday operations of an institution or organization and resolved in a gender just manner in normal operations. Mainstreaming gender necessitates that gender perspectives become part of the normal perspective of an organization without its having to resort to special vehicles, units or offices that isolate and marginalize these issues.

Gender mainstreaming sometimes begins by focusing empowerment initiatives on women because of their previous disadvantage. Usually, it is difficult or inconvenient for many institutions to move beyond this phase because they have to negotiate real power and resources with women. Gender mainstreaming is the process of normalizing women's presence together with men on equitable bases to wield power, control resources and set priorities in institutions. These processes are contested and the contestation is manifested by the inability or unwillingness to abandon sectional or special projects for women and to make space for them in the everyday operations, positions and situations where policies, priorities and executive decisions are made.

An organization is culturally defined, and reflects and replicates the values of those who set it up. Tertiary institutions are traditionally gendered: until a few decades ago, for example, many universities in the West were for men only. There is therefore a need to examine the gender aspects of tertiary institutions. The major components of every institution include strategy, structure, systems and culture. Strategy includes an organization's vision, mission, goals and how it intends to achieve them. Structure refers to its divisions, allocation of tasks, and positions of authority and responsibilities, and the relationships between its members. Systems constitute the rules, regulations, policies that govern the operations of the institution. Culture is the shared values, opinions and norms of its members. It determines the conventions and unwritten rules of the organization, its norms of cooperation and conflict, and its channels for exerting influence. Gender mainstreaming would mean engendering each of these organizational aspects and levels.

Activity 1F

Examine your institution's vision, mission for its gender sensitivity. Draw an organogram of your organisation and examine it for its gender sensitivity.

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