

Module 3

The Role of Human Resource Development and Management



Module 3

Gender Sensitisation of Tertiary Institutions: The Role of Human Resource Development and Management

Expected Outcomes

1. Improved understanding of the key role of human resource development in establishing gender equity and gender equality. Human resource development and management are critical points of intervention in mainstreaming gender issues in institutions of higher education.
2. Better informed decision making by leaders and managers in higher education of the potential impacts of human resources choices on the institutions, students and employees. Human resource choices and practices require transformation in order to create a more positive gender climate in higher education institutions.
3. Institutionalization of more gender-sensitive and more gender-fair systems for human resource development, recruitment, promotions, and welfare. Human resources managers able to design, implement and monitor gender policies and programmes which create gender equity, gender justice and enhance teaching and learning for both men and women. Human resources managers able to develop and promote gender sensitive approaches to students, staff and their dependents.
4. Improvements in operating systems, including improved information flows between levels of the system.
5. Better working relationships between male and female colleagues including change in attitudes of male staff and students towards female colleagues.
6. Enhancement of women's knowledge and ability to organize for their rights.
7. Improvements in women's access to and control over resources.
8. Improved health, security and mobility of women.

Key Role of Human Resources in Gender-Sensitive Development

Human resource development plays a key role in ensuring gender-sensitive development within an academic institution, within the nation and within the continent as a whole. This portfolio determines the types of academic, administrative and management staff hired and the handling of these staff and their dependents by the institutions. It focuses on recruitment, deployment, and development of women and men in institutions and organizations. Academic and support staff need diverse approaches in their management, resulting in the need for nuanced and dynamic policies, strategies and programmes for dealing with them. Management in higher education involves supporting, motivating, communicating, delegating and negotiating with staff, students and their dependents on a broad range of issues. Management also involves planning, directing, coordinating and controlling staff and students in order to achieve the goals of the organization.

Context Analysis

In African higher education institutions, academic and support staff may have different gender, social class, ethnic, religious, and age differences which necessitate a high level of sophistication in handling human resource issues. For example, some African male academics are polygamous while many African women academics are married and are primary carers for children and may not be as mobile as male academics. African universities tend to be male dominated and women from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds have a very muted presence in these institutions. Academic incomes in Africa tend to be low in comparison to the private sector and women in higher education institutions tend to be less qualified, less well published and less academically mobile internationally than their male counterparts. The impacts of economic crises are experienced more markedly by female than male academics in Africa and the human resources function faces challenges in improving these class, gender, ethnic, and social inequities.

Many higher education institutions in Africa do not have gender policies, making it difficult to develop and institutionalize gender-sensitive human resources practices that are deemed legitimate by stakeholders. It is critical to conduct a Gender Audit prior to developing a gender policy and developing new gender practices. Where there is no capacity, will or support for a gender audit or a gender policy, it may be possible to build on practices that currently exist to affirm the values of gender justice and gender equity while developing a fully fledged gender policy. However, it is preferable to conduct a gender audit before developing a gender policy or agreed gender terms of reference as a way of institutionalizing whatever gender-sensitive practices may be in existence in institutions, albeit small, isolated and uncoordinated.

In some countries the percentage of women employed in tertiary education is very low. Women are ghettoized in clerical and secretarial positions at the lowest ends of the non-academic hierarchy and in junior, untenured, part-time and temporary academic positions. Women are unable to access senior management and administrative positions. Women publish less often than men and occupy the lowest academic grades. Men dominate positions of Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Chancellors and Registrars.

An example is Ethiopia, where a study of teacher education institutions at university and teachers' college level showed that only 2.8% of the academic staff were women.¹ If such an imbalance is to be rectified, there will be need for a concerted and committed programme over at least a decade. The reasons underlying this disparity will need to be carefully analysed, and steps taken to ensure that the issue is addressed in a practical way. Such large imbalances are not likely to disappear without policy transformation and strategic planning not only within a single institution, but in tertiary education nationally as a whole.

There is substantial staff erosion through the “brain drain”. Difficulties are experienced in retaining and replacing experienced staff in academic and specialized support positions. Some of the reasons for this imbalance can come from factors within tertiary education itself. Others may come from factors within society as a whole. The interaction between the two sets of factors can lead to the present predicament, where institutions of higher learning not only have a minority of women staff, but may have cultures and physical situations, which are hostile and unsafe for women. A study and panel discussion carried out in Addis Ababa

¹ Almaz Eshete, *Women in Faculties of Teacher Training Institutions in Ethiopia*, UNESCO IICBA, Addis Ababa, 2003, p. 5. The percentage may be higher in other areas of tertiary education, the average being 7% according to the *UNDP Human Development Report 2005*.

University showed² that in the university, the prevalence of lifetime completed and attempted rape was 12.7% and 27.5% respectively. Sexual harassment in lifetime and 12 month period occurrence was reported among 58% and 41.8% of students respectively. This is a very high percentage of rape and sexual harassment, and in most cases these women could not receive any assistance or justice. Their trauma was not addressed by the institution. Research of this type has not taken place in many other higher education institutions, but there is evidence that women cannot walk alone on many campuses in the evenings, severely limiting their visits to evening lectures, laboratories and the library after dark. The lack of support systems for women who are victimized professionally and sexually means that many tertiary education institutions are not “women-friendly” at all. The institutional climate tolerates gender inequalities and fosters aggression towards women.

There is also some evidence of professional harassment of women candidates for recruitment and promotion in some institutions, due to the open hostility to feminism among some senior male academics. Thus, recruitment and promotions committees, where women are evidently not well represented, may reject a woman candidate for non-professional reasons, such as “trying to bring Beijing into the university”. In some tertiary education institutions, such committees have no women representatives. Women applicants report being terrified and intimidated by interviewing committees.³ This reinforces the opinion of the committees that the women candidates are in any case unsuitable.

There is a scarcity of qualified women candidates for academic posts in many countries. The percentage of women staff at tertiary level varies considerably in Africa, from 7% in Ethiopia to 14% in Ghana to 50% in Lesotho.⁴ The reasons for this scarcity have not been fully analysed, but a number of factors are highlighted in published accounts such as the following:

- In some countries there are fewer girls in secondary school than boys. The gender gap at secondary school level may be large. To take a few examples: in 2002/2003, the gender gap was 5 percentage points in Burkina Faso; 11 percentage points in Ethiopia; 8 percentage points in Nigeria.⁵ Therefore, there are fewer girls who qualify to enter tertiary education. With a much smaller pool of girls completing secondary education, there is also a much smaller number attaining higher marks. A selection system, which depends entirely on examination performance, will naturally discriminate against women as the women who may come from educationally deprived contexts will not be able to demonstrate their broader capabilities effectively. In order to have equal enrolment at tertiary level, a number of policy and strategy steps need to be taken over a prolonged period.
- The gender gap is similar at tertiary level: in 2002/2003, in Burkina Faso, women students comprised a third of the total; in Ethiopia, there were four times more male students than female students; and in Nigeria, there were 7 women for every 10 men students.⁶ Human resource planning would need to take this into account if gender equity and gender equality are to be attained.
- Women, in most African societies, marry relatively earlier than their counterparts elsewhere. Early marriage affects retention in primary and secondary schools in most African countries. Of the women who reach tertiary education, it is commonly expected that they marry immediately on completion of their first

² Institute of Gender Studies, *IGS Informs- a bi-annual publication of the Institute of Gender Studies*, University of Addis Ababa, 2005, pp. 2 - 4.

³ Almaz Eshete, *Women in Faculties of Teacher Training Institutions in Ethiopia*, UNESCO IICBA, Addis Ababa, 2003.

⁴ From UNESCO Institute of Statistics, *Global Education Digest 2005*, Montreal 2005, pp. 97 -99.

⁵ Ibid, p.75.

⁶ Ibid, p. 96.

degree, at about the age of 23. Male students, on the other hand, are not expected to marry at that age. Thus, male students are able to apply for postgraduate training facilities without the encumbrance of family responsibilities and children.

- There is a high level of teenage pregnancy in many countries. In Uganda, 43% of 17 years olds were pregnant or had given birth to at least one child.⁷ This high percentage is linked to early marriage, early sexual activity, and poor reproductive health services. Pregnancy may lead to high dropout rates at tertiary level, with fewer women completing their degrees.
- Women are considered to be responsible for their children to a greater extent than their husbands and partners, as women are seen as the “home builders”. A young woman cannot leave her children for long periods of time, whereas a young man can, and usually does, leave the children with his wife or partner, whilst he pursues further studies or career prospects elsewhere. Adjustments in organising further education would need to take this into account: women academics with children can take advantage of sandwich and distance education courses which will enable them to gain masters and doctoral degrees if these were made available as a matter of course. They usually cannot afford, for marital and financial reasons, to take several years off for a higher degree. A human resource development plan which is gender-sensitive, would enable as many women as men to study for higher degrees.
- Within faculties and departments, women tend to hold more junior positions. They also tend to be given the student-care and nurturing responsibilities, such as counselling, organizing student functions, community service and outreach. These responsibilities are very time consuming, but are not recognized for promotion purposes. Most academic institutions base promotion mainly, if not solely, on publications, and most women do not publish a great deal. This is often due to the fact that they do not have time to concentrate on research, given their heavy family and teaching responsibilities. Teaching responsibilities and ability are also often not considered for promotion purposes. Thus, the lack of recognition for some key functions where women tend to cluster, leads to the fact that there are few women in higher level managerial and decision-making posts. Changes in the way further education opportunities are organized, and adjustments in the criteria for promotions, which give greater recognition for teaching, counselling, outreach and managerial skills, will assist in creating a better gender balance.
- Universities and other higher education institutions in the western world provide childcare facilities for both students and staff. This enables young mothers to do their work, knowing that their children are being well looked after on the campus. Such a facility is seldom found on African campuses. Mothers consequently have to place their children under the care of maids or of childcare centres situated some distance from their place of work. Poor child facilities can place a heavy burden on women staff. Finding suitable child care can also be a major time consuming responsibility. Provision of such on-campus facilities will benefit women students and staff.
- The professional code of conduct may not cover areas such as professional and sexual harassment. When these transgressions occur, there may not be clear

⁷ Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, 1997.

guidelines regarding how they should be treated. There are frequent reports of demand from male lecturers for sexual favours from women students and women lecturers. These are treated as personal and individual challenges rather than as institutional challenges, yet an educational institution should have clear guidelines to deal with such occurrences. The high level of rape and sexual harassment revealed in the Addis Ababa University study may also characterize many other African universities, and needs to be addressed by the human resources policies and strategies.

- The safety of women students on the campus in the evenings has come up as a problem in a number of institutions, and this also requires a number of policies and strategies, including the presence of security officers, gender sensitisation of students and rules for dealing with transgressors.
- Capacity building is a key responsibility of the Human Resources Department. Often, the capacity building programme is not gender sensitive, leading to further discrimination against women.
- Outside institutions such as international and bilateral organizations, sister universities and colleges, as well as would-be staff and students, require a constructive and gender-sensitive environment for development and partnership. When an institution is known to condone sexual violence on the campus and professional harassment in the context of promotions, it may not be able to find suitable support for its improvement. Certainly, staff and students tend to avoid organizations and institutions, which are known to be hostile to women.

Box 3A

What issues should gender-sensitive human resources policies and practices cover? ⁸

1. Job access, employment to academic and support posts and staff development.
2. Terms and conditions of service for men and women in the same jobs.
3. Maternity and paternity benefits
4. Parental, duty, ordinary, sick and compassionate leave for men and women.
5. Medical aid benefits for men, women and their dependents.
6. Child-care on and off campus and the responsibilities of men and women.
7. Contact and sabbatical leave for men and women.
8. Pensions and terminal benefits.
9. Ordinary duties in all grades and their demands on men and women.
10. Grading and promotion for men and women.

Activity 3A

1. Analyze in detail male and female staff profiles at your university, looking at them by age and by gender. Is there a tendency to have older males and younger females?

⁸ From Prof. R. Gaidzanwa University of Zimbabwe

2. What is the class background of university staff? What percentage come from wealthy and middle class families, and what percentage represent the urban and rural poor who have been given the opportunity to receive tertiary education only after independence? Is staff from poorer backgrounds not well represented in certain disciplines, such as science, mathematics and technology? Does this reflect the quality of their earlier schooling?

Activity 3B

1. Construct an organogram of your organization starting with the highest office to the lowest in academic, management and administrative grades.
2. Ask the following gender questions as a way of conducting a rapid appraisal of the human resources practices and addressing gender disparities, inequities and injustices in your institution. Take the time to consider and answer them.

a) Access to jobs

- Can men and women access jobs equally in male-dominated higher education institutions? Is your institution male dominated, female-dominated or balanced in the representation of men and women at all levels?
- What are the procedures and processes through which men and women access jobs? Are they fair to women and men equally?

b) Employment terms

What job demands are inherent in different contracts? What are the gender implications of these contracts?

c) Work content and demands

- The work content may have specific demands which are gendered. For example, academic work necessitates conferencing away from home, working long hours in solitude to publish papers for promotion, conducting field work in a diversity of locations. Do men and women perform this work under the same conditions and with the same supports at work and home?
- Registrars and Bursars often work with Vice Chancellors to prepare and discuss budgets, plan work for diverse groups of workers beyond office hours. Are men and women similarly placed in performing such work?
- Informal networks are critical for accomplishing tasks in academic and non-academic tracks. Are men and women similarly placed to acquire and develop these networks in male-dominated institutions of higher education?

Box 3B

Human Resource Changes

In order to remove in-built and institutionalized gender discrimination it is possible to carry out a number of activities, including improvement of the knowledge and skills of staff and students, and changing the organizational quality.

- **Improve the knowledge and skills of staff and students**
 - increased understanding of gender and the link between gender and organizational change and society
 - acquisition of action-learning skills, including an ability to influence others,
 - improved training and facilitation skills for gender teams and trainers

- **Organisational quality**
 - improved training and facilitation skills for gender teams and trainers
 - new, more gender-fair policies;
 - improvements in operating systems;
 - improved information flows between levels of the system;
 - more efficient use of time;
 - better working relationships between male and female colleagues;
 - change in attitudes of male staff and students towards female colleagues;
 - improvements in women's access to and control over resources;
 - enhancement of women's knowledge and ability to organize for their rights;
 - improved health, security and mobility of women

Recruitment

Problems begin at the initial stage of recruitment. The majority of applicants may be men. The men may be older, more highly qualified and more experienced than the women. These differences may be based on historical and social factors, such as age of marriage and family responsibility for men as compared to women; further education opportunities that are insensitive to the needs of young mothers with families and children; shortage of women candidates in science, mathematics and technology; lack of child care facilities. A higher education institution that has a gender-sensitive recruitment policy will seek to address these issues, for example, by providing masters and doctoral study opportunities, which do not contradict the marriage and child-care responsibilities of young women. A time based target, such as increasing for example from less than 10% women staff to 50% over a decade is very feasible, provided that during that period, specific steps are taken to identify capable women who can be given suitable study and development opportunities which do not contradict or

undermine their roles as wives and mothers. This is often done through the appointment of teaching assistants. In some universities, doctoral students are automatically provided with some teaching responsibilities, partially to assist them financially, but also as a form of staff development.

In order to achieve such targets, the rules and regulations governing recruitment will need to be adjusted. The appointments committee will need to be gender-sensitive, and to include women members.

Activity 3C

1. Examine the staff recruitment record of your institution over the past 12 months. What criteria were utilized? How many members of the selection committee were women? How many men and women applied for the jobs, and how many men and women were appointed?
2. Brainstorm on what steps can be taken to help improve the number, qualifications and experience of women applicants.
3. Interview a sample of successful and rejected candidates to see what their views are of the recruitment processes.

Management

The majority of senior management in higher education institutions are men, even in institutions where 50% of the staff are women, such as in Lesotho. The male-dominated management systems can be self-perpetuating, with leadership networks which exclude women automatically. Informal networks are stronger amongst men than amongst women at this level. A gender-positive approach to management would mean:

- Gender balance in recruitment and promotions;
- Gender balance in student enrolments, broken down to departments and faculties;
- Equal achievement levels for both women and men students, with programmes to ensure this is attained;
- Goodwill commitment of the highest level managers of the institution for gender mainstreaming to be effective;
- There is need for a critical mass of committed and competent gender experts to give the process credibility and sustenance;
- There have to be practical guidelines and support in terms of child-care, sexual violence on the campus, sexual harassment of staff and students.
- Support is required for physically challenged students and students who encounter various difficulties, such as pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, low income, etc.
- Capacity building for all staffs, with particular emphasis on providing training and work experience to women staff.
- Professional and more balanced recognition for different forms of academic work

and achievement, including teaching, counselling, management, outreach and research/publication.

Promotions

It is recognized that fewer women are promoted in academia than men. One reason may be that fewer women enter academia directly, with many devoting large periods of their early career on part-time jobs whilst devoting most of their time to their families. They thus enter academia later in life.⁹ Another reason is that many women do not have doctorates, as present staff development systems require several years' absence from work, usually overseas, to be devoted to doctoral studies. Women are unable to do this, due to family responsibilities. If gender equity at decision-making levels is recognized as an important contributor to overall development, then a gender-sensitive policy to promotions needs to be adopted. This would require a longer term perspective, perhaps over a decade. A gender-sensitive promotions policy would include:

- Identification of suitable candidates earlier on, and providing them with opportunities for development and gaining appropriate experience. Given that women may enter the profession later than men, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that they are not further disadvantaged as a result of their social roles as wives and mothers.
- Separating applicants by gender, and examining each group in detail, then comparing the top candidates in each gender. This will enable like to be compared to like;
- Ensuring that there is gender balance in the membership of the promotions committee;
- The promotions committee's terms of reference should exclude any overt or covert forms of bullying and intimidation, problems which are reflected in societies where women are expected to have submissive and passive roles, and men are expected to be authoritarian and aggressive;
- The criteria for promotions should include a more diverse portfolio of skills and experiences, so that women are not unduly prejudiced. Performance can be measured through publication, research awards, and assessments in teaching by peers and students, involvement in community outreach and recognition by colleagues in professional associations.
- Targets should be set up as to the number of women to be appointed over the decade, rising to 50% at the end of the decade or sooner, depending on the national situation.
- The system of performance assessment has to be fair and gender sensitive. Assessment criteria may not be gender-sensitive.
- Do men and women focus on the same tasks in their work performance? Often women may be assigned more tasks, which are not considered important for promotion purposes.

⁸ Paper by Rudo B. Gaidzanwa, "Academic Women at the University of Zimbabwe: Still a Long Way to Go", 2005.

Staff Development

The future staff profile of an institution depends heavily on the staff development programme in place. It is incumbent on every institution to put in place a programme that will ensure that it is continuously improving and renewing its personnel. Unless this is done, the future health of the organization can be seriously affected, when it is dominated by archaic and out-of-date knowledge, skills and methodologies.

The planning and implementation of its staff development programme should be gender-sensitive, so that the present imbalances can be rectified. It is noted that many women cannot go overseas for long periods of time in order to do their doctoral studies because of their child care responsibilities. Given the heavier family responsibilities of women, these measures should include:

- Refresher courses, training and other activities that enhance the skills, performance and commitment of both women and men to operate effectively and respond timeously to dynamic, competitive and stressful social and economic environments;
- Providing equal opportunities for staff development for men and women;
- Funding and eligibility criteria for spouses should allow men and women to exercise the same rights in the past men were favoured under the expectation that most women will devote themselves to their marriage and their families;
- The issue of how marriage affects men and women differently in facilitating or hindering the uptake of staff development opportunities needs to be examined seriously so as to enable women to utilize these opportunities;
- Women may be more able to take up locally based staff development programmes, due to their family responsibilities. However internationally-based staff development programmes can also be adjusted to make them more women-friendly.

Leave

Men and women may not be treated equally in terms of parental, duty, sick and compassionate leave. Employers may provide sabbatical and other types of leave to enable staff to update their knowledge and disciplinary competencies through exposure to colleagues in other institutions regionally and overseas. Men may be better placed to take advantage of such leave because they may be able to go for longer periods without family responsibilities: adjustments could be made to enable women staff to enjoy such opportunities as well.

Medical aid and health benefits

Are men and women equally treated in accessing medical aid and related benefits? In some institutions, women may be expected to access benefits through their husbands. Dependents may also be placed under the medical aid funds of men rather than women.

Child care and social nurturing tasks

Do men and women have equal responsibility for child care and other social nurturing tasks? Does your institution provide child care for staff and students on campus? What impacts do child care and nurturing tasks such as funerals, weddings and other ceremonies have on parental careers?

Housing Loans and Other Benefits

Some tertiary establishments provide housing loans to staff, but married women are often excluded from such benefits. Such archaic practices may be very prejudicial to a woman's future in cases of widowhood, divorce and remarriage of the husband.

Pensions and terminal benefits

Do men and women benefit equally from pensions and other benefits at retrenchment and retirement? Are there different benefits for men and women and their dependents? Can men and women benefit from other measures such as advisory, consultant, honorary or emeritus appointment when they reach retirement age?

Is there equal post retirement recognition for men and women who have served in institutions of higher education?

These are some of the questions that you can pose in trying to develop a gender-sensitive human resource policy and practices.

If, as a result of the rapid gender appraisal/audit of your institutions, you think there is need to intervene to develop more gender-sensitive human resources policies and practices, it may be advisable to conduct some in-depth research and analyse the dynamics of the gender inequalities that you might have identified. Your intervention will be strengthened by the presentation of hard data so that stakeholders are convinced that there is gender discrimination and inequity in your institution. The research can then be used as a tool for advocacy in human resources practices that might result from the research.

Activity 3D

Using the list of areas above, produce longitudinal data on each area by gender for your institution so that a five or ten year trend is discernible. You might note that some gender disparities may be narrowing while others might be widening. These data will indicate to you what you might be doing right in your institution as well as what needs improvement.

Programmes to Redress Gender Imbalances

A gender audit will help you to decide on what programmes to devise. Some possibilities are as follows:

- Secure the commitment of top management to change towards greater gender equality.
- Provide gender training to human resources practitioners and staff so that they are sensitive and fair to women and men's needs at work.
- Sponsor training for and hire more women at higher levels of academic management and administrative grades in higher education
- Produce guidelines on gender-sensitive interviewing and assessment of applicants to all jobs in institutions to avoid patronising, insulting and discriminatory comments and questions.
- Give equal weighting to different areas of academic excellence (research, teaching and community service) so that both men and women can excel in areas of their choice.
- Provide child care and recreational facilities that can be accessed equally by men and women so that the burden of travelling to and from schools, day care and other activities is minimized. Academic and other staff will therefore be more able to concentrate on their work on campuses and develop collegial networks necessary for career advancement.
- Provide a variety of staff development opportunities, local and international, resident and non-resident, sandwich and picnic programmes which take into account the varying gendered responsibilities for families and households.
- Sensitise funding and training partners to the differing needs of men and women in higher education so that they too, can develop and fund appropriate programmes that can be exploited by women and men equally.
- Allocate other benefits for spouses who are not able to access medical aid, pension and other benefits to which employers contribute.
- Set targets for reaching gender parity in staff and students at various levels.
- Alter recruitment criteria and procedures.
- Restructure departments to mainstream gender.
- Appoint one or more staff to be responsible for gender in each faculty.
- Make the workplace and work style and learning environment more woman friendly in various ways.
- Devise and implement gender equality monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.



Activity 3E Who should get the job?

The Human Resources Department of your institution has to fill a vacancy for a graduate trainee in the Department of Civil Engineering. Two candidates have been short listed: Tanya, a 29 year old female graduate of Civil Engineering. She finished top of her class. She has a 3-year-old daughter who goes to a day care centre that runs only until 3pm. The second candidate is 24 year old Tim, unmarried male, also in the top 5 percent of his class.

The selected candidate will have the opportunity to start graduate work almost immediately and will be required to travel outside the country for a year as part of the staff development programme of the institution.

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