

Module 9

Gender Disaggregated Data



Module 9

Disaggregated Data

Expected Outcomes

1. Better understanding of the need for disaggregated data, and of the type of data needed for decision making.
2. Establishment of gender disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data in higher education institutions for staff and students.
3. Systematisation of utilization of gender disaggregated data for improvement of the administration and establishment of gender equity and gender equality in higher education institutions.
4. Strengthening communication and information systems.
5. Establishment of supportive legislation, regulations and structures against discrimination and sexual harassment.

Situation Analysis

There is a paucity of gender disaggregated data in almost all higher education institutions. There is evidence, nevertheless, that there are large gender disparities between women and men in higher education institutions. A recent study by the Institute of Education, London University, as part of its study entitled *Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education* (2005), shows that there is gender equity in enrolments only in South Africa, out of the four African countries in the study (See Table 9A). The study outlines the challenges women face: issues of social class, poverty, race and the quality of earlier education complicate the picture. It is as important to measure achievement as to measure access.

**Table 9A. Female Enrolment at University Level in Selected African Countries, 2003
2004**

Nigeria	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda
39.9	53.0	24.0	34.0

Source: Institute of Education, University of London, *Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education*, Working Paper 1, Part 1, 2005, p. 10. [Http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid](http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid).

A desk study of a selection of African higher education institutions shows that there is a sizeable gender gap, related to particular areas and levels of study (See Table 9B). At undergraduate level, more women cluster around certificate and diploma courses than degree courses. At graduate level, there may be fewer women at masters and doctoral level, although there is insufficient data to be conclusive on these issues. There may be larger differences when specific subjects are surveyed. The tendency is for higher enrolment of women in education, arts and law faculties, and low enrolment in science, technology and engineering.

Table 9B. Percentage Enrolment of Women in Selected Institutions

	Year	Percentage Women at Undergraduate Level	Percentage Women at Graduate Level
Ibadan University	2000/1	41.8	30.9
Cape Town University	2002	45.0	51.0
Dar es Salam University	2003/4	31.3	12.7
Makerere University	2002/3	42.6	36.0
Ho Polytechnic, Ghana	2004/5	Certificate 53.6 Diploma 31.7	N/A
National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe	2005	Diploma 18.07 Undergraduate 32	23.81
University of Witwatersrand, S Africa	2005	Diploma 65.9 Undergraduate 51.8	Postgrad Diploma 40 Honours 56.5 Masters 44.5 Ph. D. 43.3

Sources: Institute of Education, University of London, *Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education*, Working Paper 3, 2005, p. 5, <http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid> and *African Association of Universities Questionnaire on Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education in Africa*, September 2005.

Witwatersrand University has the highest percentage of women at undergraduate level, whilst Cape Town has the highest at graduate level. Witwatersrand University follows a “target” policy rather than a “quota” system for gender equity for students and staff. This “target” policy has clearly succeeded. Witwatersrand University has an Employment Equity Plan, a Policy on Sexual Harassment and a Policy and Procedure for dealing with complaints of unfair racial and sexual discrimination. It has enrolment “targets” for male and female students. All of these touch on gender issues. These instruments for gender equity have clearly had an impact when compared to the other institutions.

There is a sizeable gender gap in the staffing situation at all levels. However it is particularly striking at the higher decision-making levels, where in four Commonwealth African universities, the percentage of women at professor, associate professor and senior lecturer level is decidedly lower than the percentage of men. At the lowest level of academic appointments, that of assistant lecturer, the percentage of women is surprisingly low, indicating that there is little focus on gender equity and gender equality in the staff development programme in these institutions.

Table 9C. Percentage Female Academic Staff in Selected Institutions

Institution	Year	Professor	Associate Professor	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer	Assistant Lecturer
Ibadan	2000/1	12.5		25.85	39.8	10.86
Cape Town	2000/1	7.0	17.0	33.0	41.0	
Dar es Salam	2003	5.2	14.8	11.9	10.6	17.7
Makerere	2004	6.1	20.0	15.95	23.4	22.9

Source: Institute of Education, University of London, *Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education, Working Paper 3*, 2005, p. 5, <http://ioewebsserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid>

In the questionnaire sent out by the Association of African Universities on Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education in Africa in 2005, respondents gave the percentage of women amongst the academic staff and amongst the senior management.

Table 9D. Percentage of Female Academic and Senior Management Staff in Selected Institutions

Institution	Year	Total Staff	% Women Academic Staff	% Women Senior Management
National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe	2005	Academic staff 173 Senior Management 51	15.0	13.7
University of Witwatersrand, South Africa	2005	Academic staff 1076 Senior Management 78	46.1	42.3

Source: *African Association of Universities Questionnaire on Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education in Africa*, September 2005.

It is evident that from this small sample that the University of Witwatersrand was again able to achieve a much higher level of gender equity than the other universities, due to its array of policies and instruments to prevent gender and other forms of injustice and discrimination.

Gender Disaggregated Data as Tool for Achieving Gender Equity and Gender Equality

Generally, higher education institutions in Africa do not collect or utilize a wide range of gender disaggregated data. Non-documentation makes it difficult to measure the degree of

disparities or to take steps to redress these inequities. As a result, analysis may be anecdotal rather than based on systematically documented data.

Where gender data is collected, it may be based on overall enrolments, rather than in greater detail by faculty and department. Overall statistics may be misleading: for example, large numbers of women may be enrolled in secretarial and nursing courses, boosting the statistics for overall enrolment, but there may be few women enrolled in disciplines such as medicine, agriculture, science, technology and engineering. Overall statistics thus lead to misleading conclusions.

There is little data on the areas women find problematic at university level and the impact those problems have on their levels of participation and performance. Generally there is little data on performance. Without suitable data, it is difficult to devise suitable programmes to address these difficulties.

Observations made by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) include the following:

- i) Data has remained quantitative and does not address the factors that influence women's (staff and students) poor performance or lack of opportunities for further studies.
- ii) Data is not always gender disaggregated
- iii) Data on factors that militate against women's career advancement (involvement in research, finance, workload and staff development processes) is generally unavailable.
- iv) Data on women's access and participation in informal network is inadequate. Women do not have opportunities to meet with the decision-makers in informal places, hence the disadvantage.
- v) Data on facilities available for conducive working and learning environment for women (staff and students) housing, childcare, distances between building, poor lighting etc) is lacking.
- vi) Data on existing networks within universities (both quantitative and qualitative) is lacking
- vii) Data on gender responsive curricula is inadequate¹

There is little data on sexual harassment, although there may be a lot of anecdotal accounts. These anecdotal accounts may comprise either under-reporting or exaggeration. Moreover sexual harassment may not be clearly defined, and there may be no systems for collecting information in this area.

Sexual harassment includes behaviours such as unwelcome and unwanted sexual contact e.g. verbal comments, abuse, gestures or physical contact of a sexual nature by individual or group, which is judged by recipient as

- (i) causing mental, physical and social discomfort
- (ii) interfering with her/his academic performance. This could result from threatened downgrading of marks, demoting, withholding privileges or dismissal as a result of sexual advances or promise of reward for compliance.

¹ V. Masanja, R. Karega, D. Kasente, M. Mbey, A. Kadi, N. Simelane, F. Nyamu, *Female Participation in Africa Universities : Issues of Concern and Possible Action*, FAWE Paper, 2001, pp. 4-5.

- (iii) creating an intimidating hostile or offensive environment for her/him.²

The study entitled *Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education, Working Paper 6* (2005) also indicates that detailed research can help to identify successful strategies and practices for tackling problems and challenges more effectively. Impediments may come from wider social factors such as social class, poverty, poor primary and secondary education, etc., or they may come from factors within the control of higher education institutions, such as biased enrolment criteria, staff recruitment and promotions procedures. Issues such as student accommodation and sexual harassment may affect students' ability to continue, but without data, such challenges cannot be addressed properly.³

The Situation of Women Students

Observations

Despite the fact that there is little detailed gender disaggregated data, there is an observable gender imbalance in admissions, with fewer women being admitted overall, and fewer in some science-related disciplines. These disparities are not actively addressed in the majority of institutions. If gender equity policies were in place, such disparities could be actively addressed, and redressed over time.

There may be less on-campus accommodation for women, yet women may find it more difficult to find off-campus accommodation, and are more likely to face sexual harassment en route or in private accommodation. In particular, a woman with a baby will not be able to find campus accommodation. There is little data and few programmes to assist women who have dropped out whether this is due to financial reasons, marital problems or pregnancy. Women with disabilities may be especially disadvantaged in terms of campus facilities. Data from Kenyatta University shows that the number of hostels for women in 2000 was half that for men, 6 as compared to 12, with women students occupying hostels comprising 32.2% of the total.⁴

Such problematic areas as gender violence and sexual harassment on campuses are not addressed because of the lack of data and policies regarding the challenges facing women students and staff. Such attacks may affect women students' performance as they may be afraid to go to the library and to evening classes out of fear of attacks. The reportedly high levels of rape and sexual harassment on campuses may lead to trauma and psycho-social problems which are unknown and unaddressed.

The problems faced by poorer women students have not been addressed. Lower income women, from remote rural areas and from high density urban areas, may face very serious problems even when they are enrolled in prestigious higher education institutions, and these problems may not be known or addressed. They may be liable to repeat and drop out more frequently. The level of transactional sex which female students engage in to survive is not well documented, although anecdotally, it may involve as many as half the women students. The effects of Structural Adjustment Programme changes on students' living conditions have not been documented: whereas middle class students, who now comprise the minority, may not have been badly affected as they are cushioned by their parents' wealth, students from

² Ibid, p. 5.

³ Institute of Education, University of London, *Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education, Working Paper 6*, 2005, pp. 7 - 9, <http://ioewebsserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid>.

⁴ Regina G. Mwachia Karega, "Statistical Overview on Girls' Education at the University Level", FAWE, Nairobi, 2001, p. 10.

lower socio-economic backgrounds may be seriously affected, facing problems such as lack of food, lack of accommodation, and lack of money for transport.

Older students may face different challenges from straight-from-school students. Whilst it is assumed that mature aged students have fewer problems than younger students, this assumption may be incorrect. Some policy decisions could be advantageous to mature students, such as the combination of distance education and face-to-face teaching, which will enable married women with children to access higher education more easily. Some policies may make it easier for women forced to drop out for economic or marital reasons to return. Age limits for scholarships for postgraduate studies may affect women adversely. The most frequent age limit is 42 years, and this is the age when most women cannot undertake full time study because of their responsibilities for their children.⁵

The collection of student data should include quantitative data, qualitative data, and socio-economic welfare data.

Activity 9A

Summarize what data is presently collected in your institution. How much of this is gender disaggregated? How is such data used for decision-making and by whom? Are there any specific programmes set up to address gender disparities?

Disaggregated Quantitative Data on Students

- Enrolments by year and discipline
- Information on ethnic groups, minority groups, disabled, rural/urban, economic levels
- Information on straight-from-school as compared to mature students
- Repetition rates
- Dropout rates - Causes of absenteeism and drop-out rates of girls in education system must be addressed.
- Completion rates

Disaggregated Qualitative Data on Students

- Achievement levels
- Participation in extra-mural activities
- Leadership roles in student affairs

Disaggregated Social and Welfare Data on Students

- Accommodation availability, quality of such accommodation, difficulties faced by students in different forms of accommodation
- Marital status and number of children, and their impact on academic study

⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

- Pregnancy occurrence and availability of reproductive health facilities
- Financial situation what difficulties are faced and by what percentage and profile of students
- Frequency of transactional sex the “sugar daddy” syndrome observable in many higher education institutions
- HIV/AIDS infection rates and care systems

Activity 9B

Select 5 key indicators from the above list of possible disaggregated data collection, and describe how they could be utilized to improve the situation of women students.

The Situation of Women Staff

Observations

Traditionally, university structures and set ups are very masculine and rigid. Very few universities are engaged in the process of changing existing practices to cater for women. As a result, women staff cluster around the lower levels of the academic and administrative structures. Most higher education institutions have no gender policy, and discrimination may be in-built and accepted as normal. Senate, council, faculty boards, recruitment and appointments committees, promotions committees, may have a predominance of male members, and consciously or unconsciously practise gender discrimination.

The legislation and regulations may be gender-blind, leading to discrimination against women and minority groups. Recruitment and promotions processes may not be transparent.

Personnel may also practise gender discrimination and sexual harassment may be accepted as normal. There may be need for gender re-orientation of all education personnel, and particularly of senior management. There may be no system for reporting and dealing with sexual harassment.

Women may be less qualified and publish less often than men. There may be reasons for these disparities, but these have seldom been addressed.

Activity 9C

1. Give the percentage of women in 5 departments/faculties in your establishment. What explanations are there for this situation? How can it be redressed?
2. Give the percentage of women in senior, middle and junior levels of academic and administration staff in your faculty. What explanations are there for this situation? How can it be redressed?

Disaggregated Quantitative Data on Staff

- Academic staff by sex and by seniority levels
- Managerial staff by sex and by seniority levels
- Support staff by sex and by seniority levels
- Gender balance in recruitment and appointments, promotions committees
- Gender balance in council and senate
- Marital status

Disaggregated Qualitative Data on Staff

- Qualifications and age of academic staff
- Teaching load
- Publications by sex
- Responsibility for student welfare programmes by sex
- Tenured and non-tenured staff
- Career progression
- Opportunities to access staff development schemes

Disaggregated Social and Welfare Data on Staff

- Accommodation: do regulations allow a married woman to access housing or housing loans?
- Marital status
- Financial status
- Availability to women of independent medical and pension schemes separate from their husbands

References

Association of African Universities Questionnaire on Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education in Africa, September 2005.

Bennett, J. 'Exploration of a "Gap": Strategising Gender Equity in African Universities' *Africa Gender Institute E-journal launch issue*, 2002. <http://www.feministafrica.org/01-2002/jane.html>

CIDA's Policy on Gender Equality, www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/ca/cida_ind.nsf/

Institute of Education, University of London, *Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education*, Working Papers 1 - 5, 2005. <http://ioewebsserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid>.

Jibril, Munzali, "Nigeria" in D. Teferra and Altbach . P (eds.) *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

Karega, Regina G. Mwatha, "Statistical Overview on Girls' Education at the University Level", FAWE, Nairobi, 2001.

Mama, Amina, "Restore, Reform but do not Transform: The Gender Politics of Higher Education in Africa" *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2003, pp 101 - 125

Masanja, V., Karega, R, Kasente, D, M. Mbey, A. Kadi, N. Simelane, F. Nyamu, *Female Participation in Africa Universities: Issues of Concern and Possible Action*, FAWE Paper, 2001

Odejide, Abiola (2003) "Navigating the seas: women in higher education in Nigeria" *Journal of Education* Vol. 38, 3 Fall 2003, pp 453-468

Pereira, Charmaine (Ed.), *Concepts and Methods for Gender and Women's studies in Nigeria. Report of the Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria. No. 2*, Zaria: Tamaza Publishing, 1997.

United Nations, *Beijing Platform on Education and Training of Women*, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/educa.htm.

United Nations, *Toolkit for Women, 3rd World Conference Nairobi 1985*, www.earthsummit2002.org/toolkits/women/un-doku/un-conf/nairobi.htm.