

Quality Matters

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A Quarterly Newsletter of the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA)

St. Mary's University College

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Quote of this issue

*"Education is the movement from
darkness to light"*

Allan Bloom

This newsletter is published every three months by the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA) of St Mary's University College (SMUC). The Objective of the newsletter is to inform the SMUC community as well as interested public, private, non-governmental stakeholders about the activities and endeavors of the institution in fostering quality education and research in the Ethiopian Higher Education setting.

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Two Policy Documents Drafted

Two policy documents, Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy and HIV/AIDS Policy of St. Mary's University College were drafted recently by the Gender Office.

In its mission, the HIV/AIDS Policy draft noted that "The University College strongly believes that the best mechanism to deal with these problems [HIV/AIDS] is by designing workable policy"

Meanwhile, the Office also introduced SMUC Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (SMUCASHP) with seven sections and 33 articles compiled into 20 pages.

Both policy documents await the approval of the University College's Senate to become officially functional. Up to now, the draft of the policy documents has been distributed among different officials of the University College and a discussion session organized by the Gender Office was held to collect comments that would enrich the documents. ■

From the Editorial Desk

Ethiopia is undergoing a remarkable change in the higher education sector. Expansion of HEIs in the country is still in progress. Currently, the number of public and private higher education institutions has reached 22 and 55 respectively, while the construction of ten new universities is underway. More than 80% of the student population, at present, is in the public HEIs.

Along with the expansion of HEIs, due attention is also given to the quality aspect of education provision by establishing a quality assurance agency (HERQA), which is mandated by proclamation to safeguard the relevance and the quality of the programs provided by each institution through internal and external quality assurance mechanisms. HEIs, on the other hand, are obliged by proclamation to establish a robust internal quality assurance system.

To assure their internal quality, higher education institutions should provide, among others, well organized and effective student support services. Student support services, as an internal quality assurance focus area, underpins the quality of the learning experience particularly in times of institutional changes as the basic block that can support the shift to student-centered learning, and is indeed one of the best mechanisms to monitor the activity of institutions including student attainment.

Gender mainstreaming is one aspect of student support services and a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. It is a process of creating

knowledge and awareness of and responsibility for gender equality among all education professionals engaged in tertiary education. It is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality in higher education institutions through sensitization and educating key stakeholders since the costs of women's marginalization and gender inequalities are borne by all in the education sector. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to gender equality are central to all activities - education policy, curriculum research, advocacy, resource allocation, facilities and planning, implementation and monitoring of tertiary education programs. It essentially involves systematic evidence gathering and analysis of the differential participation and completion of education by women and men, analysis of why gender differences persist etc. It also involves extensive consultation with students, instructors and the management, and opening up of a broader, free and frank dialogue on gender and higher education.

Ensuring equal access and opportunities for men and women and creating a level playing field involves engaging with the system and enabling decision-makers to work towards greater gender equality.

In this edition, it is our pleasure to have included a perspective on Gender mainstreaming as quality indicator, an interview, and a research review in relation to gender issues in the higher education sector. ■

News

HERQA's Conference on Quality of Higher Education

A two-day conference organized by HERQA was held at the Ethiopian Management Institute on the 3rd and 4th of May 2011. In the conference, seven papers were presented enabling participants have in-depth discussions on salient issues.

The conference was conducted under the theme "The influence of HERQA on the Quality and Relevance of Ethiopia's Higher Education System: Reflections on the Evidence". Participants ranged from leaders of higher education institutions - public and private - to those who have a stake in the education sector, including members of the House of Representatives. St. Mary's was represented by the President, EVP and AAVP.

The conference was officially opened by H.E. Ato Demeke Mekonnen, Minister of Education, and a welcoming address was made by HERQA's Director General, Dr Tesfaye Teshome.

From the private sector, Wondwosen Tamrat (Assist. Prof.), President of St. Mary's University College, presented a paper titled "Evaluating the Evaluator: HERQA in the Eyes of Private Higher Education Institutions". Dr. Arega Yirdaw, President of Unity University Board Chairman of the Ethiopian Private TVET and Higher Education Institutions' Association gave a closing speech and made remarks on such issues as the new 70/30 higher education intake policy and public-private partnership. Although no paper was presented from public HEIs, their active participation in the discussions made their presence felt in the entire sessions ■

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Training on Effective Leadership

The Offices of the Vice-President of Business and Administration & the Human Resource Management have collaboratively prepared a two day training on 'Effective Leadership' for top & middle level managers of SMUC from 20th to 21st of May 2011. The total number of participants in the training was twenty one. Ato Teshome Bekele, Lecturer at Addis Ababa University, gave the training. ■

St. Mary's has become an associate member of INQAAHE

SMUC has recently become an associate member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), a well-known world-wide association of over 200 member organizations. INQAAHE promotes theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education across the globe. ■

Training on Pedagogy

A pedagogical training was organized by the Academic Development and Resource Center (ADRC) of CEIQA for academic staff members of SMUC from 10th to 21st of May 2011.

The training was offered by internal and external resource persons from the Faculty of Teacher Education, Testing Center, Executive Vice-President's Office, CEIQA and Addis Ababa University. A total of 14 staff members of SMUC have successfully attended the training. ■

Research Corner

Research Title: Academic, Social and Psychological Correlates of Gender Disparity in Higher Education: The case of Debu University

Date of Publication: A research paper presented in the 4th annual national research conference on Private Higher Education organized and sponsored by St. Mary's University College. The proceeding was published in August 2006.

Researcher: Tesfaye Semela (Assistant Professor, Debu University)

The paper emphasizes that encouraging women enrollment is only the first step in the process of bridging the gender gap in HE participation in Ethiopia. Despite the fact that female participation has shown a marked increment over previous years, the female survival and success trend at HEIs does not seem to show an impressive picture due to factors that are not yet addressed but are inherent in academic activities, socio-cultural experiences, and psychological development of learners.

Having understood this fact, the study endeavored to describe the female enrollment and participation at national level; investigate gender differences in enrollment, attrition, and survival trends institutional level; empirically reveal the extent to which academic, socio-cultural and psychological variables impact female participation and survival based on case study; and derive policy recommendation based on the data generated.

The study revealed that HE participation is still considered low as compared to the region.

Regardless of gender, post secondary enrollment until 2000 was below 1% among the eligible age group (World Bank 2003). According to EMIS-MoE Education Statistics (1998-99 academic year), only 15.4% were female, which was the lowest participation rate next to Central African Republic (Mama. A, 2003 - *Journal of Higher Education for Africa*).

In describing the socializing agents toward female students success in higher education, the study shows that parental expectation affects scholastic achievement of their children in Physics i.e. parents expected their daughters to have lower ability in Physics than they expected their sons.

On the other hand, self-concept is considered to be an important variable in explaining and predicting students' achievement. Subsequently, such studies have also documented the existence of gender differences in academic self-concept relative to the kind of subjects students learn in school.

In the study, which included 134 (male=94; female=40) respondents, it is indicated that female students enrollment has generally increased; however, despite the claim that females tend to choose traditional streams like language and humanities, all areas were found to be dominated by men.

The paper concluded that traditional sex-role orientation among female college students undermined their academic self-concept by associating hard science areas like mathematics and physics, which are considered as key subjects to succeed in college, to masculine students. ■

Interview

This column features interviews of people including government officials, policy makers, educators, researchers, and presidents of universities or colleges as well as students on issues of importance in the higher education sector. This edition presents interview with W/ro Mekdes Eyoel - the director of Gender Directorate at the Ministry of Education.



Background

W/ro Mekdes Eyoel is currently Director of Gender Directorate Office at the Ministry of Education. She received her Master of Arts in Gender Studies from Addis Ababa University.

She has worked as a lecturer and Head of the Gender Office at Hawassa University before she joined the Ministry of Education. ■

Quality Matters: *What does the status of women in teaching-learning activities of higher education look like?*

W/ro Mekdes: The number of female academic staff increased from 468 in 1998 E.C. to 1465 in 2002 E. C.. These data show that we have to work a lot to increase the number of female academic staff. So, MOE targeted in ESDP IV to increase share of female leaders and academic staff from 3% to 16% in 2007 E.C.

Quality Matters: *How important is gender mainstreaming in tertiary education and which mechanism should be in place to address gender issues in the Ethiopian Higher Education Sector?*

W/ro Mekdes: Tertiary education is a means to generate highly skilled and knowledgeable personnel for social and economic advancement of a country. It is the source from where the future decision makers and policy makers emerge. Therefore, in order to see empowered women at decision and policy making positions, gender mainstreaming will be a key process at tertiary level. More over, it is interlinked with development of a country, the MDGs and EFA goals. The presence of access and opportunity for women at tertiary level pulls children to the education system.

Quality Matters: *To what extent is the culture of our Higher Education Institutions supportive of equal opportunities for women?*

W/ro Mekdes: Currently, there is a good start to ►►

support female students in all our higher education institutions by establishing Gender Offices that assure equal opportunities for female students. The Gender Office gives academic support counselling and financial support for needy female students so that they can successfully attain their studies. The monitoring and evaluation system at the Ministry of Education has put Gender in place as one component for higher learning institutions.

Quality Matters: Do you think that handling gender issue can be one of the quality indicators of higher education?

W/ro Mekdes: Yes, one of the major gender issues at HEIs is gender insensitive classroom interaction. This means the teacher handles a class and teaching material without assessing the different factors that affect the learning teaching process. To alleviate the problem, the instructor must assess the different factors that hinder girls not to be active participants. The other indicator is creating in class and on campus enabling environment and encouraging atmosphere for students to learn. This means the teaching learning environment should be gender sensitive and free of gender based violence to make it conducive for female students. Generally, if quality indicators are achieved the gender issues in learning and teaching process will be addressed.

Quality Matters: How is Ethiopia addressing Gender issue (especially in higher education)?

W/ro Mekdes: There are promising activities and results of mainstreaming gender in higher education sector. Gender offices are established at all public higher learning institutions and some private higher learning institutions to ensure gender equality and address gender issues. Affirmative actions for female students are being implemented to give access for female students to tertiary education.

The affirmative actions like tutorial and special support programs continue to improve the retention rate of first year female students. In order to create conducive learning environment, MOE prepared a draft sexual code of conduct which is in a process to be appraised by university senates. In addition, the ESDP IV and GTP have given special attention to gender mainstreaming at higher learning institutions. In ESDP IV, we targeted female students' completion rate to be 90 %,to increase enrollment rate at higher education institutions from 29% to 40%.

Quality Matters: What is your recommendation to mainstreaming gender in higher education?

W/ro Mekdes: In order to mainsream gender in higher learning institutions,the following measures should be considered:

- The commitment of the management is the first step to address gender issues at HEIs;
- The community (academic, nonacademic and students) of the HEIs should consider ensuring gender equality as part of their job. It should be included in the job description of all staff and students'code of conduct;
- Creating conducive and gender friendly environment;
- Making indicators of quality to address gender issues;
- The gender offices with the necessary resources; putting in place sexual harassment code of conduct and gender policy; and
- Giving special support and mentoring services for needy female students.

Perspective

Gender: a Quality Indicator in the Education Sector

By Ergogie Tesfaye
(Head, Gender Office)

The importance of education has been emphasized time and again by a number of international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. Moreover, the fourth world conference on women held in Beijing in 1995 recognized that women's literacy is key to empowering women's participation in decision making in society and in improving families' well-being. The Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) emphasize the essential role of education in building democratic and civilized society and creating a foundation for sustainable economic growth. Therefore, education as a social right and a development imperative should involve both women and men equally.

The inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the MDGs suggest that the importance of addressing gender equality in meeting the challenges of poverty and development has been recognized. But, its quantitative measurement do not go nearly far enough in terms of assessing what the value of formal education is for the increasing number of girls and women who are accessing education.

What do we mean by quality education? Policy makers, instructors, parents and learners have different perspectives and opinions about what quality

education is. There are many frameworks for thinking about quality education and many different notions of quality that underpin policies. Many frameworks consider issues of gender equality and equity more broadly as a separate issue and restrict quality to a list of educational inputs, while others consider equity-subsuming gender equality within it – as one distinct dimension of quality. Often, too, quality frameworks focus exclusively on schooling as if it were disassociated from the wider social, cultural, political and economic environment-at the local, national and global levels.

If one begins with the importance of social justice and examining educational practices in terms of the values that they are built upon, the dimension of quality gender equitable education could be achieved. Working towards such education recognizes that gendered roles and relationships as well as educational practices and processes are outcomes of negotiations of power and find expressions within specific historical and social contexts.

The status and quality of higher education are useful indicators of a country's social and economic development. In addition, it critically influences the quality and depth of public discourse and policy making to generate highly skilled and knowledgeable personnel for social and economic advancement. Equally, proactive and promotion of greater and equitable participation of women and men of all social groups in education can have a significant downstream impact. More women, both in public and ►►

private sectors, have a greater effect- creating role models for women and girls in traditional communities where gender discrimination and sex segregation are taken as the norm.

The quality of education, as a means for social change, does not stand alone. Rather the cumulative package of educational, social and gender-based disadvantages is carried into the higher education space. Therefore, it is not possible to analyze quality of education without addressing gender inequality in education. Thus, higher education institutions are strategically placed to undertake multidisciplinary research and practices giving due attention to gender equality issues. If this has taken place practically, quality education contributes directly to the growth of national income by improving the productive capacities of the labour force. Moreover, it is a key strategy for reducing poverty.

But on the other hand, in the increasingly open global economy, countries with high rate of illiteracy and gender gaps in educational attainment tend to be less competitive. As women cover half of the world's population, an education institution could not attain the aforementioned positive expected outcomes ignoring half part of the society. So, that is why the issue of gender equity and equality in the education sector must be an indicator of the quality of education. The education sector could provide quality education, if and only if, it incorporates gender into consideration. In order to bring sustainable development and growth of a country, half of the working task force, the women, should not be neglected. Giving more

emphasis to gender, particularly to women, for sure increases labour force that contributes to the economic growth.

It is not enough to make education more widely available; the quality of education also needs to be improved. Education should not only be 'means of perpetuating social stratification and poverty reduction' but also a means of increasing social equality. Gender sensitivity and responsiveness is a key aspect of the quality of education. Educational system should be sensitive and responsive to the specific needs of women. Yet, the curricula and teaching materials – and the media which has a powerful role in shaping people's knowledge and opinion – often reinforce traditional roles that may deny women opportunities for full and equal participation in the society. As a result, efforts to improve education in general and female education in particular, need to go beyond rhetoric and should involve policies and programmes with measurable results.

Therefore, the government should make the MDGs part of the national development plans and monitoring progress toward those goals. The government also needs to make an extra effort to ensure that education is more accessible to women, as this signifies the quality of the national education and the most rewarding investment a country can make. Investing in female education will accelerate the country's economic and social development by enhancing human capital, handling population growth and alleviating poverty. In addition, gender

mainstreaming, which requires high-level commitment among advocates, policy makers and top management at different levels, is essential for promoting gender equality in Higher Education Institutions. ■

FORTHCOMING EVENT

27th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning

Organized by: University of Wisconsin-Madison
Division of Continuing Studies

Contact name: Kimary Peterson

Recognized internationally for the quality and integrity of its program, the conference provides an exchange of current resources, research, and best practices that are relevant to the design and delivery of distance education/training.

For latest details, please visit:

<http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/index.cfm>

For registration information, please visit:

http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/Registration_2011.cfm

Virtual Links

Ethiopian Ministry of Education

Web site: <http://www.moe.gov.et>

Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (Ethiopia)

Website: www.higher.edu.et

PROPHE- Programme for Research on Private Higher Education

Website: www.albany.edu/dept/eaps/prophe/

International Network for Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (INQAAHE)

Website: <http://www.inqaahe.org>

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK)

Website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

Center for International Research on Higher Education

Website: http://bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe

Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia

Website: <http://www.qsae.org/>

International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

Website: <http://www.eric.ed.gov>

International Network for Higher Education in Africa (NHEA)

Website: <http://www.bc.edu>

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in higher Education

Website: <http://www.inqaahe.nl>

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Website: <http://www.enqa.eu>

Asian Pacific Quality Network

Website: <http://www.apqn.org>

Ethiopian Knowledge and Technology Transfer Society (EKTTS)

Website: <http://www.ektts.org>

Association of African Universities (AAU)

Website: <http://www.aau.org>

HEDDA, Higher Education Development Association

Website: <http://uv-net.uio.no/wpmu/hedda/about/>

The African Quality Assurance Network

Website: <http://afriqan.aau.org/>

Fun Corner

Grading the Essay

A professor was grading the essay finals he had just given his class and opened the exam book of a failing student to reveal blank pages and a \$100 bill. The only thing written in the book was "\$100 = 100% - I get an A."

A month later, the student approached the professor. "I don't understand," he said. "I failed the course. Didn't you read my final?" The professor handed the student the exam book.

The student opened it to reveal \$50 and the phrase "\$50 = 50% - You fail!"

Fooling the Professor

Two college seniors had a week of exams coming up. However, they decided to party instead. So, when they went to the test, they decided to tell the professor that their car had broken down the night before due to a very flat tyre and they needed a bit more time to study.

The professor told them that they could have another day to study. That evening, both of the boys crammed all night until they were sure that they knew just about everything.

Arriving to class the next morning, each boy was told to go to separate classrooms to take the exam. Each shrugged and went to two different parts of the building. As each sat down, they read the first question. "For 5 points, explain the contents of an atom."

At this point, they both thought that this was going to be a piece of cake, and answered the question with ease.

Then, the test continued... "For 95 points, tell me which tyre it was."

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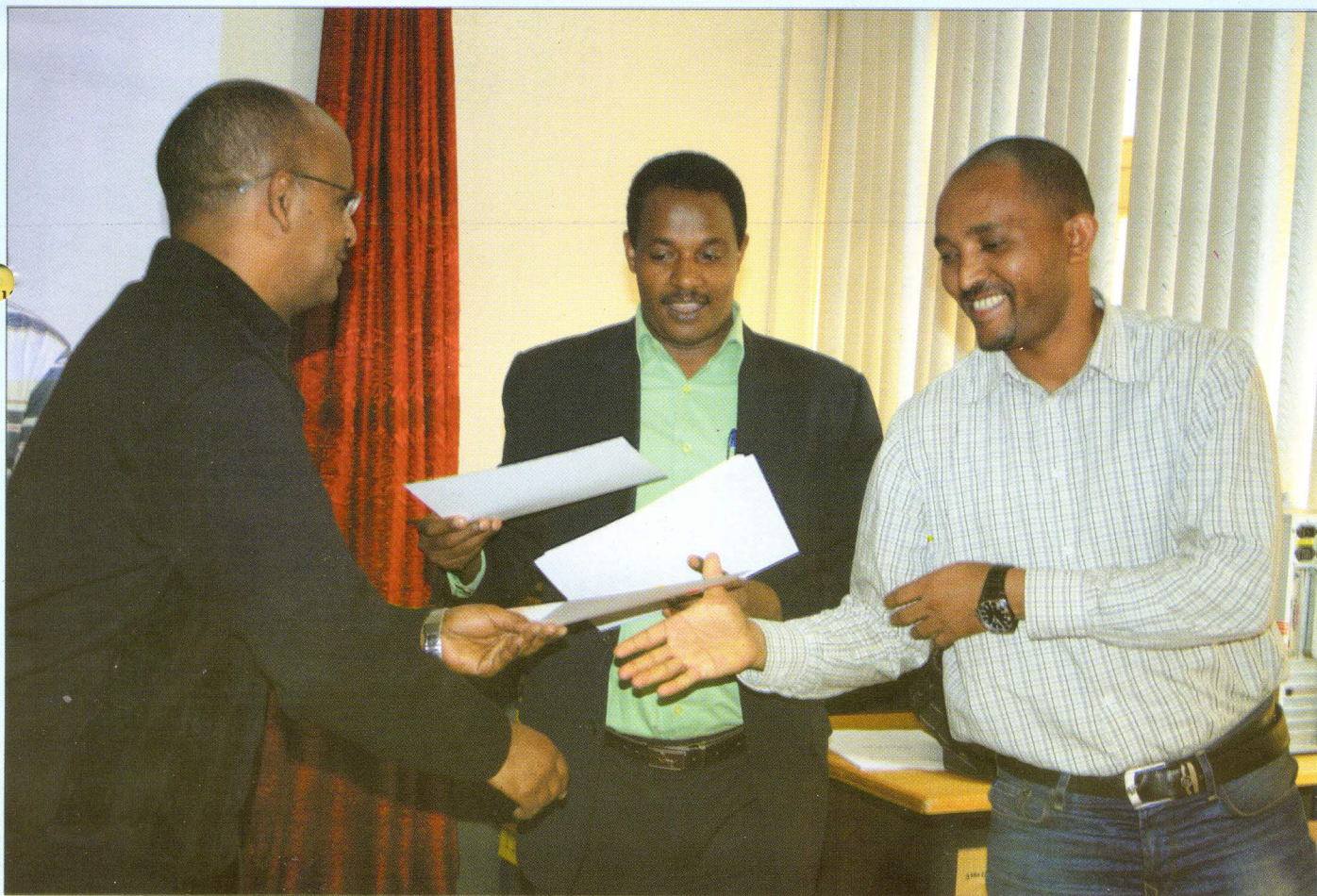
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Leadership Training



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