Gender Equity in TVET

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Commonwealth of Learning
Gender at COL

- gender equality is a cross-cutting corporate goal
- the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment are central to COL’s agenda of learning for development
Gender & ODL

- ODL helpful for women and girls to access educational opportunities alongside other responsibilities
- COL uses ODL to help promote gender equality and the full participation of women and girls in education and especially MST
- address unequal gender relations that prevent equitable development
Women in MST: COL study

- Women enrol in greater proportions in arts and social sciences than they do in MST, the world over.
- Underrepresentation of women has been largely structural, created in and through the social structures of institutions and the segmentation of the labour market.
- Affected by social values and beliefs about appropriate roles and expectations.
- Host of barriers to women's participation.

Fairness

Resources
Women in national development

- If we do not ensure that girls and women get **equal opportunities** to participate in TVET then national development will be severely hampered.

- Majority of women are confined to low-paid, un-skilled work, working long hours which just about keep them above the poverty line.

- Large numbers of female-headed households.

- Often the only bread-winner – working unqualified in informal sector.
International gender statements

• Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
• > dozen statements promoting inclusion and equity for women
• World Declaration on Education for All – Jomtien 1990

The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated.
Planning & implementation

- Recognition of the right to education
- Most countries enshrine this right in law
- Realisation of that right is not achieved for girls
- Policy is strong, implementation is weak
- Have to make the vision a reality!
Barriers to female participation

- Cultural
- Attitudinal
- Qualifications
- Situational
- Institutional barriers
Cultural

• common patterns in role and status of women emerge across countries, despite widely different circumstances

• they reflect the cultural and cross cultural social norms and traditions by which the subservient status of women is maintained

• In some societies these create “almost insuperable obstacles to women's participation in education”

   Evans and King 1991
Attitudinal

- perceived differences in male and female roles and capabilities, inculcated through socialisation in the home and family, reinforced through schooling, through career guidance services, through experiences in the workplace, peer pressure and through absence of female role models
- motivation and self-confidence is needed to break through these barriers
- lack of confidence and self esteem is itself a major barrier, and has to be directly addressed by any successful initiative in girls participation.
Qualifications

• lack of maths/science qualifications for entry to TVET programmes
• as many girls as boys achieve general proficiency in maths and science, but remain girls are underrepresented in MST subjects at higher levels once "choices" are made
• the belief continues to persist that females are by nature technologically ignorant and unable to absorb scientific and technological information or to acquire technical skills
Situational

- family commitments, lack of partner support, financial, living in rural/isolated areas
- fees requirements - where women do not have control of resources, where they are dependent on male partners who are unsupportive
- male partners are more likely to be unsupportive of entry to non-traditional, male oriented spheres
- poverty is a major factor
- combined effects of poverty and social or cultural sanctions create almost insuperable barriers
Institutional

- fixed hours
- lockstep approach to curriculum makes missed sessions hard to catch up on
- lack of child care facilities
- off putting, "unfriendly" course information
- lack of female teachers/assumptions and attitudes of male teachers
Institutional barriers

• male orientation in course publicity
• inflexible selection and entry requirements
• TVET often has large attendance requirement for practical skills/laboratory based work
• male oriented language and male images in teaching materials
• teaching approaches and curriculum content which ignores the social context of technology
Areas for attention

- Teacher as agent of change
- College as agent of change
- Reach out to parents & learners
- Change at traditional/cultural level
Teacher as change agent

Ensure gender equity in treatment of girls

- Teacher sensitization
- Gender balanced learning materials
- Lookout for cultural gender stereotypes
- Active membership of WITED
Women in TVET – WITED

- Started as CAPA
- National organisation with institutional Chapters
- Promote equality in TVET for women & girls
- Members are both male and female, management, teaching and support staff
- Pay a small monthly subscription to fund activities
- Meet regularly to actually DO something about helping more women benefit from TVET
WITED Activities

- sensitization visits to schools, traditional rulers and opinion leaders
- female role models to improve image of TVET
- run extra-mural science classes and adult literacy programmes
- provide career counseling
- run day-care centres and cooperative societies
- conferences and publication of journals
- campus environmental sanitation activities
College as agent of change

- Review course offerings & actively promote TVET for women
- Review how TVET courses are promoted
- Improve potential risks of sexual harassment at college
- Ensure adequate sanitary facilities for women
- Consider provision of nursery facilities
- Support WITED
Reach out to parents & learners

• New flexible courses can target female learners in short courses
• Need to attract women to college
  • The right subjects
  • Flexible times and place of study
  • Provision of child care
• Career choices are highly influenced by parents
• Is there a need for special sensitization sessions for parents?
FSD Gender equity activities

- Balance in workshop nominees
- Support female participation in international conferences
- Equity & Gender discussions on CLN
- Focus on courses for women in informal sector

Future

- Promote WITED
Recent gender workshop at Auchi

- Workshops for parents to recognise their vital role
- Legislate against early marriage and bride price
- Feminism is not about reducing standards
- Work with traditional and community leaders to promote benefits of girls in TVET
- Improve image of TVET
- Female role models to promote TVET
### Students by gender: 2010

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<th>Institution</th>
<th>M %</th>
<th>F %</th>
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The COL Challenge
Improving gender parity in TVET

What is the one thing I can do to improve the participation of women and girls in technical and vocational education and skills training?
Thank you

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