

Pedagogies of Inclusion project: Virtual Stakeholder Co-creation Workshop Report

Introduction

The virtual stakeholder co-creation workshop, held on February 27, 2024, was a collaborative effort between the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), and the University of Johannesburg (UJ). The workshop brought together stakeholders focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) within Southern Africa's higher education ecosystem. The stakeholders shared invaluable reflections and insights to help shape the research framework of the Pedagogies of Inclusion project supported by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and implemented by APHRC and UJ. SARUA functions as an inclusive and vibrant regional convening membership organization that represents the entire Southern African Development Community (SADC) higher education region and strives to cater to the diverse needs of both public and private higher education institutions.

Outcomes of the Thematic Discussions

Reporting on student success in STEM

1. Some institutions indicated that information about student success rates in STEM programs is segregated by gender when reported.
2. Excellent students in STEM disciplines are featured on individual university websites.
3. Boards of examiners in some universities award the best students in STEM disciplines and promote their work on their universities' websites.

Policies regarding women and inclusion

1. There exist national institutional affirmative action policies that promote lower entry requirements for female students during enrolment in STEM.
2. There is a lack of gender-based violence prevention and management policies that focus on female students.
3. Mozambique has a national gender policy that mentions the inclusion of women in STEM and promotes gender equality.
4. Some countries have national policies to encourage enrolment of female students from marginalized backgrounds.

Literature on women, inclusion, and pedagogy

1. Zimbabwe has conducted research on women and agriculture to improve livelihoods.
2. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report on leaving no one behind focuses on STEM.
3. There is a gradual positive trend in the number of women participating in STEM in some African countries.
4. There is limited sensitization and effective implementation plans to increase women's participation in STEM programs.

Innovative practices: women, inclusion, pedagogy, and STEM

1. Sponsorship and career mentorship programs to promote female students' enrolment and participation in STEM.
2. Establishment of disability centers and innovation hubs to promote access to STEM programs for students with disabilities.
3. Bridging courses in STEM disciplines segregated by gender are offered after high school.

Demographic Characteristics of the Stakeholders

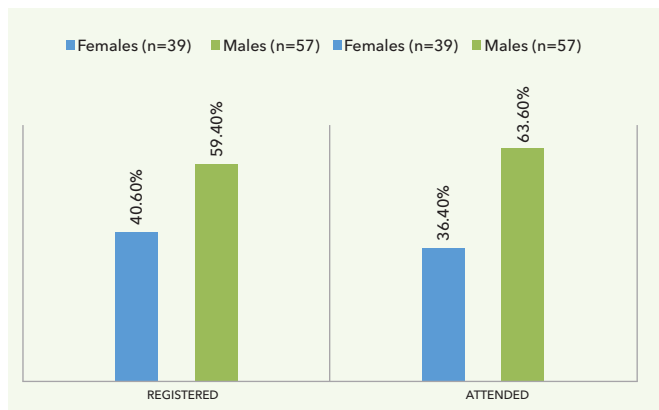


Figure 1: SARUA stakeholder workshop registration and attendance by gender.

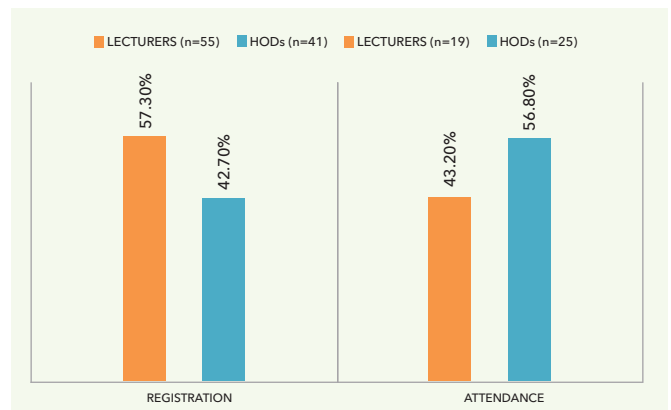


Figure 2: SASARUA stakeholder workshop registration and attendance according to position held.

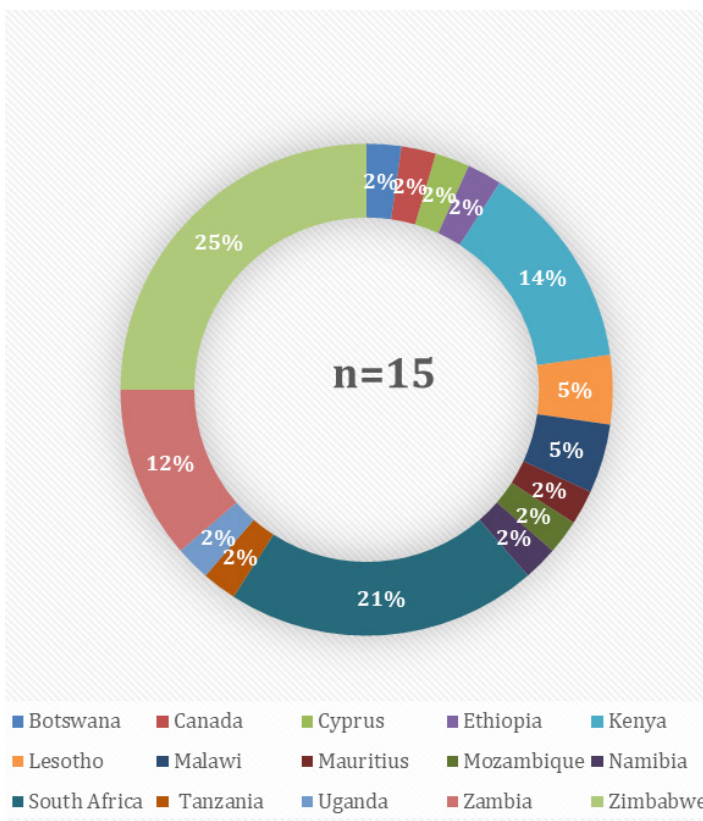


Figure 3: SARUA stakeholder workshop attendance by country

Way Forward

In collaboration with SARUA, we look forward to continued engagement and inclusion of stakeholders' voices in successive stages of the research process, with validation of findings at the end of the project. The ultimate aim is to build a collaborative research agenda and develop communities of practice with the stakeholders, including practitioners and policymakers, on how pedagogical practices can address issues of social exclusion, particularly gendered exclusion, in STEM disciplines in Africa's higher education institutions.

The SARUA workshop was part of a series of regional virtual stakeholder co-creation workshops. The other workshops were held in collaboration with the Inter-University Council for Eastern Africa (IUCEA) in Eastern Africa, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in Western Africa, and the Association of African Universities (AAU) for a continental reach.

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