

Stakeholder Workshop Report for the Association for African Universities (AAU) held virtually on 29 February 2024

Introduction

The virtual stakeholder co-creation workshop, held on February 29, 2024, was a collaborative effort between the Association for African Universities (AAU), 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 the African continent'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 being implemented by APHRC and UJ. As the voice of higher education in Africa, AAU strives to enhance the quality and relevance of higher education in Africa and strengthen its contribution to Africa's development.

Outcomes of the Thematic Discussions

Reporting on Student Success in STEM

1. The management of the University of Namibia shares data on female graduates in STEM disciplines on its website.
2. Some institutions reported that motherhood affects the enrolment of female students into Ph.D. programs.
3. Some institutions of higher learning report students' performance in science disciplines by gender.

Policies Regarding Women and Inclusion

1. Some countries implement affirmative action policies that consider low entry grades for female students in science disciplines.
2. Some countries have policies on sexual and gender-based violence to promote safety for female students and women joining STEM courses.
3. There exist gender development policies in some countries to encourage participation of women in STEM programs.
4. In certain countries, like Norway, governments give preference to African female students regarding funding to pursue science courses.

Literature on Women, Inclusion and Pedagogy

1. At the University of Dar es Salaam, a curriculum review is being conducted to incorporate women with disabilities in STEM programs.
2. The University of Ghana is conducting research on the status of female students' education in STEM programs that is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).
3. In South Africa, some universities have conducted research and published journal articles on women's participation in STEM courses.

Innovative Practices on Women, Inclusion, Pedagogy, and STEM

1. In some countries, the World Bank Group sponsors young women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to undertake bridging programs and prepare them for science courses.
2. Certain countries implement affirmative action and merit scholarship programs that allow female students to enroll with low entry points and access financial benefits in science courses.
3. The African Regional Centre for Space, Science, and Technology Education in English (ARCSSTEE) in Nigeria, exists to increase women's participation in STEM.
4. Some countries convene annual STEM fairs and mentorship initiatives that leverage associations for women in science and engineering to encourage female students.
5. The Open University of Tanzania encourages distance learning to allow women to study science programs while balancing family responsibilities.

Demographic Characteristics of the Stakeholders

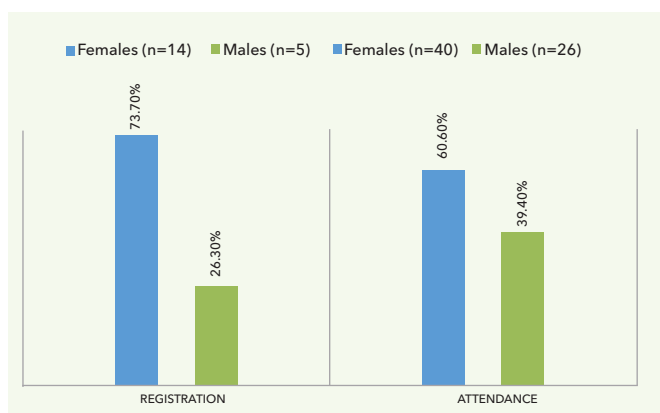


Figure 1: AAU stakeholder workshop registration and attendance by gender.

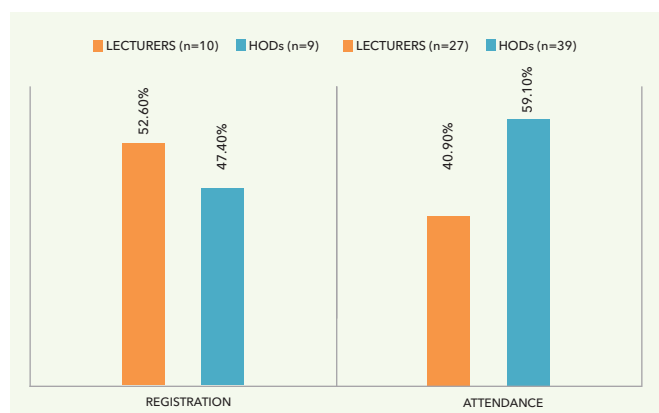


Figure 2: AAU stakeholder workshop registration and attendance according to the position held.

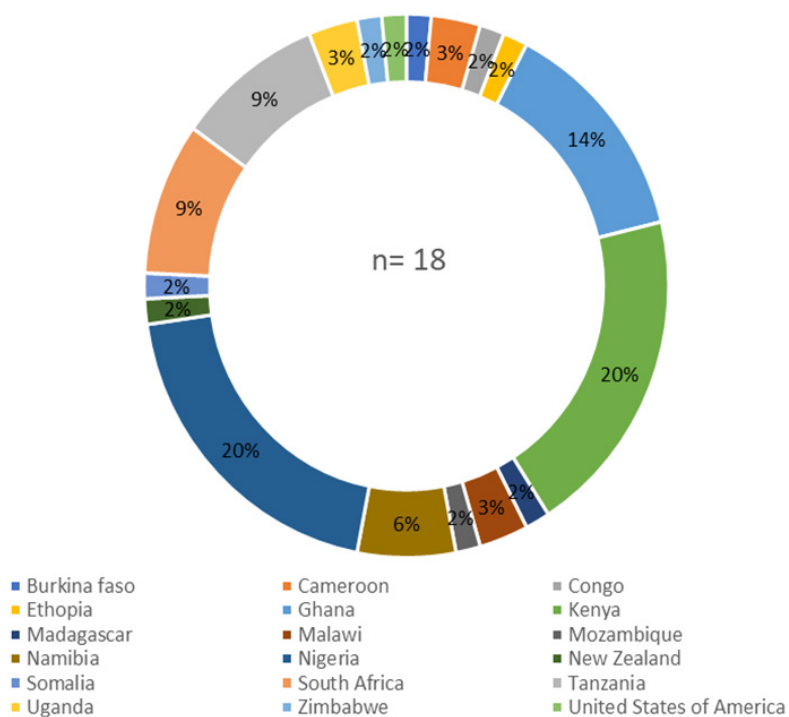


Figure 3: AAU stakeholder workshop attendance by country

Way Forward

In collaboration with AAU, 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 policy makers, on how pedagogical practices can address issues of social exclusion, particularly gendered exclusion, in STEM disciplines in Africa's higher education institutions.

The AAU 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 Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in Western Africa.

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