

It is a Long Way to the Top

This is a research report of the CODESRIA:

## **Higher Education Leadership Programme (HELP)**

Launched in 2011, with funding support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), the HELP program sought to support research networks, policy forums and publications to document and provide an understanding of transformations underway with regard to the governance and leadership of higher education institutions in Africa. In initiating the program, CODESRIA was motivated by the desire to contribute to the knowledge base and initiate policy debates that would deepen the reforms, as leadership and governance are central to ensuring the quality and relevance of higher education in the continent.

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**It is a Long Way to the Top**  
**Increasing Women's Leadership in Ugandan**  
**Public Universities**

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**CODESRIA**

Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa  
DAKAR

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# Preface

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The CODESRIA Higher Education Leadership Programme (HELP) is among the council's research initiatives listed as a special programme. With the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the governance and leadership programme in African universities is aimed at documenting ongoing changes in governance practices in universities within historical and contemporary contexts. This programme is operationalised through working groups and thematic areas. The Uganda national working group consists of a partnership between four public universities namely: Kyambogo and Makerere (central region), Gulu University (in the northern region) and Mbarara University (western region).

Ugandan public universities face a number of crises revolving around low funding and limited resources that have compromised quality of teaching, spawned incessant staff and students' strikes and slowed progress in addressing national development goals, among other challenges. Strengthening the effectiveness of individual university leaders is bigger than the mere preservation and enrichment of institutions; it empowers them to serve communities and society at large. In this case, the university reforms should be seen as part of a fundamental transformation of the values and vision of society as a whole: men, women, boys and girls.

The motivation for this research is the desire to add our voices to those who decry the continues domination of various governance bodies (council, senate and academic boards) by men and the virtual exclusion or poor representation of women. Yet it is from these boards and committees that top leaders such as Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, College Principals, Deans, officers and heads of departments emerge. The national constitution together with a number of other policies and programmes guarantee legal provisions for gender equity. This is slowly transforming the gender composition of institutions at national level, but unfortunately, not much impact is felt in universities because embracing gender equality and equity in the governance and leadership boards has been slow and prone to resistance.

This research is conceived on the idea that capacity building in gender policy formulation and implementation is a shared responsibility of Makerere University that has received a lot of support to develop this capacity. The establishment of Gulu and Mbarara Universities as public universities in Uganda therefore necessitates an examination of the manner in which men and women are located in these universities, both as students and staff. The research unearths the gender terrain of the universities in order to make explicit the gender gaps that exist in enrolment, retention, teaching and learning environment, research, career progression, organisational cultures, and welfare services. Ten female professors speak about their experiences in leadership and the ways in which universities can build gender balanced leadership cultures.



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This kind of publication is often the result of concerted effort from a range of discreet and non-discreet individuals and organisations. The information in this report is jointly collected and compiled by researchers from the School of Women and Gender Studies and the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate of Makerere University; and the Academic Registrar's Office, Gulu and Mbarara Universities. We enjoyed the valuable contributions of Mr. Geoffrey Lamtoo, Ms. Stella Laloyo and Sr. Rosalba Aciro of Gulu University; and Ms. Sarah Muzaki who provided the initial thoughts regarding the gender terrain in Mbarara University. Research assistants Mr. Noor Muhidin, Mr. Eric Tumwesigye, Ms. Racheal Mirembe and Ms. Leila Kasozi worked tirelessly with us. A lot of thanks also go to Prof. Ruth Mukama for the editorial work. We are indebted to the CODESRIA, Higher Education Leadership programme (HELP) through their coordination support office and Mr Ibrahim Oanda for the generous financial and moral support extended to us.

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Lastly, this report is also a result of the numerous meetings, interviews, group discussions and workshops between the researchers and the different categories of staff and students at the Universities of Gulu, Kyambogo, and Mbarara, We value and are grateful for their input and contributions.



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## Background to the Study

### **Introduction**

Numerous researches have indicated that women's participation in higher education has significantly increased in response to the need and struggle to produce new and relevant knowledge in the 21st century. Women have displayed their commitment to education and they increasingly regard it as a route to personal and collective liberation and empowerment. The writers have alluded that women have embraced modern public universities with dedication and enthusiasm, attending them as learners, and serving them as scholars and researchers, teachers and administrators, not to mention the support roles in the various sections in welfare, catering, health, cleaning and other support services that are crucial for the daily operation of universities.

Universities play a key role in shaping society and building active citizens. Many people who assume powerful roles in society have a background in higher education. This implies that a gender equal higher education also has a huge, long term impact on gender equality within society. Therefore, universities did fight for a gender equal environment that preserved equal chances for both women and men. However, Literature reviewed on Ugandan universities shows that today's situation does not meet the threshold for equal participation of females and males in different stages of a university career. The distribution of power and financial resources that accrue to it is not the same for females and males. This includes personal benefits that result from education.

Increasing women leadership in universities demands that data on growth trends for past years is re-examined. Academic universities need all the leaders it can develop to address accelerating institutional and societal needs, so the waste of

the potential of most women is of growing concern. Only institutions that recruit and retain women will be likely to maintain the best academic and non-academic staff because the universities analysed indicated that the long-term success of their academic centres was inextricably linked to the development of women leaders. There was thus need for long and sustained commitment to improving the representation of women in senior positions specifically, and throughout the organisation generally. So far, we can conclude that the progress achieved is inadequate. In so doing, we draw on the theory and practice that underpins organisational cultural change and on strategic planning principles and practice to systematically delve into proposals of the strategies to increase their numbers.

The females interviewed expressed a number of gender based challenges that will need to be addressed if the University is to attract female teaching staff. A number of universities examined did not treat academic staff as human resources to be retained and developed, thus a framework was often lacking for improving their professional development in general and, in particular, women's leadership capacities. To note, mentoring provides the needed experience for women aspiring to become leaders although it can also be argued that rather than seeing the women as requiring remedial support, it is the organisations that require transformational change. It is, therefore, concluded that the paucity of research on leadership development and executive election in academia means that a framework is also lacking for understanding how best to improve women's leadership development.

A number of challenges are noted to affect not only academic members of staff but also their other employees and students at large. Gendered disciplinary choices which often see women missing from science, technology and mathematics; gendered learning and working environments; discrimination that occurs in the most subtle ways for all the categories of staff; socio-cultural factors such as the emphasis on marriage and fertility as more important indicators of women's social value success than educational attainment; the devaluation and disempowerment of academic women through lack of investment in them; gender violence taking the form of sexual harassment, or transactional sex (sex for grades) and social exclusion; lack of structural interventions to provide information and support for women to enter leadership; and lack of awareness of gendered dimensions within universities.

Some of the enablers that have been identified include: an integrated and sustainable approach to gender interventions throughout educational sector; strong national and international policy contexts for gender equality; community initiatives and coalitions between the home, school/university and non-governmental organisations e.g. outreach programmes; girl-child education

movement and international funding schemes e.g. the Master Card and Carnegie Corporation of New York's scholarship programmes and curriculum transformation including the introduction of women's and gender studies. The focus is built on the understanding that gender equality as a strategic priority in universities' planning and reporting processes should be embedded in the practice that underpins the organisational culture of these universities. A change in and emphasis on strategic planning principles and practice as well as financial support to strengthen women organising efforts will necessarily improve women's representation.

## **Universities and the Equality Challenge**

The globalisation of the economy and of higher education as one industry within it has increased. Moreover, increasing international competition and rapid technological change are each and together transforming the context in which universities operate, locally, nationally and globally. These intersecting trends are impacting upon the nature of work and working conditions within them. Much has already been written about the implications for organisations of the fundamental shift from the old industrialised to the new knowledge economy (Ramsay 2000; Cameron 2011; Banerjee 2010).

Universities face the double challenge of responding to these challenges both as organisations per se and also in terms of the implications of them for the professional futures of our graduates (Lowen 2012; Cameron 2011; Mama 2006). "This context demands changes both to what and how we teach our graduates. We need to carefully identify research priorities and the conduct of our research, as well as offering interesting opportunities to work in new forms of partnerships and alliances as we face these challenges"... (Mama, 2006:7). Lowen Linda, (2012:11) notes that over the years, these four challenges have been faced by higher education:

1. To introduce more disciplines and diversity;
2. To satisfy the social demands for new options;
3. To remove gender barriers and role stereotyping;
4. To enable enrolment of women for purposes of productivity and of empowerment.

The concern is whether higher education institutions and their leaders will respond to the required changes and the measures to be devised to exploit women's potential and promote their subsequent empowerment. Lowen, Linda (2012) asks pertinent questions that relate to the need to increase women's leadership roles. When it comes

to leadership, does gender matter? Is there a difference between women leaders and men who lead? If so, what are the unique qualities of female leadership that the most effective women leaders possess, and are they unique to women?

Whereas this paper does not purport to answer these questions in their entirety, we recognise the fact that women's representation in leadership is crucial through the lenses of feminism and social justice. We follow in the footprints of Mama (2012:1) when she observes thus:

Feminist theory and ethics have enormous potentials to transform and energise the discourse on academic freedom and social responsibility. As a theory of knowledge and an intellectual practice, feminism deconstructs the epistemological foundations of patriarchy and contributes to the emancipation of women as subjects and studies on and about women as critical intellectual engagements.

Universities have assumed responsibility for transmitting accumulated knowledge. The persistent challenge however, is that these need to be reoriented to increase women's access to traditionally male dominated courses and positions and equip them to take up entrepreneurial management and leadership roles and responsibilities (Lewis 2016; Mama 2012; Mama 2009, Mama 2006). Banerjee (2011) notes three specific needs related to women and higher education as: (i) recognition of women as an essential human resource base; (ii) a strong commitment to equip women with the necessary range of managerial skills empowering them in their decision making role; and (iii) institution of a feminine leadership model suited to the needs of social development across the higher education sectors.

### ***Definition of Leadership: A Feminist Perspective***

A leader is defined as the person who influences a group to attain the group's goals. According to Lien-Tung *et al.* (2010), effective leaders continually push themselves and others toward their goals and are not tolerant of those who reject the vision or repeatedly fail to attain reasonable goals. They distinguish transformational leadership from transactional leadership by concentrating on morals and ethics. Transformational leadership is a process that motivates followers by appealing to their higher ideals and moral values, while transactional leaders rely on rewards and punishment to influence employee performance. The difference between these two types of leadership has been clarified in numerous studies.

Feminist writers have noted that definition of leaders falls within two important domains: those definitions that mainly focus on the attributes and practices of effective leaders, and definitions of leadership as a process and practice. These definitions mainly come from management and organisational fields. It is also



noted that lately, the “feminine style of leadership” has become popular in the corporate world, as large numbers of women entered companies and begun to demonstrate that they can produce results and profits through different means from the testosterone-driven male style the “boys” had utilised e.g. competitiveness, aggression etc. ...while some of these assumptions essentialise women and seem to build on gender-stereotypes about women’s ways of working and dealing with others, they recognise indirectly that gender construction processes result in women negotiating inter-personal and collective processes differently, and possibly more effectively (Batliwala 2010:7).

So closely identified with other expressions of the human spirit – hope, commitment, energy, and passion – leadership has often escaped precise definition. And yet, we respect its power to transform and are quickly able to sense its absence. We have, in short, come to believe in leadership because of the impact it can have on people and events. And we believe that the capacity to lead is rooted in virtually any individual and in every community. As a social “construct which derives from observations made about specific interactions within a society, it is defined differently in each social circumstance. Leadership is thus a property of culture and reflects the values – both stated and operating – of a specific society (Lien-Tung *et al.* 2010; Bryman 2007; Astin and Astin 2000).

The process of leadership can thus serve as a lens through which any social situation can be observed. Leadership – especially the ways in which leaders are chosen, the expectations that are placed on them, and how they manifest their authority – can provide remarkable insights into any community or group. It can tell us about how the group identifies itself, who and what matters to the group, how things are done, and what stories will be told about outcomes (Astin and Astin, 2000). Within the last few years, we have come to appreciate that the study of leadership within a given social context can open up new possibilities for transformation and change. In this way, leadership can be more an active tool than a passive lens, allowing individuals, communities, institutions, and societies to narrow the gap between what they value and what their actions express, recognising that leadership is an integral part of the drama that plays out between the two.

Leadership is a practice, either organisational or personal that focuses on achieving organisational or societal goals. Aguirres and Martinez (2002) note that there are two key distinguished features: (i) the engagement of persons in a process that identifies them with goals; and (ii) the potential to change the institutional environment (e.g. values, beliefs, etc.). The engagement of persons in goal attainment socialises them to a shared vision or a shared mindset of what needs to change. Accordingly, by implementing gender equality goals into organisational

cultures, values and beliefs, the institutional environment is targeted for change. Leadership thus embodies the practice of empowering persons to believe that change is necessary and of involving persons with a shared mindset of how to implement change. Our view of leadership thus follows from observations of the researchers that describe leadership as coping with change, defining the direction of change, and engaging persons in the change process.

In sum, feminist questioning of the term leadership helps us to recognise how depending on cultural contexts and history may lead us to useful analyses of gender, feminism and leadership. It leads us to examining approaches to leadership and women e.g. mainstream research and theorisation has engaged with “feminine” and not “feminist” styles of leadership. That even works devoted to women in leadership do not address or discuss feminist leadership; and the attributes of feminine leadership styles are all within the within the accepted gendered roles of women i.e. nurturing, caring, sensitive, cooperative, consultative, inclusive, etc. (Heather Lysa 2012; Karen O’Connor 2010; Srilatha Batliwala 2010).

### ***Women’s Continued under Representation at Senior Levels***

The correlation between women’s leadership styles and characteristics and those which organisations need to face the challenges of the new globalised context has not to date translated into an advantage either for our universities or in terms of the position of women in them. As

KandikoHowson 2016; Altbach 2016; Lewis 2016; Ahikire 2011, Odhiambo, 2011; Abiola 2009; Endeley and NchangNgaling 2009; Mama 2009; Barnes 2007; Tsikata 2006, point out that : “women are grossly under-represented in higher education management” citing that hardly any exception exists in the global picture. Men outnumber women at about five to one at middle management level and at about twenty to one at senior management level. In terms of administrative positions, it was found that “women are more likely to succeed as registrars, librarians or heads of personnel, than if they aspire to be vice chancellors (or their deputies) or directors of finance or even deans of faculties Mama 2009:3.” For example in the case of this study, we find that women in university leadership are hardly three to ten per cent represented; in Gulu University there is only one women who is at the rank of Associate Professor; Makerere University, one of the oldest in the region, boasts of eleven per cent. Other public universities as Kyambogo (predominantly science teachers’ education) and Mbarara (science and technology) have only two per cent women at that rank.<sup>1</sup> We note that the immediate problem confronting women in terms of their leadership roles in

universities is not so much that they lack the attributes demanded by the challenges facing the institutions, nor that the organisations are ill-equipped to respond to these challenges, but rather that the leadership contribution and further potential continues to be neglected, under recognised and insufficiently integrated into the management structures of our universities. This situation is cause for concern not only on the grounds of equal opportunity and as a matter of basic human rights, but also in terms of the productivity of the higher education sector at the institutional, national, regional and global levels<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Implications for Organisations and Leadership Transformation***

The organisational change management literature which explores the implications of these changes for organisations stresses the importance of learning organisations and of developing learning communities within them which can develop and use strategic and effective approaches to collective workplace learning. It also points out that as we develop new organisational shapes and structures in response to this rapidly changing context, organisations need to foster what is referred to as relational capital as the foundation for networks, alliances, partnerships, joint ventures, spin offs, and the integration of ideas and effort which will be pivotal for future organisational development and success (Nyantakyiwa 2014; Morley 2012; O'Reilly and Reed 2011; Bagilhole, and White 2011; Ramsay, 2000; Rosener 1990). The new and emerging communication technologies demand communication skills of a particular and new kind, and also managers flexible and adaptable enough to thrive in constantly changing environments. The rapidly changing context also requires much faster decision making and the ability to synthesise, evaluate and integrate information at a similar pace (Drury 2012; O'Reilly and Reed 2011; Cameron 2011). And the new leadership skills demanded by the new and global economy include the ability to transform organisational cultures by a willingness to question the status quo. Conceptual skills required include the ability to see issues from a variety of viewpoints, to manage ambiguity, and understand the complexities of other culture's values and priorities; the ability to manage through dialogue and inter-personal negotiation rather than through power and control; and the capacity to recognise that learning is an on-going process involving the need to continuously re-think what we are doing and how we are doing it. Collective rather than individual entrepreneurship is required so that skills are shared amongst others rather than hoarded by individuals, and transformed into organisational achievement rather than personal competitive advantage (Fitzgerald 2013; Cameron 2011; Bryman 2007; Aguirre and Martinez 2002).

Leadership has replaced management in post neo-liberal higher education change discourse. The cultural ideology of leader-ism suggests that certain subjectivities, values, behaviour, dispositions and characteristics can strategically overcome institutional inertia; outflank resistance and waywardness and provide direction for new university futures (O'Reilly and Reed 2011). Potent cultural templates or 'scripts' circulate for how leaders should be – often based on larger cultural and historical formations. Leaders are expected to demonstrate authority, affective agency and possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills. However, leaders also have to negotiate intersections with other simultaneously held identities, and this is where some dissonance may occur, with cultural scripts for leaders coalescing or colliding with normative gender performances (Mama, 2009; Bryman 2007; Austin and Austin 2000; Alemn 2000; Meyerson and Ely 2000).

It is interesting that some universities already possess or are in a good position to cultivate or adapt many of the organisational attributes demanded by this changing global context. Some of these Universities already see themselves as learning communities and so are well placed to apply what we know about encouraging learning amongst students in order to develop effective approaches to collective workplace learning among those who work in and manage them. And many (but not all) of the capabilities required of new managers and leaders are also more likely to be attributes associated with women managers than their male colleagues (Nyantakyiwaa 2014; Fitzgerald 2013; Cameron 2011; Mama 2009). Thus research projects that identified women managers as empathetic, supportive, relationship-building, power sharing and information sharing (Fitzgerald, 2013; Odejide 2009; Ibarra and Obodaru 2009; Wach 2002); whereas male managers were characterised as risk-taking, self-confident, competitive, decisive and direct need urgent revisits.<sup>3</sup> The characteristics shown by women, particularly readiness to share power and information, were also the qualities needed by managers of the future. These studies on the leadership attributes of men and women in universities, have found that women are more consultative and conciliatory, avoid conflict, and are more likely to be task oriented than their male colleagues<sup>4</sup> (Fitzgerald 2013; Ibarra and Obodaru 2009; Melero 2004).

## **Organisation of the Study Report**

This monograph is divided into six sections with different contributors to each section. First section is the introduction that lays the background to the study by examining gender in higher education and the role of leadership. The second section is methodology and it outlines the objectives, design, conceptualisation, and methods used for data collection and analysis. The third section details the

background to understating the problem of low representation of women in the leadership of universities in general and lays the foundation by presenting a brief history of Ugandan universities and the establishment of the Women Studies department at Makerere University. Fourth and fifth sections explore the situational analyses of two public universities: Gulu and Mbarara. Here we examine the gender terrain and the context in which the strategies to increase women in the university leadership is sought. Both parts are conceived on the idea that capacity building in gender policy formulation and implementation is a shared responsibility of Makerere University, which has received a lot of support to develop this capacity. The establishment of Gulu and Mbarara Universities as a public institution of higher learning in Uganda thus necessitates an examination of the manner in which men and women are located within them as students or as staff. We draw on some historical milestones while at the same time reflecting on the present in terms of strategic direction, programmes being implemented, and an analysis of the staff establishment in terms of gender

The sixth section presents a framework for understanding the pattern of gender disparities in organisational an organisational context and provides an avenue for delving into strategies to increase women in higher education leadership. We refer to specific women's experiences to provide examples of how social practices sometimes produce subtle inequities while appearing to be gender-neutral. Drawing on research work on the gender terrain in universities, we develop an intervention strategy for changing gender relations in organisations accordingly.



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## Methodology and Objectives

### **The Purpose of the Study and Design**

This study underpins the importance of including women in leadership positions in the academia. The paucity of research on leadership development and executive selection in the academia means that a framework is also lacking for understanding how best to improve women's leadership development. Difficulties aside, it has increasingly been noted that the rationale for involving women in university leadership is more appealing and should be based principles (the right thing to do) and pragmatism (the smart thing to do). Specific objectives are: (i) conduct a gender situational analysis of selected public universities to evaluate the position of women in terms of their representation in leadership (management and administrative) positions; (ii) examine the ways in which women are consistently included and/or excluded from managerial and leadership positions; and (iii) to use women leaders' experiences to elicit new and improve existing strategies to increase women therein.

This is a two-layered study reflecting two almost distinct designs. Using a survey method, we examined the nature of the "gender terrain" in four public universities: Kyambogo and Makerere (central region), Gulu University (in the northern region) and Mbarara University (western region). The case study approach enabled us to purposively identify the sites and the participants in the study to try and elicit individual views. We use personal histories of ten university women who are or have been at the rank of Professor and have served at different levels of the leadership ladder to examine the ways in which women are consistently included and/or excluded from managerial and leadership positions.

## Conceptualisation

Conceptualisation is done at two levels: theoretical framework and survey approach to the gender terrain.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Although there are historical and contemporary barriers to women's leadership and issues of gender bias and discrimination, this paper focuses as well on positive aspects and opportunities for leadership in various domains and is centered on the most important debates specific to women, gender and leadership. Karen O'Connor (2010) notes that the extensive study of feminist theory scholarship reveals an great deal of theoretical analysis of women as leaders; and that there is a substantive amount of work on feminist theories of power, autonomy, citizenship, representation, and ethics, which are related to but not simply synonymous with feminist leadership. According to Srilatha Batliwala (2010) an analysis of feminism, gender and leadership enables us to understand and engage with gender power and women's lack to formal positions of authority. Feminist leadership is hence a struggle to the theory and practice of power to advance gender equality in positions of power and to structures that would not reproduce the patriarchal models of leadership that dominate most societies and cultures.

...informed by the power of feminist lens, which enables the leader to identify injustices and oppressions and to facilitate the development of more inclusive, holistic...communities (ibid 2010 Page 10).

An explicit tendency to deconstruct leadership by the author is proof that there is a critical urgency in not merely increasing the number of women to play leadership roles, but also to lead differently, with feminist values and ideology, and to advance the agenda of social transformation in a way that other forms of leadership do not or cannot (ibid 2010:5).

**Feminism** is an ideology of women's liberation founded on the intrinsic belief that women suffer injustice because of their sex (Humm, 1995 as cited in Chege, 1998). Hence, feminism is founded on a moral imperative to understand the power that governs oppression of women and seeks to learn how such power could be challenged and negotiated for women's liberation and empowerment in order to create equitable societies. Feminism is informed by serious reflections on the histories and nature of sexual differences and the mechanisms by which such differences are enmeshed in and created out of male power relations that are entrenched in patriarchal ideology. Put another way, feminism is a call to end patriarchy and



to expose, deconstruct and eradicate all the myriad personal, social, economic and political practices, habits and assumptions that sustain gender inequality and injustice around the world. Feminism seeks nothing less than the transformation of our institutions, including our knowledge institutions (Mama 2009; Mama 2012).

The widespread manifestations of feminism in and beyond the global academy has had resonance in the African social science community too, touching the personal, professional and political lives of many, especially those accepting the importance of gender equity to democracy and freedom (Mama, 2012:3). Following from this, Heather Lysa (2012) defines **feminism** as a social movement whose goal has been and continues to be women's social, legal, political, economic and cultural equality. It is a movement to end sexist oppression. Using a description by Barton (2006) she defines feminist lens as "a political and social way of thinking, a radar or set of antennae used to identify issues of oppression at personal, group or institutional level".

**Gender** on the other hand refers to the socially-constructed roles of and relationships between men and women. Gender concerns men and women, including conceptions of both femininity and masculinity. The difference between 'gender' and 'sex' is that the latter refers only to biological differences. Gender does not mean focusing solely on women or females, but rather on the inequalities between males and females. Analyses of gender differences often show a disadvantaged and weaker position of women and girls in social, political, economic, legal, educational and physical issues. This is why there is a tendency for gender discussions and interventions to focus on correcting these imbalances by specifically targeting women and girls.

It covers historical and contemporary barriers to women's leadership and issues of gender bias and discrimination, but also places a strong focus on positive aspects and opportunities for leadership in various domains (O'Connor 2010). We treat gender as a complex set of social relations enacted across a range of social practices in organisations. Having been created largely by and for men, these social practices tend to reflect and support men's experiences and life situations and, therefore, maintain a gendered social order in which men and particular forms of masculinity dominate.

While defining gender, we note that the distribution of power and seeking egalitarian relationships necessitates that we pay attention to other systematic forms of oppression and privilege such as race, class, religion and ethnicity in the construction of feminist leadership and practice. Hence good leadership is that which serves both men and women, rich and poor, the powerless and powerful ... is inclusive, participative and horizontal ... a good leader is also conscious the process is as important as the objectives themselves (Batliwala 2010).

### *Assumptions*

In this study, we deliberately make a direct assumption about the relationship between higher productivity and higher levels of gender equity, and concomitantly lower productivity with greater gender inequality. Like the writers before us, we further assume that if women were found in equal numbers and proportions at more senior levels, our universities, and the students studying in them would benefit from the different perspectives and experiences as well as the additional educational leadership and administrative management abilities and experience which women as well as men bring to the table. Indeed, the ongoing wastage of management and leadership talent which arises from and is perpetuated by the current marked under-representation of women at the senior levels of universities seriously undermines their ability to respond to change and threatens their future viability and vitality in the face of the challenges referred above.

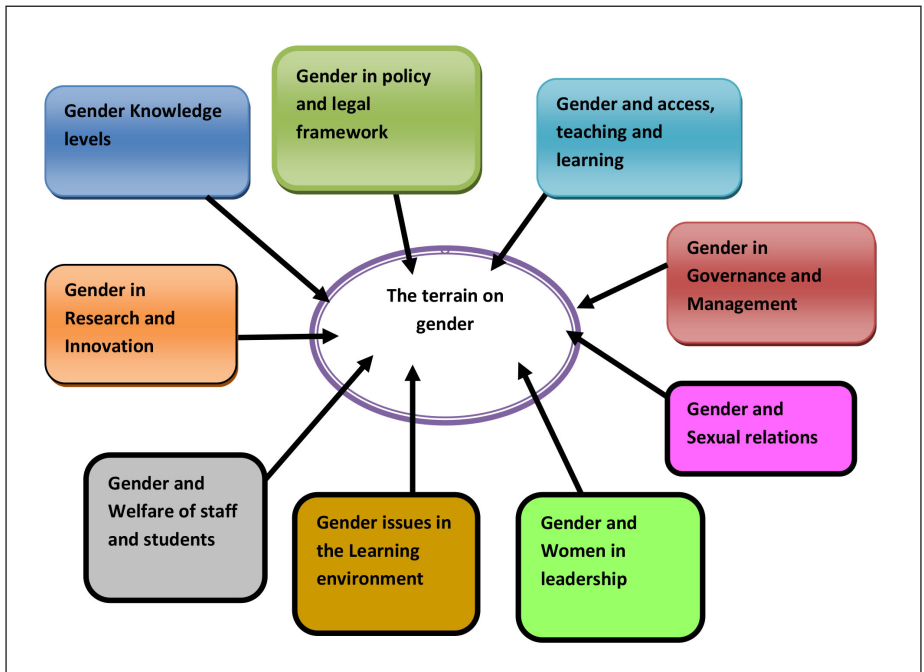
Although we do not try to provide substantive answers, we have stuck to questions such as: what is the nature and tenacity of these disparities between men and women in our universities' leadership structures? What organisational efforts to recruit and advance women result in substantial gains for women? What differences exist between men and women leadership styles; are women relatively powerless at work? We propose that the answers to these questions lie in organisations' failure to question – and change – prevailing notions about what constitutes the most appropriate and effective ways to define and accomplish work, recognise and reward competence, and understand and interpret behaviour. These unquestioned work practices support deeply entrenched divisions and disparities between men and women, often in subtle and insidious ways (Kandiko-Howson 2016; Altbach, 2016; Cameron 2011).

Strategies to involve women might lead us to leadership practices that are more effective, and which seek to implement gender equality in its organisational culture. We use personal histories of ten university women who are, or have been, at the rank of Professor and have served at different levels of the leadership ladder to examine the ways in which women are consistently excluded from managerial and leadership positions. These processes enable us to undress the intricacies related to challenges that women face while trying to build and be part of the leadership dynamics, while at the same time they encourage us to look to feminine styles for the transformation of universities into democratic entities. We then suggest ways in which universities can build gender balanced leadership cultures.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

#### *The Gender Terrain in Public Universities*

The gender terrain represents several components of the university’s functioning. However, this paper is inclined to gender in governance and management and gender and academic leadership. A ‘gender terrain ’in this context refers to the various dimensions of the manifestation of the gender social identities of men and women and how these affect and are affected by institutional processes and structures in a given setting of work or life. The result is a presentation of particular patterns and levels of men’s and women’s wellbeing in terms of access and utilisation of available opportunities for self-advancement.



**Fig 2.1: Conceptualisation:** Institutional components where gender is manifested

Conceptually, a number of factors are intertwined in the game play of university cultures. These act as arenas or sites of gender manifestation. Through careful analysis, we note the following as predominant: (i) access, enrolment, retention and students completion; (ii) the teaching and learning environment; (iii) levels of

knowledge and appreciation of gender; (iv) the design and state of the welfare and recreation services; (v) the design and implementation of research and innovation projects; (vi) the legal and policy framework; (vii) access to training and research opportunities; the structures of governance and management; (viii) the nature of sexual relations; and (ix) the number of women and their location around the lines of leadership.

To assess the completeness of the existing data we developed themes under which we grouped the existing data and identified data gaps, areas which required further information. The following are the themes under which the data was grouped:

- The University establishment, strategic direction and capacity to realise the goal
- Access to university education by males and females
- The curriculum, teaching and learning environment and its influence to females and male students
- Students' attitude, knowledge and practice of gender
- Gender-based challenges to staff and students in terms of welfare.

## **Methods of Data Collection and Analysis**

### ***Survey Questionnaire***

Large amounts of relevant information about the experiences of others and their own experiences were collected by directly questioning or talking to people. In this way we were able to answer some of the research questions. Interviews, especially unstructured or semi-structured ones, offered considerable flexibility and we depended on them immensely. We agreed to conducting 80 interviews of both males and female students; 20 interviews for the teaching staff and another 20 for the non-teaching staff in the two universities of Gulu and Mbarara. We termed this as a brief survey. Then we also had the personal narratives, which we elaborate in the section below.

### ***Interviews***

Findings are also based on a case study approach where we purposively identified the sites and the participants in the study to try and elicit individual views. We use personal histories of ten university women who are or have been at the rank of Professor and have served at different levels of the leadership ladder to examine the ways in which women are consistently excluded from managerial and leadership positions. We then used these case studies' participants to suggest

ways in which universities can build gender balanced leadership cultures. These assumptions were then used to guide data collection related to increasing potential for women leaders. These participants were selected based on developed criteria guided by their achievement in three themes of research, teaching and academic development they had at some point served as Heads of Departments, Deans or Directors. Also in a few cases, some Associate Professors and Senior Lecturer's views informed the study.

### ***Focus Group Discussions***

In Gulu and Mbarara universities, we held focus group discussions with female and male students and staff. In each university, we held separate groups of females and males in the categories of: students, student leadership, academic staff and non-academic staff.

### ***Documentary Analysis***

We examined University documents ranging from strategic plans, gender policies, student' and staff union constitutions, and specific reports. We also widely consulted with books and articles published on the subject.

### ***Observations***

We noticed certain nuances relating to the situation and gender patterns as we moved through the universities.

### ***Data Analysis***

The analysis of the volumes of data collected was at various levels. The survey information that constituted the first and second part of this paper included statistical analysis. At first, we wondered why we should do statistics but were convinced that we use straightforward methods of data analysis. We used SPSS to introduce several common statistics used in social research and applied the explanations to make sense of the "raw" data gathered. These statistics included frequency distributions and graphs. For the case study analysis, we used thematic analysis for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data. However, it minimally organised and described all the data we had. We also interpreted various aspects of the research topic to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the participants. Broadly, we devolved around several themes. The specific research questions guiding the analysis are: who are the women who survive and occupy

leadership roles in universities? How might their leadership roles be shaped by and a consequence of institutional climate? What strategies do they learn and adopt and how do they lead and manage fellow colleagues? What do these women say about the ways in which women might be increased? Through narrative inquiry, participants shared their leadership experience as they tried to work to change the structures of power and privilege for a particular sex and systematic disadvantage for the other sex.

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## Gender and Higher Education in Africa

### **A Post-colonial History of Women's Involvement**

Gender and higher education in Africa research focused mostly on the 1970s-1990s debates that examined women's access and representation, highlighting systemic patterns of gender inequality, and the discourse on questions of voice, power and responsibility in the administration of academic institutions from the turn of the 21st century (Chege 1998; Mama 2006; Barbosa 2010).

Higher education in Africa has always had a gendered element. Historically, Africa's colonial-era universities began as extensions of elitist metropolitan institutions, which were set up to recruit the brightest and the best of young men from the colonial classes, to train and prepare them to become a new elite destined to serve the colonial state and govern "the natives" (Mama and Barnes 2007; Mama 2006; Mama 2009). African students of the 1950s and 1960s recall gracious conditions of teaching, learning, residence and resource allocation that today's often under-resourced students can only envy (Mama 2006). With independence, a new mission, that of training the indigenous for nation building and development, began to take shape, but with the same institutional form. These institutional cultures and gendered hierarchies within Africa's higher education systems persist to the present day. Colonialism left behind a legacy that severely reconfigured gender relations within and outside the family to women's disadvantage (Mama, 2009; Mama and Barnes 2007; Barnes 2007; Odejide 2007; Tsikata 2007; Akosua-Adomako *et al.* 2004; Chege 1998).

African women's training was meant to prepare them for their role as wives in an emerging elite society where men were the major actors and ideal leaders in

higher education and were not burdened by social roles and expectations (Mama 2009; Mama 2006, Kwesiga 2002). In contrast, women's professional identities were often inscribed into their 'primary' roles as wives and mothers. African female academics and administrators occupy a low profile in decision making; they remained subordinately positioned 'others' whose presence in the ivory tower is tolerated rather than totally embraced (Mama 2009; Mama 2006).

The gains women have made so far, many scholars argue, have not given them much voice in decision-making (Ahikire 2011; Mama 2009; Mama and Barnes, 2007, Kasente 2002; Kwesiga 2002). Makerere College, Uganda's premier higher education institution, only admitted its first women students in 1945 and this was after a long struggle. This 'experiment' was closely monitored and regulated, and the number of women enrolled fluctuated between 1 and 13 in the years leading up to independence. In 1968, there were still only 328 women at Makerere University (Mama 2006; Kwesiga 2002). The National University in the Congo was established in 1954 and although women were not formally excluded, none were admitted until 1962. The National University of Côte d'Ivoire had only 6.75 per cent women in its enrolment as late as 1971. Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya reflect a similar situation, but the French, Portuguese and Belgian colonies was generally worse all round, with hardly any African men and no African women receiving higher education until liberation allowed the establishment of universities to proceed (Mama 2009; Mama 2006).

### **A Brief Description of Higher Education and the Crisis of Public Universities in Uganda**

History of higher education in Uganda dates back to 1922 when the British colonial administration established Makerere Technical College, to train civil servants, after revelations by the Phelps-Stokes Commission that educational policies of missionaries and the colonial government were inadequate (Nakanyike and Nansozi 2003). However, in 1937, the colonial administration expanded the school into a Higher College for East Africa to award diplomas and certificates and in 1949; the college became a University College of the University of London (ibid). In 1970, Makerere became the first national university and remained the sole university in Uganda until 1988 when the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) was established. Currently, the system is made-up of 27 universities (NCHE Website) and in 2006; there were 113 other tertiary institutions (NCHE, 2006, p.9). Initially, university education in Uganda, like in most other post-independent African countries, was considered a public good – freely provided



by public universities. However, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, increasing demand for higher education amidst declining budget allocations to public institutions' among other reasons created ideal conditions for establishment of private universities. For example, a study by Mugabi (2009:92) shows that the share of education budget devoted to public universities declined from 24 per cent in the early 1990s to about 11 per cent in 2000/2001, notwithstanding the rising demand for higher education.

At independence, Uganda had one of the best higher education systems in Africa, attracting many students from neighbouring countries. However, the economic and political crises that occurred in the subsequent years damaged the higher education system and created problems of financing, quality, and educational relevance (Musisi, 2003). In the 1990s, a number of reforms were undertaken to reverse this decline, including the adoption of alternative financing strategies, the offering of demand driven courses and administrative changes. Uganda follows a 7-4-2-4 model of education, with seven years of primary education, four years of lower secondary, 2 years of upper secondary and three to four years of tertiary education. The public higher education sector is composed of universities, national teachers colleges, colleges of commerce, technical colleges, training institutions, and other tertiary institutions. The two major public universities in Uganda are Makerere University in Kampala established in 1922, and Mbarara University of Science and Technology, established in 1989. Three other public universities have been established recently: Kyambobo University, the University of Gulu, the Open University of Uganda, and Busitema University in Eastern Uganda. There are also 102 private higher education institutions including 23 private universities (14 of which are licensed) (National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), 2006).

The gross higher education enrollment ratio grew from 2.5 per cent in 1995 to 4.1 per cent in 2004. In 2004, there were a total of 108,295 students in higher education institutions; of these 68,079 were in universities with more than half enrolled at Makerere (34,341) (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2005).

### *The Crisis in Ugandan Public Universities*

Uganda's Makerere reflects the crisis facing the public universities in Uganda – how to fund higher education amid rising demand for places and concerns about falling academic standards (Bakkabulindi 2016; Kasozi 2013). Once called the Harvard of Africa, Makerere has been closed on a number of occasions after academic and administrative staff downed their tools, the climax of a row over pensions and pay (Bakkabulindi 2016), the second time in four years that the

university closed over matters relating to staff welfare. The pension dispute between the staff and the National Insurance Corporation raged on despite the promise to sort it out by the legal and political regimes. Indeed, President Yoweri Museveni committed his government to dealing with the issue.

In all the public universities, staff are also demanding salary increases, a reflection of a wider crisis confronting many of Africa's public universities. According to Bakkabulindi (2016) the chairman of the Makerere University Academic Staff Association, has often stated that some teachers earn as "little" as \$390 a month. The association wants the starting salary to be almost eight times that. With inflation at 21 per cent, the government says all civil servants will get a pay raise, but that can only happen gradually.

Until the late 1980s, the only Uganda students who joined public university were those who secured a government scholarship. Since the early 1990s, these public universities have been admitting fee-paying students to study alongside state-sponsored students. The change grew out of a coincidence of increased demand for university education and public universities surviving on shoestring budgets. The result has been public universities mostly funded by private money but controlled by the state, which still has the last word on such issues as staff pay and tuition fees. In other words, the government vigorously defends its statutory right to shape public universities but frets about responsibility to fund the institutions. In 2012 barely 37 per cent of Makerere's budget came from the government, compared with 55 per cent from private students' tuition (Kasozi 2013).

For years, the universities, starved of public funds, tried to increase revenue by raising fees to reflect the actual cost of education, only to be blocked by the government. Technocratic vision lost out to political calculations, when the government allowed a 40 per cent increase, which is still inadequate. When university authorities announced another fee hike, students went on strike. The increment has been shelved, with the state minister for Higher Education, saying there was "not enough justification" (Kasozi 2013:9).

### ***Rising Student Numbers***

According to a 2010 World Bank report, Africa is grappling with a huge mismatch between student population and investment in higher education. Between 1991 and 2006, the number of students in higher education rose from 2.7 million to 9.3 million. This was an annual rise of about 16 per cent, yet public resources for expenditure grew by 6 per cent. Over the same period, "public investment" in higher education has remained about 20 per cent of education sector budgets

(Bakkabulindi 2016; Kasozi 2013). The report concluded: “In most sub-Saharan African countries, enrolment in higher education has grown faster than financing capabilities, reaching a critical stage where the lack of resources has led to a severe decline in the quality of instruction and in the capacity to reorient focus and to innovate.” The result has been “a trade-off that often occurs at the expense of quality and particularly at the expense of expenditure on wages. Universities are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a teaching staff, lecture halls are overcrowded, and buildings are falling into disrepair, teaching equipment is not replenished, investment in research and in training for new teachers is insufficient, and many teachers must supplement their incomes by providing services to the private sector”. With governments unlikely to dramatically increase funding, one of the reforms envisaged is to increase (or in some countries introduce) student fees, with the money ploughed back into the higher education institution. But the report acknowledges this is a sensitive political matter: it can lead to protests and riots by students and staff – as happened in England (2011), France (2008), and Mexico and Germany (1999).

To get around this problem, several researches and reports propose different approaches. The business case for increasing women in the governance and leadership structures as one key approach has been well debated below.

### ***Rationale for Women in Higher Education Leadership***

Today, as ever, Africa desperately needs its universities. As the pace of technological and social change speeds up, the challenges of knowing ourselves as African people continue to change subtly. Mama (2009) and Mama and Barnes (2007) ask these pertinent questions as a way of opening the discussion for future researchers: where are the peoples of Africa in world development? What role can our cash-strapped universities play in Africa’s fate and future? How do we make sense of global politics and power struggles? They assert that these are critical for the African universities today as they struggle to find a place in the competitive global market of ideas. It also poses for academics new demanding levels of resilience, tenacity and dedication.

It is also noted by most African scholars who have written about the subject matter that as we struggle to produce new and relevant knowledge in the 21st century, African women continue to display their commitment to education, continuing to regard it as a route to personal and collective liberation and empowerment. Women have embraced modern public universities with dedication and enthusiasm, attending them as learners, and serving them as scholars and researchers, teachers and administrators, not to mention the preponderance of women in the various

welfare, catering, health, cleaning and other support services that are so crucial for the daily operation of Africa's universities as spaces where the production of knowledge is facilitated.

In recent years, the power of leaders and leadership to transform institutions and confront the challenges faced by communities and organisations around the world has become manifest. Strengthening higher education institutions and the effectiveness of their individual leaders is of great importance. Institutions of higher education's roles in leadership are premised on their role in serving communities and society at large, not merely for their preservation and enrichment as institutions. While institutional pressures and practices are important, it is the role that higher education might play in the greater social environment that inspires the subject. While there have been many calls in recent years for higher education to reform itself by becoming more "efficient," others have suggested that educational reforms should be seen as part of a fundamental transformation of the values and vision of society as a whole (Astin and Astin 2000). Only through an education that emphasises diversity could individuals understand the world, recognise inequalities and gain the tools needed to remedy these inequalities. The incorporation of diversity issues into the pedagogical practices in higher education changes societal mindsets and challenges structural arrangement of persons in society (Aguirre and Matinez 2002:55).

There is increased interest in improving the management and leadership of higher education institutions, but this is only half the task. A second part involves building long term commitment and enthusiasm towards engendering the leadership debate. We need information on how gender is being treated in the construction of this new leadership wave. How women are often excluded as part of a wider university culture will lead us to drawing lasting solutions to the need to create gender balanced management and leadership environments. In this way, we can offer invaluable theoretical perspectives and insightful narratives to students and researchers who are interested in women's leadership, gender and organisation. It will be of interest to all women in leadership positions, but specifically to those interested in understanding the systemic nature of leadership and their role within it.

Another important aspect is that this contribution to a broader feminist project intended to make large-scale organisations more democratic and more supportive of humane goals. A focus on the relationship between gender and leadership is synergistic; it promotes change as an emergent agent in structuring of higher education, while leadership promotes practices that identify gender as a nested context for achieving balance in social relations between men and women.

## **Current Efforts towards Gender Mainstreaming in Public Universities**

Currently there are a number of measures in different universities towards increasing the levels of gender sensitivity in the curriculum, students' in-take, students' scholarship opportunities and the policy changes designed for increasing the number of women in all areas. These vary across the different universities and a number of factors are responsible for this. Makerere University is far ahead because it is the oldest university and had begun the process well before some of the new universities like Gulu, Kyambogo and Mbarara were established. The efforts towards gender equality in the newer universities are conceived on the idea that capacity building in gender policy formulation and implementation is a shared responsibility for Makerere University, which has received much support to develop this capacity. It is now the turn of Makerere University to "give back to the community" by guiding the younger public universities in shaping and developing their own gender policies. The Gender Mainstreaming Directorate (GMD) of Makerere University, with support from the Government of Sweden, collaborates with other stakeholders' to achieve this goal in five public universities of Busitema, Gulu, Kyambogo and Mbarara. The University of Gulu developed with a vision to be a leading academic institution for the promotion of rural transformation and industrialisation for sustainable development. This vision put the university in position to play a leading role in post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Northern region through the provision of human resources in the areas of education, health, agriculture, technology, research and other services. Hence the University has a well-developed strategic plan and a resource mobilisation strategy in order to full-fill its endeavors. However, there are a number of gender-based challenges that the University must seek to address, the inherent difficulties notwithstanding.

Makerere University has in place a Gender Mainstreaming Directorate – responsible for working towards making Makerere an all-inclusive institution for men and women (and others who fall in the category of minorities, e.g. persons with disability). It is this unit which tackles issues arising from a negative organisational culture and other intangible forms of discrimination. It trains leaders – men and women – to be gender sensitive and gender responsive, i.e. heads of departments, Deans, top management, etc. It looks at both the non-teaching as well as the teaching environment and formulates relevant policies. The Division is able to solicit for scholarships in favour of the disadvantaged. For example, the Division has in the past solicited for postgraduate scholarships for women who cannot travel abroad to study within Uganda because of their roles as mothers. It is hoped that this process will "fish" out the disadvantaged and make the institution more embracing.

### ***Creation of Women Studies Department at Makerere University***

The drive to initiate the department came from a number of women, both within and outside the university, who attended the NGO Forum of the 1985 United Nations World Conference for women which took place in Nairobi. The focus of the conference was on how all women could participate and benefit from national development, and this encouraged many Ugandan women to consider systematically how they could coordinate their knowledge and political interests. At the time, Uganda was in the middle of a series of political crises, having emerged from the infamous rule of Idi Amin. The civil strife associated with the second Obote government fuelled a rebellion that culminated in a military coup in 1986. In this context, the few Ugandan women who attended the world conference and survived the turmoil encountered an array of intellectual ideas and political processes. This involvement significantly influenced the nature of their teaching and research in women's and gender studies (Kasente 2002).

The UN conference was critical in generating new ideas that contributed to the conceptualisation of an academic department that could take leadership in addressing the gender inequalities affecting the majority of women's lives in a country emerging from a war situation. Importantly, the conference took place shortly before the coup of 1986, a moment when Uganda was poised for major political change. The receptiveness to change applied to Makerere University as well, and a number of donor agencies expressed interest in supporting the rehabilitation and development of selected programmes following the end of civil unrest. The national context at the time heavily influenced the orientation of the department towards the areas of under-development, lack of rights in access to basic resources, gendered impacts of war and violence and women's low participation rates in different sectors; it was not considered appropriate to develop a purely academic programme concerned primarily with generating innovative knowledge or encouraging new research. It is, therefore, clear that the department, though based at the university, was initiated by the women's movement and explicitly endorsed the political agenda of transforming women's lives in the face of particular post-conflict circumstances. The expectations of the women's movement were that the department would generate conceptual and analytical frameworks for directly addressing the needs of Ugandan women, many of whom live in rural areas.

## ***Gender Mainstreaming: the Unfinished Business in Ugandan Universities***

The goal of Gender Mainstreaming is to ensure that positive gender policies and practices are embedded in all the operations of an institution – thus eliminating discrimination, or marginalisation (whether covert or overt), so that in such a case, there will be equal opportunities for men and women to lead (since the impediments will have been removed or reduced through this process). Gender mainstreaming is being tried out by many other institutions – including the UN and its agencies – as an approach that will eventually eliminate gender marginalisation and/or victimisation.

We note that there are important strides that have been made so far across all the universities. Some of them have had far-reaching impact in addressing gender equality issues. However, without trying to dilute these efforts it is equally important to acknowledge the challenges that are still hindering further progress in this regard.

They include: (i) low level of understanding and appreciating gender both as a concept and as a socially constructed phenomenon that is affecting how our universities are run; (ii) low integration of gender in university structures and policies (iii) universities are far from deliberately planning and budgeting for gender activities and affirmative action in the structures of administration and management; (iv) lack of sensitivity, in staff promotion and retention of females, amongst other factors.

The Public Universities Act sees an urgent need to improve the situation of women and men in academia. Both women and men are tackled by outdated gender stereotypes, which may force them into a behaviour that does not suit everybody. The choices of subjects, the expected jobs taken and the nature of the research undertaken are often based on those stereotypes. The staff and students who do not stick to the typical male or female behaviour are likely to face unequal treatment and discrimination. The losers of the patriarchal academic system are still women. Even though they make a big number of the student population, they are rarely present in higher cycles and leading positions. Those women in higher positions earn less money and are often subjected to discrimination. Increasingly, universities see the role of higher education also in creating equal opportunities for all people and therefore stress the importance of affirmative action to overcome the actual gender-based discrimination in higher education. Active measures are required in order to reach gender equality.

We have seen numerous examples of a similar scenario in the consideration of Gulu and Mbarara Universities where the university structures are completely devoid of women as managers or high level administrative staff. The case of Makerere (considering it is the oldest institution with the established Directorate of Gender Mainstreaming and the School of Women and Gender Studies) and Kyambogo (a recently created university from the Kyambogo Institute of Teachers education (ITEK) explains the fact that the predominance male-centred structures may as well suffocate any efforts towards change. As the table below shows, gender parity in management structures of universities is still far from realisation.

**Table 3.1:** Table showing Makerere/Kyambogo Management

Positions	Makerere		Kyambogo	
	Mak (2013)		KyU (2011)	
	Male	female	Male	Female
Chancellor	1	0	1	0
Vice Chancellor	1	0	1	0
Deputy VC (Academic Affairs)	1	0	1	0
Deputy VC (Fin & Admin)	1	0	1	0
University Secretary	1	0	1	0
University Bursar	1	0	1	0
Academic Registrar	1	0	0	1
Director Planning	1	0	1	0
Dean of Students	0	1	0	1
Chief Internal Auditor	1	0	1	0
University Librarian	0	1	1	0
Director Human Resource	0	1	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

*Source:* the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate reports, 2014/15, Makerere University

### ***Academic Staff Composition by Gender***

Also in comparison with Gulu and Mbarara universities on the issue of academic staff, we find that both Makerere and Kyambogo universities are just as skewed in as far as gender equality is concerned. There have been several explanations by various scholars on this subject. Recently, KandikoHowson, (2016) and Altbach, (2016) note that often, more women than men are stuck at the middle-



level careers and hence they cannot progress fairly well to becoming part of the university top leadership. They note formidable challenges that women face in advancing their academic careers. What women felt was important in their careers differed from what they felt was valued by their disciplines, departments and institutions. What motivated many women were traditional academic values such as the love of science, learning and the pursuit of knowledge, alongside other aspects such as good working environments, flexibility, autonomy and making a wider contribution to society (KandikoHowson, 2016:1). So with this frustration it more often than not that woman will leave and not stay to grow their careers at the university. This again applies to an established university as Makerere as the table below indicates.

**Table 3.2:** Makerere and Kyambogo Teaching Staff

	Makerere		Kyambogo	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professor	94	6	100	0
Associate Professor	97	3	100	0
Senior Lecturer	90	10	74	26
Lecturer	81	19	66	34
Assistant Lecturer	71	29	72	28
Teaching Assistant	71	29	68	32

*Source:* the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate reports, 2014/15, Makerere University

Women's academic careers remain characterised by strong vertical segregation. For instance in Makerere University, the proportion of female students (55 per cent) and graduates (59 per cent) in the social sciences and humanities exceeds that of male students, but the pattern remains the same as elsewhere. Writes on the subject report that women were on average were less than 10 per cent of top management; 15 per cent in Council; 20 per cent of the Senate; and 21 per cent of student leadership. Further, women in the entire university constitute, on average, at the rank of professor seven per cent and three per cent for social science and science-based courses respectively. In all the other three universities there are no women at that rank. An average of five per cent women is found at the rank of Associate Professor. All public universities were led by men.

It can be observed that women were entering adjunct roles, but not attaining the senior most positions. While the reform of higher education has created new middle level managerial positions including quality assurance, planning,

innovation, community engagement and marketing managers, many of them find themselves in the communication, library, and human resource management, or languishing in what was described by Higher Education Projects (2013) as the 'ivory basement' and "the velvet ghettos" by Fitzgerald and Wilkinson, (2010). To confirm this expectation, in Makerere University, the women head the Human Resources, Library, Communications and the Planning Directorates. In Gulu, a woman heads the Human Resource department and she is the only one at that level. One woman is at the rank of Associate Professor level and is the only female member of the Senate. In Kyambogo University, there are no women even at the "velvet ghetto" level. In most locations, there has been a feminisation of lower level managerial positions, for example, women constitute an average of 33 per cent of the positions of Assistant Lecturer and Teaching Assistants. They constitute over 50 per cent of library staff and 99 per cent in communication. Women's absence from senior leadership is a recurrent theme in studies from the Global South e.g. from Ghana (Ohene 2010); Kenya (Onsongo 2004); Nigeria (Odejide *et al.*, 2006; Odejide 2007; Pereira 2007); and Uganda (Ahikire, 2011; Kwesiga and Ahikire 2006; Kwesiga 2003; Kasente 2002).

Studies of promotion rates among faculty show that women typically take longer than men to reach the rank of professor; compared to male colleagues, they spend more time on teaching and service and less on research and writing. In addition, while women have made significant inroads into higher education administrative/leadership roles, they are still greatly outnumbered by men.

Onsongo (2003) in a study of the leadership profiles of six Kenyan public universities and four private universities, found under-representation of female employees in the leadership structures of these universities. For instance, out of 10 Vice Chancellors, only one was female (from a private university) while out of 295 Heads of Departments, only 52 were female. Onsongo (2003) also found that most of the female Deans, Directors of Schools and Institutes and Heads of Departments were in 'traditionally feminine areas' such as home economics, languages, history and religious studies.

It is hypothesised that a good leader is defined according to normative masculinity. The skills, competencies and dispositions deemed essential to leadership including assertiveness, competitiveness, autonomy and authority are embedded in socially constructed definitions of masculinity.

### *The Rationale for Gender and Leadership Argument*

Today, as ever, Africa desperately needs its universities. As the pace of technological and social change speeds up, the challenges of knowing ourselves as African people continue to change subtly. Mama (2009) and Mama and Barnes (2007) ask these pertinent questions as a way of opening the discussion for future researchers: where are the peoples of Africa in world development? What role can our cash-strapped universities play in Africa's fate and future? How do we make sense of global politics and power struggles? They assert that these are critical for the African universities today as they struggle to find a place in the competitive global market of ideas. It also poses for academics new demanding levels of resilience, tenacity and dedication.

There is increased interest in improving the management and leadership of higher education institutions, but this is only half the task. A second part involves building long term commitment and enthusiasm towards engendering the leadership debate. We need information on how gender is being treated in the construction of this new leadership wave. How women are often excluded as part of a wider university culture will lead us to drawing lasting solutions to the need to create gender balanced management and leadership environments. In this way, we can offer invaluable theoretical perspectives and insightful narratives to students and researchers who are interested in women's leadership, gender and organisation. It will be of interest to all women in leadership positions, but specifically to those interested in understanding the systemic nature of leadership and their role within it.

Another important aspect is that this contribution to a broader feminist project intended to make large-scale organisations more democratic and more supportive of humane goals. A focus on the relationship between gender and leadership is synergistic; it promotes change as an emergent agent in structuring of higher education, while leadership promotes practices that identify gender as a nested context for achieving balance in social relations between men and women.



## Assessing the Gender Terrain in Gulu University: A Situational Analysis

In this section, we examine the establishment of Gulu and Mbarara Universities in separate discussions as public institutions of higher learning in Uganda. This is done to allow the various factors at play in the different environments to emerge on a platform that displays gender differences as dependent on a particular culture of the people, which in turn is reflected in the way organisations in those cultures form their own organisational cultures. We draw on some historical milestones in addressing gender inequalities while at the same time reflecting on the present in terms of strategic direction, programmes being implemented, and an analysis of the staff establishment.

### **Gulu University Establishment**

The conflict in Northern Uganda began in 1986, after the national Resistance Army (NRA) took control of the region. This was followed by formation of different insurgent groups that warred against the government. Over time, the conflict has had devastating impacts on the various aspects of human life and activities in the region, especially Education, Health and Economy. The destruction of the physical infrastructure, social fabric and culture of the Acholi people is clearly evident combined with the debilitating educational infrastructure and performance. The massive poverty, lack of opportunity, hopelessness, violence and sexual vulnerability that enforced habitation in the internally displaced peoples' (IDP) camps left a generation of youth without the benefit of strong social support networks.

Despite the war, on the 28th April 1994, Government appointed a Task Force comprising ten people to undertake the specific task that would lead to preparatory work for setting the new university in northern Uganda specialising mainly in Agricultural Mechanisation. In their report, the Task Force proposed that the new University should focus beyond agricultural mechanisation and broaden its mission to produce high level human resources that can effectively participate in solving the social and economic problems of the country in general and in, particular Northern Uganda. Gulu town was selected to be the ideal location for such a university and the name Gulu University of Agriculture and Environmental Science adopted.

Gulu University is one of the two Public Universities that the government of Uganda wanted to be located in the region; it had to be operational by October 2002. This part of the country had hardly benefited from the economic recovery and growth that the whole Ugandan country had witnessed over the last decades due to insecurity. The University developed with a vision to be a leading academic institution for the promotion of rural transformation and industrialisation for sustainable development. This vision put the university to play a leading role in post war reconstruction and rehabilitation of the region through the provision of human resources in the areas of education, health, agriculture, technology, research and other services.

Based on the guidelines and reports of the previous Task Force and taking into consideration the proposal from various stakeholders including His Excellency the president, the mandate of Gulu University has drastically changed. The University was renamed Gulu University from the University of Gulu, and it introduced other disciplines such as medicine and engineering.<sup>5</sup> The mandate of Gulu University was to play a leading role in the provision of skilled human resources for national development in the areas of education, health, agriculture, technology research and other services. The vision for Gulu University was to be a pillar for academic and professional excellence contributing to sustainable development; its mission was to provide access to higher education, research and conduct quality professional training for the delivery of appropriate services directed towards community transformation and conservation of biodiversity.

The Core values of the University are professionalism, integrity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and transparency, teamwork, gender responsiveness and concern for the elderly and people with disabilities. In the literature available, it is suggested that a Task Force was set up to start up the University with these pillars. Our interactions revealed that apparently, the task force was male dominated because of the mandate of science and technology which is largely exclusive of women.

## ***Gulu University Strategic Direction***

The mission of Gulu University is to provide access to higher education, research and conduct quality professional training for the delivery of appropriate services directed towards community transformation and conservation of biodiversity. The vision is “to be a pillar for academic and professional excellence contributing to sustainable development.”

The objectives of the university are as follows; equitably expand access to higher education, increase the number of basic and applied science and humanities teachers, increase professionals in agriculture and environmental sciences, produce engineering and technology graduates and cadres appropriate for industrialisation, produce medical personnel and other health workers for delivery of medical and health services, develop appropriate human resources to match the management and administrative demands of the public and private sectors; and to undertake applied research towards community transformation and provide quality training in various disciplines as they need may arise.

The analysis of the above clearly indicates that Gulu University is clearly oriented towards the promotion of science, technology and medicine in its strategic direction. This direction is thereby problematic for gender inclusion and mainstreaming, given that a number of female professionals are largely in the humanities and social sciences. Science both basic and applied is still systemically a male dominated sphere not because women cannot make it through academically but because of male orientation and labeling, it has been given a male bias.

## ***Management and Governance Structures***

Here we examined documents containing information on the structures and systems of administration and management, paying attention to the related policies organogram, the power hierarchy, the relative position of females and males, and the composition of staff by gender and by rank. We also looked at the students’ leadership in relation to the strategic direction of the university. We came out with sub-topics as governance,

### ***Governance***

Gulu University is a corporate body governed by the University Council which is the supreme policy organ and is responsible for the overall administration and ensures the due implementation of the objectives and functions of the university. The council has committees like the Appointments Board and Senate which help to perform its functions.

However the Management Committee of Gulu University constitutes all Deans and Directors of Faculties and Institutes, the University Secretary, Bursar, Academic Registrar, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor as Chair to the Committee.

The Management Committee is trying to some extent to achieve strategic direction by having active partnerships and collaborations like Book Aid International and International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE). There are also collaborations with a number of Embassies that range from Belgian to Cuban and collaborations with Universities in the North. The University has increased the number of academic staff, especially in the sciences, and is in the process of acquiring 742 hectares of land for infrastructural development.

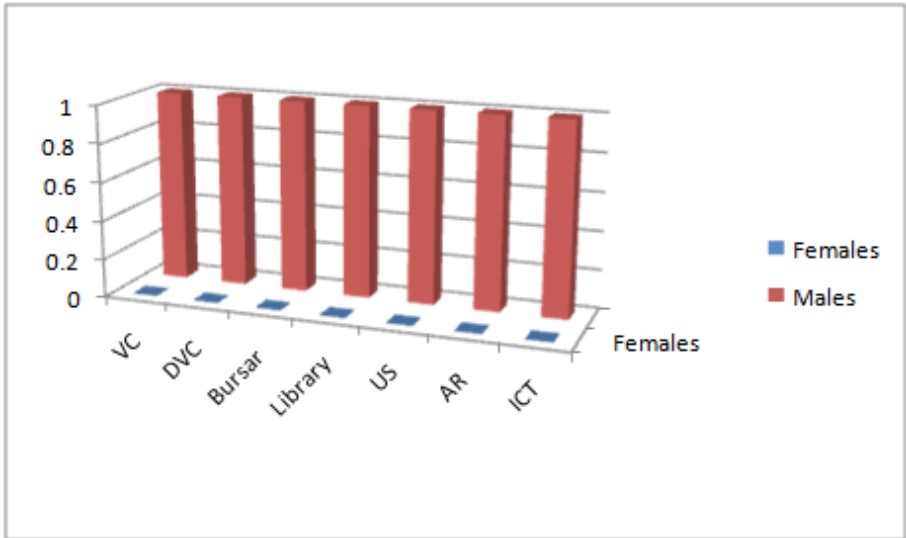
#### *Council Composition by Gender*

Like other higher education institutions in Uganda, the Council is the leading decision making organ and is composed of 20 males and 3 females.

#### *Senior Management Composition by Gender*

The Management Committee of Gulu University constitutes all Deans and Directors of Faculties and Institutes, the University Secretary, Bursar, Academic Registrar, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor as Chair to the Committee. However, we found that in all cases, these positions applied to males. Males occupied all senior positions, including the positions of Deans and Directors at Senate level. With an exception of Assoc. Prof Elisabeth Opio who is currently the Director for Research and Graduate Studies.





**Fig 4.1:** Graph showing top management positions by gender

Above shown are the key positions in the university’s administrative set-up. The Vice Chancellor and his deputy lead, while other positions like the University Bursar, University Secretary, the Librarian, Head ICT and Academic Registrar are important. In all cases the occupants are males, females fall in the categories of Personal Assistants and Secretaries.

***Financial Situation, Planning and Budgeting Processes***

In such establishments as the Gulu University, plans are often reflective of priority actions over a period of time and they are indicative of the estimated costs. The source of information was the strategic plans and budget estimate plans; we intended to undertake a gender budget analysis.

The Financial situation of Gulu University is wanting. The strategies to diversify the financial base of the University according to the Strategic Plan 2009/10-2018/19 include; developing and implementing external resource mobilisation strategies (lobbying, donor funding, competitive grants, research project proposals), initiating internal income generating activities (consultancy, commercial farming, printing and publishing, increased student enrolment.), develop collaborative partnerships with the private/public sector and development partners to co-fund university activities. According to the University Bursar, the

quarterly remittances from the Government are sent late and in small bits, which greatly affects the implementation of activities. The Internally Generated Revenue for the University which is mainly university students' tuition is relatively small and heavily taxed for a number of activities to cover up the budget deficits. The Public-Private Partnership initiatives are still minimal and cannot sustain the revenue base of the University.

The material resources of the university include physical infrastructure like new and remodeled buildings, a sports and recreational centre, office, laboratories, workshops and farm equipment, university roads, driveways, walkways and parking lots and transport facilities. The road to the University has been recently tarmacked which makes movement easier to staff and students to reach the university irrespective of the season, but the situation in Gulu campus is different. The University was housed in the former Gulu District Farm Institute, and since its inception in 2002, most of these inherited buildings have not been renovated. One of the staff interviewed said:

“A visit to an office in the Faculty of Education and Humanities exposed a falling ceiling board which will soon endanger the lives of staff. Offices and laboratories have no equipment. In the Faculty of Education and Humanities, you can hardly find a computer in any office, most staff use their personal laptops. Laboratories are equally still wantin, and although the University has tried to put in place parking lots, they are in designated areas for the “Privileged Management team.”” Interview, April 2011.

The University in general lacks land for infrastructural development; the 742 Hectare land acquisition plan is still in process and will not quickly take care of rapid infrastructural development. The Master Plan for the Land use of the University which highlights 107 hectares of land for campus development and sports facilities, 340 hectares for temporary farming, 145 hectares for development of students hostels, 72 hectares for a Guest house and sports complex and 35 hectares for the industrial park are theoretical and will need approximately US \$ 110 Million to materialise.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Human Resource Situation***

The Human resource strategy for Gulu University is to recruit quality staff, train existing staff to masters and PhD levels, embark on in-service training, review terms, tenure and conditions of service of Gulu University to minimise staff turnover, evaluate staff and motivate staff through promotions and rewards.

*Teaching Staff Composition by Gender*

Gulu University at the moment has over 260 academic staff that are involved in teaching and research functions. There are, by far, fewer females who constitute only 16 per cent; and in some programmes we find none in the senior ranks.

**Table 4.1:** Academic Staff Establishment Status 2000/10

Faculties	RANK BY PROFESSION											
	Professor		Assoc Prof		Senior Lecturer		Lecturer		Assistant lecturers		Teaching Assistant	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Medicine.	1	0	3	0	1	0	17	4	-	-	14	4
Agriculture & Environment.	2	-	-	-	1	-	21	3	-	-	18	1
Business & Devt Studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	4	0	0	11	4
Science	2	0	1	1	4	0	20	4	0	0	16	3
Education & Humanities.	1	0	0	0	1	0	25	2	0	0	2	2
Peace & Strategic Studies.	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	5	-	-	-	-
Research & Graduate Studies	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	11	0	4	1	8	0	131	22	0	0	61	14

*Source:* Approved Establishment for Non-Teaching and Teaching Staff, Directorate of Planning and Development, Gulu University, 2009.

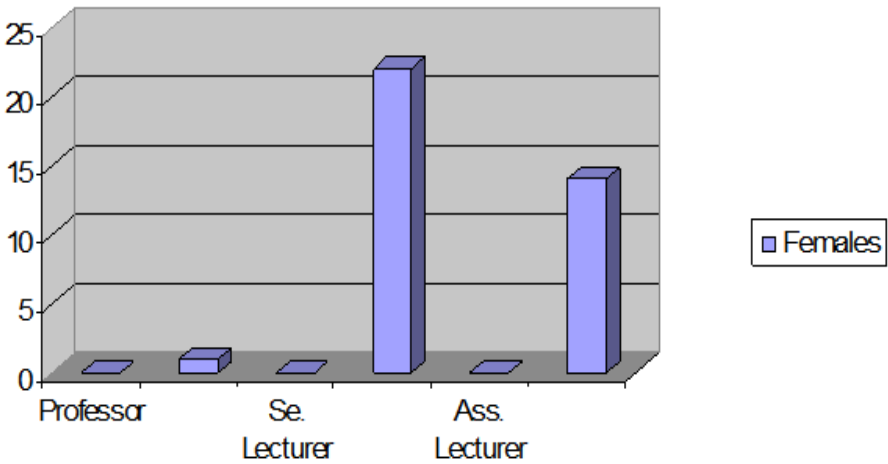
The Academic Staff establishment for Gulu University as shown in the table above is far from being fully constituted; but specifically, there are huge disparities between female and male teaching staff. The most qualified female staff is, ironically, in the Faculty of Science as an Associate Professor; and only a hand full of others serve as Lecturers and Teaching Assistants. The highest number of female academic staff is in the Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies where the ratio is 2:5. Although promotion is based on merit in Gulu University, women face peculiar bottle necks. The rest of the positions are occupied by males, although again these are not fully constituted positions. A female respondent comments thus:

“It is more likely that the males would take up a training opportunity, while the females think twice because women with burdens such as family responsibilities are in general not given sufficient opportunities because they are fewer women to bargain for them in decision making spaces”.

This is a common impression among most female staff and we make an analysis of the gender-based challenges later on.

The University appears to attract few Female Academic Staff. Whereas we note a staffing problem at the University, females are scarce; the positions of Professor, Senior Lecturer and Assistant Lecturer do not have females at all.

### Female Academic Staff by Rank



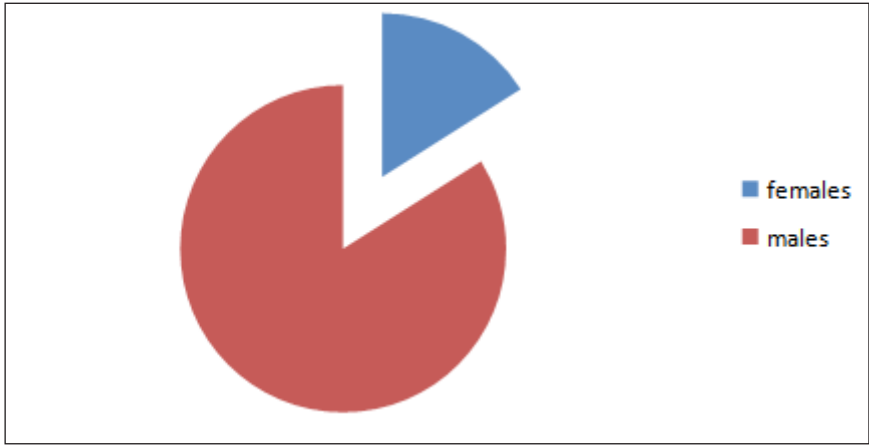
**Fig 4.2:** The number of Female Academic Staff by Rank in Gulu University

The graph indicates that there are no female Professors and only one Associate Professor. It also shows that majority of females occupy the rank of Lecturer, while none is at the rank of Senior Lecturer. In the same vein, we find no female Assistant Lecturers, instead a number of them serve as Teaching Assistants.

While trying to answer the question: “Why do women succeed in higher education – but only to a certain point” Kandiko Howson (2016) notes that many academic women spend the greater part of their lives at the mid-career stage. Some mid-career academic women feel ‘stuck’ and undervalued and some are concerned about their futures in academic life if they are not promoted. This stage is seen as a career-building time, but many feel that there was little support or mentoring. With fellowships directed at early career stages and research funds clustered with fewer top stars, it is increasingly difficult to navigate through the

mid-career stage. For many women, the mid-career stage coincided with care responsibilities – raising young families, and taking care of ageing relatives. This can lead to a prolonging of the mid-career stage, and in this ‘make or break’ period, an exit from academia for some.

In relational terms we show below the proportion of females to males:



**Fig 4.3:** Chart showing the Percentage of Female Academic Staff in Gulu University

The female staff represent only 16 per cent of the total number of academic teaching staff. The females interviewed expressed a number of gender based challenges that will need to be addressed if the University is to attract female teaching staff.

Like researchers before us, we wondered why the question “why do women succeed in higher education – but only to a certain point” is often asked instead of looking at senior women who have made it to the top.

In the exploration of gender-based factors that would be contributing to this small presence, we reached out to a female academics in a group discussion. Their responses are as below:

### **Challenges Women Face**

Most academic staff are demotivated because of low pay across public universities, lack of payment of their extra-load allowances, lack of housing and high costs of living which results in high staff turnover. Female academic staff have to make extra sacrifices of leaving their families behind to come and

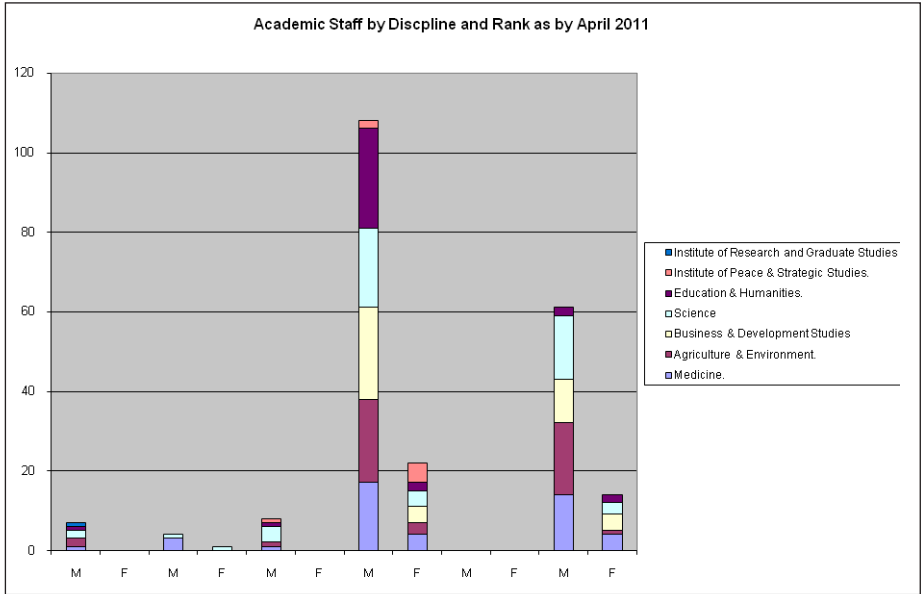
work in Gulu. If the pay is meagre then the woman has to explain to her husband why she needs to continue trekking to Gulu.

The University, in addition, does not have a deliberate policy for training staff at Masters or PHD level. Most staff are compelled to find their own scholarships and are most of the times not committed to return to the service of Gulu University. Most women also lack time to commit to web searches for opportunities for bigger degrees. They often are a pace slower than their male counterparts. Even women who are qualified find it hard to move to Gulu because of inadequate child care facilities, schools and medical care and related services.

Since Gulu is a non-residential university, women face formidable challenges. The constant movement from Kampala where their families live to Gulu is disruptive. They don't find enough time to prepare and write proposals for research work. Most women lived in single, indecent rooms that are way beneath their status. Commuting is difficult and that is why most women cannot be present at the University all the time. Many tend to appear only when they have to conduct lectures.

Compiled interviews, April 19 2014.

On a positive note, we, however, noticed an increasing number of females across all teaching disciplines, albeit in small numbers. This could be interpreted as a strength if the university is committed to increasing females' presence. This scattered presence is also recent and shows that the gloomy picture is changing, with more females now accepting to move to Gulu for teaching and other job opportunities. This scenario is demonstrated diagrammatically below:



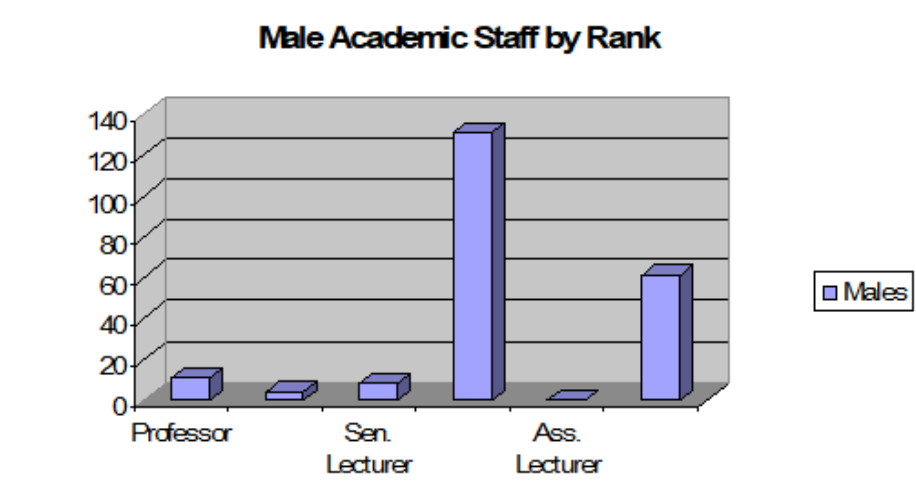
**Fig 4.4:** The spread of females and males across disciplines

*Source:* Approved Establishment for Non-Teaching and Teaching Staff, Directorate of Planning and Development, Gulu University, April 2011.

The diagram above shows the proportion of female to male staff in the different academic fields being offered in Gulu University between 2006 and 2011. Agriculture and Environment as well as Development and Business Studies have the highest number of staff, although again female staff are much fewer. The highest numbers of females teach Education and Humanities. Females are also represented in Science and Medicine. The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies has mostly females. In all, there has been an incremental number of women teaching courses across the academic disciplines, albeit in smaller ratios since 2009 to 2011.

***Males are also Few***

It should be noted that although the females are few, the majority males do not constitute sufficient capacity for the University. In general understaffing is a challenge; professors constitute only 11 of the 215 male staff. Some positions are not occupied. For instance we found no male Assistant Lecturers.



**Fig 4.5:** Male Academic Staff representation by Rank, 2011

As previously observed, the graph emphasizes that even among males, the staff who occupy the rank of Professor is comparatively too small. There are no males at the rank of Associate professor and few serve as Senior Lecturers. Majority males are Lecturers and Teaching Assistants.

This situation grossly impacted on the goal of building a staff capacity that would enable the university to become “a pillar of professional and academic excellence”. It affected the overall composition of staff at Senate, which is the leading academic decision making body as most often, few staff qualified to be members. In contradiction to the academic staff figures on the ground, we found that Gulu University operates according to the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 6 of 2001 which state thus:

“A Dean or Director of a faculty, institute, college or other academic body shall be elected by its academic staff from among its senior members of the academic staff in accordance with the procedures proposed by the Senate and approved by the University Council”

We found this to have a gender-specific implication limiting further the possibility for females to access such positions. Although several staff expressed lack of interest in positions of leadership by females, it was also apparent that this provision did not encourage females to occupy the said positions since none so far is a senior Lecturer. One of the male interviewees remarked:



“Females often lack self-confidence, even when a woman is qualified she will not accept to take up responsibility. They prefer to remain in the background. We need massive sensitisation for these women”

This, however, is not a case of lack of confidence, but a clear application of gender insensitive policies and assuming they will apply to all in the same way. It shows that gender insensitivity goes well beyond Gulu University establishment to higher decision making bodies at national level.

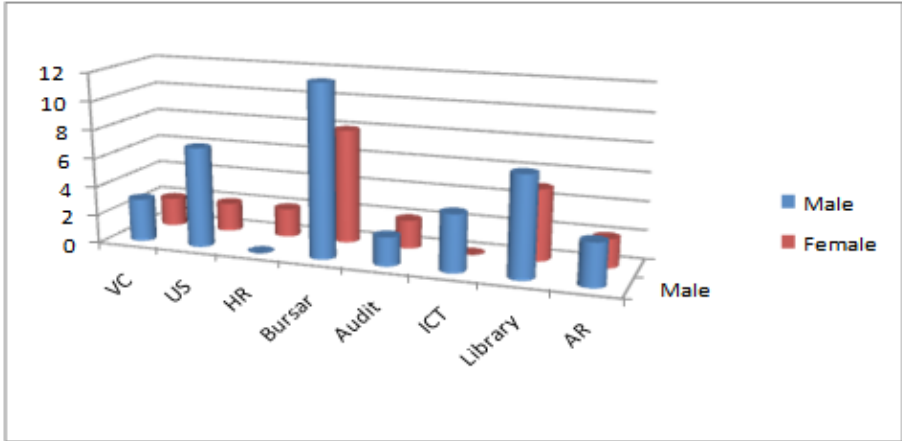
To be able to analyse the University’s capacity to implement its strategic objectives, we examined the establishment in relation to non-academic staff. In the next section we provide a picture of the situation.

### *Non-academic Staff Composition*

Staff who constitute this category they include senior managers in charge of the administration of the University (University Council and Senior Management Committee), middle line managers as Academic Registrars, Librarians, Finance, Administrators, Security, Medical, and Secretaries; and support staff involved in cleaning, messengers, and security at the lowest echelons.

More often, non-academic staff are the technocrats responsible for management and administration of the university. They occupy most positions at the Management Committee level and guide matters related to Council business. Planning, budgeting and overall resource allocation is the responsibility of Management. Planning for human resources is also their responsibility. The Management works hand in hand with the administrators who are spread across the university departments. Although the management makes the overall decision, the administrators implement them. These are in turn assisted by support staff as office attendants, clerks, copy typists, messengers and cleaners. This makes this category of staff essential for the day-to-day running of the university.

In the appendix, we find that the indicative total number of management, administrative, and support staff employed by the university, demonstrates that males are dominant in all sections of administration, and females are only emerging in the Finance and Library units. Majority of the females occupy secretarial related positions, including those of Principal and Personal Assistants. For details on staffing see appendix. The picture is gloomier when we analyse the top management since this is where real power is concentrated.



**Fig 4.6:** Graph showing the composition of Administrative staff by Gender

The offices indicated in the diagram are those that constitute both management and administrative functions of the University. These are: the Office of the Vice Chancellor, University Bursar, Human Resources, Audit, Information and Communications, Library and Information Science and the Academic Registrar. The Human Resources remains entirely female, although it is grossly understaffed, and so is the Library and Information Science. The rest are male reserves, who occupy the top positions in all cases.

There is a clear gendered divisions of labour where unnecessary and under-rewarded labour (e.g. repetitive lab work, secretaries, library attendants, accounts assistants or data entry in the university) is done more often by women, 'freeing up' others (mostly men) for 'successful' and prestigious forms of work. In this way, the prestige economy operates to reward certain forms of labour while ignoring or undervaluing others. So-called 'serious academics' were seen to focus on research and other work that would be recognised as prestigious (KandikoHowson, 2016).

There formidable challenges for staff in this category as well. Many of them are related to the human resources policies that guide them. A particular case in point is the lack of automatic promotional growth that the academic staff enjoys. This policy grossly affects staff at the lower cadre position as Secretaries and other administrators. Again we find that in this category, females are the majority. That, therefore, means that this policy has gender implications. It can be assumed that since there is a thin presence of females in top management, issues of gender equality often fall between the cracks. Although we found that in most of the

cases there was a positive attitude among senior male staff about the need to advance women's views in a positive manner, there was no guarantee that they would advocate for the elevation of women.

Again here we find gender-specific challenges that women non-academic staff faced. As one interviewee remarks:

“In the administrative units, most women are in the ranks of Secretaries, Office Attendants, Stenographers, Accounts Assistants, and Assistant Librarians. All these are position of less power and are stereo-typed with lack of competent skills. This category of women is answerable to higher authorities and can not make independent decisions. It is a dumping ground for female employees”.

The power hierarchy depicted here reflects lack of substantial power for female staff to influence the direction of important decisions being made in the University because they are stuck at the lower echelons of power, and there is little they can do to effect change. During the focus group discussion, they openly expressed many gender-specific challenges. Below are some of their responses:

- I can only be promoted horizontally through informal internal transfers; I cannot rise vertically even if I acquire the relevant qualifications for a higher position.
- Most of us have our families in Kampala so we have to commute every weekend. And when we are with our families back home, we are in charge of the house and related chores like cooking, washing and preparing children for the week. We don't rest because when we return to Gulu, it is business as usual.
- All our bosses are male, so we are faced with all sorts of situations. It is common for the boss to ask for a sexual relationship. Since he is your boss, you can not refuse; if you say no the consequences' are harsh.
- I have been to many important meetings, but all the time, I am the one talking notes. My boss does not allow me to say anything.
- We are not organised as women. We have no uniting factor, not even a small association. The students fair better because they have several associations.

The discussion tended to be dominated by challenges that women face in their work places and at home. There was a feeling of helplessness since the discontentment remains an individual concern and private matter with no platform to discuss their experiences or to advocate for change. A heated discussion followed the remarks on sexual harassment in particular with remarks that it is rampant and a big challenge for low cadre women.

In this chapter we have discussed issues pertaining to the University's capacity to realise its strategic direction. We noted that the University is still growing from a farm institute in 2002 to a fully fledged university. However, there are a number of drawbacks that impact on its vision and goals. For instance, members reported low finances, and poor physical infrastructure and human resource development. In addition, we noted that most of these problems had a gender dimension.

We then turn to the analysis of access to education in Gulu University. There are many challenges that women face in advancing their academic careers, particularly negotiating disciplinary prestige, unbalanced workload allocations and managing caring responsibilities. More women are entering academia and finding mid-career success – but fail to advance to senior positions. There is work to be done.

### Access to University Education

In assessing access to education, we examined records regarding the details of the factors that may promote or challenge entry of females and males into university. We examine the nature of programmes offered and the patterns of enrollment, retention and completion for both males and females. We pay particular attention to the programmes offered to males and females. The discussion involves student academic issues as they impact on males and females such as: 1.5 extra point scheme for females, the cut off point system of admission, the presence of scholarship initiatives and their role in promoting access to university education.

**Table 4.2:** Diagram showing the students admitted per programme between 2002-07

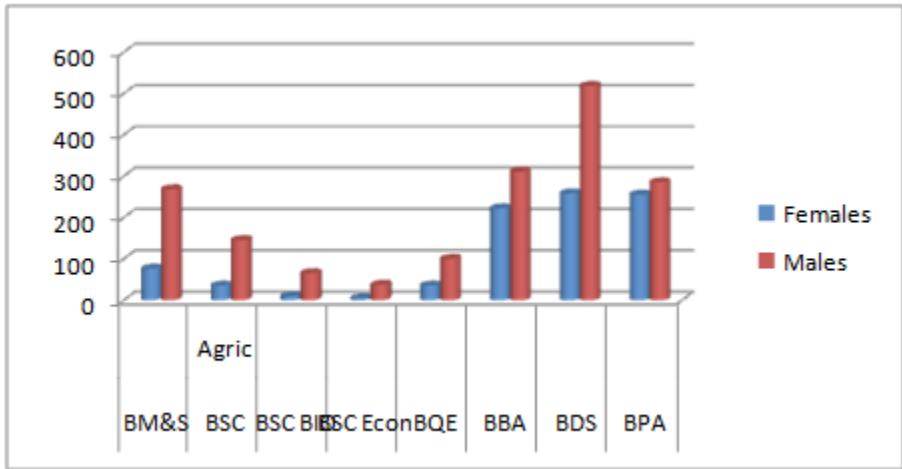
PROGRAMME	2002/2003			2003/2004			2004/2005			2005/2006			2006/2007		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Sugery 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	55	59	8	52	60	15	49	<b>64</b>
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Sugery 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	55	59	9	52	<b>61</b>
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Sugery 3	0	0	0	0	0		0	0		0	0		4	50	<b>54</b>
Bachelor of Quantitative Economics 1	0	0	0	1	7	8	1	18	19	2	23	25	4	34	<b>38</b>
Bachelor of Quantitative Economics 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	8	1	18	19	2	23	<b>25</b>

Bachelor of Quantitative Economics 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	8	1	15	<b>16</b>
Bachelor of Business Administration 1	48	56	104	18	50	68	23	55	78	33	65	98	45	114	<b>159</b>	
Bachelor of Business Administration 2	0	0	0	48	56	104	15	50	65	23	54	77	33	65	<b>98</b>	
Bachelor of Business Administration 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	47	56	103	14	49	63	23	54	<b>77</b>	
Bachelor of Development Studies 1	41	48	89	64	77	141	72	124	196	57	60	117	75	98	<b>173</b>	
Bachelor of Development Studies 2	0	0	0	41	47	88	63	77	140	72	123	195	57	60	<b>117</b>	
Bachelor of Development Studies 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	47	88	63	77	140	72	123	<b>195</b>	
Bachelor of Science Education 1	10	58	68	5	94	99	5	90	95	5	67	72	10	53	<b>63</b>	
Bachelor of Science Education 2	0	0	0	10	56	66	5	92	97	6	90	96	5	59	<b>64</b>	
Bachelor of Science Education 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	55	65	5	92	97	6	90	<b>96</b>	
Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	20	<b>72</b>	
Bachelor of Agriculture and Environment 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	37	40	10	38	<b>48</b>	
Bachelor of Agriculture and Environment 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	37	<b>40</b>	

From the table, it is apparent that although the University was set to open in 2002, most programmes were started after that period. There were three programmes that admitted students in 2002. These were: Bachelor of Public Administration, Development Studies and Science Education. It is also important to note that at that time, the number of females and males were almost at par except for the Bachelors in Science Education, where there were fewer females. However, by 2004/05 most of the programmes were up and running, although male admissions continued to dominate throughout most of the programmes.

In summary of students’ enrolment for the academic year 2011/12, we selected a number of undergraduate courses that would be indicative of the gender patter. The selected programmes were: Bachelor of Medicine and Dental Surgery (BM&S); Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSC Agric); Bachelor of Science in Biology (BSC Bio); Bachelor of Science (BSC); Bachelor of Quantitative Economics (BQE); Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA); Bachelor of Development Studies (BDA) and Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA).

Below is the information regarding the 2011/12 admissions by gender:



**Fig 4.7:** Graph showing current admissions of undergraduates by gender

The graph shows the programmes offered at undergraduate level for the academic year 2011/12. Males in all cases outnumber the female students, although female numbers are high in programmes as BBA, BDS, and BPA. There are extremely few females pursuing BSC BIO and BSC Econ. It also shows that the number of females undertaking the programme on Medicine and Dental Surgery has increased.

### *Student enrollments*

Although the University was created to cater for science-based subjects, we note that the humanities have attracted more students. There are currently over 2,000 students in undergraduate programmes but only about a third study sciences. In all the programmes offered, males far outnumber the females, even with the application of the 1.5 extra points for females. The 1.5 extra points has made negligible difference in some science courses. Most of the students interviewed mentioned that there are glaring gaps between males and females at the University. Male students dominate most of the courses at the University, especially in science courses. The School of Medicine was reported to have the fastest growing number of female enrollments as compared to men.

“In some courses, we still have almost no females! Where you find only one or two females, they often are shy and lack self-confidence because people tease them

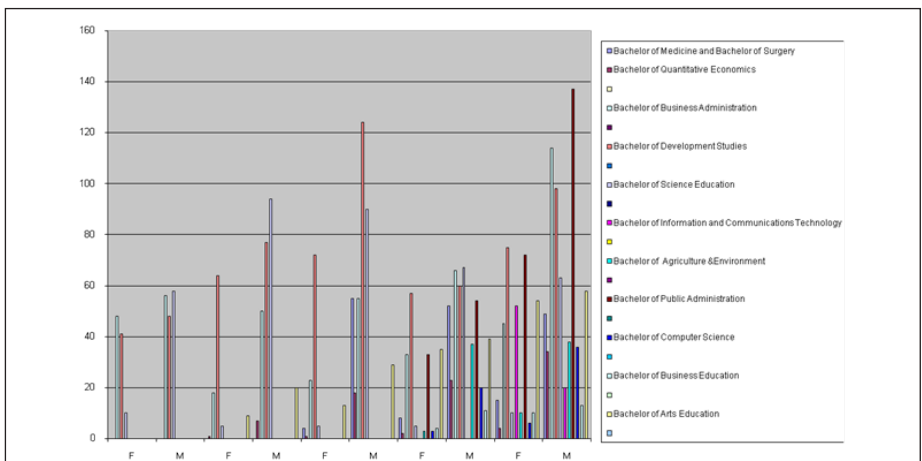
about the choice of their courses. In fact, some girls have run away from the courses originally offered to them.”

Students also pointed out the high dropout levels. Males and female students had varying reasons for failure to complete their courses. The men often lacked fees and had to forego their university education; they left and resorted to petty business and trading in produce. The females, in addition to lack of tuition fees, had to contend with pregnancy, in their first and second years, with majority of them opting to leave university. A female guild representative said this:

“The issue with women here is that they get pregnant all the time. In one year, you may find up to 20-30 of them leaving university for fear of being victimized by their parents or guardians. I know cases where some quit and elope with their lovers.”

This has been the case for all programmes since the university was created in 2002. The figure below indicates that the highest number of students belong to the arts programmes of Public Administration followed by Development Studies and Business Administration. The males and females have found a place amongst these central programmes. The diagram is also an indicator of retention being reflected in the number of students in the third and subsequent years following opening of the university.

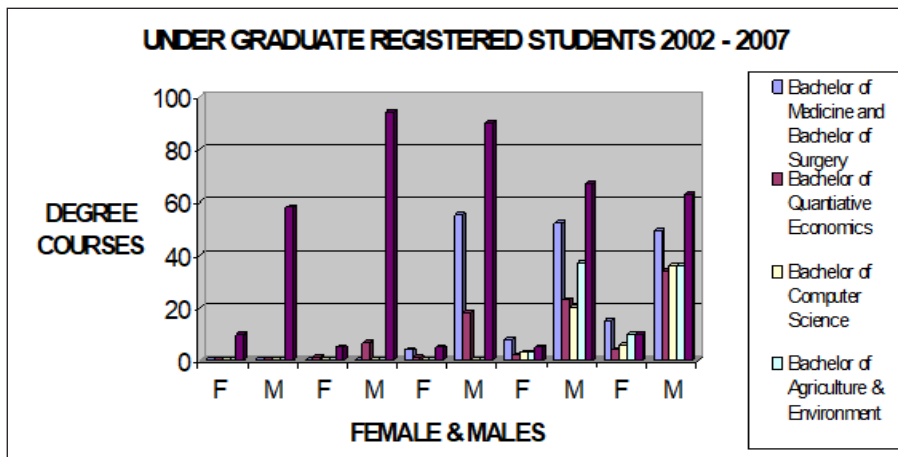
From 2005, programmes begin to intensify and relatively more students concentrate around the Arts and Education subjects. The diagram below shows how the programmes have been growing progressively since the university’s inception in 2002.



**Fig 4.8:** Number of Registered Undergraduate students by programme

The same pattern where males consistently dominate the science-based programmes between 2002 and 2007 is repeated. There is a difference in terms of the numbers registered for particular science based programmes as Medicine, Agriculture and Environment, Computer Science, and Science in Education. The university enrolment has been swelled by the introduction of non-science subjects as shown above.

Since 2005, more students began pouring in from all parts of the country on the basis of the winner-takes all, with the students with the right cut-off points joining. But increase in student numbers does not necessarily mean that the female population on the campus has increased. There is an apparent demarcation between the science-based and the non-science programmes. The increase in number of females has not often meant an increase in the Sciences. The figure below demonstrates this:



**Fig 4.9:** Figure showing female and male students by Science-based programme  
*Source:* Academic registrar's department.

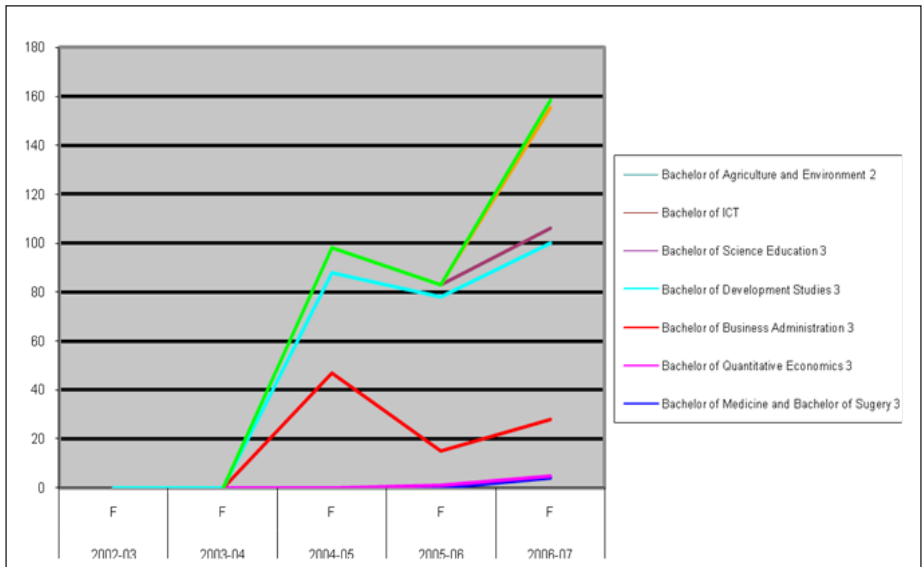
We also note that the uptake of courses across the Sciences is grossly uneven. On the whole, there are fewer students pursuing such programmes. The highest number of students is found in the Bachelor of Science in Education programme, as has been since the course picked up in 2003-2003 with ten females and 58 males. The programme reached its peak in 2004-05 with nearly 90 males, but the females dropped to only five. The other programmes that have remained more or less steady with enough students are Bachelor of Medicine and Dental



Surgery. Although it picked up much later in 2005-06, it has attracted a number of students, from 55 males and only four females at inception. However, the females' completion rates cannot be detected from the diagram. Interviews revealed that female Medical students face formidable obstacles that further aggravate their miserly representation in this field of study.

Despite its importance in the vision and mission of Gulu University, the Agriculture and Environment Programme has retained a relatively low profile; beginning in 2006-07 with 37 males and ten females. The completion rates are not well expressed, but interviews revealed that many challenges are associated with such a practicum-based subject. There is acute lack of finance to match the demands of the costs associated with running such a programme.

Are Females Steadily Increasing? It is important to note that the number of female students has continuously risen across all courses. Although their admission to science based subjects is relatively lower in all cases, especially Medicine, their steady increase is noted there too. Available date recorded from 2002 to 2007 for the female students in their year illustrates this point as shown blow:



**Fig 4.10:** Female students by programme 2002-07

The graph shows a steady sharp increase in the uptake of female students as the University admissions pick up from 2005 to 2007. The programmes

with the highest number of females are Bachelor of Science in Education and Environment, Bachelor of Information and Communication Technology and Bachelor of Development Studies. There is an erratic rise and fall of preference for females in Bachelor of Business Administration; and a low intake for Bachelor of Quantitative Economics and Medicine and Surgery.

The findings to the question “Are females more likely to undertake diploma programmes” were illuminating. Indeed more females pursued programmes that were noted to be of short duration but only earned the candidates diplomas and certificates. The summary of figure below demonstrates this fact.

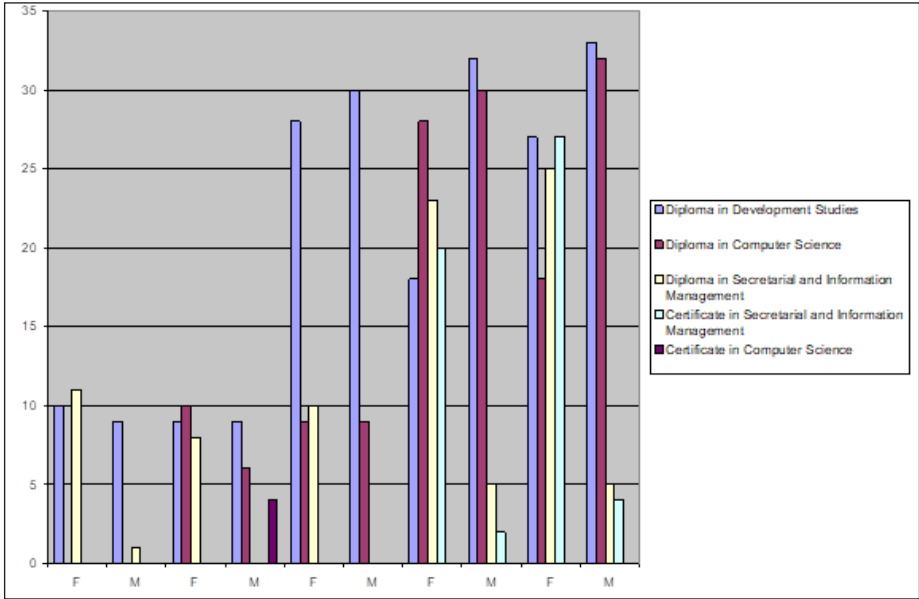
**Table 4.3:** Are Females more likely to Undertake Diploma Programmes

PROGRAMME	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Diploma in Development Studies	10	9	9	9	28	30	18	32	27	33
Diploma in Computer Science	0	0	10	6	9	9	28	30	18	32
Diploma in Secretarial and Information Management	11	1	8	0	10	0	23	5	25	5
Certificate in Secretarial and Information Management	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	2	27	4
Certificate in Computer Science	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	00	0	0
Total	21	10	27	19	47	39	197	69	97	74

### *Undergraduate Diploma Programmes*

For all the programmes offered as diploma or certificates, the females dominated them in all aspects. The figure shows that there are hardly any males pursuing diplomas and certificates in Secretarial and Information Management. An equal number of females and males were pursuing diploma programmes in Development Studies and Computer Science. This aspect has policy implications regarding the increase in numbers of females’ access to university education.

Below is the illustration of the females’ preference for diploma and certificate programmes:



**Fig 4.11:** Females and Males undertaking Diploma and Certificate Undergraduate Programmes

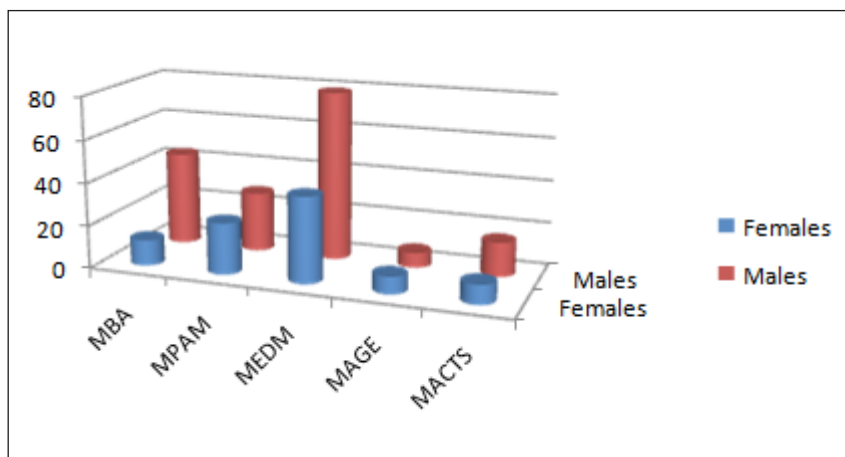
Are there Gender Differences in Graduate Programmes?

**Table 4.4:** Graduate programmes-registered students, 2002-2007

PROGRAMME	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Masters of Business Administration	0	0	2	19	0	0	7	28	0	0
Masters of Educational Planning, Management and Administration	0	0	0	0	5	18	5	23	0	0
Masters of Public Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	20	0	0
Postgraduate Diploma in Education	1	1	4	6	2	10	1	5	2	4
Postgraduate Diploma in Conflict Management and Peace Studies	0	0	0	0	3	11	5	10	4	11
Postgraduate Diploma in Entrepreneurship Development	0	0	4	10	5	16	6	20	22	30
Postgraduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management	0	0	2	6	3	7	2	9	4	8

Graduate programmes are slowly gaining ground in the University; reasonable numbers are enrolling for courses like Masters in Public Administration and Management, Business Administrations and Diploma in Entrepreneurship Development. In all these cases, the female numbers are increasing comparably with males enrolments. But on the converse, postgraduate diplomas are losing significance with fewer students enrolling by the years. As the table below indicates, there is more preference for the Master of Arts in Business Administration (MBA), Public Administration and Management (MPAM), and Master of Arts in Education Planning and Management (MEPM). The records also indicate that there are no graduate programmes for science-based courses.

	MBA	MPAM	MEPM	MAGE	MACTS
Females	12	24	40	8	9
Males	44	28	79	7	16



**Fig 4.12:** Graph showing the 2011/12 admission for graduate programmes by gender

As shown in the graph above, there is only a handful of graduate programmes on offer, but the numbers are encouraging. There is a proportionately big number of females undertaking Masters in Business Administration (MBA); Masters of Arts in Public Administration (MPAM); more are found in Master of Arts in Education Management and Planning although there are fewer students pursuing Master of Arts in Governance and Ethics (MAGE) and Master of Arts in Conflict Transformation Studies (MACTS).

In all, students' enrolment, retention and completion patterns depict interesting gender patterns. The 1.5 extra points for females has greatly increased access to education for girls, although there will still be complications on the 60:40 ratios for humanities. The uptake in science-based subjects is still low and there no graduate programmes for science-based courses. Females tend to undertake diploma and certificate courses, whereas these are declining in significance. The graduate courses in humanities have pulled in a big number of females.

The increase in female population has got a number of implications for the various University units and its capacity to realise strategic goals with ease. The increased number of females, for instance, poses new demands for both academic and non-academic services. Females expressed frustration with the facilities offered by the University. For example, non-residential university females faced challenges because of their gender. Another important issue is that even with the 1.5 extra points, few females still make it. Moreover, students' enrollment is often by selection at the centre, and as a result, the "natives of Acholiland" are not given special consideration. These are explored later in this report. The next section explores the equally important subject of curriculum, teaching and learning environment.

### **Gender, the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Environment in Gulu University**

The curriculum, teaching and learning environment are key factors in the discussion of the gender terrain. We examine the course content and analyse the gender issues therein. We also analyse the teaching methods applied and the materials used. Finally, we also look at the learning environment and relate these to the different needs of males and females.

Gulu University offers a range of programmes in the natural sciences and humanities. The following are offered:

Natural Science-based subjects	Humanities-based subjects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery</li> <li>• Bachelor of Quantitative Economics</li> <li>• Bachelor of Computer Science</li> <li>• Bachelor of Agriculture &amp; Environment</li> <li>• Bachelor of Science Education</li> <li>• Diploma in Computer Science</li> <li>• Certificate in Computer Science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masters of Business Administration</li> <li>• Masters of Educational Planning, Management and Administration</li> <li>• Masters of Public Administration</li> <li>• Postgraduate Diploma in Education</li> <li>• Postgraduate Diploma in Conflict Management and Peace Studies</li> <li>• Postgraduate Diploma in Entrepreneurship Development</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postgraduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management</li> <li>• Diploma in Development Studies</li> <li>• Diploma in Secretarial and Information Management</li> <li>• Certificate in Secretarial and Information Management</li> </ul>
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Gender courses are taught in almost every department either directly or indirectly, however the content varies based on the discipline. It is vital to have a linear gender course for all the departments rather than each department developing their own programme. The argument of having a linear programme is based on the need to have a holistic view of gender rather than tailored view. Most course outlines we came across still do not highlight the essentials of gender like the difference between gender and sex, the socialisation process talking about the specificities of how this leads to the division of labour, formation of masculinity and femininity, value placement on the genders, stereotyping, gender inequalities and restrictions and how gender becomes systemic. These vital aspects are not clearly articulated in many of the course outlines analysed.

The gender curriculum needs to be transformative, that is lead to a desired positive behaviour in an individual through building of a consciousness and unveiling the realities rather than being passive. A uniform curriculum; a curriculum that contains the basics of the so called “ABCs” and with flexibility of being tailor made to the various disciplines is necessary.

**The following gender courses are currently taught:**

***Gender Roles in Peace Building and Conflict Management***

The Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies offers the above mentioned course every second semester of the Post Graduate Diploma in Conflict Management and Peace Studies calendar. The objectives of the course are to help students understand that gender plays a key role in the design and implementation of war and peace.

### ***Gender and Rural Development***

The Bachelor of Development Studies was created with four major objectives, one of them being enabling students to understand the basic issues in development like poverty, population studies and gender. To reach this goal, the Course DVS 210: Gender and Rural Development is taught with the aim of looking at gender concepts, theories and relations and how they influence development

### ***Gender and Development***

This Course is offered in the Bachelor of Public Administration Programme in the Faculty of Business and Development studies. One of the objectives of the course is to equip students with knowledge and skills in applying the new public administration techniques that lay much emphasis on achievement of results and integration of gender and environment as well as exercising good governance principles in decision making.

### ***Gender Issues in Literature and the Media***

The Course is taught by the Department of English, Literature and Language at the Faculty of Education and Humanities, GuluUniversity

### ***Gender and Agribusiness***

The Gender and Agribusiness is a course taught in the second year of the Bachelor of Agriculture and Environment course. Its aim is to look at the gender issues in Agribusiness, like women's access and control over land, women's control of the income that comes out of the fields or marketable commodities

### ***Gender Issues in Health***

This is course is taught at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

## ***History of Gender in Gulu University***

Gender-Mainstreaming per se was spearheaded by the then Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof. Mary Okwakol and a draft gender policy produced. However when she was

seconded to spearhead the establishment of Busitema University, the entire agenda died out. The department of Gender-Mainstreaming was supposed to operate under the auspices of the Academic Registrars office, but it got swallowed up in Mature Age and Admissions and could not flourish.

Over the years, Gender-Mainstreaming has been taking place as a conscientisation of “adding women in and Stirring” but not a matter of policy and practice. In most cases, the term Gender in Gulu University is used blindly to refer to women in general, but the dynamism around it is not well understood and is missing from vital documents of the University ranging from personnel policy, health policies and even general admissions of students.

### **First gender course, where and why?**

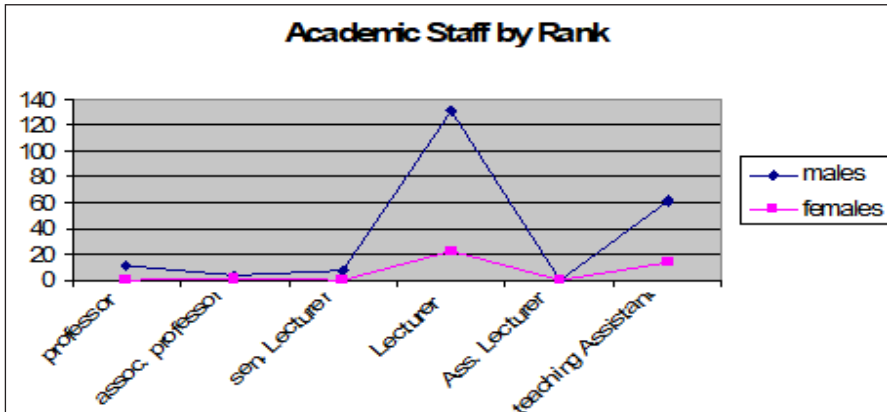
The First Gender course was taught in 2003 in the Institute of Human Resources Development, now the Faculty of Business and Development Studies. It was taught under the Ordinary Diploma in Development Studies (DDS). The Objectives of the course were to; train the human resources required to provide leadership and guidance to the Ugandan communities in their effort to raise their living standards, to enable students to understand the mutual interplay/interrelationship between the role of government, donors and civil society organisations (CSOs) in the development of Uganda, to prepare the students to become informed participants in the economic, social and political development of the country, where they are expected to plan, build and maintain effective organisations and utilise efficient control procedures and to enable students understand the issues in development like poverty, population studies and gender. From the start, the objectives of the introductory course lay in the fact that the understanding of gender was critical to the understanding development issues. Hence, the course DDS 106: Gender in Development looks at the definition and concepts of gender, problems of gender imbalance, solutions and the role of women in development.

### *Teaching and Learning Environment*

We focused on the classroom, teaching and learning materials, reviewed some of the course content; and also examined the methods and language used to transfer knowledge, the environment in which this occurred while focusing on the learners



themselves and their teachers’ attitudes as interpretive of gender. We noted that the staff gender composition affected the degree to which the teaching and learning environment was engendered. The females were examined in relation to males as shown in the diagram below:



**Fig 4.13:** Graph showing male academic staff in relation to females

The graph shows a similar pattern of male dominance in the teaching and learning environment. Females are extremely few; a pattern that negates efforts to mainstream sex equality in the University. This topic was discussed by teaching staff and students. In several interviews we held, the following were noted:

- a) That in some cases, lecturers were lacking in sensitivity to gender in the classroom and in the language they used while instructing students. The use of derogatory statements which are used to refer to female students as “*you are only fit for cows and not here; you are being groomed for marriage and this is not the right place for you*” were used against female students in class.
- b) In regards to most courses in Agriculture, practical courses were not gender sensitive. For instance, the requirement and need to wear overalls while working was cumbersome for females who also had to operate tractors designed for male operators. It was mentioned that some of these elements would not change unless viable alternatives were put in place.
- c) In Education and Humanities, abusive language was used against females by some lecturers. Quote: *You are so useless that you will disappear when two cows are given!* The student who said this wonders if handled their students in an ethical manner. In addition, females were routinely portrayed as

submissive and too weak to cope with the rigour of academic work. The teaching staff requested for a retooling of lecturers in terms of introducing and encouraging gender sensitive language as well as classroom tools that are gender responsive. The lecturers' attitude needed to be put right.

- d) Teaching of criminal law and related laws on domestic violence and on defilement was essential to all University community. Sexuality is another important aspect of gender training that needs to be put to everybody. The use of offensive or demeaning examples in class should be banned.
- e) In subjects as anatomy, gynecology, and business and development studies, male students complained that they were disturbed by the manner of female dressing. In Education, however, the dressing was said to be more decent. In Law, the students organised themselves to adhere to professional dress code and evict colleagues who do not comply. In Pharmacy, the gate keepers ensure that the dress code for both lecturers and students is adhered to. A challenge foreseen is how to have a common understanding of what is a proper dress code. There is some disagreement on the approach of sending students away due to unethical dressing. This was seen to be related to sexual harassment.
- f) It is important to work on attitude of young students before they join university.
- g) Teaching rooms are insufficient for promoting gender issues. Overcrowding is a common problem.

Despite these problems which we associated to the teaching and learning environment, we found that there are positive elements within this environment that could be used to propel gender equality activism. We found that there were a handful of women activists that were scattered across the University and these could constitute a key element in solidifying a core group of champions for gender equality. We collected some memoirs from respondents as one below:

### ***History of Women in the Founding of Gulu University and Current Women Leadership***

Gulu University was built on the pillar of promoting Science and Technology; this was directly exclusive of women by implication. No documentation can be found to the effect that women were involved in the founding of the University. The current women leaders in the University are the female professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Health staff and Senior Administrative Staff. The Academic Staff provide career mentoring for both the male and female students in the

university, trying to reiterate that whether male or female, everyone can reach their desired goals. Ever since the Dean of Students Office was headed by Sr. Achieng, a woman who is also in-charge of counseling and guidance, it has revealed that women's leadership is crucial. For example in September 2010 when the first year students reported, the Dean of Students Office organised training on Women's Leadership and Reproductive Health Sponsored jointly by Gulu University and PACO Uganda. This was an important piece of training and sharing because it introduced these young women to University life, what to expect and how to protect themselves from reproductive health hazards. Issues ranging from sexual harassment, sexuality and relational issues, gender and leadership were all discussed. Prominent women like the local area Women Member of Parliament and other distinguished speakers and academic staff were invited.

The Health Unit headed by a female Senior Nursing Officer is spearheading Counseling and Guidance, especially of female students, on reproductive health issues and on general life in the University Setting. The Department initiated the "go-get us" campaign, that was on awareness on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections is also championing hygiene in lavatories around the University. Such progress is clearly centered on the fact that a woman heads the Department and is well aware of the reproductive health needs of young women and men. The plight of female students is also receiving greater attention since the appointment of a female Senior Admissions Registrar.

### ***Research and Community Services***

We also looked at the documents that contained information on the research agenda and research policy, research projects and their capacities as well as the capacity to conduct the said research. We also examined the funding sources. It was noted, that on the whole, research in the university is on a low scale. A few science-supported projects benefitted just a couple of male senior researchers. Most academic staff were not conducting research. Humanities, on the other hand were only into full time teaching. However, quite a number were on PhD programmes, meaning that there is an upcoming capacity in terms of research and quality of teaching. We noted that the University needed to nurture such young scholars and motivate them through availing research funds or setting up foundations to stimulate research activity. Females who were notably less in the research pool were required for affirmative action in sense that a special fund for female scholars would be set aside for women to compete against themselves. It was also noted that since females start their careers late, they would be allowed to take up their PhDs even after the age of 50 years.

All in all, this section examines the gender elements in the teaching and learning environment. There are several gender courses that are taught across the disciplines. These constitute a good starting point for engendering the University curriculum. To improve the teaching and learning environment, there is need to retool the instruction materials and staff and students trained in gender sensitive approaches. In the next section, we will discuss the attitude, knowledge and practice of students towards gender.

### **Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices towards Gender**

It was an assumption that assessing students' attitudes, knowledge and practices towards gender is an important pointer towards understanding the levels of acceptability and the ready implementation of gender sensitive policies in the University. Students' opinions were necessary to analyse the extent to which University was ready for change in the manner of relationships between the sexes. A questionnaire was administered to 63 students (33 males and 30 females). Students were randomly selected from various faculties and departments at the University. The researchers also used the snowballing method especially to connect to students in different academic years and students in the same faculty but pursuing different courses. The questionnaire focused but was not limited to the following issues; Sex of the interviewees, age, level of education, field of study, length of time in the University, marital status, sources of income, the level of understanding of gender and related concepts, students' understanding of the University efforts to integrate gender in its functions, gender specific challenges, policy recommendations, and other recommendations for the university to strengthen efforts to mainstream gender.

One of the key emerging issues was that both students and staff that were interviewed had limited knowledge about gender. Most of the respondents gambled with basic understanding of the concepts but with no clear definitions. A few students who had some knowledge of gender are those that took gender as course unit or as part of the course unit. Such students were from the development studies and agriculture courses.

It was however noted that, most of the students and staff eagerly wanted to learn more about gender. Most of them suggested that the University should organise gender sensitisation workshops and seminars and print and distribute gender sensitisation materials like brochures, flyers, magazines, leaflets, etc. Female students also proposed that they lacked space where they would express their concerns as females. They proposed that the University should recruit senior

women who will attend to their problems. A student leader summarised the scenario as below:

“Most of the students and staff at Gulu University do not have knowledge of gender and related concepts. There is need for the University to organise gender sensitisation and awareness campaigns including workshops and seminars, printing and distribution of gender promotional materials, stickers and flyers. There is need for the University to expedite the process of institutionalising gender equality through policy designs and implementation and establishing and facilitating a gender mainstreaming unit at the university” (interview April, 2011).

According to the findings from the survey, there was no clear indication that students and staff consciously practiced gender equality. Those who did were from a formalised classroom environment and they did this as a fulfillment of one of the practices of the University. Some students mentioned that the University had specific course units on gender which they covered within their degree studies. For example, students of Development Studies and Agriculture had course units that focused on gender in their areas of specialisation and these courses are examinable. Some of the staff respondents also emphasised the fact that gender equality was practiced informally especially during lectures. Some academic staff were cautious on using examples that were gender inclusive including being mindful of the language used during the teaching and learning interface.

### ***Organisational Culture and Language Discourses***

The data we analysed also contained information on the interpretations of symbols, language, practices and deeply-embedded beliefs and values. We considered that each of these constituted an important field of gendered meaning, which reproduced and sustained gender identities, practices and power relations. The culture of Gulu University could be considered gender neutral; however, there are practices that would constitute gender discrimination in a manner that is not deliberate. However, there is still unconscious treatment of females as minor or even inferior by some individuals. For example, the feeling amongst majority males that females in the University community dress in ways that are ‘enticing’ to the opposite sex and that there is need to stress for a dress code. This enhanced the view that females are sex objects.

“We need a dress code in this University; we can’t have girls’ thighs out all the time, some of them practically walk naked. This is a university not a place for prostitutes.” (Remark by a senior academic staff during the validation workshop, 29 October 2012)

### ***Forms of Gender Injustices for Students and Staff***

The questionnaire sought from students what they considered forms of gender inequalities at the University. Although both males and female students seemed to have one voice on some issues, to others, their ideas quite differed. The following were pointed out as gender injustices experienced by males and females students:

#### *Student enrollments in various disciplines*

Students generally observed that the general enrollment figures at the University were predominantly male. Male students were generally concerned about the few numbers of female students in their classes, especially in science disciplines. The concern for male students however majorly bent towards relationships or lack thereof. Whereas students' priority at the University was to read and excel in their school assignments, majority on the men interviewed shared the view that relationships with the female students complemented students' success. The limited number of females at the University limited the number of female friends to choose from; a reason that created competition for the few females. Competition for women seemed to also affect the financial stability of male students as majority of them went left and right seeking monies to sustain relationships.

#### *Sexual Harassment*

More than 75 per cent of the students interviewed expressed concern over sexual harassment. Whereas female students referred more to sexual harassment at individual level, male students' concerns were centred on the dress code for female students. According to male students, the way many female students dressed caused them discomfort. They complained that female students who dressed in skimpy clothing in lecture rooms and other academic meeting places made them uneasy and unable to concentrate. Students also complained about the discriminatory nature in which the University administration and academic staff handled students. Male students speculated that in seeking services from different university units, male staff gave females more attention and responded to their concerns much faster than they did to males. Notably, most students tended to talk about others (their friends) other than themselves when discussions on sexual harassment came up, clear indication of the perceptions and stigma that surround sexual harassment as private and not public matter. Female students were particularly uneasy with this subject.

In sum, in this section, we note that limited knowledge about gender by both students and staff limits their appreciation of the need to work towards

a gender equitable University. They note the glaring gaps between females and males, which often results in unfair treatment of females by males. This is what we called forms of gender-based violations that included highly oppressive numbers of males and also the presence of sexual harassment among students and also among students and staff. This pointed to the need for gender policy that spells out clear relationship paths between students and staff. The attitude and practice in terms of gender is closely linked to the issues of welfare in the University. Since the welfare services lacked gender sensitivity, this aloof attitude was passed on the attitude and practice of the university community, which often is gender insensitive.

### *Gender Issues and Welfare*

Under the theme, students and staff welfare; we explored factors external to the classroom environment, with the belief that these may influence and shape gender attitudes and practices. Here, we examined systematic policies of recruitment and related benefits for staff like promotion, retirement, death gratuity, family support, accommodation, medical care, career development, salary and other forms of motivation. We also explored into information regarding University infrastructure, sporting and leisure activities, informal organisations, accommodation for student's access to health and the general mood.

### *Emoluments and Staff Retirement*

No discrimination in terms of gender was identified regarding staff emoluments and retirement packages. The differences in salaries are in terms of ranks and the nature of jobs. For example, academic staff have a different salary structure from administrative staff. The injustice was a hidden one; since it is males who occupied the well paid positions, it goes without saying that they fetched the bigger salaries. Females who occupy the bottom positions often went away with meagre salaries that were "commensurate" to their status and skills.

Furthermore, it was noted that the mechanism of promotion were not clear for all categories of staff. For instance, academic staff were promoted faster than administrative staff because guidelines for their promotion are clear while those for non-teaching staff were vague and often to the disadvantage of females. For instance, there were females secretaries who possessed master's degrees but were told that their careers can only progress horizontally. This was often the case with other staff in the Library and Academic Registrar's office. There were also loopholes in the pay structure guidelines where new staff are paid the same salary

scale as old staff, meaning that experience does not count in promotion. Majority of females were found to be in such positions, where occupational mobility was not possible and so the new staff who are often males found themselves better off. This grossly affected the morale of staff in such categories. The same pattern was present regarding staff development, where academic staff were prioritised, which hindered career growth among administrative staff

### *Accommodation*

All students at the University are non-residents since the university does not have its own residential halls and hostels. Most of the hostels where students stay are mixed for both males and female students. In the hostels, most students share ablution facilities, with some of them having to line up, especially in the mornings to use bathrooms. This situation poses a high risk for sexual harassment. Both male and female students complained about lack of privacy as the hostels have the same bathrooms for males and females. The non-residential nature of the University is also a security risk for students who leave the university at night from their readings and lectures. The Dean of students had this to say:

“Accommodation is a serious challenge. . At the moment, the University has only one female hostel. The rest are mixed or privately owned. As a result, many students begin to live out married lives before they complete their studies. A catastrophe happened when a male student committed suicide in his girl-friend’s hostel room. It was so devastating that she had to leave the University.”

The lack of university accommodation also affected staff. Several female academic staff confessed having to stay in places beneath their status. They had resorted to renting single rooms outside the University to cope with the expensive house rental charges in Gulu town. Also, majority of staff were commuting from Kampala, Bweyale and other places where their families lived. One remarked:

“It is far too expensive to keep your family here in Gulu. It is also difficult to find a good school for my kids, so I decided to keep them in Kampala.”

Many staff for whom the road between Gulu and Kampala was a regular commute included both male and females with families back in Kampala for various reasons. One female had this to say:

“I am married with three children; the youngest is eight months old. I leave Gulu every Friday with the late evening bus and return on Monday with the early morning bus. This is now my life. This journey is now a part of me.”



Clearly, lack of proper accommodation was affecting the well-being of staff when coupled with the nightmare of lack of regular transport to and from the University. One staff remarked:

“The only means of public transport to the University is bicycle taxi. Before I came to Gulu, I had never sat on a bicycle, but it became my daily transport. It is uncomfortable and risky. I was thrown off one day and got bruises all over; I was wearing a skirt and blouse. This has forced me to change my dressing style. I now put on trousers and long sleeved blouses in case I fall off a bicycle taxi again.” Health Care Services

The University has a provision for medical care with identified health providers where staff and students seek services. It was reported by respondents that all the medical staff are women and that this discouraged the males from utilising the services.

“It is difficult for us males to go to a female nurse to explain our health issues. How will she understand? How can I open my zip to a young female nurse and show her my nakedness? This is impossible.”

The same problem arose with related services such as counseling and guidance. Again, the female counselor was not sought by males because they felt shy. Besides, students also viewed counseling services as related to psychiatry and mental illness.

### *Hygiene and Sanitation*

There were extremely few toilet facilities, with erratic running water. In some faculties, students shared toilets with staff. The few student toilets were not labelled, making male and female students to share. Broken toilets were common sight. Units like the Library lacked such facilities altogether.

### *University Associations*

#### Staff Associations

Several staff associations exist for both teaching and non-teaching staff. These are based on a gender-neutral principle of membership is free for all. Females were unfortunately inactive in these associations, thus perpetuating the myth that women are hardly interested what happens around them. But the female staff we spoke to expressed frustrations in the manner the associations were run. One member remarked:

“During meetings, the men often enforce their points of view; the agenda is often predetermined so it is a matter of endorsing it. We women have no voice. For

instance I was trying to raise the issue of maternal and child care in the University. they would not listen to me. I left the meeting and never returned.”

It was noted that the associations did not fully represent all members' views and interests, and were more or less ceremonial as opposed to propelling the interests of members. That is why there they generally elicit little interest from female staff

### *Student Leadership and Governance*

There is male dominance of the students' governance and leadership as well. The Students' guild representation is headed by males. The vice chair is female but the presence of women is scanty. The Minister for Gender is a vocal female but she has had no opportunity to advance a women's agenda because, in her words, there are simply no funds to conduct such activities. Most of the female students reportedly shun away from politics because of the assumption that politics is a reserve for men. Female students expressed inferiority complex feelings towards leadership and harboured feelings that females cannot make good leaders. There is, therefore, need for a strategy to encourage female students to participate and effectively contribute to student leadership at the University.

### *Recreation and Sports*

Gulu University has inadequate recreation facilities for both students and staff. It is noted that there is only one restaurant which is shared by students and staff. The football pitch only takes care of male football.

### *Security*

Issues relating to the safety of female students on campus, their property and that of their university; freedom from violence, especially sexual violence, also came up as a indicators of a gender unfriendly environment. We noted that since the University mostly employing male security personnel, the females felt less secure. The university also had limited lighting at night and students felt insecure, especially when they needed to use the library. Night academic discussions were almost impossible for female students, who often needed to be escorted by male colleagues back to their hostels. Private hostels posed a bigger challenge, with the owners paying little attention to student security. Often, their property, including clothes hung out to dry, got stolen. Incidents of rape and sexual violence in the hostels were also raised. Victims often did not report the cases because of the stigma involved and also because sometimes, the assailants were their boy-friends.

## Grievance Handling and Conflict Resolution

This aspect enabled us to read whether Gulu University is nurturant of a true spirit of good working environment open to learning and change. Based on the rights principles, we examined the mechanisms for handling grievances and conflicts among both staff and students, study types of eminent conflicts, their nature and scope and the means through which such conflict and grievances are handled i.e. student-staff liaison, student leadership and the various associations. We found that there were no formal structures for grievance handling and that often, the weaker party the conflict suffered. Students were at greater disadvantage as many of the cases they are faced with relate to their lecturers. One student remarked:

“Cases of sexual harassment are rampant, but where and how can you raise such an issue? How can a mere student rise up in a disciplinary meeting against her lecturer without fear?”

Members suggested faculty-level liaison offices, where both students and staff accessed the service and where female representatives were present.

A number of the welfare challenges in promotion, emoluments, staff development, security, health service care and accommodation would be resolved by a commitment by Management to gender equality measures in the university. Massive sensitization towards the discrete gender differentials in emoluments, promotions, career growth and access to services will serve to bring down old formed stereo-types about females and males, what they can or can not do. In the next section we discuss the meaning and interpretations we make out of these findings. We summarise the key issues discovered in our study as we make analyses of gender responsive meaning to them. The purpose is to identify important milestones in the journey towards gender equality in the University as well as identify key resources required.

## Summary, Conclusions, Emerging Issues and Way Forward

In summary, the following were noted to be the overarching findings:

- The university's establishment in terms of infrastructure and financial hold is still narrow and it limits its ability to undertake proposed activities, including gender equality initiatives
- There is a growing number of females in the University, but most growth is felt in the humanities.
- Science-based courses enroll fewer females, but the number for Medicine and Dental Surgery has dramatically increased

- More females would rather undertake diploma and certificate courses if offered the opportunity
- Graduate programmes reflect a pattern in undergraduate enrolment where males dominate.
- The female to male staff ratios are expressive. Females represent only 16 per cent of staff, the teaching and learning environment is male dominated
- Low up take of Science-based subjects by females is a concern
- Poor infrastructure which affects teaching and learning environment
- There are gender differences in enrolment, retention and completion rates among students
- Female students are more likely to undertake diploma and certificate course
- Limited knowledge affects appreciation of gender issues
- There are challenges in implementing a gender curriculum
- The state of welfare does not correspond to gender needs

### ***Discussion of Key Findings***

#### *University establishment and capacity to realise goals*

Capacity of Management towards achieving the strategic direction is being undermined through various financial and infrastructural issues. However, gender equality should be seen as one of the core issues in defining the strategic direction, missions and goals of the university. Management has key role to play in providing the needed leadership and resources.

For instance challenges as limited infrastructure to support the full functioning of science-based programmes, and to support students in their practicum and internships can have elements of “female in science” activism to promote projects that finance women to undertake science programmes. The entire University planning and budgeting systems should be introduced to gender responsive budgeting. The University management should commit resources to gender-related activities.

#### *Low Level of Staffing is an Issue at Gulu University*

By location, Gulu University attracts only a few qualified staff at all levels. There is acute understaffing of teaching staff, for instance professors constitute only 11 of the 215 male staff. For the females, there is only one person at the level of

Associate Professor. This state affair affects efforts to engender the curriculum, teaching and learning environment, since there are few champions to advance the cause and to act as mentors and role models. The single female professor who is also part of the University management can help stimulate and drive activism towards gender equality efforts. As a rallying champion, the University stands to gain if she was provided resources to mobilise a core group of champions to carry the cause forward. Sensitisation is critical for attitude change across the university community.

### *Females are not at the Helm of Management*

It has been noted that top management constitutes up to 100 per cent males. Such an environment is not nurturant of gender equality ideals as there are no watchdogs to ensure the implementation of gender sensitive guidelines. Gender is institutionalised at policy making level, so females need be represented at this point. Creating a new position to take care of the gender balance at the position of second deputy Vice Chancellor and elevating or up-grading existing positions occupied by women such the Human Resources is a key requirement. Senate and Council should have quotas for female representation. The Council Committee of gender should be invigorated with proper resource allocation and task plans.

### *Low numbers of Students, but Erratically Growing*

The University has to put up with few students, who have to make choices from the few available programmes. They are spread across the sciences, but much more in arts-based programmes, particularly in Development Studies and Public Administration. This finding has got lot implications for gender related activities in the university. Setting up standards for good gender practice will ensure an uptake of projects that attract quality females as well as males. Initiatives as the “female scholarship fund” can attract well qualified females who otherwise would not do the course in question due to financial reasons. Female students from financially challenged backgrounds can have the opportunity to pursue their life goals, including science-based courses.

### *Low uptake of Science-based Subjects*

It can be remembered that the University was initially a science-based university, but this aspiration has not been fully realised. There are a number of obstacles to science-based programmes, which range from lack of adequate financial, material

and human resources to a low infrastructural development base for science subjects. The small number of females in the sciences is appalling. The stimulation of projects that deliberately increase uptake of females into science-based courses is a responsibility of Management. The government approved guidelines of the 70:30 for science-based courses does not provide the answers to why this formula cannot work for Gulu University. The current statistics show that in all science courses, females fall far below the required minimum of 30 per cent. A campaign that spreads across the admission requirement and goes down to primary and secondary school should be one of the activities the University should advance in the struggle for gender equality. Outreach activities that are targeted towards improving the access of females to university for science-based courses need be nurtured and funded by the University and its partners. Students and staff should write projects that attract this kind of funding.

### ***There are no Graduate Science-based Programmes***

This complicates the problem of low uptake of science-based programmes since there are no possibilities for further advancement in that regard. Further still, the discipline lacks qualified personnel who can ably teach these subjects, and the absence of graduate courses means that the people in this area are far from advancing themselves academically. Management should watch out for a space for graduate training in science-based courses. Looking out and targeting science-based trainers should a priority.

### ***Affirmative Action for Students Affected by Post-conflict Situations***

Currently accessing education at Gulu University is on the standards recommended by the Higher Education authorities; this approach is not sensitive to applicants emerging from the post-conflict situations which affected school systems and hence has impact on the numbers qualifying for university. It is noted that most of the successful applicants come from other areas other than the greater Northern regions. At the Management level, there is need for discussions regarding affirmative action for this category that constitutes a big number of students affected by war in the North.

### ***Low Accommodation Infrastructure Affects Performance of Staff and Students***

Conceived as a non-residential university, the consequences for staff and students have gender implications. Lack of accommodation affects morale and performance of students and staff. Priority be given to those projects that will

improve accommodation crisis, well planned staff and student housing with gender sensitivity as a starting point. In the meantime, the University needs to get in touch with private housing providers to discuss issues of common concern as security and gender sensitivity in service provision.

### ***Females can be supported with the promotion of Diploma and Certificate Programmes***

The attempt to promote undergraduate diploma and certificate programmes should be promoted as a University strategy to increase the number of females benefiting from its programmes. Since many females start careers late, such programmes are beneficial as they act as a stepping stone for them to pursue degree courses. Most of the ranking females in society today started off with a certificate or diploma.

### ***Limited Knowledge Affecting Appreciation of Gender***

Most of the students and staff at Gulu University do not have knowledge of gender and related concepts. A number of policy issues arise out of this. First is need to institutionalise the teaching of gender introductory courses to all students in their first or second year of entrance to the University. Since the department of Literature and Media Studies offers the best starters course so far, it can serve as a starting unit to develop the cross-cutting course in conjunction with other units that are strong in gender. There is need to identify interested individuals across the disciplines to begin a teaching unit on gender. In addition, all staff of the University should be part of the introduction to pedagogy course, in which introduction to gender is made integral. That would mean that all staff should undertake a pedagogical course that is engendered. For the rest of the University, regular sensitisation and short courses should be given priority and funded by the University Management. A gender equality campaign should be launched and be equally funded by the University Management.

### ***The State of Welfare Undermines Gender Needs***

In all, we note that the need for a gender mainstreaming unit is eminent. To sustain gender-related discussions and activities, the unit will spearhead and provide the needed leadership as well mobilise required resources. This unit will function best if it is part of Management. Currently in the Academic Registrar's Office, many were of the view that this cripples its ability to tackle welfare and staff issues. The function needs to go further and embrace the organisational power structures, the

culture as well as the key functions of the university. The ideal location would be an independent department in the Office of the Vice Chancellor. An office of the second deputy Vice Chancellor would be created to oversee this function because it is as enormous as it is important

*Emerging Issues and Key Considerations for Integrating Gender in the University Strategy*

All staff and students in the university community, including the Senior Management stressed that gender mainstreaming was relevant to the University's strategic direction because it creates an enabling environment for all irrespective of whether one is a woman, man or disabled. It creates an equitable expansion of opportunities and resources. However, they noted that the challenge of gender mainstreaming in Gulu University is that there is no gender policy, there has been no sensitisation on gender, there is inadequate finance for human resource and infrastructure, and there is no specific programme in gender, all worsened by poor communication tools and procedures. They recommended that gender should be integrated in all the programmes of the university. They also note that there are available opportunities for mainstreaming gender in Gulu University and that some of the opportunities include:

- a) The University has the human resource to implement gender related activities.
- b) The University has two experts in gender who have already initiated the processes of gender mainstreaming
- c) Makerere University, Gender Mainstreaming Directorate has identified Gulu University as one of the public universities to partner with in order to build its capacity in mainstreaming gender.
- d) Although the government has put an embargo on employment, the University Management can lobby for special treatment as there exists a genuine need.
- e) Gulu is a young University and is open to new suggestions and ideas; gender can easily be taken on and consumed up in the new set up.
- f) The location of the university in northern Uganda provides an opportunity for researchers in areas of interest. There is still some donor sympathy because of this and this may influence their need to support gender mainstreaming among other crucial university programmes.

The following issues were noted to be of great relevance and they could sustainably encourage change. These are reflections from the various interviews as the way forward:



First, the University Management can eliminate existing gender inequalities through the initiation and support for gender responsive policies, including a specific University policy on gender equality. Management has a role in institutionalising and financing gender activities. It is imperative that the university management begins to draw a road map for gender equality practices in its structure, policies and practices. For instance, the creation of a gender unit will ensure as its priority the review and engendering all existing curricula and ensure that new programmes are gender responsive. There is need for a sexual harassment policy – including specific pronouncements on dress code and implementing a mandatory cross cutting course on Gender – to be taught to all students in their first or second year of study. Specific gender courses continue to be developed and taught across the board. The department of Literature and Media Studies is a good starting point for the cross-cutting course and a gender studies unit.

Second, while planning, the University needs to take into account the changes in enrolment, retention and completion by both males and females. Procurement of teaching and instruction materials should be done with gender sensitivity. There is an urgent need to retool teaching materials and retrain teaching staff in gender studies. Female enrolment, retention and completion be viewed in relation to conflict specific context, i.e. resource mobilisation for female scholarship who were affected by the war and/or extra points to females who emerge from war-affected areas. Student numbers should not take the University management by storm, earlier planning will ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for males and females.

Third, staff sensitisations and short courses in gender will eliminate gender bias and improve language discourses; these require stable resourcing for the University budget. Welfare and accommodation be a responsibility of University management with special consideration for female security. Students' accommodation can be engendered through continued negotiations with private service providers. Making students' accommodation safe and decent should be a priority.

Fourth, engendering the University culture and the teaching and learning environment are also very crucial. Arts and humanities have the bulk of females so they require corresponding facilitation, instead of marginalising the arts courses in favour of sciences and therefore under financing the arts. It is imperative to nurture and instill a culture of gender sensitivity so that all individuals have a responsibility to implement gender-positive practices. Also, the integration of an academic gender course can change the culture of academic disciplines that are male centric. Gender Studies departments in universities are known to not only change the disciplinary cultures but also engender consideration of important

gender dimensions across disciplines. In that regard, it is important that the University considers gender to be integrated as a compulsory pedagogical training course for all teaching staff and integrate peace values. Recognition of other forms of social marginalisation other than gender is necessary, i.e. rank, age and ethnicity. University management can stimulate and fund gender-based activities.

Fifth, the University can encourage a department that will be designated the role of coordinating and conducting gender related research, as part of the university's strategic directions. Such a unit should inform the University on several gender-related matters, e.g. assessing the intersection of gender and culture. Such a unit may also include other functions such as advocating for gender equality and equity. Gender work requires sustained advocates (both male and female) to raise and follow up for solutions on pertinent gender issues as they arise.

Last but not least, women would benefit from recognising and rewarding collective activities and success, not solely individual achievements. In departments, consideration of workload balance among individuals and teams and avoiding the gendered division of activities, would lead to greater equality. And across all staff, there is a need for developing genuine and collaborative ways for communicating achievements and success, such as departmental newsletters, a culture of sharing news or structured web pages enabling the communication of activities. Self promotion and prestige for women accumulates slowly, but making small changes at the key mid-career stage could help women advance that next bit further.

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## The Gender Terrain at Mbarara University of Science and Technology

Education is universally recognised as playing a key role in sustainable social and economic development, Regardless of the ideology underlying approaches to development, education is always cited as a priority area for attention and the investment of resources.

The Benefits of education are by now well established. Education improves the quality of life. It promotes health, expands access to paid employment, increases productivity in market and non-market work, and facilitates social and political participation (Bellew and King 1993:285)

In an ideal environment, such benefits should be experienced by both women and men, in a fair and equitable manner. It is also increasingly recognised that ensuring that women receive education makes sense in terms of sustainable economic development.

The education of girls and women is, therefore, an important investment, despite the precarious economic contexts within which many developing countries have to provide for education. Not only does education have a significant multiplier effect, given the responsibility of women for socialising the next generation, it also enhances the potential of women to contribute to the social, economic and political aspects of national development. Education also has considerable potential, in its many dimensions and processes, for bringing about change which can redress imbalances between women and men, as well as in other social groups.

However, considerable gender inequalities exist in the education sector. These inequalities occur not only in indicators such as literacy, enrollment, achievement

and levels of schooling attained, but also in several other aspects of education which are of concern in the pursuit of gender equality and equity, for example, management personnel in decision-making roles, curriculum content and teacher-student interaction.

Furthermore, current research on gender and education carried out internationally indicates that education in its many facets of literacy, classroom interaction, curriculum, enrollment, attendance and achievement patterns, and teacher training, plays a significant role in perpetuating gender inequalities. Unless there is a deliberate effort to confront these inequalities, women and in certain situations men will remain disadvantaged in accessing and benefiting from education processes.

### **Establishment of the University of Science and Technology Mbarara (MUST)**

MUST was opened in 1989 following a statute of the National Resistance Council (NRC), the then legislative body in Uganda. This was in response to realization by Government that higher education was a critical asset for nation building, at a time when Uganda's economy and social infrastructure had collapsed due to civil strife in the 1970s and 80s. The University emerged out of former School of Midwifery/ Mbarara District Referral Hospital.

MUST is a pre-dominantly science-based University and also runs community-based programmes in healthcare provision. MUST contributes to the development of the country through the production of professionals that serve in the health and other development sectors in various respects. Although the University boasts of this rich history, it does not have clear strategies or even strong evidence in promoting the gender agenda for equitable and inclusive service delivery. The University strategic focus also lacks a reflection on gender responsiveness. In its mission, MUST commits to becoming, '*A centre for academic professional excellence in science and technology through the provision of quality and relevant education at national and international levels*'. Special emphasis is on science and technology plus its promotion of community development. The University works in collaboration with Makerere University in the promotion of its gender responsiveness.

The overall aim of this exercise was to establish the baseline situation on gender mainstreaming in the University and base on the findings to determine the scope of the capacity development initiative of increasing the number of females in the leadership processes. In particular, the study aimed at assessing the gender responsiveness of the University in its policies and practices. The assessment also

aimed at determining ground for establishing appropriate strategies to ensure best gender practices that equally nurture the potential of females and males for leadership positions. This study is hence founded within the broad CODESRIA's HELP project, in our case aimed at formulating strategies for increasing women in public universities' leadership. Objectives of this paper are:

- a) To establish the level of gender responsiveness of the existing legal and policy at MUST.
- b) To determine the levels and modes of gender sensitivity in the structures that guide access, teaching and learning, research and innovation.
- c) To assess levels of gender awareness and knowledge capacities among staff and students at MUST.
- d) To analyse the gender sensitivity in representation in governance, management and leadership in the MUST community
- e) Establish the levels of gender friendliness and responsiveness in the University's environment both academic and non-academic
- f) To base on the findings to propose various ways of mainstreaming gender into MUST Organisational structures, functions and processes.

Key institutional components that guided the study included: (i) Existing legal and policy framework; (ii) Access, teaching and learning; (iii) Levels of knowledge on gender; (iv) Research and innovation; (v) Management and Governance; (vi) Welfare; (vii) Sexual harassment; (viii) MUST Learning environment; and (ix) Women in leadership.

Formerly the Mbarara School of Mid-wifery, Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) was established in 1989 as a public University following a Statute of the National Resistance Council, the then only legislative body in the country since the overthrow of the Tito Okello Lutwa's regime in 1986. Located in Mbarara town about 286Km on the Kampala – Kabale highway, MUST was established to address the observed shortage of scientists in Uganda and also instill a sense of community service among university students and graduates. Under the leadership and academic guidance of Professor Frederick Ian Bantubano, Vice Chancellor Kayanja and four other Cuban Professors, the University started with only 43<sup>7</sup> students, most of them male. The pioneer faculty was only one with two degree programmes of Medicine and Surgery. Since then, the number of both students and staff has grown, and by 2010, there were about 3,000 and 200 respectively. The phenomenon of male domination in both academic and non-academic spheres however still remains prevalent.

The University has five key academic faculties and institutes. Viz:

- i) Faculty of Medicine and Nursing
- ii) Faculty of Science Education
- iii) Faculty of Development Studies
- iv) Institute of Computer Science
- v) Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC)

ITFC is based in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The University offers certificate, diploma, undergraduate and post graduate courses. In almost all the faculties of MUST, the number of female staff is low compared to males. According to statistics from the University, 71 per cent of the total academic staff in all the units is male while only 29 per cent is female. It's only in the faculty of Science Education that females enjoy a higher percentage [65 per cent] compared to their male counterparts [35 per cent] as shown below.

### **The Legal and Policy Framework on Gender Mainstreaming**

The framework articulated shows the international, national and MUST-specific policy context. The aim of this is to enable the reader to clearly understand the context within which the University operates and the extent to which it complies in terms of gender mainstreaming.

Regarding the international and national legal and policy context, the second and third of the international Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2 and 3 set targets for the promotion of gender and women's wellbeing with clear targets by 2015. In terms of education, one of the national targets under MDG 3 stipulates, elimination of 'Gender parity index in tertiary education level enrolment'. Article 33 (2) of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda also stipulates a provision where the welfare of women (And girls) is enhanced to enable them realise their full potential. In agreement with this, the National Development Plan (NDP) of 2010/11 – 2014/15 also has objectives relating to education as, "Increase equitable access to higher education" and "Improve the quality and relevance of tertiary education system. This is supported by the National Gender Policy of 2007 which calls for the integration of gender and equity concerns in all sectors of development including education.

### ***The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001***

One of the objectives of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) is to increase and improve equitable access to quality education. The Universities and Other

Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001 gives the legal basis for the establishment of Public Universities. The main objective of this Act is to establish and develop a system governing institutions of higher education in order to equate qualifications of the same or similar courses offered by different institutions of higher learning while at the same time respecting the autonomy and academic freedom of the institutions. The Act highlights some sections that are pertinent to gender. The gender sensitive stipulations support the engendering of both academic and administrative functions in these institutions.

Though there is some evidence of gender neutrality, the language used in the Act is in various respects gender responsive. Gender inclusive language like chairperson, he/she, him/her are used as an acknowledgement of the fact that there are men or women in public educational institutions. On the meetings of National council, the Act stipulates that;

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the National Council unless he or she is absent from a particular meeting in which case the Vice-Chairperson shall preside. (Part III, 10 (2)) This kind of language is consistently used throughout the entire ACT.

In Section 24, the Act provides for the Objects and Functions of a Public University, in which it acknowledges the need for gender and equity in:

- b) dissemination of knowledge and giving opportunity of acquiring higher education to all persons including persons with disabilities wishing to do so regardless of race, political opinion, colour, creed, or sex;
- c) The provision of accessible physical facilities to the users of the Public Universities.

These provisions compel public Universities to offer equal access to and utilisation of public facilities regardless of physical ability, colour, race, political opinion, creed or sex. At Section 28, instructions are provided thus:

1. Admission to a public University shall be open to all qualified citizens of Uganda without discrimination.
2. It shall be lawful for a public University to admit any person qualified for admission who is not a citizen of Uganda
3. The admission committee of a public University shall take into consideration affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups on the basis of gender, disability and disadvantaged schools.
3. The admission committee of a public University shall take into consideration admission of persons with special talents in sports, music and other social activities for their enhancement.

All the above subsections are consistent with an attempt to avoid discrimination, admission on merit, but also put into consideration affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups on the basis of gender, disability and disadvantaged schools. These provisions especially on Affirmative action have been neglected in most public universities that argue to admit students on merit to avoid a clear focus on marginal numbers of women as discrimination. Section 45 shows that the university senate is a very important organ of the university. It is responsible for the organisation, control and direction of the academic matters of the university. All these are areas critical to gender mainstreaming within any public university. Hence the strength of representation of men and women to this body is critical. However, under section 44 (The University Senate and other Academic Bodies) there is no provision for gender parity in the representation to senate. Majority members to senate are there by virtue of their offices. In situations where these offices are male-dominated, which is commonly the case in MUST, the senate as the highest academic organ of the university will be male-dominated. This inadequate provision for gender equality is contrary to the gender parity examples that this Act had actually noted (see composition of the University staff tribunal – 50, 2 (e), Public Tertiary Institution a Governing Council – 77, 2 (c), composition of national council – 7, 1(i) It is therefore important to note that the Act provides for avenues of mainstreaming gender in management of Public universities to a certain level as indicated above. However, the act can be reinforced with the university coming up with a specific policy framework to articulate the level of gender imbalances/inequalities/unfairness in the university operations and possible strategies to address them for gender equality. The policy can, therefore, comprehensively address aspects of gender equality not addressed in the act and reinforce the Act provisions of equality in a more systematic and detailed manner.

### *The MUST Strategic Plan, 2004-2014*

Mbarara University of Science and Technology developed a Strategic Plan for the period 2004–2014. MUST was established in 1989 and has since then grown into a vibrant institution with an increasing number of faculties. The Plan acknowledges that as the University grows, so do the challenges. The highlighted challenges included, scarce resources, government regulatory agencies, competition and constantly changing technologies. The Plan was developed through consultative processes that included key stakeholders such as council members, core government ministries, students, faculty deans, and local government, among others.

The Plan clearly articulates identified challenges and their likely implications on the quality of standards of the institution. However, the University did not



identify inadequacy in gender skills among staff as one of the competences they needed to harness. In its fourth objective to develop, implement and review an effective human resource management policy by 2006, the plan identifies developing a human resource system that is gender sensitive. However, no related action (such as training staff in gender skills, or introducing a course in gender) is identified. The plan provides for sex disaggregated data in students' enrolment as per 2004 which clearly showed gender imbalances in all the programmes presented. However, the analysis merges grand totals, making it hard to draw out gender differences in the final analysis. Additionally, in the highlighted achievements, the plan makes no reference to any success in gender mainstreaming.

The plan outlined 24 budget lines for the planned period of 2004-2014. However, none of these budget lines directly addressed issues of Gender mainstreaming in the University. This also signifies a disconnection between the key priority of Gender mainstreaming and the key areas of funding. It points to a covert resistance of certain programmes (gender in particular) by identifying them as core programs but deny them resources for implementation. In an event that the budget lines address key Institution priorities, then Gender mainstreaming ceases to be a priority area for the 10 year planned period. In its introduction, the plan reflects on a progressive history that the University has been riding on to date. The plan then sets out 11 main priority areas to be addressed in a ten year-period to transform the Institution. Key to these priorities is the Institution's commitment to improving gender responsiveness in the 11th priority of Gender mainstreaming. The Plan also outlines the establishment of requisite physical facilities and exemplary academic, administrative and human resource systems, effective teaching, quality research, financial self-sufficiency and community service development.

The plan centrally identifies gender mainstreaming as one of its main priorities in the period between 2004 and 2014. Although this is a central point in realising a gender responsive institution, there has not been a consistent or systematic commitment to this goal. The plan, for instance, noted a number of challenges as the University grew, such as scarce resources, government regulatory agencies, competition and constantly changing technologies. At this point of articulation, gender inequalities were not envisaged as a challenge that the University has to contend with, even when the structures, programmes and University cultural settings pointed to widely existing gender inequalities. It is, therefore, highly likely that the core principle of gender mainstreaming was never raised as a result of a comprehensive gender analysis of the institutional setting.

The Plan further uses block figures and generalised terms in reference to students, teaching staff, administrators, and patients. No endeavours have been made to categorise/disaggregate this information by sex or gender yet we know that development plans have different implications for women and men. In its Executive Summary also, the pPan notes thus “At present, the student population is 1,156 students. The university has a workforce of 686 employees, 30 of whom are expatriates and 54 per cent of the total numbers are females”. Although the last bit of this contribution has sex- disaggregated data, it is rather adhoc and the practice is not consistently and systematically carried throughout the entire Strategic Plan.

The mismatch concerning gender mainstreaming as highlighted in the plan’s priority areas. Other sections of the plan points to either inadequate skills in systematic integration of gender in planning processes or lack of commitment to gender as a transformative programme for a gender responsive institution. It also signifies one of the ways through which gender evaporates from most of the programme and institutions that seek to integrate it. Although the plan commits itself to gender mainstreaming as its one of the priority areas, it has no clear strategy to operationalise it. No gender equality objectives are later on translated into performance indicators and targets at the level of programmes and budget even in the newly suggested courses at the University,

There is no clear- cut course geared towards capacity building in gender or integration of gender studies in existing courses to recruit human resource for this task of gender mainstreaming. Gender is not highlighting in the motto, vision, mission, aim and institutional objectives. Although the plan mentions gender mainstreaming as a priority area, it is not addressed within the Plan’s strategic objectives. The Plan lists key stakeholders consulted during the planning processes. These stakeholders included, among others, ministry of Education and Sports and the ministry of Finance. Unfortunately, the University did not interact actively with national gender institutions and women’s organisations working for women’s advancement or with international gender networks for gender equality. For instance, the ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, a Government ministry mandated to offer technical support in mainstreaming gender in all public and private institutions was never prioritised as a key stakeholder. This could have also denied the University an opportunity to utilise the expertise in this field during University planning processes.

Under its Community Outreach Programme, MUST has in place a model approach to communicating scientific and technical knowledge through student placement and outreach programmes. While this programme engages both male

and females students and staff, it write-up does not clearly bring out mechanisms of how gender issues therein are addressed.

### *The MUST HIV/Aids Policy*

MUST developed its HIV/Aids Institutional policy in 2004; whose overall aim was to streamline the mechanisms for the provision of support and information on HIV/Aids. Since then, there has been vigorous implementation through support both internally and by donors like the Swedish Embassy and Lund University. A number of training workshops have been held, action research carried out plus other activities like Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) and condom distribution. There have also been efforts in areas of curriculum review to integrate HIV/Aids concerns in the mainstream academic work. A critical analysis of the policy however reveals a glaring gap in terms of gender. As a result, it is quite challenging to get messages from existing researches about the gender dynamics in both the University's policy and in practice.

### *The Research Policy*

The University developed a research policy in November, 2009. In this policy, the university sets itself aside as a mandated flagship institution to provide a leading role in championing the development of Science and Technology in Uganda. The major focus of the policy is to provide a framework for streamlining, harmonising, prioritising, supporting, monitoring, evaluating, coordinating and disseminating research and research outputs from MUST. The policy further targets addressing national, regional and global development agenda geared towards societal transformation through Research. The policy also aims at promoting ethical and professional research practices, development of research teams, collaborations, partnerships, leverages with partnerships in research, promoting resource mobilisation for research and ensuring effective resource utilisation. Other core areas in this policy include principles of honesty and accountability, confidentiality, research management, as well as monitoring and evaluation. Although this policy provides a guiding framework in doing ethical and professional research at MUST, it leaves a lot of gaps in addressing issues of gender differences in accessing research opportunities by staff, generating sex and gender disaggregated data and integrating gender analysis frameworks in carrying out and disseminating research outputs. Although the policy targets addressing national, regional and global development agenda geared towards societal transformation through Research, issues of gender have not been prioritised by this policy as a national, regional or even global issue

for social transformation. Gender mainstreaming is not only a national issue of concern that needs immediate attention but a global issue as well (refer to Beijing, +5, Millennium development Goals). The policy is silent on addressing issues of gender in research yet research offers a potential ground for establishing the gender terrain and consequently mainstreaming gender in university functions. Research provides a first step of unearthing gender differences and coming up with strategies to improve the gender responsiveness of institutions. It is also important to note that research has never been gender-neutral; from the researchers' positioning, to the respondents, access to research opportunities, categorisation of data, data analysis and to the relations between researchers and supervisors, etc. all these are gendered processes that the policy never addressed. The neutrality of the policy is also based on the understanding that both women and men shall have equal opportunities of doing research and professionally deliver in this field on equal grounds. This, however, is never the case. The policy also makes no reservations on funding priorities for marginalised research fields or national/regional/global agendas. The policy also assumes that all researchers will have same enabling environment, time and resources in executing research activities. There has also been no provision for promoting gender responsive research methodologies such as disaggregating data by sex as well as gender.

### *The MUST Human Resource Policies Manual*

The University has a human resource policies manual (2010) that commits itself to recruiting and retaining qualified and competent staff, deploying the right persons into the right jobs at the right time and right numbers. The manual further commits the University to maintain a resourceful, highly motivated, developed and innovative human resource. These commitments which are stated in the manual's preamble are reinforced by the manual's key objective of serving as a comprehensive guide and tool for efficient recruitment, development and management of the University's human resources. The manual is structured in five chapters that crucially focus on;

- i) Recruitment Policy
- ii) Terms and Conditions of Service
- iii) Staff disciplinary code of conduct
- iv) Promotions Policy
- v) Staff training and development policy.

In certain sections of the manual, language used is gender inclusive, i.e. using he/she, him/her which indicates that the manual envisages the existence of

males and females in the Institution. However, the policy doesn't commit itself to addressing wider imbalances in equity and equality as reflected in various aspects of the institution particularly gender imbalances overtly eminent among University human resources and student body. The manual reflects the University's commitment to non-discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity for all staff. However, the HRM remains largely gender blind and leaves a lot of opportunities to address inequalities on basis of gender unexplored.

Through its objectives, gender mainstreaming or on attempt to address imbalances arising out of gender is never mentioned. The document lists five focal areas but none of them addresses the issue of mainstreaming gender, whether in staff recruitment, management or promotion, yet all these areas have different implications for male and female staff. The manual only seems to refer to female staff when addressing the issue of pregnancy and maternity leave. With such a manual that remains silent on issues of gender, the University is likely to function on the existing document knowledge embedded in institutional culture, a culture that is not only male dominated but also challenges females access to public spaces. Although the University has had a history of limited numbers of female staff, the manual doesn't indicate any strategy to increase recruitment, promotion and retention of female staff.

The manual provides for selective recruitment under its provisions of recruitment policy. However, addressing gender imbalances in this selective exercise was never envisaged as a strategy to narrow the gap in staffing. This can be seen as a missed opportunity for the institution to recruit female staff that seems to be underrepresented in both academic and administrative roles. There are also no gender concerns addressed in procedures for promotion even when there have been noted gendered challenges in this area. On eligibility for promotion, one's promotion depends on decisions from departments as well as Faculty committees' assessment in the annual performance. In a male dominated institution, such committees are also likely to be dominated by men, translating in gender biased decisions made during promotions. Since male domination is highly recorded in science-based disciplines in almost all education institutions in Uganda, MUST as a traditionally science University is also likely to affect the number of female candidates available for promotion to vacant positions in the institution.

While exceptional promotion procedures are provided for in section 4.6, (P.52) gender inequality is never highlighted as one of the exceptional circumstances of accelerated promotion. Under staff training and development policy, the manual neither identifies training staff in gender skills nor integrating gender in entire training and staff development process. Yet capacity building in gender skills is

integral to a successful gender mainstreaming strategy. Without planned and continuous training in skills of analysing gender, the University's human resource will largely remain gender blind thus presenting a setback in the entire process of mainstreaming gender as one of the core objectives in the University's 10 year strategic plan.

### *The Sexual Harassment Policy*

It has been observed that, "Sexual; harassment is a key gender issue that normally arises in relations or situations of power and hierarchy such as the University". It is often associated with violence against women, the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and the assertion of economic power over women, which phenomena serves to subordinate women to men. It is also strongly linked to the dignity of men and women in the workplace ([www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org)).

Sexual harassment has been widely recognised to be a serious problem for students at all educational levels including Universities. Unfortunately, many students and workers are scared or too embarrassed to report these incidences ([www.equalrights.org](http://www.equalrights.org)). Sexual harassment ranges from verbal utterances to causing physical harm. It occurs when unwanted sexual touching, comments, and/or gestures are so bad or occur so often that it interferes with one's education, causes discrimination or exposure to insecure situations or prevents one from participating in or benefiting from a school programme or activity. In relation to this, it has, "...Physical, visual, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted, intimidating, offensive and not reciprocated" (GMD 2010:32).

MUST enacted a sexual Harassment Policy in which it defines sexual harassment as 'unwelcome and persistent conduct of a sexual nature that violates the rights of a person'. The University acknowledges that sexual harassment can present serious problems for both students and employees of any institution. The policy was, on the other hand, designed to meet the institution's HIV/AIDS sensitive and responsive principles aimed at ensuring a healthy workforce. The university further argues that the policy should be understood in the context of other MUST policies and statements; HIV/AIDS institutional policy, Human Resource manual, MUST Cord of Conduct, the Constitution of the republic of Uganda (1995) and the employment Act, 2006. The policy also lists different forms of sexual harassment that are likely to be experienced by students or University employees, strategies to raise awareness about the policy, education and training to enable victims of sexual harassment to log their complaints as well as committees to ensure the implementation of the policy. Sexual harassment indeed

remains one of the key gender issues that affect the relations between and among women and men.

However, the policy has no clear basis (baseline information) for justification of establishment of the policy in the University. Thus, there is no reference as to how the University came up with the anti-sexual harassment policy as an urgent instrument to address an existing challenge. The only justification given for the policy is to understand it in the context of other MUST policies and statements, rather than existing unequal power relations between women and men that fuel cases of sexual harassment. The policy makes no provision for gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation framework for the prevention of sexual harassment. Even when Anti-sexual harassment committees are provided for, there is no reservation for gender balanced composition of these committees to cater for the interests of both women and men in case any one of them is the offended party. The policy provides for the top management to appoint the chair and committee members but no specifications are given in terms of gender in terms of who these appointed staff will be. Yet it is most important to note that whereas sexual harassment may occur between equals, most often, it occurs in situations when one person has power over another. Therefore, majority offended are likely to be the subordinate, with less power, and majority of these in the context of MUST are women.

### *The Human Resource at MUST*

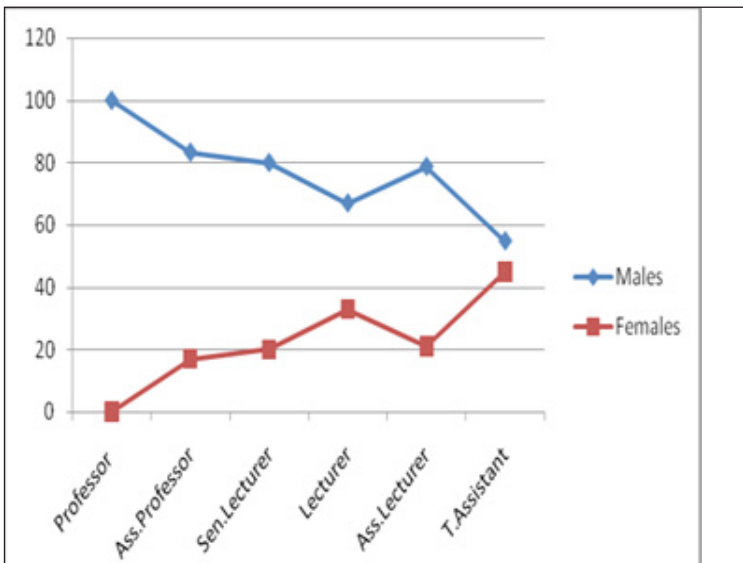
By 2011, the biggest percentage of the academic staff were in the department of Science Education, with most Professors falling under Medicine and Nursing.

**Table 5.1:** Number of Academic Staff

Unit	Professors		Assoc. Professors		Senior Lecturers		Lecturers		Assist. Lecturers		Teaching Assistants		Total No.		Total %	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Med. & Nursing	2	0	9	2	15	3	25	10	19	5	1	5	72	25	74	26
Sc. Educ	0	0	1	0	3	2	17	7	1	0	4	4	26	13	35	65
Dev. Studies	0	0	0	0	2	0	14	8	4	1	3	0	23	9	72	28
Comp. Sc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	2	1	9	5	17	12	59	41
ITFC																

Source: University Staff List, 2013.

As of 2012, there are 13 undergraduate courses, 19 Masters' courses and six Doctoral courses. The University employs over 200 staff members. These constitute both academic and non-academic staff. As shown in the table above, the majority of the teaching staff are males, totalling up to 70.1 per cent. In the Faculties of Medicine and Nursing, those who are professors are only male. The highest rank among the females is that of Associate Professor. It is only at the lowest level of Teaching Assistants where females are more than the males. More so, it is only in Science Education where the females are more than males (65 per cent). All in all, the table clearly shows the gender imbalance among the academic staff at MUST, with the bias favouring the men. The table below gives a diagrammatic expression of the gender disparity.



**Fig 5.1:** Gender disparity in levels among academic staff

## Access, Teaching and Learning at MUST

### *Access*

The Public Universities Joint Admissions Board (PUJAB) is charged with the responsibility of student admissions into public universities, of which MUST is part. Admissions are through both direct and private means, as per the guidelines in the PUJAB. By policy, the 1.5 extra marks for female students in public Universities also

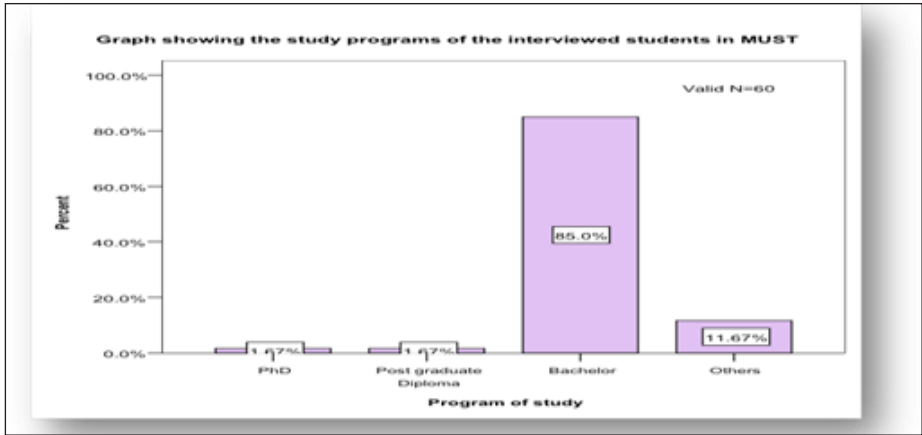


benefits MUST students. This has led to a tremendous increase in female students joining the University since its establishment. In 2010, Academic Registrars in public universities considered restricting this arrangement to only science courses citing marginalisation of male students in Arts courses (Moses Talemwa, Sunday Vision, 23rd May, 2010). This by implication would mean more opportunities for female students into science-based courses, but a drop in other courses. In 2012, a total of 423 male and 294 female students successfully graduated at MUST with diplomas, Bachelors' degrees, Masters and PhD degrees. All the four students that got PhDs were male. This shows that the number of female students pursuing degrees at higher levels is still comparatively low in the University. Furthermore, the number of females accessing education at MUST is still much lower than that of the males. This was widely attributed to the persistently low interest and performance of girls in science subjects at secondary school level.

### ***Teaching and Learning***

Effective teaching and learning is only possible when the environment is conducive. It was discovered that while male students tend to concentrate more on their studies, some of the female students are bogged down with other responsibilities like childcare and marriage. Thus, the double or triple identities call for full attention which often affected female students' performance much more than their male counterparts. It is also noted that the nature of relationships between students and their lecturers also determine the level of student academic achievement; the more positive and parental the relationship, the better performance for both lecturer and student. The Vice Chancellor of the University was widely reported to play a very key parenting role for the students.

A total of 85 per cent of the interviewed students were pursuing a Bachelor's degree followed by about 12 per cent of them on diploma. Only a small percentage of 1.7 per cent are undertaking post graduate diploma and PhD courses. This is shown in the graph below. A gender perspective shows that among the students interviewed, there was a generally equal representation of male and female students in the course of Development Studies (seven out of 30 males and six out of 23 females), Information Technology (two out of 30 males and two out of 23 females) and Laboratory Studies (four out of 30 males and four out of 23 females). But while male students were more in the Faculty of Science, there were more females in Nursing (17 per cent among males and nine per cent among females). This portrays the gender stereotype of women being seen to be fit for nursing while males are doctors.



**Fig 5.2:** Student Programmes of Study

**Table 5.2:** Courses offered by students interviewed

	Number	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Development Studies	13	21.7	21.7
Bachelor of Science Education	9	15.0	36.7
Bachelor of Business Administration	8	13.3	50.0
Information technology	8	13.3	63.3
Laboratory Science and Technology	7	11.7	75.0
Nursing	6	10.0	85.0
Pharmacy	5	8.3	93.3
Medicine	3	5.0	98.3
Vali	1	1.7	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

This table shows gender portrayals only among students interviewed. As explained in the narrative above, gender balance was seen in student representation in courses of Development Studies, Information Technology and Laboratory Science and Technology. Other courses saw sharp gender imbalances, with the males being more concentrated in Medicine, Business Administration in favour of male students and Nursing in the females.

## Levels of Knowledge on Gender at Mbarara University of Science and Technology

To be able to mainstream gender, one needs first to understand various concepts relating to gender. Apart from one female academic staff member with a degree in Gender at Postgraduate level, over 90 per cent of both male and female staff members only had basic training in gender in a workshop situation. Two male academic staff said they had never attended training of any kind on gender. Among the students, 18 out of the 30 males and 16 out of the 24 female students had never attended any training in gender. Among those who had trained in gender, only one male and two females had been in a workshop setting of less than seven days. These were mainly students of the Development Studies courses. Among the non-academic staff, over 50 per cent had never attended any kind of gender training. This calls for a great need in gender training across the board.

Efforts were made to establish levels of understanding among respondents on gender. There was an observed level of knowledge on meaning of gender, and its implications for men and women's access to University education. The most common knowledge was that gender has something to do with women.

One male respondent explained

“Whether you are a man or woman”, “equality between women and men, for instance we have one craftsman, sorry woman in our department”. As a planner; we have not had much emphasis on gender at MUST. When you talk about gender, they see women just fighting for power” “the difference between males and females exclusion and inclusion of either sex. This is got from reading and listening to what people say. I never had any training on gender”.

However in a few isolated cases, a handful of individuals could relate the concept of gender to relations of power between women and men, the different roles that men and women perform and differences in decisions made. More so, most of University stakeholders including those in positions of influence within the University had never attended any course on gender, with a relatively higher number having learnt gender either through short courses, meetings, workshops or as a module in the course.

In the faculty of Development Studies, where the University coordinates a service course on Gender, the lecturers admitted having difficulty in getting requisite skills of addressing advanced gender analysis especially from the theoretical point of view. According to one of the female staff:

The University started a course on Gender and development but with nobody to teach it. A certain priest taught this course without much training. When he left,

the faculty (Development Studies) did not bother to replace him. I was recruited and told to teach gender without any training. Over time, I have undergone some courses of two weeks and below. ...I am now in charge of teaching Gender and Development Studies as a course and as a part of the service course for the whole university. Nobody here is trained on gender. What people have is research on women out of interest rather than duty.

Among the Heads Departments to the Faculty of Science, gender integration into their curriculum was almost impossible. Asked whether they have a gender focus when teaching, the following responses were noted:



**Fig 5.3:** Assertions of the Academic Staff

Despite these statements, there was still a ray of hope expressed as far as integration of gender especially in science subjects is concerned. This was emphasised further through a discussion with one of the lecturers who asserted:

Gender in science is crucial especially in the teaching methods. You know teaching methods vary and these can also be used to capture the interests of boys and girls. ... to me having no focus on gender as a university has been a big oversight. {Associate Dean, Faculty of Science}

## **Gender in the MUST Learning/Teaching Environment**

**On Gender and the Policy environment**, this study established that the presence of gender policy at MUST was almost nonexistent since none of the interviewed academic staff agreed to this. However, if indeed gender policy exists at MUST as was suggested by a low percentage of both students (20 per cent) and non-teaching staff (30 per cent), then this policy is not being promoted/implemented and made known to the relevant stakeholders.

The same applies to **gender mainstreaming**, where none of the academic staff suggested that it existed, in fact, the majority (56 per cent) of them did not know of gender mainstreaming to be available at the University. Only 17 per cent of all the interviewed students and 30 per cent of the non-teaching staff agreed that gender mainstreaming was being practiced at the University.

### **Gender and Budgeting**

In agreement with the subsequent graph and tables, none of the interviewed academic staff agreed to this, although a small percentage of both students (14 per cent) and non-teaching staff (11%) reported that the university was currently conducting gender sensitive budgeting. Only a fair percentage (35 %) of the interviewed students said that the budgets for women and girls specifically were in existence at the University, this was however, supported by a small percentage of both academic staff (22 %) and non-teaching staff (11 %) as seen in the subsequent graph and table.

### **Levels of Knowledge on Gender**

Findings show that 41 per cent of the interviewed academic staff on average had some reasonable understanding of gender concepts. About 56 per cent said they knew how to carry out gender analysis and therefore could conduct gender research. However, most of the interviewed academic staff had no knowledge on concepts like gender budgeting and gender sensitive monitoring represented by a proportion of 44.4 per cent each.

The above statements not only reflect the respondents limited conceptualising of gender issues, but also the general attitude towards gender given that fact that MUST is a predominantly science University. At one point, lecturers wondered how gender will be publicly accepted, when that president has already been questioning the rationale of Development Studies in a Science University.

All the above experiences point to convert resistance that is likely to surround gender mainstreaming practices. They (scenarios) point not only to individual

but also institutional low level of conceptualisation of gender and the gender relations and the likely impact of gender relations on University’s progress. The overall gender responsiveness of the university remains only in the goodwill of the top management to have a gender responsive environment. Lack of systematic approach to address issues of inequality puts the Institution in a position of legitimising and perpetuation gender inequality itself. The denial of equality and rights for women for instance at MUST seems based on biological differences as well as a notion of equivalent right that spring from the social cultural environment that the University is enriched in . With men having more chances of accessing education, particularly Science Education, to earn a living, women constitute to be viewed as economically provided for, or that change to cater for the interest of female students is costly for a University that is still young. Gendered structures are so entrenched that is uneconomical to do things differently. An example of this is the resistance to setting up day care centres at work places or creating bigger structures such as institute of Gender at MUST.

More than 83 per cent of all the students interviewed reported that they had no knowledge on most of the gender aspects such; generating sex disaggregated data, generating gender disaggregated data, gender sensitive evaluation, gender sensitive monitoring, sender budgeting, designing gender sensitive research, gender sensitive monitoring, implementing projects in a gender sensitive way, and conducting cender sensitive research respectively. The understanding that was clearer was mainly on the concept of gender, and most of those students who showed that clear understanding were female. Only less than 2 per cent of all the interviewed students had advanced understanding/skills on almost all of the different gender aspects.

The findings show that 65 per cent of the interviewed non-academic staff had no clear knowledge on all of the gender aspects. These mainly included; analyzing policy from a gender perspective, generating gender disaggregated data, designing gender sensitive research, and conducting gender sensitive research respectively, amongst others. Only about 10 per cent of the interviewed non-teaching staff reportedly had advanced skill /understanding on the gender aspects.

**Table 5.3:** Non academic Staff understanding of the gender concepts

	No Know- ledge	Begin- ner	Ave- rage	Advan- ced
	%	%	%	%

Gender Aspects	Meaning of Gender	33.30	33.30	25.00	8.30
	Gender analysis	63.60	18.20	18.20	0
	Gender budgeting	63.60	18.20	18.20	0
	Designing Gender sensitive research	72.70	9.10	9.10	9.10
	Implementing projects in a gender sensitive way	63.60	9.10	18.20	9.10
	Gender Sensitive monitoring	60.00	10.00	30.00	0
	Gender sensitive evaluation	60.00	20.00	20.00	0
	Gender mainstreaming	72.70	18.20	9.10	0
	Analysing policy from a gender perspective	80.00	20.00	0	0
	Generating sex disaggregated data	60.00	30.00	10.00	0
	Generating gender disaggregated data	77.80	11.10	11.10	0
	Conducting Gender Sensitive research	70.00	20.00	10.00	0
Average Score	64.78	18.10		2.21	

***Efforts on Capacity Building in Gender or Women Issues***

The study established that the 89 per cent of the academic staff interviewed had ever received training on gender or womens’ issues. There was, however, reported limited opportunity to put into practice what they had learnt. Such training was found to be comparatively lower among the students and non-teaching staff as was represented by only 37 per cent of the former and 36 per cent of the latter respectively.

Most of the academic staff received such training from seminars/conferences which lasted for duration of seven days and less; the few students who reportedly had received such training mainly accessed it as part of their course units.

**Table 5.4:** Training background on Gender

		Students		Academic staff		Non Teaching staff	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Fre quency	%
Valid	Seminar/Conference for less than 7 days	3	5	4	44.4	3	23.1
	Degree	4	6.7	1	11.1	2	15.4
	Others	4	6.7	2	22.2	0	38.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>77.8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>61.5</b>

Missing	System	49	81.7	2	22.2	8	0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Research and Innovation

Research and Innovation is regarded by MUST as essential to the development of any forward thinking University, and that without serious research initiatives, the University cannot achieve its goal of becoming a major academic institution in the region. The University has in place a number of innovations to strengthen the research component. The Millennium Science Initiative (MSI), a venture in partnership with the University of California, is mainly concerned with health issues in communities. Specifically, it is aimed at improving the health status of communities in *Nakaseke* District in Central Uganda. It endeavours to integrate mobile phone technology into rural health systems. The Epi-Centre at the University compass is a research centre that is also health-focused. Other initiatives include the Child *Amagara* Project and the Community Based Medical Education (CBME)<sup>8</sup>.

Such initiatives serve as a great opportunity for investigating and providing evidence on the influence of gender in the levels and modes of academic performance of both students and staff in the University, and further bring to light community level gender dynamics influential in the health of communities.

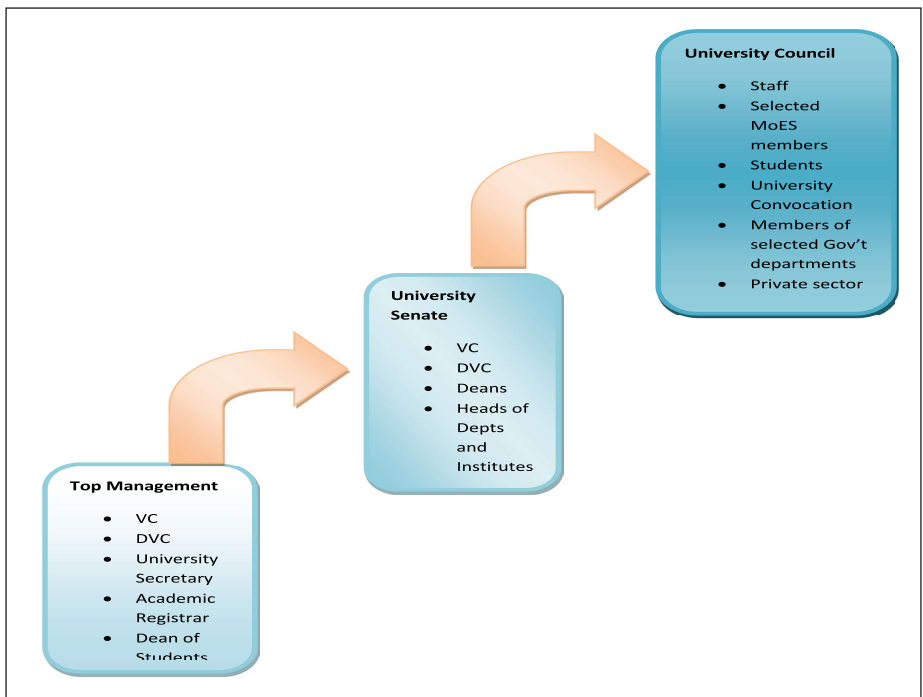
In light of the importance attached to research, the University has in place a Research Policy (though still in draft). The University also holds annual Research Conferences, an initiative strongly supported by the current Vice Chancellor. Since inception, MUST have held a total of seven research conferences. The theme for the 2012 conference goes, “Linking Research to Societal transformation and the Millennium Development Goals”. None of the sub-themes explicitly portrays gender as an area of concern. There is also no evidence of any deliberate efforts to engender the structures supporting research and innovation in the University. Discussions during the study revealed individual research interests in gender or women issues, with no clear evidence for institutionalisation of the effort. Despite this oversight, a number of female staff alongside males are engaged in some kind of research work. The number of academic staff members leaving the University for greener pastures and others engaging more in consultancy jobs for survival have partly undermined the research and innovation effort at the University.

## *Governance and Administration at MUST*

The concept of ‘governance’ indicates both the formal and informal arrangements that allow institutions to make decisions and take action. It includes external



governance which refers to relationships between a given institution and its external supervisors and internal processes which includes lines of authority and how this authority is exercised within that Institution. Governance largely relates and overlaps with management. Management focuses largely on the implementation and execution of policies. It is seen as one of the tools for achieving good governance. Governance in turn sets parameters for management. Informal governance includes the unwritten rules that determine how people relate within the institution. It involves internal power centres and their allegiances, exercising of freedoms patterns of student behaviour, etc. Here, rights and responsibilities of actors are set, plus rules that define interaction. Good governance is expected inter alia, to promote social justice and gender equality plus the realisation of human rights. The diagram below shows the key governing bodies of MUST as a University. Analysis was made of how these governing structures promote or fail to promote gender concerns. Analysis is done on terms of representation and other aspects like areas of concern during decision making.



**Fig 5.4:** Decision making organs of the University

The University Council is the overall General Assembly of the University. It is made up various internal and external stakeholders as stipulated above. The university Senate on the other hand is strongly focused on the academic concerns of the University. The top management is the executing body of the decisions made at Senate and Council levels.

The governance and administration dynamics greatly portray the gender terrain in any given University. At MUST, the representation of women keeps diminishing as one goes up the hierarchy of the University administration and Governance structures. It was also discovered that there are no deliberate efforts to mainstream gender concerns into the agenda or mandates of these structures. The main concerns of these governing bodies were more in terms of the academic performance of MUST, resource mobilisation and other related issues, with no deliberate efforts towards gender. The table below illustrates the gender distribution of the positioning at various levels of the central administration.

**Table 5.5:** University Central Administration

Administrative Office	Males	Females	Comment
Vice Chancellor's office	6	5	
Deputy Vice Chancellors	2	4	Office headed by female
University Secretary	15	16	Majority females are Secretaries/office attendants with none holding a senior position
Academic Registrar	3	7	
University Library	8	3	
Dean of Students	18	27	Majority females in kitchen work and cleaning
Finance Department	9	6	All female are accounts clerks, office attendants or personal secretaries. No female in a senior position.
Procurement Unit	3	0	All senior members of staff
Internal Audit	4	1	
Estates and Works Department	11	3	Male dominated, could be informed by stereotypes of physical work as men's work
Security Section	29	1	Gross imbalance could be informed by gender stereotype of security work as men's work that requires being strong

Faculty of Medicine and Nursing	34	25	
Science Education	8	8	
Development Studies	2	2	
Institute of Computer Science	3	4	
Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation, Bwindi	3	2	
Total	158	114	
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>42</b>	

Out of all the central administration positions, 58 per cent are occupied by males while the remaining 42 per cent are occupied by females. The female administrative staff dominated the lower level offices while the males occupied mainly the higher level positions. This has a direct implication on the levels of remuneration of females compared to those of males. Females dominated positions like those of cleaner, office attendant, secretary, cook and administrator.

In both administrative and academic sections, there was a clear gender stereotype with females being less in senior positions than the males. Under the academic section, more females were located at the ranks of Teaching Assistant, Assistant Lecturer. Those in senior positions found themselves deputising the males. Males often dominated the Estates and Works as well as Security functions. Results in the field also showed that these stereotypical specialisations are linked to the societal belief systems that assert particular attributes for men and women. These tendencies perpetuate gender imbalances further.

### ***Comparing Academic and Administrative Positions at MUST***

In both academic and central administration, there is a visible level of gender inequality with females being the marginalised category in terms of lower numbers but also holding low-ranks (positions). Majority females are concentrated in low ranks such as teaching assistant, assistants lectures, or in administration as secretaries, cooks, midwives, offices assistants, lab attendants, cleaners, accountants, etc. Very few of them hold senior positions while others in senior positions deputize their male counterparts. This also has an implication on the salary scales that majority females have which translate in women's economic subordination.

### ***Professional Stereo Types***

Majority female and in certain cases, male members of staff in central administration are congested in what could easily be argued out as gender stereotypical professions. In almost all offices, females predominantly do secretarial work, office attendants, accounts clerks, cookery and cleaning as well as deputizing male counterparts. In another turn of stereotyping, men almost exclusively occupied the Estates and Works Department as well as Security Unit. Gender stereotypes are structured sets of beliefs about personal attributes, behaviours and roles of specific social groups. It is no doubt that men and women in these administrative positions have been concentrated according to the rigid thinking of their socio-culturally constructed expectations of their genders. Men in such positions of earners and providers and females as mere recipients of decisions make. Unfortunately such stereotypes entrench and perpetuate gender inequalities within social settings.

### ***Women in Leadership***

Leadership is a key aspect of good governance. The leadership structures at MUST are said to be exercised on merit. As a result, positions are on appointive and not elective in nature. There are, however, no mechanisms in place at the institutional level to spell out key focus on the promotion of women in leadership even when there is overt inequality in leadership. Gender inequalities are therefore prevalent. Like is the case at top management in most institutions, top positions and decision making is dominated by men, with women too few to effectively influence such processes. Most committees constitute heads of departments and institutes, which levels are dominated by men. For instance at the time of this study, the Faculty of Medicine had three Heads of Department, all male. Even within specific departments, females constitute less than 25 per cent. In the Security Unit, there is hardly female representation yet there is a demand for them to specifically serve the purpose of cross-examining female students and visitors at entry points<sup>9</sup>.

It was discovered that in the Academic Registrar's Department, there is a considerably high number of female staff. This was termed by one staff as, *"purely accidental!!"* Another respondent said,

*"I know that the Vice Chancellor as an individual is passionate about mentoring female members into leadership, but at institutional level, there is no policy or even guidelines for specifically promoting female leadership in the University"*.

In terms of recruitment, the University commits itself (at least in writing) to non-discrimination in any form. This is clearly stipulated in the Human Resource

Policy Manual. This is aimed at ensuring there is no discrimination on any basis, including gender.

The situation is no different at student level with low representation in the leadership of student bodies. It was discovered that since the establishment of MUST as a University, the first female Guild President only came on board in 2012<sup>10</sup>. In reaction to this breakthrough, the following were reactions by students.

“It was a historical election in the history of Mbarara University. We had never had a female Guild President. We have had 23 years of male leadership and having a lady at this moment is crucial”.

*“We are waiting to see how the leadership of a lady will taste...”*

“It is high time we started putting trust in our ladies to lead in various positions...including the position of the Presidency... Ladies are more humble, result-oriented and focused. They are also free from any temptations of plots to wage war to overthrow regimes...unlike men who are egocentric...”

Source: New Vision, April 16th, 2012

### ***Students and Staff Welfare***

Issues of welfare of staff at MUST are highlighted in the Human Resource Policy Manual. Discussions with selected academic and support staff revealed that the University has no clear welfare policy. The Mbarara University Teaching Staff Association is existent but relatively inactive/dormant. As explained by some of the respondents, the smallness of the institution enables short processes of issue handling. One academic staff explained:

“There aren't yet issues in the University that call for serious and laborious institutional processes. In case of anything, the officers concerned are easily accessible...”

It was further elaborated that the Heads of Department, the Academic Registrar and the Personnel Officer are the ones that often handle welfare issues. And common issues of concern are in the areas of staff training and development, salary and allowances plus health. A senior female non-academic staff member said:

“...MUST as an institution has not yet had any serious or conflict-related issues that call for rigorous processes. That explains why our academic staff association is quite inactive...When one loses a relative, there is a staff bus always readily available to transport others who often go for the burials... The Personnel Officer is the one who plays a key role in mobilising condolence fees from the rest of the members”

A close analysis shows that there isn't a clearly specific concern for gender or women issues. The discussions by respondents portrayed gender blindness though there may be possibilities of paying specific attention to gender issues without consciously realising THAT this is being done.

The welfare of students at MUST largely deals with issues of students' accommodation, and operating in a safe environment. Like any other sections where gender has not been considered, there is no consideration for gender in terms of residence. The Dean of Students who is charged with student welfare noted that students are accommodated within the University flats (one for females and two for males) while those not accommodated reside in hostels off campus. Hostels have remained a responsibility of individual landlords and the Town Council rather than the University. As result, majority of cases facing students within the private hostel environment remain unattended to by the University. The hostels and routes to these accommodation spaces were reportedly insecure, with inadequate lighting at night, and prone to thuggery, including rape of female students, robbery, physical assault related to theft and fights over boyfriends and girlfriends within the hostels. Further challenges facing students include attention for babies or students who become pregnant. According to the dean of students:

When a student is seven months pregnant, we advise her to move out of the University and seek an alternative residence. However, we don't allocate her room to another student. After delivery, such students are free to come back on condition that they do not live with the baby.

These are some of the stringent measures that leave girls at the margins of realising their goal of a university education. Even when a pregnant student's room is not given away, the stay for two months outside (before delivery) and more time after delivery is likely to disorient her residence. The stigma, to attach to loss of residence on an account of pregnancy, and the trauma of living without the baby are likely to work against the young mother's concentration and overall performance in her course.

### ***Students' Security***

The issue of security has been noted as a great challenge due to different locations of students on and off campus. The security of students outside campus has been described as a nightmare. Since majority of students come from resource limited families, they can only afford poorly facilitated and located hostels and these are a big security risk. According to the students, several of them have been raped in hostels or on their way to hostels, especially after visiting the library at night. The following incidents have been registered with the Dean's office.

There have been reports of rapes – three incidences which occurred in the night. Usually, victims don't want any person to know. First thing is call a physician – victims are initiated on mandatory post-exposure on prophylaxis. In another incidence, a girl comes to buy pineapples at 7.45pm and on her way back, rapists threw a jacket around her face, raped and robbed her of her money. He later escorted her to the road and gave her her phone....we have 1,200 females and we get three-four cases in one academic year (Dean of students, MUST)

Most of the students we spoke to felt that the university administration has not given due attention to the issue since it is outside of the campus. Other incidences of student's insecurity were reported during the clinical years for Medical students. It was reported that most students [both males and females] who do their practical lessons during the night in the Teaching Hospital fear going home in the middle of the night yet no measures are in place to cater for their security.

### ***Physical Facilities***

**On hygiene and sanitation facilities**, all the interviewed academic staff reported that there were separate sanitation facilities for men and women. A total of 93 per cent of the students also confirmed the same. However, 22 per cent of the non-academic staff said this was not the case throughout. During site visits, the study observed sanitation facilities for male and female students such as dumping bins in female toilet, separated toilets for males and females while in other cases the facilities are used by both sexes and at times, toilet facilities for males and females are close-related. Although in most cases, these facilities were separated and clearly marked as for males or female, instances were established where students (male and female) would, not only use facilities close to each other but also used the same facility, while some few facilities were marked in a manner not easily identified the facility as for males or females. For instance in the Nursing and Community Development Department, toilets are marked with A, B and C. In such a situation, it becomes hard to tell which of them is for for males or females. What was further confusing was that toilets A, B and C are accessed through one entrance by males and females. Students, however, noted that although there were no proper symbols to indicate which facility is used by which sex, they already know which one is for ladies and which one is for gents.

Disposal bins were also conspicuously missing in most of the female toilets. Such practices indicate that institution's environment is conscious of the interests of female students, albeit in a haphazard manner. For those who may be 'strangers' or 'new comers' in the University, such facilities remain blind, deceptive and misleading to the explicit interest of male and female students.



**Plate 5.1:** Ladies or Gentlemen?

The University also has adequate facilities for persons with disabilities especially in newly constructed buildings. This also indicates a move towards taking into consideration interests of other marginalised categories of people in accessing higher education.





**Plate 5.2:** A sloping to the lower floor to enable easy movement by students with physical disability

### ***Students Hostel Environment***

It was reported that most students of MUST reside in hostels outside university campus. Some of these hostels are located along streets that are isolated, dark, and prone to criminality, especially in the late hours of the night. The location of a highway that cuts across the University campus was also seen as a threat to the safety of students. Most cases of insecurity were reported to be common around Independence Park and the Golf Course. Throughout all our interaction with university stakeholders, both students and staff noted that insecurity at, and off campus was a great issue that has not been comprehensively addressed. According to the Dean of students:

The university is aware of this situation. Several cases of rapes our student have been reported, grabbing of girl's bag, beating of male students; all these cases have been reported.

The DVC who also acknowledged that rape cases had been reported and noted that security of students in hostels has largely remained unaddressed, especially

due to blame games where the University blamed insecurity on laxity by Mbarara Municipal Council, which in turn passed the buck to the the police. What remains clear is that the insecurity always has an effect on student' attendance in the library, especially at night. The trauma and stigma that follows rape has an effect on student's concentration in class or remaining in class in the first place.. All these negative effects the lives and welfare of students in hostels and demand urgent attention.

### ***Gender in Sexual Relations among Staff and Students***

Sexual relations and sexual harassment in particular is often looked at as one of the avenues through which gender power relations are exercised. Sexual harassment is defined by law in terms of asking for sexual favours, sexual advances or any other unbecoming sexual behaviour. Through sexual harassment, gender power relations are defined and actualised.

Cases of sexual harassment were reported within and outside the University environment. As the respondents noted, there are several case although they have not been channeled in a way that makes them part of institutional history. Cases that range from students harassing each other or being harassed by administrators/lecturers have been reported albeit with no clear mechanism to address them.

These are several cases of students getting pregnant and the responsibility was traced to male lecturers. There are cases of senior staff sexually abusing female administrative and support staff. This is common knowledge yet treated it is treated as rumours, meaning the allegations remain at that level. Support staff promotion remains unclear and this leaves room for abuse. (Female member of staff)

Although the University has a policy on regulation of sexual harassment mechanisms for reporting abusers, fear of the likely consequences to the victim still impede victims from seeking justice. There was notable disconnect on information flow on sexual and peaceful, .However, the general feeling is sexual harassment exists and incidents are pushed under the carpet because no one is willing to testify.

Sexual harassment usually thrives in an environment of unequal power relations, where the victim is most likely to be at the bottom of this hierarchy and therefore hard for them to report once abused. The above cases of girls getting pregnant, and majority others reporting cases of abuse to the Dean of Students office probably represent the smallest fraction of what sexual harassment looks like at MUST. The reported fear of victims and their preference to confide in the Dean of students or even doctors at the Mbarara University Teaching Hospital but beseech them not to tell their parents and friends is an indicator that many cases remain shrouded in silence.

**Grievance Handling and Conflict Resolution**

The Students Guild (S.G.) is an officially recognised body representing over 2,000 students at Mbarara University of Science and Technology. The Guild endeavours to create a supportive, positive and conducive environment for students on campus. Among other things, the structure is responsible for organizing social events.

It is led by the Guild President who represents students on various management committees of the University. The Guild works together in collaboration with the Dean of Students to address student issues as well as oversee student welfare. The Dean of Students is responsible for student welfare, including matters concerning student accommodation, feeding, health, sports and recreation. Discussions with various respondents revealed that all these processes do not give serious consideration to gender issues affecting students. As a result, there were reported cases of rape of female students, with no serious preventive measures put in place apart from cautioning them not to move about during the late hours of the night. The paradox here is that the more female students avoid moving in the night, the more they would miss out on opportunities like using the library or discussion groups geared towards improvement in academic performance.

**Table 5.6:** Views of the non-academic staff

	Yes	No	Don't Know
	%	%	%
Gender Policy	20.0	21.7	58.3
Gender mainstreaming strategy/Plan	16.9	16.9	66.1
Separate bathroom for women and men?	96.7	3.3	
Conduct Gender sensitive budgeting?	13.6	20.3	66.1
Budget for Women and girls specifically?	34.5	32.8	32.8
Staff with equal number of women and men?	10.0	78.3	11.7
Policies with provisions for women and girls	31.7	38.3	30.0
Policies which are gender sensitive	37.9	20.7	41.4

**Table 5.7:** Views of the Academic Staff

Valid N=9	Yes	No	Don't Know
	%	%	%
Gender Policy		44.4	55.6
Gender mainstreaming strategy/Plan		44.4	55.6
Separate bathroom for women and men?	100.0		

Conduct Gender sensitive budgeting?		55.6	44.4
Budget for Women and girls specifically?	22.2	55.6	22.2
Staff with equal number of women and men?		100.0	
Policies with provisions for women and girls	22.2	55.6	22.2
Policies which are gender sensitive	33.3	44.4	22.2

**Table 5.8:** Views of Students

	Yes	No	Don't Know
	%	%	%
Gender Policy	30.0	40.0	30.0
Gender mainstreaming strategy/Plan	30.0	30.0	40.0
Separate bathroom for women and men?	66.7	22.2	11.1
Conduct Gender sensitive budgeting?	11.1	55.6	33.3
Budget for Women and girls specifically?	11.1	66.7	22.2
Staff with equal number of women and men?		57.1	42.9
Policies with provisions for women and girls	28.6	28.6	42.9
Policies which are gender sensitive	42.9	14.3	42.9

## Gender-based Challenges

**Table 5.9:**

Challenges	Mechanisms of handling them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Staff:</li> <li>• Negative attitudes towards gender as a subject by students</li> <li>• Female students sexually harassing male lecturers</li> <li>• Low confidence of female students</li> <li>• Inadequate sanitation facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance and counselling for female students</li> <li>• Encouraging female students to build confidence and work hard</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-academic Staff:</li> <li>• Very limited knowledge and appreciation of gender</li> <li>• Most females in the institution do not know their rights</li> <li>• Top management is highly male-dominated, leading to limited influence by females of decision making</li> <li>• There is a mentality of self-pity and low confidence among female staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting involved in other income generating activities to earn additional income</li> <li>• No direct mechanism to handle these issues in place</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students:</li> <li>• Sexual harassment by male students and lecturers</li> <li>• Sexual harassment by female students (Skimpy dressing)</li> <li>• Insecurity at night when moving from the University to the hostels</li> <li>• Lecturers academically favouring female students</li> <li>• Under-representation of female students on the Students' Guild</li> <li>• Lack of female security officers leading to female students and visitors being handled by male security personnel at check points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing sexual harassment issues is done through the Peer Project</li> <li>• Nothing much done about the other issues.</li> </ul>

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study set out to bring to earth the gender terrain at MUST. Findings show that while some efforts are already in place towards promoting gender in the University, a lot more work needs to be done to have gender effectively mainstreamed into MUST structures and processes both at the University campus and in the communities where its programmes are implemented.

Mbarara University has existed for over two decades since its inception as a University. The University has gone through stages of growth and development from one faculty in 1989 to three faculties and two institutes, From 43 to over 3,000 students, from less than 30 to over 200 staff members, both academic and

non-academic, from offering degrees, diplomas and certificates, to the level of Masters and PhDs. With all these achievements, the University is yet to draw serious attention to gender issues both at academic and practical levels. The concluded study on a situational analysis of the gender terrain at MUST clearly revealed that while some efforts have manifested themselves, a lot still needs to be done to have gender successfully mainstreamed in the University's work.

Gender equity and equality emanates from the efforts that analyse and address the deep-rooted societal social value systems that define the 'proper place' for the man and the woman. The efforts towards gender mainstreaming by implication advocate for the promotion of social justice, men's and women's human rights, plus good governance. The current initiatives on training on gender are mainly under the Faculty of Development Studies which offers gender as part of the subjects of study. The statistics also show that while the number of both male and female students has increased, the female percentage still remains low compared to the males. This is largely influenced by the social stereotypes that in turn influence the kind of subject specialisation girl students take at secondary school level. The curriculum at MUST being largely science-based then provides limited opportunities for female entry into the University.

The research initiative by the University in partnership with other reputable institutions has greatly promoted innovation. The efforts in place target addressing the current community challenges in health. This provides a great entry point into investigating the role that the gender social identity plays in disease patterns and health seeking behaviors, plus the emerging gender loaded needs on the side of the University to address them. Gender was however observed to be largely ignored in these innovations. Thus, gender has not yet been taken as one of the key areas of concern for the University.

The governance, administration and leadership structures in the University are clearly male-dominated and particularly in the higher levels of the hierarchies. The females have tended to dominate the lower levels of the leadership structures, which frustrates any effort to influence decision making processes. The fact that the student leadership structures also tend to be dominated by the males also cements further the gender imbalance in the leadership structures of the University.

Efforts are already in place to address welfare issues among both students and staff. There is however a clear gender unfriendliness and bias in various aspects of the welfare component. The insecurity faced by students at the hostel residences disadvantages the females more. The evidence provided concerning sexual harassment shows that both staff and students are at risk. The facilities in

place also provide limited recreation opportunities for talent development among students.

However, there is a lot of potential for creating conceptual and physical space for gender mainstreaming. This, once done, should improve gender relations and work towards gender equality among males and females in the University. The recommendations stipulated in this report will establish a starting point for taking forward the gender agenda at MUST.

And to ensure sustainability, the existing minimal efforts should be built on, both at policy and practice levels. Participatory and inclusive mechanisms will need to be adopted, with allocation of financial resources as a sure deal to facilitate the effort.

**The recommendations** reached in this report originate from the discussions with the respective stakeholders, the researchers' observations and relevant literature reviewed on similar situations in other institutions.

### ***On the Policy and Institutional Framework***

Policy making and policy review are part of the key engagements for MUST's governing body at various levels. The policy making and reviewing structures in their entity under the overall leadership of the University Council, should go beyond token allocation of gender mainstreaming to establishment of a sustainable mechanism that ensures gender is mainstreamed into all MUST's policies, plans and strategies. More so, the linkage between the upcoming Gender Policy and other policies guiding work at MUST should then accordingly be strengthened and streamlined to ensure that they communicate complementing messages. MUST should also go beyond policy making to allocate resources to facilitate its implementation. This should begin with a critical analysis of MUST's budget and priorities to establish entry points for gender budgeting. This will go a long way in ensuring that every stakeholder in the University is charged with the responsibility of addressing gender issues within their planning, prioritisation and implementation mandates.

The Sexual Harassment Policy should enhance its gender sensitivity to ensure that both male and female students, academic staff and other workers plus other closely relating stakeholders enjoy an environment free of any kind of sexual harassment, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

### ***Capacity Development on Gender***

The Office of the Dean of Students in collaboration with Faculty Deans should spearhead the actualisation of the Gender Policy. In response to the identified gaps, special efforts should be put in place to address capacity gaps of all academic and non-academic staff at various levels for them first to appreciate its importance in their lives as men and women and as workers, and resultantly take personal charge of the gender mainstreaming drive in the University. A structure should also be created to serve as the overseer of the gender mainstreaming initiative in the University. Gender, as an academic subject, should also go beyond the Institute of Development Studies and be introduced in each of the faculties. These once implemented to acceptable levels should enable great improvement in the academic performance of students and teaching staff in the University, as MUST further builds a reputation which other institutions can learn from.

### ***Safely and Housing***

In order to increase female students' access to, performance and retention in the University, efforts should be put in place to construct more halls of residence for them given that findings show they are more vulnerable to sexual harassment much more than their male counterparts. A rapid response mechanism should further be established to respond to students' and staff safety issues in a timely manner.

### ***Women in Leadership at MUST***

One of the key issues pointed out across the board during the study is that of a glaring inequality between males and females in terms of access to opportunities for educational advancement and other career prospects. Findings in the field clearly pointed to the comparatively low levels of female engagement in key leadership positions and responsibilities in the University. The affirmative Action programme that targets mainly students should be extended to the allocation of leadership positions to ensure that women participation in leadership in the University is improved. This should be supported by special mentoring initiatives to enhance women's abilities alongside men.



### ***Performance Monitoring and Evaluation***

To ascertain whether gender mainstreaming efforts are yielding results, the policy making and planning body of the University should institute a clear and user-friendly Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism for tracking performance on gender mainstreaming. The M&E should be periodic and tagged to the academic performance assessment for it to carry the value it deserves.

### ***Research and Innovation***

The current research initiatives in the University are mostly science-related but with limited efforts to address gender issues. During the review of the Research Policy, the Officers overseeing the implementation of the research policy should take special efforts to ensure that respective research initiatives draw attention to gender issues. More so, gender and equity specific research projects should be encouraged among both students and staff. The Community Outreach Programme in particular should draw attention to gender issues in the communities with the aim of having them addressed. This will provide a great opportunity for building a body of knowledge on gender in the context of MUST.

### ***Strategic Partnerships***

MUST enjoys a wide scope of strategic partnerships that have been instrumental in all the success it has registered as a higher institution of learning. MUST should further deliberately attract strategic partnerships with gender-focused organisations for shared learning and tapping on existing opportunities in the area of gender as a way of strengthening avenues for achieving the University's goals and objectives.



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## Women Leaders in Ugandan Public Universities:...

### “It’s a Long Way to the Top...”

Literature reviewed on Ugandan universities shows that today’s situation education is far away from an equal participation of females and males in the different stages of higher education career. The distribution of power and financial resources is not the same for females and males. This includes their personal benefits that result from the education (Kwesiga 2003; Ahikire 2011; Odhiambo 2011). Higher education plays a key role in shaping society and building active citizens. A lot of the people who will take powerful roles in a society have a background in higher education. This implies that a gender equal higher education also has a huge, long term impact on gender equality within society. Therefore, universities today fight for a gender equal environment that preserves equal chances for both women and men.

#### **Experiences of Selected Women with University Leadership**

This section represents views from women who have had a long history of holding positions of influence at university. It should be noted that in universities, for one to become a leader it should stem from his/her academic prowess. As such, holding leadership positions often goes hand in hand with academic rank. Often the leaders we sought (at level of Dean and top Management) were often at the rank of Professor. Although the intention was to follow such women across the four universities, it was impossible because only Makerere University has women at that level of leadership. Only one woman from Gulu University at the rank of Associate Professor became an automatic and lone member of the Senate.

In the study, we regard leadership and management to be distinguished from each other. Although one aspect of the functions of a manager is leading, a manager may not necessarily be a leader (Zulu 2013). In some situations, it is possible for a manager to be a leader. However, the debate about leadership versus management and whether the two are distinct or synonymous belongs elsewhere. This study concerns itself with the dual role of an academic Senator (often Deans) and professional leader and a line manager at the same time.

### ***Her Story: Do Women Possess Unique Feminine Qualities for Leadership?***

This study is conceived in a way that recognises the role played by women leaders, despite their small presence. We draw our conclusions based on experiences of purposively selected women who have served at all the ranks as Deans, Directors or Heads of Department. The women detail their paths and approaches to leadership in the new atmosphere. The characteristics these women share include having a high level of self-confidence, being risk takers, instinctively anticipating change, capitalising on understanding customer service, and using their femininity to manage employees and serve students to the best of their abilities. These professors were found in places such as the school of medicine, technology, languages, social sciences, forestry, education and the library. As already noted the women profiled exhibited enormous courage and will to succeed. We were tempted to think that perhaps they possessed some unusual traits that could actually fertilize the playing field of management in universities. In her story, we examine their responses to the following: (i) feminine qualities for leadership; (ii) career paths; and (iii) mentoring experience.

Regarding the first question of whether women possessed a unique feminine quality, we were confronted with responses that sometimes were a stark contrast. A contentious theme in some literature is that women and men have innately different and “essentialised” leadership dispositions. Binns and Kerfoot (2011) discussed the ‘female advantage’ literature, which posits that there is existence of superior female leadership traits e.g. empathy and “relationality”. The stories of these pioneers show how women are reinventing management rules and redefining the meaning of power in today’s management world. In her book *Why the Best Man for the Job is a Woman: The Unique Female Qualities of Leadership*, author Esther Wachs (2001; 2011) notes:

Women leaders are more persuasive than their male counterparts; when feeling the sting of rejection, women leaders learn from adversity and carry on with an

“I’ll show you” attitude. Women leaders demonstrate an inclusive, team-building leadership style of problem solving and decision making. Women leaders are more likely to ignore rules and take risks.

What she discovers echoes the several studies of a similar nature<sup>11</sup>, including a willingness to reinvent the rules; an ability to sell their visions; the determination to turn challenges into opportunities; and a focus on ‘high touch’ in a business world; that women leaders are more assertive and persuasive, have a stronger need to get things done and are more willing to take risks than male leaders.

A leader of the Library for over ten years exhibits all qualities named above. While expressing her unique style she notes:

For many years now, no one appears to understand me. I follow my vision and self-belief. In this library we have a women’s only space. We have a space where pregnant mothers and mothers with their children can rest. This was not easy. I defied a lot of rules, including advice from the lead architect. Senate laughed this idea off but I was adamant.

Women leaders were also found to be more empathetic and flexible, as well as stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts, enabling them to read situations accurately and take information in from all sides. These women leaders are able to bring others around to their point of view because they genuinely understand and care about where others are coming from so that the people they are leading feel more understood, supported and valued. In this regard, the Dean of the School of Medicine had this to say:

I have invented my style, which I use wherever I go; I have designed a computer lab with all modern facilities. This has never been seen at the medical school, I ever. I serve tea in my office and have fresh flowers delivered everyday to decorate the office. Although it is draining, I try to commit time and attend to students as if they are my own children. I take this job as a call for duty to serve and I try to do it diligently (Interview April, 22 2014 Kampala).

However, on the other hand, she as narrates her story, she is aware of the fact that the ‘indicators of success’, or markers of prestige and success in academia, were found to be gendered – following male-dominated patterns and pathways. Activities such as receiving invitations to give keynote speeches, winning medals and prizes and holding editorial positions were seen to be more easily accessed by men. Women found it harder to accrue the types of currency that would advance their reputations.

Another participant said this:

I put in long hours with my employees who I call colleagues. I see myself as a team member; always building toward what I feel is the vision of this University. I come to office whatever what happens to me. Once, I even gave a presentation with a face bandaged, arriving at a meeting immediately after being in a car accident (Interview, May 2, 2014 Kampala).

In her case, she sees domination as a leadership style becoming less and less popular. There is a new growing appreciation of those traits that women use to keep families together and to organise volunteers to unite and make change in the shared life of communities. These newly admired leadership qualities of shared leadership; nurturance and doing good for others are today not only sought after but also indeed needed to make a difference in the world. A feminine way of leading includes helping the world to understand and be principled about values that really matter (Ibarra and OtiliaObodaru 2009). Another respondent pointed out to us that:

When I got here ten years ago, it was a mess. The office look showed lack of seriousness and lack of a competitive spirit. I started with remodeling the office outlook so that it could present a true picture of a serious and well-kept office. I ordered for new furniture, bought new curtains and furnished the kitchen as well. During meetings, we do not have to make outside orders for teas and eats; we make them here. Although it is unusual, the office offers lunch for staff whenever there is a task that is running through the lunch hour. It is like a big family here (Interview April 30, 2014).

In continuing with the discussion, she notes in agreement that women leaders actually possess a different approach to things that others outside their circles would call minor or even trivial. She adds:

This university had been using the same old library structures and systems for over 40 years. I came in with the thinking that something can be done about the situation. I presented my case all over the world and in the end I managed to get onboard many friends who were willing to help. I thank the generosity of several development partners as the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, and the governments of Sweden, Norway, UK and the Netherlands. Today we have one of the state-of-the-art library facilities in Africa. We have unique facilities such as the sections for mothers who are pregnant or breast feeding, kids care and a coffee place to relax (Interview April, 22 2014 Kampala).

As noted above, women are clearly taking risks by inventing new ways of doing business. They are also conscious that their style is different and this may generate new challenges in terms of the societal values in which they live. The issue of a

liberalised library spaces raised many eyebrows. A lot of ridiculing dominated the discussions and it was not easy for the leader. She also said that some of her colleague detest her approach and “they hate me because I push them hard”. As a result we found that in most cases, there is a consistent tendency to cling to traditional expectations. Responses such as these were common:

Of course I have a family; I am married and perform all my duties as a wife. I have been able to bring up my children in the best upright manner that I could and I set aside plenty of time for family activities. I cook, clean and serve my husband on special dishes which I personally cook.

Another respondent had this to say:

As a new dean, I tried to bring up for discussion some issues that were affecting female staff and students. I thought a day care centre was a good idea. To my surprise, my colleagues were instead infuriated. They said the the university is not a market place; that it is a place for serious academic work.

While the majority stories contend that successful women employ uniquely female qualities, there is also a view that it also invites skepticism. It is up to now difficult to define the “female qualities”: being a team player, managing people well and working toward a vision are traits of successful women and men. It is apparent, too, that these women also do try to act like men. The temptation to behave according to the tradition expectations was so big that some of them were detested and even despised. The desire to subdue others and play the politics of patronage to survive was apparent in some instances.

A tying experience is expressed by Ibarra and Otilia Obodaru (2016). As they explained it when citing a response by one of the CEOs in their study: “I think strategy comes naturally from knowing your business and the forces that influence your market, clients, and suppliers — not at a high level but at a detailed level. Intermediaries kill your insight. You obviously can’t monitor everything, but nothing should keep you from knowing in detail the processes on which your company runs — not supervising everything but understanding at a detailed level what is going on. Otherwise, you are hostage to people who will play politics. At best you don’t have full information; at worst you’re vulnerable to hidden agendas. My job is to go to the relevant detail level.”

In our interviews, we experienced such energy being espoused by the women in leadership. However, it is also true that the participants seemed to imply that to some people, their style was almost repulsive and non-engaging, especially to fellow women. On the downside, one of the participants alleged that there are

damaging comments that are directed to them, sometimes even by fellow women. For instance, she had heard some staff making comments on her colleagues as:

She has sunk this unit to embarrassing levels. She has even recruited people who have no qualifications because they are her friends or relatives so she can easily drive them around. She wants to be adored as if this is her personal business. She definitely rewards only those who do what she wants them to do and hates divergent views or be defeated.

Others thought that these women were rather high-handed and were over-managing. One person pointed out that:

She came in through vote-rigging; I hear that money changed hands. She prefers to work with male junior staff and has isolated senior female staff; I think she wants to shine all alone. It is called the “queen bee syndrome.”

Women with their unique characteristics definitely often never fully deliver on the promise of being the right person for the job. This evidence – that the leadership style of women is not simply unique but possibly at odds with what men practice – begs the question: Do these qualities have value in the marketplace? Is this type of leadership welcomed by society and by the public and private sector?

These are pertinent questions as we look back on the actual situations in universities. In all the public universities studied, including Makerere University where all the top positions are held by men, our study seems to indicate that women’s unique values are yet to gain a stronghold in the market place. The female dean who tried to advocate for daycare facilities was deliberately de-campaigned and not reelected to serve another term. When leaders elsewhere were frightened to try something new; it took the courage and boldness of only a few to try out any experiments. The few that exist are under the spotlight and anything about them is big news. The misunderstandings in their work environments are exaggerated and taken to be the result of an incompetent and amateurish style. However, a number of stories told confirm that women leaders’ styles have made a great difference wherever they have been. Notably, in many instances, women were rated against their male counterparts. Hence the women interviewed rated their performance on certain grounds as weaker than males. For example, these women believed that they were short on core leadership values as being visionary, possessing tenacity and a global mindset, empowering colleagues and team building.



### ***Leadership Career Paths***

Responding to the specific questions such as: What was your career path to the college or university administrative position? We found that the career paths to administrative positions of the women in this study were, for the most part, quite traditional. Most of the women (60 %) reported their ascension to upper-level leadership in higher education began as an assistant lecturer to associate professor to full professor. From full professor, these women entered administration as heads of department, programme chairs, deans, or directors. However, one woman reported moving from Assistant Professor eventually to Deputy Vice Chancellor. She was quick to say that the position was designated by the university policy. “But this provision was re-interpreted right after I had served my term”. The position of the second Deputy Vice Chancellor to be a woman was abolished and till now, all at that rank are men. One other woman acknowledged that her career path was by chance, by the grace of God. Still another woman reported moving from a clerical job to an administrative desk, then finally to dean and director.

I was one of the few women administrators who supported the opening of a women’s studies unit as an academic department. We were Immediately sent for training and on return we were supposed to run this unit. I plunged into this position without any prior experience. I started to imagine what I was expected to do. I did not seek views of experienced deans because I thought that this would undermine my status. I learnt things the hard way; sometimes I would call my husband and ask him how to do things. I did not have friends in similar position that I would rely on for guidance. Instead I resorted to doing things my own way.

Majority of these women had those characteristics of determination from the time they were young. Human beings develop their vision and willingness to take up leadership positions from their experiences as young people in society and yet our societies is characterised by gender inequalities (Odhiambo 2011). The top leadership positions appeared to interest young women who wished to explore the forbidden world.

I started campaigning for leadership when I was in primary school. I became the head girl of my school. This was so because I was the only girl in my family among seven boys. I played tough games with them and often my mother wondered if I could ever become a “true” woman.

It can be observed here that surviving and advancing to the level of professor is linked in part to early career choices. White (2003) cites some of these career options to “whether or not one plans an academic career, tries to juggle full-

timeteaching and part-time postgraduate study; chooses to complete a PhD before embarking on an academic career; chooses to do a postdoctoral fellowship before becoming an academic; chooses to have children; and chooses to focus on teaching or research or both” (White 2003:5). The women in this study who did not have career breaks and had substantial publications were more focused on promotion but were also more frustrated at the barriers they experienced in the management culture of the University. While these women learnt to prioritise research and to tackle the masculine management culture head-on, some had reached the level of Associate Professor only to find that they were worn out, dispirited at best by lack of encouragement, and at worst by blatant discrimination, and no longer had the energy to push on.

The majority of these women had been or were deans or heads of departments, yet few had received training for management and leadership roles. The increasing volume of work and range of duties performed has led to increased stress<sup>12</sup>. Certainly, many women in this study saw management roles as stressful and detrimental to their research productivity, and in turn to their promotion. Not surprisingly, in this climate, women ask what they can achieve if they take on leadership roles.

Furthermore, a small proportion of women spoke of gender inequalities and its effect on their career advancement. This small percentage compared to other cultural and structural barriers<sup>13</sup> suggest that gender discrimination is not as prevalent today as in the past for the women in this study. Gender discrimination was cited as one of the five major factors that affect women’s ability to excel in their careers and get past the glass ceiling. One of the women in this current study posited,

“There are gender biases. In my former institution, I lost two gender discrimination lawsuits.” One of them was a clear case of rape which involved a student and her lecturer. The male jury felt that it was unfair to condemn the one culprit since he was not a common offender; instead he was given strong warning.

Another woman stated, “hiring committees often do not have diverse representation, resulting in biases – differential administrator pay scales, favoring males,” In addition, this participant noted, “More females are in non-traditional pathways to leadership, which was necessary to climb the ladder, but also served to justify low pay.”

Research has acknowledged that gender identity and differences are acquired through various developmental processes associated with life stages, such as schooling, and work life. Cultural and structural barriers can be explained through theories such as role theory (Eagly 1987 as cited by White 2003) and expectation states theory (Berger *et al.* 1980, *ibid* 2003). Both of these theories posited that men and women are allocated different roles in society due to their

gender. In addition, different expectations are connected to the different roles. The fundamental roles played often shape the individual's career path.

It was widely expressed that leadership is often perceived to be at odds with the demands of motherhood, domestic responsibilities, and work/life balance. Some writers have suggested that the academy is constructed as a 'carefree zone' which assumes that academics and their leaders are zero load workers, devoid of familial and care responsibilities. While quoting Grummell et al., (2009), Bagilhole and White (2011) acknowledge the importance of these arguments but, also emphasise the fact that it does not account for why somewomen who are 'carefree' are also absent from senior leadership. They further assert that explanations invoking care as a barrier fail to challenge essentialist and hetero-normative assumptions that all women live in nuclear families and that, within those families, women do and will continue to take majority responsibility for domestic arrangements. Assumptions based on the demands of motherhood overlook changing relations between women and men, and how modern forms of gender identity are more fluid, multifaceted and varied than previously (Bagilhole and White 2011). How leadership roles are constructed determines the selection process in so far as particular qualities are normalised, prioritised or mis-recognised. The male preference that is both unconscious and unintentional will often result in bias. This is more likely to occur if assessments are based on obscure criteria with confidential evaluation processes. Hence the emphasis on transparency in appointment processes (ibid 2011).

Women's under-representation in leadership was also attributed to the fact that women are excluded from this 'boys' club', often in subtle ways (White, 2003). The formal and informal networks that operated within senior management were at the core of this male hegemony. The exclusion was clearest in promotion policies and processes in higher education which acted as a 'gateway' against women by being interpreted subjectively. A clear case was expressed by the practice in one of the universities in selecting the second Deputy Vice Chancellor. We can conclude that as part of promotion, the system also discriminates against women; in the pervasive culture women may find their academic achievements very differently valued and evaluated from those of male peers.

### *Mentoring Experience*

Another pertinent research question for these women was: What mentoring experiences have you had? Ballanger's (2010) literature on mentoring revealed that female administrators in higher education who had several mentors found this experience valuable in their climb up the career ladder. These mentoring

experiences increased their visibility among women in upper leadership roles and met a variety of their needs. The themes that emerged from this section of the data were: (a) Positive mentoring experiences, (b) Male mentors, and (c) No mentors. For positive mentoring experiences, most of the women (70 %) reported positive and supportive mentoring experiences. One of the women stated,

“The positive and supportive advisors and informal mentors far outweighed the few negative sorts. I have been fortunate to participate in some structured leadership and mentoring programmes. I learned as much from informal relationships and watching talented administrators as well.”

One other woman referenced mentors from outside the university. She stated, “My mentors have been external to the university. I was involved with a women’s leadership group early in my career. I took advantage of leadership opportunities and continued on with my education.” Still, another woman noted the wonderful mentoring experience from a fellow woman, “My first administrative opportunity was provided by a woman, more than two decades ago. She was a fabulous role model at a time when there were not many women in top positions.”

On the other hand, several of the women, 30 percent, acknowledged males as mentors. One woman noted,

“I was mentored by a male dean for whom I worked first as Secretary then later as an Administrative Assistant. He gave me plenty of responsibilities, challenged me to go beyond my comfort zone, and had great confidence that one day I would become a university vice chancellor.”

Another woman also said that in particular circumstances where she was the first and only woman, a male mentor was handy. She said:

I learnt all that I know from the previous Dean, I was his favourite. He liked results and I won his attention because I was ready to work hard. He encouraged me to replace him. At first I thought that it was a joke. As time went on, I realised that he actually was preparing me to succeed him.

On the other hand, one woman voiced a less positive experience with a male mentor by stating, “Male mentors who while were supportive did not fully understand the challenges of being female, a spouse, and a parent because their significant others did not have careers.”

One barrier to women’s mentoring is that there are too few women available to mentor other women. Three of the women in this current study, 30 per cent,

reported that they did not have mentors. Mentoring is an opportunity for career advancement. Ballanger (2010) posited that mentoring can develop either in a structured environment or can be a result of spontaneous relationships. Mentoring is an invaluable resource for the recruitment and preparation of women for the leadership positions. Research confirmed that women with outstanding credentials can find it difficult to rise for upper leadership positions without having been vouched for by powerful individuals in leadership positions (Odhiambo, 2011). The university positions of Chancellor, Vice chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor are dominated by men and, as a result, men have more opportunity to have access to sponsorships and promotions, whereas women may be excluded from these types of connections. Mentorship can help women to overcome these obstacles and to break the glass ceiling.

The “good old boy network” was also found to serve as a barrier to women’s career aspirations.

The good boy network is aligned with Ballanger’s (2010) concept of similarity attraction. They found that most men managers tended to sponsor other men because they were attracted to and tended to prefer those similar to themselves. The women in this current study confirmed this.

One woman stated, “The good old boy club is a limited circle where decisions on persons and positions are made. Another woman reported, “This is a very male-dominated society. Many of the men go to lunch together and share information that the females are not exposed to until after the fact.” Yet another woman confirmed the concept of similar attraction that explains the good boy network by stating, “The good old boy networks are not welcoming and/or inviting to women, e.g., going out for drinks, golfing, watching football, etc.” Furthermore, this woman noted, “I don’t play golf or watch football and don’t intend to do so.” Overall, the majority of the women in this study felt the lack of mentors and lack of support for women with family responsibilities clearly served as cultural and structural barriers in their career aspirations for upper leadership positions.

However, participants noted that mentorship can help aspiring female leaders to replace those who are approaching retirement. It is crucial that women help others to understand obstacles and show appreciation for each other by realising women’s resources, strengths, and skills. Consequently, a need exists for women to encourage others and move forward by building on existing success. One woman remarks, “Preparation for higher administration positions usually does not happen accidentally”. It is observed that women administrators in higher education who had several mentors found their experience valuable in facilitating

their movement up the career ladder. Mentoring increased their visibility among those who were in leadership roles and also met a variety of their needs. Women not only benefited from having several mentors but also from having different types of mentoring relationships. Diverse mentoring relationships can address women's psychosocial, career, and personal development needs. Psychosocial mentors can enhance mentees' self-confidence and provide emotional support. Career-related mentors can provide career advice and mentees exposure and visibility; whereas, peer mentors can offer collegiality, friendship, and emotional support.

In summary, the women in this study agreed that mentoring and being mentored are career development activities that help women to advance up the academic administrative ladder.

Documenting the significance of the relationship between women mentoring activities and academic career development is an important element in this endeavor. Female and male mentors can perform excellent mentoring roles. Mentorship activities identified by the women in this study were: sponsorships, coaches, counselling, role-modeling, and friendship. A barrier to women's mentoring revealed that too few women were available to mentor other women. These results suggested that mentorship plays a critical role in advancing females up the administrative ladder (Ballenger 2010).

In conclusion, we note that while studying the personal narratives of women leaders there are important factors to consider. They include: (1) whether women possess unique qualities that are desirable in the new university challenge. It is noted that although there are perceived differences in leadership styles between women and men, drawing a circle around difficulties specific to women's advancement is impossible because as some writers put it: "men and women's professional development goals and needs are more alike than different"; (2) the issues of a woman's career path is important as it reveals the numerous ways in which individuals face either encouragement or skepticism in their places of work. Few universities treat academic staff as human resources to be retained and developed, thus a framework is often lacking for improving their professional development in general; and (3) mentoring provides the needed experience for women aspiring to become leaders although it can also be argued that rather than seeing the women as requiring remedial support, it is the organisations that require transformational change. It is therefore concluded that the paucity of research on leadership development and executive election in academia means that a framework is also lacking for understanding how best to improve women's leadership development. But these complexities need not deter academic societies from further work to increase the number of women. Below are some suggestions:

## Overall Conclusions and the Proposed Strategies to Increase Women in Leadership Positions in Ugandan Public Universities

### **Overarching Conclusions**

The conclusions summarised here emerge from the data presented right from the arguments concerning women and accessing higher education and the analysis of their access to positions of leadership in the public universities. Emphasis is also put on the different academics who speak about their experiences in leadership and the ways in which universities can build gender balanced leadership cultures.

### ***Women Accessing Higher Education***

Women's participation in higher education has significantly increased. In the current global context where universities are struggling to produce new and relevant knowledge in the 21st century, women have continued and have been supported in several ways to display their commitment to education. Increasingly, women have continued to regard it as a route to personal and collective liberation and empowerment. They have embraced modern public universities with dedication and enthusiasm, attending them as learners, and serving them as scholars and researchers, teachers and administrators, not to mention the preponderance of women in the various welfare, catering, health, cleaning and other support services that are so crucial for the daily operation of universities (Mama 2006). For

instance, regarding students' admissions, Makerere University is noted to have a growth enrolment of females of 55 per cent in the humanities and social sciences. This is a dramatic increase compared to merely 23 per cent ten years ago. In Gulu University, it was noted that the number of female staff joining as teaching assistants is increasing while that of males is decreasing.

It is widely recognised that universities play a key role in shaping society and building active citizens; and that many people who take up powerful roles in a society have a background in higher education. This implies that a gender equal higher education also has a huge long term impact on the gender equality within the society and in the world of work. However, Literature reviewed on Ugandan universities shows that today's situation is far from equal participation of females and males in the different stages of a university career. The distribution of power and financial resources is not the same for females and males. This includes their personal benefits that result from education. For instance, in Uganda, only 14 per cent of women are in formal employment and that women earn only 60 per cent of the total earning of males nationally. Thus universities indeed need to fight for a gender equal environment that preserves equal chances for both women and men.

### *Women in University Leadership*

In examining data on women in leadership in the universities studied, we note that in seeking to increase their roles in leadership is going to be an uphill task. First, of the four universities explored, only ten women suited the criteria that we had prior developed. In all the cases studied, leadership qualities and potential are still tied to academic progression. For instance, to become a head of department, one needs to be at least at the rank of Senior Lecturer; and for a Director or Dean one must have progressed at least up to the rank of Associate Professor. This has a number of dimensions. First, as feminist who write on organisational theory say, leadership is one of those ideas that are considered self-evident and are hardly in need of explanation or deconstruction. "... Leadership is like the Abominable Snowman whose foot prints are everywhere but who is nowhere to be seen" (Batliwala, 2010:4). She further asserts that "if we can not define and deconstruct leadership then we have no way of assessing the value or efficacy of the leadership development interventions which we seek" (ibid, 2010:5).

Women's leadership development efforts challenge us to re-examine the data on the growth trends for past years in academic universities. In the universities studies it was clearly acknowledged that academic universities need all the leaders it can (both females and males) develop to address accelerating institutional and



societal needs. Exclusion of women was often seen as a waste of most women's potential and this feeling was of growing importance especially among feminist scholars. The stories told revealed that only those universities that are able to recruit and retain women will be likely to maintain the best academic and non-academic staff. They also indicated that the long-term success of their academic centers was inextricably linked to the development of women leaders. There was thus need for long and sustained commitment to improving the representation of women in senior positions specifically, and throughout the organisation generally. So far, we can conclude that the progress achieved is inadequate. In so doing, we can on one hand draw on the theory and practice that underpins organisational cultural change and on strategic planning principles and practice; and on the other revisit the very notions that constitute leadership or leadership qualities. In regard to these two observations, Sirlatha Batliwala (2010); Karen O'Connor (2010); and Heather Lysa (2012) note that there is a great urgency to go beyond the ubiquitous assumptions that strong, coherent leadership – and strong competent individual leaders – will inevitably strengthen and enhance the impact of social and cultural change in organisations. This is particularly important in their analyses since their concern is not merely about capacitating more women to women to play leadership roles, but to lead differently with feminist values and ideology, and to advance the agenda of feminist social transformation in a way that other forms of leadership do not and can not. Such clarity would enable us to build feminist leadership capacity in non-feminist women and men.

Further, a number of universities examined did not treat academic staff as human resources to be retained and developed, thus a framework was often lacking for improving their professional development in general and in particular, women's leadership capacities. To note, mentoring provides the needed experience for women aspiring to become leaders although it can also be argued that rather than seeing the women as requiring remedial support, it is the organisations that require transformational change. It is, therefore, concluded that the paucity of research on leadership development and executive election in academia means that a framework is also lacking for understanding how best to improve women's leadership development. But these complexities need not deter academic societies from further work to increase the number of women.

### *Challenges to Women's Access to Leadership Positions*

A number of challenges were noted to affect not only academic members of staff but also other employees and students at large. From gendered disciplinary choices

which often see women missing from science, technology and mathematics to gendered learning and working environments, discrimination occurs in the most subtle ways for all the categories of staff. Socio-cultural factors such as the emphasis on marriage and fertility as more important indicators of women's social value success than educational attainment; the devaluation and disempowerment of academic women through lack of investment in them; gender violence taking the form of sexual harassment, or transactional sex (sex for grades) and social exclusion; lack of structural interventions to provide information and support for women to enter leadership; and lack of awareness of gendered dimensions within universities.

However, some of the enablers that have been identified include: an integrated and sustainable approach to gender interventions throughout the educational sector; strong national and international policy contexts for gender equality; community initiatives and coalitions between the home, school/university and non-governmental organisations e.g. outreach programmes; girl-child education and international funding schemes e.g. the Master Card and Carnegie Corporation of New York's scholarship programmes and curriculum transformation including the introduction of women's and gender studies.

In conclusion, the data presented on the extent of gender disparities shows that seeking to increase their roles in leadership is going to be an uphill task as men greatly outnumber women in all top positions. The structural ideologies that prevent women from occupying positions of leadership are still at large. By studying the personal narratives of women leaders, there are important factors to consider as we learn new lessons on the way forward. They include: (1) the conclusion that correlation between women's leadership styles and characteristics and those which organisations need to face the challenges of the new globalised context has not to date translated into an advantage either for the universities or in terms of the position of women in them. Women have certain unique soft traits for the work place with great potential for impact on organisational success and they are outperforming men in particular instances, but these are not in tandem with the feminist leadership principles and lack the ideological value to make them stand the test of time. those women who are explicit with their unique feminine styles are labelled as disastrous and are shunned; (2) the issues of a woman's career path is important as it reveals the numerous ways in which individuals face either encouragement or skepticism in their places of work; and (3) mentoring provides the needed experience for women aspiring to become leaders although it can also be argued that rather than seeing the women as requiring remedial support, it is the organisations that require transformational change.

## **Building on the Strategies to Increase Women in Public Universities' Leadership**

Many of these suggestions have been tried elsewhere in the world with far-reaching successes. The suggestions are only indicative of the need to transform universities by applying the practice that underpins organisational cultural change and on strategic planning principles and practice. This can be achieved on several fronts: (i) affirmative action programmes; (ii) senior women academic task groups (iii) the Colloquium of Senior Women Managers (iv) university women networks; (v) Interrogate gender, power and organisational change; (vi) organisational cultural change; (vii) strategic planning and reporting mechanisms; and (viii) gender fair education. These themes emerged from the narratives given to us by the study participants.

### ***Constant Re-vision and Evaluation of Affirmative Action Programmes***

Uganda has got an active Affirmative Action programme which has been the forerunner to the increased number of females enrolling in universities. The constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for the recognition of gender equality as well as equality of persons and outlaws all forms of discrimination including that based on sex. Objective VI of the constitution requires the state to ensure gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups on all constitutional and other bodies. It further obligates the State to take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of historical prejudices, socio-cultural negative attitudes and practices. Article 33 elaborates the rights of women, including their right to dignity and realisation of their full potential and advancement. The National Gender Policy of 1997 as well as the National Action plan on Women support the mainstreaming of gender in the national development process. On its part, Makerere University developed a Gender Mainstreaming programme and instituted the Gender Mainstreaming Division (GMD) in 2000 and 2002, respectively. The GMD has the responsibility for mainstreaming gender into all faculties, departments, and organs of the University, a task that is currently hampered without the backing of a comprehensive Gender Equality Policy<sup>14</sup>.

A combination of wise appointments to key roles have in the past been seen to augment subsequent and ongoing policy changes and programs initiated to address inequities, but this is no longer the case. For instance, in Makerere, affirmative action that guaranteed a position for a deputy Vice Chancellor was scrapped. The same almost happened in Mbarara University where the faculty of Development Studies came under threat and yet it was the only available avenue to bring in women to the top leadership.

However sustainability of affirmative action can be undertaken with the expectation that managers will be accountable for achievement of equity goals and the gradual but persistent growth of an organisational culture which not only supports but encourages women's equality and thus professional growth. Makerere University had made strides when it introduced the position of Deputy Vice Chancellor, but barely five years later, the decision was reversed. A designated role for women can be attached to a senior executive role, and also to a person who has considerable knowledge and expertise in the area of gender and organisational development. This portfolio has the capacity to gradually influence systems and procedures to allow for equity issues. A University Gender Equality and Equity Committee can be established, including the Affirmative Action committee. Public Universities can use this to access government funding and supported by the respective Universities.

### ***Revive Women in Senior Academic Positions Task Groups***

The stories told by the women leaders revealed a framework that Stroud (2009) theorises as Leading to Transgress. Leading to Transgress is a theory of leadership that is a multiracial, multicultural identified, gender-influenced framework informed by leaders who are a "part of, or situated closely to, the masses of marginalised people and whose primary purpose is to influence the allocation of resources in a way that breaks down or transgresses existing systems of power and privilege in the pursuit of social justice". Feminists have recommended that women leaders should have a feminist perspective and a vision of social justice, individually and collectively. They should have the ability to transform themselves to use their power, resources and skills in a non-oppressive way, employing inclusive structures and processes to mobilise others, especially fellow women around a shared agenda of social, cultural, economic and political transformation for equality and the realisation of human rights for all.

A solution is for academic women to challenge these hierarchical relations. Some writers (O'Connor 2000, pp. 3–7; O'Connor, 2010) suggest a range of 'resistance' strategies that include: keeping your head down; creating or maintaining a 'separate world'; challenging the (socially created) opposition between work and family; passing on the challenge to the next generation; tackling the 'enemy' within; naming aspects of organisational culture that are not 'woman friendly'; and exposing aspects of gendered career structures. In the context of Ugandan universities, starting point would be to re-invigorate the Association of University Women to bring senior academic women together. These can be constituted into a task group to identify and lobby for required changes. The strategies would

include redefining an elitist and intransigent management culture. They can also oversee the implementation of the affirmative action programmes and other gender equity measures. The task group can discuss ways in which women might be attracted to vacancies and retained in senior positions.

### ***The Colloquium of Senior Women Managers in Higher Education***

The women's executive development programmes are initiatives mostly applied by universities in Australia, Canada and United States of America. Such programmes may operate across the nation geographically and/or institutionally. The colloquium across all universities in Uganda as a unified national system may also be a consortium of like institutions which are located in far corners of the continent (for instance the Gender Studies network). These initiatives have already attracted international attention for their achievements and potential and in this case Ugandan universities all stand to benefit from these initiatives.

### ***Universities Should Plan for Networks for Women in Universities***

To date, there are a number of existing networks, which include the globally known Association of University Women. Makerere University has for a long term been running the Ugandan chapter. In the past, it was better resourced and was the centre of attraction and induction for young females joining university as staff or students. An earlier emphasis on formal and informal mentoring programmes to counteract the barriers to women's advancement has now been overtaken by an increasing focus on the establishment and operation of networks. While the opportunity to develop networks was initially seen as an ancillary, albeit noteworthy, benefit of mentoring programmes, in universities as in other forms of organisations, increasing attention is being given to the significance of informal networks and channels of communication per se in terms of gender employment equity.

Participants affirmed that such networks offer opportunities for non-hierarchical mentoring between peers. Further, it was noted that the developmental relationships which are made possible by and thrive in the context of such networks are more likely to be two-way and mutually beneficial, and therefore more attractive to and effective between women, than the more traditional and hierarchical mentoring relationships which are the focus of much of the literature on mentoring. An examination of a range of networks for women in universities such as in Australia and South Africa reveals that there is considerable experience in establishing and maintaining regional and national women's networks. Based

on such experience, Ugandan universities can gain from building networks across the region like the one between Makerere

(Uganda) University of Ethiopia and Afhad Women is University in Khartoum.<sup>15</sup> It is relevant to note that by far, the most significant and successful strategies to achieve greater gender employment equity for women in Australian universities have both been based on the establishment of networks of senior or near senior women.

These networks must be recognised within the university's priority activities and programmes and be resourced well enough to make meaningful influence.

### ***Interrogate gender, Power and Organisational change***

Over the past years there have been several experiments to building alternative organizational forms and leadership practices. However there needs to be deeper interrogation and theorization in light of the far deeper understanding of power and organizational behavior. This can be put on the priority lists on the university's research agenda.

### ***Organisational Cultural Change***

The strategies described above can serve as a key instrument to a positive organisational culture change. For instance, the task group on senior academic women can serve several targeted purposes. One of them could be to enhance the effectiveness of search committees to attract women candidates, including assessment of group process and of how candidates' qualifications are defined and evaluated. The colloquium of women managers can commit to, for example, assessing which institutional practices tend to favour men's over women's professional development, such as defining "academic success" as largely an independent act and rewarding unrestricted availability to work (i.e. neglect of personal life). It is hoped that such strategies can eventually take on culture and slowly transform it from within.

### ***Target Strategic Planning and Reporting Mechanisms***

As a strategy, targeting strategic planning and reporting functions of universities can lead to eventual transformation of the organisational cultures. Universities can plan to have an "***Equal Employment Opportunity Plan***" and also develop diversity management programmes (such as the School of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University). Other strategic actions would include the deliberate emphasising sex and gender differences in departmental reviews, and

evaluating managerial compositions as well as setting up and planning for the career development of women staff. More deliberate action would be to target women's professional development needs within the context of helping all staff to maximise their chances for appointments. Also, plans and budgets could include deliberate actions for helping men become more effective mentors of women.

Financial support to institutional advancement of women's agenda in University programmes and the University Women Association can be another important landmark. This can be accompanied by regularly monitoring the representation of women at senior ranks. By embedding a focus on gender equality as a strategic priority in its planning and reporting processes, universities can draw on the theory and practice that underpins organisational cultural change and on strategic planning principles and practice. Through this process, many universities in the Australia, for instance, have achieved an improvement in the percentage of women at all levels of the organisation, and most notably in the ranks of senior academics.

Other things can also happen at the same time, for example, the inclusion of equity targets in relation to women so that they become part of the key performance indicators (KPIs) for the revision of academic staffing policies.

### *Gender-fair Education*

This involves a fundamental change in the culture of higher education management so that women can flourish in higher education and in turn can help the system to flourish. The mechanism suggested for this transformation is gender equality management programmes, which could be an effective strategy to impact on the heavily male value system of the modern university. The government of Uganda has already begun this journey. Females have an additional 1.5 points for those who qualify to join university. This has seen dramatic increases of females in all courses. In addition, there is support to assist well-performing females to complete their courses through provision of scholarships. This is a direct effort to assist in meeting the expenses of higher education for the rural economically disadvantaged population through scholarships and access using the district quotas.

It is imperative that such efforts towards achieving full integration of women within the democratic and developmental efforts of the country should be accompanied with curricular reforms. These reforms should include compulsory exposure to, and engagement with different kinds of work in the form of part-time jobs and/or internships, according to the circumstances and needs to increase the employability of females.

Some major instruments of gender-fair education are affirmative action and quota systems, aggressive recruitment of female academic staff and administrators, reform programmes to remove bias from curricula and teaching materials, gender-sensitivity training for teachers and counsellors, a review of policies and procedures for possible gender bias, and active recruitment of women into non-traditional fields of study.



# Notes

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1. Ranks matter so much in universities. For instance to become part of the Senate (the highest policy debating and advisory organ) or the Vice Chancellor or Chancellor (highest managerial jobs) one must be at the rank of Professor or Associate Professor utmost.
2. Not only has women's progress been slow and restricted primarily to men, those who have progressed have often done so by assimilating, however uncomfortably, into the predominantly male organizations. The organizations themselves have changed little, and women who ascend to top positions tend to be relatively disempowered (Mama, 2012; Mama, 2009; Mama, 2006).
3. See Nyantakyiwa, Adwoa, 2014; Margaret Madden, 2011; Bagilhole, B. and White, K. (eds) (2011); Edwards Melero, 2004; and Eagly, A; Johannesen-Schmidt, M.C., & Van Engen, M. (2003).
4. And words commonly associated with women's leadership in universities include co-operative, team oriented, collaborative, fair, and contextual, compared with those associated with men's as competitive, hierarchical, winning, rational, cold, and principled.
5. Gulu University Strategic Plan, 2004/5-2008/9
6. Gulu University, Strategic Plan 2009/10-2018/19
7. No gender disaggregated data.
8. The pioneer initiative in Uganda
9. It's a common practice in all institutions as a measure for keeping alert of terrorist attacks.
10. Sheila Nduhukire is the first female Guild President at MUST.
11. Nyantakyiwa and Adwoa, 2014: *leadership styles practised by females in leadership positions in the university of cape coast*; See Kate White, 2003: *Women and leadership in higher education in Australia*; see also Eleanor Ramsay, 2000: *Women and Leadership in Higher Education: Facing International Challenges and Maximising Opportunities*;
12. Leadership has been classified as an all-consuming activity, generating an uncontrollable commotion of workplace demands. Devine *et al.* (2011) claimed that there is an assumption of 24/7 availability of leaders. Fitzgerald (2011) noted how leadership is exhausting, with unrelenting bureaucratic demands and institutional pressures.

13. Some of the structural barriers included the recruitment system that is in part discriminatory, the promotion criteria is indifferent to demands of women academic staff, the understanding of leadership to be based on underlying masculine characteristics, etc. Cultural issues were related to factors such as the “boys club” phenomenon, the language and environment of exclusion and the culture of tokenism. See Mulyampiti and Kanabahita, 2013.
14. This commitment is demonstrated by institutionalization of affirmative action in the Makerere University’s admission processes (1990) and the establishment of two institutional mechanisms: the Department of Women and Gender Studies (1990/91), an academic unit; and the Gender Mainstreaming Division (GMD 2002), an administrative unit. Prior to the institution of the GMD as a unit, the University Senate and Council had approved the Gender Mainstreaming Programme (GMP) in 2001/2002. Further, in the seven-year University Strategic Plan: 2000/01-2006/07, Gender Mainstreaming was ranked among the six strategic priorities of Makerere University.
15. This network that is supported by the government of Norway does not make evaluative analyses of the impact and their effectiveness both in counteracting the factors which prevent women from advancing to more senior levels of employment in the universities and in enhancing their leadership effectiveness and impact.

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