REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

AFRICAN UNION-
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN
EDUCATION IN AFRICA (AU/CIEFFA)

JULY 2015-DECEMBER 2015
Introduction

The African Union - International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) is a specialized institution of the African Union since 2004, dealing with women and girls’ education following Decision Assembly/AU/DEC.44 (III). The centre is located in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

AU/CIEFFA has been established under the Department of Human Resources Science and Technology at the African Union Commission to coordinate the promotion of girls and women’s education in Africa, with a view of achieving their economic, social and cultural empowerment.

The centre works closely with AU member States and government, civil society and international partners to implement its programme and activities and maintains specific working relationship with UNESCO to ensure a strong partnership in the implementation of its programs.

This report outlines the activities undertaken by AU/CIEFFA since July 2015 until December 2015; it comprises two main parts:

1. Operationalization of AU/CIEFFA
2. Activities addressing AU/CIEFFA’s mandate

1. Operationalization of AU/CIEFFA

1.1 Legal status of AU/CIEFFA

There are on-going discussions between AUC and UNESCO on the double status of AU/CIEFFA as an AU institution and a UNESCO Category 2 Centre.

UNESCO is concerned about this double status and has proposed to remove the status of Category 2 UNESCO of AU/CIEFFA and sign a special MOU with AU/CIEFFA. This proposition will be further discussed.

1.2 Staffing of AU/CIEFFA

The shortlisting for the positions of the Policy officer -ICT & Documentation (P2) and Senior Policy Officer (P3) have already been conducted. There were over 700 applicants for both positions. The interviews for the position of Policy officer -ICT & Documentation have also taken place. The Administration and Finance Officer was recruited in June 2014, but due to budgetary constraints, he has not assumed duty yet. We expect to have him on board in second quarter of 2016.

A program assistant has also been recruited to facilitate the implementation of activities of AU/CIEFFA.
The local staff currently in the Ouagadougou office consists of twelve persons, both professional and General Service officers. They are seconded from the host country and we look forward to engaging with them on their conditions of services.

1.3 Budget

The operational budget for 2016 was approved by the Heads of State and Government during the July 2015 Summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa to the tune of $735,000. Funds have also been mobilized for program implementation both from AU member states and also Norway and USAID which are our main partners.

2. Programme activities

During this period from July 2015 to December 2015, the following activities were undertaken by the Coordinator as well as the staff in the Ouagadougou office:

2.1 Resource mobilization and collaboration with partners

The Coordinator has held meetings with partners for mobilization of funds for the implementation of activities proposed in the AU/CIEFFA Strategic Plan. These partners include, USAID, Norway, Canada and the African Development Bank.

The following concept papers were submitted to partners to request funding:

a. Empowering girls and women: keeping girls in schools
b. Ensuring rights of girls in schools and universities
c. Gender-based curricula in Higher Education

2.2 UNESCO/AU CIEFFA -Case studies on girls’ education and inclusive education in Africa

AU/CIEFFA in collaboration with UNESCO has prepared in-depth case studies of five countries providing education to diverse groups of learners, with special emphasis on girls’ education in the five geo-political regions of the continent. Choices of Member States to be involved in these case studies were made by RECs based on certain specific criteria.

These five case studies have been compiled as one synthesis report with a cross-national approach and comparing the five countries so as to highlight the good practices and lessons to be learnt. This synthesis report will be published early 2016.
2.3 Capacity-building workshop on clarifying Gender and Education

This capacity-building workshop on clarifying Gender and Education for AU/CIEFFA Focal points, Member States and RECs was held in December 2015 and was funded by the European Union. The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

i. Understand the impact that a learner’s gender has on the construction of his/her knowledge

ii. Outline students’ constructions of gender influence and their social interactions with peers and adults/teachers

iii. Identify equitable strategies that prepare teachers to be sensitive to issues of gender equity

The report of this capacity-building is attached in Appendix A.

2.4 Meetings attended by the AU/CIEFFA Coordinator

The AU/CIEFFA Coordinator attended the following meetings:

2.4.1 UNESCO Seminar on gender equality, Beijing.

The outcomes of this meeting were:

i. Need to develop relevant and adequate strategies to ensure retention of girls in schools

ii. Develop relevant and measurable indicators for gender equality

iii. Strengthen implementation of legislation in Member States concerning gender-based violence

iv. Advocate for coherence between national policy guidelines and teacher training programmes

v. Reinforce implementation of African Teacher mobility protocol

vi. Promote concept of gender equality and non-violence in school curricula

2.4.2 UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) Meeting, Nov. 2015, Bamako, Mali

The outcomes of this meeting were:

i. Identify specific implementable actions at country, regional and global levels to improve girls’ and women’s education

ii. Design a measurement framework for gender equality in education and pilot testing in selected member states

iii. Support for gender-responsive sector analysis and planning with tools, policy, advocacy and country facilitation for Member States
iv. Set up a technical platform of partners with AU/CIEFFA as lead partner and FAWE to co-lead with the aim of developing an implementation strategy in line with gender equality and sensitivity pillar in the Continental Education Strategy of Education(2016-2024)

2.4.3 UNESCO General Conference, Paris, November 2015

The outcomes of the meeting were:

i. **Education in the post-2015 agenda**
   a. Need for AUC to be part of the process of building this global convention on Higher Education and ensure its complementarity with African regional frameworks
   b. AUC/HRST has to take a leadership role in the implementation of the 2030 Education Agenda in view of contributing towards SDG 4

ii. **Case studies on girls education/inclusive education**
   a. Recommendations emanating from case studies to be used for policies and decision-making at both regional and continental levels
   b. Be part of the community of practice on Inclusive Education/Girls Education

iii. **Girls and women Education**
   a. Ensure that AU/CIEFFA is part of UNESCO’s Global Partnership for Girls and Women’s education
   b. Promote and reinforce teaching and learning of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) sensitive to gender equality

iv. **Strengthened cooperation**
   a. Ensure that there is harmonization of activities among UNESCO cluster and country offices and AU/CIEFFA in the area of girls and women’s education

v. **Legal status of AU/CIEFFA**
   a. Need to clear the legal status of AU/CIEFFA
   b. AU/CIEFFA cannot be both a UNESCO Category 2 institution and an AU institution

2.5 Advocacy and communication resources

The Strategic Plan for AU/CIEFFA (2015-2017) has been translated in the four AU languages; Arabic, French and Portuguese. Brochures, pamphlets and the AU/CIEFFA Strategic Plan have been printed.
2.6 Activities carried out by staff in Ouagadougou Office

The officers have attended meetings at the national level with different Ministries such as Education and Health and also with Civil society such as Peace Corps, FAWE Burkina, Dia- konia.

The national Coordinator also attended the following three international meetings:

a. International conference on the culture of Peace, Angola September 2015

The aim of this meeting was to apprise participants on the concept of culture of peace as well as models of preventing and resolving conflicts.

b. UNESCO General Conference, Paris, 2015

The national coordinator attended the UNESCO Education commission which dealt with the leadership role of UNESCO, the youth forum, preparations for the harmonization and recognition of qualifications at higher education.


The national coordinator of AU/CIEFFA attended this workshop on the clarification of gender and education interplay and was one of the rapporteurs of this workshop.
APPENDIX A

AFRICAN UNION

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Report

AU/CIEFFA’s workshop on Clarifying Gender and Education Interplay

Addis Ababa,

14-16 December, 2015
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1.0 Introduction

On 14-16 December 2015 the African Union- International Centre for the Girls and Women’s Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), a specialized institution of the African Union, convened a workshop on Clarifying Gender and Education Interplay which specifically targeted policymakers and practitioners in the African ministries of education (MoEs) and the regional and economic communities (RECs) as participants. The meeting brought together more than 20 participants from 14 countries and 2 RECs as well as two international facilitators.

Dr. Rita Bissoonauth, Coordinator of the AU/CIEFFA, delivered the opening address on behalf of the Acting Director of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST). She thanked all the participants for coming to this workshop and outlined the mission and the objectives of AU/CIEFFA. She also underscored the activities that the centre would be working on in 2016-2017, which were featured in the AU/CIEFFA’S Strategic Plan.

The representative of the office of the President of the Commission of the African Union, Ambassador Febe, provided a keynote speech in which she explained the vision of Agenda 2063. She indicated that the Agenda covers all areas of development to ensure that future generations will have a better life in terms of health and education. The major challenge is the quality of education, particularly through the development of human resources in mathematics, Science and Technology. She concluded by underlining the importance of socialization of the African child and respect for his/her rights and wished success for the workshop which she said was a contribution towards achieving Agenda 2063.

2.0 Objectives and expected outcomes of the workshop

The main objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of the participants to develop a better understanding of the interplay of gender dynamics in the educational system in order to formulate and implement relevant gender-sensitive policies and programs. Gender is indeed an ambiguous and misused term as it refers to socially constructed relationships between men and women. It is therefore very important that education policymakers and practitioners need to understand how learners are assigned gender roles by themselves, peers and teachers. Since gender is a socially constructed conception, it influences and impacts any social setting. As a result, organizations and institutions such as schools, colleges and universities are socially constructed entities and as such they bring into the teaching and learning process biases and stereotypes that are detrimental to girls and women as learners.

Another important objective of the workshop is to revisit CIEFFA’s strategic and organizational setup as the Center has just developed a new Mid-term Strategic Plan (MSTP) and it was fitting that the workshop would serve as an opportunity to renew the network of focal points and bring the current and potential members up-to-date on the strategic
orientations of the Center. AU/CIEFFA will need to rely on a vibrant network of focal points to deliver its mandate.

More specifically, the workshop sought to achieve the following objectives by ensuring that the participants:

i. understand the impact that a learner’s gender has on the construction of his/her knowledge;

ii. comprehend how students’ constructions of gender influence their social interactions with peers and adults/teachers

iii. Identify gender-responsive policies, strategies and programs capable of making students, teachers, school administrators and leaders change agents that are a sensitive to issues of gender equity at all levels.

With regard to the expectations, the workshop aimed at achieving four main outcomes:

1. That participants acquire a better understanding of gender concepts and their educational and policy implications

2. That they are able to analyze basic gender concepts and their implications for teaching and learning and use them in identifying the best equitable teaching strategies suited to their own contexts as well as

3. That they acquire competencies on how to review their teaching and learning resources in order to make them gender-sensitive.

4. That they understand the need for partnership frameworks in creating conducive gender-responsive learning environments both at the classroom, school and the school’s immediate levels.

### 3.0 Structure of the Workshop and proceedings

The three-day workshop was organized as follows:

#### 3.1 Day 1

The day was divided into two parts: a seminar and a workshop. The seminar part consisted of analyzing the concept of gender and its implications for educational policies and practices. Important facts (statistics) on gender, the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Africa and Education for All (EFA) in Africa were presented, analyzed and discussed. The participants were involved in activities consisting of deconstructing gender in its many dimensions and relating them to educational and policy issues that are specific to their contexts in terms of achievements and challenges.

Another activity consisted of bringing the participants to underscore key gender issues in Africa and the specific educational challenges that arise as a result. This was achieved by
presentations on gender integration in education and development and more particularly by sharing the work carried out by the African Development Bank (AfDB) through its Agenda for Action in empowering African women. AfDB has developed an index called the Africa Gender Equality Index which is measured every year and all the 54 African countries are ranked on their achievements in meeting the three dimensions of the Index: equality in economic opportunities, equality in human development and equality in law and institutions.

At the end of the seminar part, the participants indicated that there was indeed need for: review of existing policies, more advocacy through evidence-based policy dialogue.

The day ended with a small-group session in which the participants were actively involved in analyzing gender bias in learning and teaching materials (textbooks). The recommendations that came out of the activity are for African countries:

1. To formulate, strengthen textbook policies by integrating the gender dimension,
2. To train actors in charge of developing textbooks for them to factor in the gender dimension,
3. To set up a monitoring mechanism for textbooks at all levels, as well as to define evaluation criteria for learning and teaching materials.

All the member states present confirmed that their teaching and learning resources would be revised following this workshop and would henceforth integrate gender-sensitive components.

3.2 Day 2

Day 2 consisted of two small group sessions related to the creation of conducive learning environments at the classroom level and through partnerships that are necessary within the school and with the community in which the school exists.

At the end of the two sessions, participants recommended that African countries should promote gender sensitive classroom practices in order to address the issue of gender bias at the expense of the girl learner. Among the strategies proposed to achieve this end the following were proposed: re-training teachers and introducing gender responsive pedagogy at the pre and in-service levels; training of administrative and education staff on gender; developing curriculum delivery guidelines, gender policy briefs to sensitize policy makers and program implementers, development of regional gender policies and the reflection of gender education dimension in non-formal settings.

With regard to partnerships, it was recommended that partnerships at the school and community levels be strengthened and capacitated using local resources. Partnerships at the level of government institutions and bilateral and multilateral development agencies should recognize the local partnerships and support them. Governments should adopt more and
more gender-responsive budgeting and enact laws to bring about more gender equality and equity at the national level.

3.3 Day 3
It consisted of participants working collectively to consolidate the recommendations and develop a concrete action plan and road map for the follow-up to the Workshop. Roles and actions were also assigned to AU/CIEFFA as the continental body in charge of coordinating and facilitating gender and education. A log-frame that spells out the key recommendations, actions the strategies on how to achieve them was developed (see Table 1).

4.0 Closing
The workshop ended with Dr. Bissoonauth who in her closing remarks recalled the main outcomes of the workshop:

1. Member states agreeing to revisit curriculum and learning and teaching resources.
2. CEN-SAD willing to organize meeting for CENSAD member states’ AU focal points (24 countries) on gender and education
3. Updating of CIEFFA focal points
4. Setting up of two Working Groups: (i) on gender education and research (leader: DRC representative form the ministry of higher education) and (ii) on teaching and learning materials (lead: Uganda).