



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

AUC International Conference on Research in African Challenges (ICRAC)

Track G: Combating Poverty through education

SUB-TRACK: GENDER EQUITY AND GIRL'S EDUCATION

Chair: Dr. Malaak Zaalouk, Dr. Ibrahim Karkouti

Co-chair: Dr. N'Dri Thérèse Assié-Lumumba

Although many reform initiatives were launched to bridge the gender gap in higher education classrooms, research indicates that female graduation rates in African universities are still falling short of anticipated goals due to systematic discriminatory policies and practices against minority groups. The purpose of this conference session is to examine the effects of inequity on post-secondary female student persistence and degree attainment. Specifically, it will (a) identify the factors that increase attrition and dropout rates among female students; (b) establish the fundamental link between gender equity, persistence, and post-secondary degree attainment rates; (c) present policies that govern student rights to higher education; and (d) expose gender inequity practices at African colleges and universities. Scholars in the field of higher education are highly encouraged to share their research findings and experiences related to gender equity, persistence, and degree attainment at African post-secondary institutions. Policy briefs that aim at addressing unjust admission and enrolment practices are also relevant. All submissions will be peer-reviewed and complete papers will be considered for publication in the conference proceedings. This session should generate recommendations for practice and future research that aim at expanding educational opportunities for minority groups in Africa and formulating context-specific policies that bridge the gender gap in African educational systems.

The issue of Girl's education within the overall gender equality normative global goal has survived many international calls for governments to commit to education. It has appeared in the Education for All EFA movement, in the Dakar framework for action where The United Nations Girls Education Initiative UNGEI was born, it reemerged in the Millennium Development goals and now has reasserted its importance through the sustainable development goals. The Education 2030 Framework for Action, a tool aimed at helping the international community achieve SDG 4 on education, explicitly recognizes gender equality as a guiding principle linked to the realization of the right to education. It states clearly that girls and boys, women and men, must be equally empowered 'in and through education'. Although goal five is totally devoted to gender equality it is clear that all goals are meant to be interrelated in a framework that supports equity, empowerment and the eradication of poverty. Hence girl's education and women's empowerment are key to the achievement of the goals on health, employment and sustainable development. Moreover it is clear that the poorest quintile of the world population will often coincide with the representation of a compounded profile of a rural girl who is colored, disabled and out of school. Although the world at large has made great progress in decreasing the gender gap in education it still persists in many parts of Africa and at the different levels of education.



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Achieving gender parity and equality is a most complex undertaking. It is not only the business of education nor is it the sole responsibility of governments. It requires concerted efforts from different stakeholders and through a variety of initiatives that reflect the multi-sectoral nature of the problem. It not only looks at the number of enrolled girls but also looks at how they are treated, what role models they might follow, how they are portrayed in curricula and which areas of learning they are guided to. Inequality happens in a context that is political, cultural and economic.

The American University in Cairo all Africa conference to be held in the fall of 2019 with a focus on No poverty will be an excellent opportunity to bring together all those concerned with girls' education and gender equality in the continent. Papers presented are encouraged to offer strong analytical frameworks around the barriers to girls' education as well as offer innovative solutions. Evidence based discussions will be the norm. Moreover good practices from Africa are very welcome touching on a variety of topics including regional initiatives, leadership, policy frameworks, financial approaches, curriculum design, teacher sensitization, school facilities and building, gender audits, gender sensitization, community support, poverty alleviation programs, social protection and more. Papers and sessions should be a good mix of academic analyses as well as policy and practical recommendations while making the links between no poverty and the education of girls evident. Submissions will be peer reviewed and full papers could be considered for publication as an edited book or as a journal special issue

Biographies

Dr. Malak Zaalouk is professor of practice and the director of Graduate School of Educations (GSE) Middle East Institute of Higher Education. Malak has previously served as UNICEF Regional Senior Education Adviser for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). She led the founding of Egyptian community schools and has promoted girls' education and quality education reform and has been a noted global leader on issues of human rights and gender equity. She has published widely on issues of development in both English and Arabic. Malak holds a diploma in educational planning from the International Institute of Educational Planning IIEP in Paris, a PhD in social anthropology from the University of Hull, an MA in sociology from the American University in Cairo, and a BA in political science from The American University in Cairo. Her research interests include political economy of reform and social change, gender, education and development, empowerment, participation and development, liberation education, comparative education, quality education, community participation and education, transitions from school to life.

Dr. Ibrahim Karkouti Ibrahim M. Karkouti is an independent thinker, a young scholar and a life-long learner who recently defended his doctoral dissertation at the University of Hartford, CT - USA. Karkouti holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration from UHART, an Ed.M. in Educational Leadership from Qatar University, and a B.A. in Advertising from the Lebanese International University. Ten years of professional experience have taught him that learning has no boundaries and that education matters the most when it is used to remedy the deleterious effects of segregation, racism, sectarianism and other forms of discriminatory practices that prevent historically excluded populations from attaining their basic rights of education, healthcare and prosperity.

Karkouti's research focuses on (a) diversity issues in higher education, (b) the elements that aid in the facilitation of the use of technology in the classroom and (c) the types of social support K-12 teachers



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need to embrace and implement reform. His work on the importance of diversity in higher education appeared in scholarly journals such as *College Student Journal* and *Education*. In addition, he participated in the local and international conference and was invited for lectures and presentations at the University of Connecticut and Central Connecticut State University.

Previously, Karkouti worked as high school instructor and extra-curricular activities coordinator at a private international school in Doha - Qatar. He has over 10 years of teaching and research experience at K-12 and higher education settings and is looking forward to assuming more leadership roles at the American University in Cairo.

N'Dri Thérèse Assié-Lumumba, who is the President of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES, 2016-2019) and served in 2015-2016 as President of Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), is a Professor of African and Diaspora education, comparative and international education, social institutions, African social history, and the study of gender in the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University. She joined Cornell in 1991 as a Fulbright Senior Research Fellow and Ford Foundation/Africana Studies Fellow. She is a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science. She served as Director of the Cornell Program on Gender and Global Change (GGC) and as Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) of the Africana Studies.

Assié-Lumumba earned her Ph. D. in Comparative Education (Economics and Sociology of Education with Pi Lambda Theta Honors) from the University of Chicago in 1982, two Masters and two BAs (Licence) in Sociology and History, respectively, from Université Lyon II, Lyon (France) between 1973 and 1975.

She has been Visiting Professor in the Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE) at Hiroshima University (Japan) and Distinguished Visiting Professor, American University in Cairo (Egypt). She is Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg (South Africa), Extraordinary Professor in the Education Policy Studies at the Stellenbosch University (South Africa), Diasporan Fellow in the department of Sociology (UG-Carnegie Diaspora Programme) at the University of Ghana, Chercheur Associé at Centre de Recherches Architecturales et Urbaines (CRAU) at Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), and Research Affiliate of the Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance of the University of Houston, Houston (Texas). She is co-founder and Associate Director of the Pan-African Studies and Research Center in International Relations and Education for Development (CEPARRED), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). Prior to coming to Cornell, she was a Resident Fellow in the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in Paris (France), held teaching and administrative positions in the Lomé (Togo) CIRSED doctoral program for researchers and administrators in education for francophone countries, the Ministry of National Education Mali (planning unit), Bard College and Vassar College (New York, USA).

Assié-Lumumba has published extensively articles in refereed journals, chapters in books and peer-reviewed reports. Her article "Educational and Economic Reforms, Gender Equity, and Access to Schooling in Africa" published in the International Journal of Comparative Sociology, received the 2001 Joyce Cain Award for Distinguished Research on African Descendants offered by the Comparative and International Education Society. She serves on editorial committees of prestigious journals. Her monographs, edited and co-edited books include: *Les Africaines dans la politique: Femmes Baoulé de Côte d'Ivoire* (L'Harmattan, Paris 1996); *African Voices in Education* (Juta Publishers, Lansdowne, South Africa 2000); *Cyberspace, Distance Learning, and Higher Education in Developing Countries: Old and*



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Emergent Issues of Access, Pedagogy and Knowledge Production (Brill, Leiden and Boston 2004); Higher Education in Africa: Crises, Reforms and Transformation (CODESRIA, Dakar 2006) and African Higher Education in Transition: Recurrent Impediments, Emerging Challenges and New Potentialities (CODESRIA, Dakar, Forthcoming).