



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO and Gender Equality in Sub-Saharan Africa



Innovative
programmes,
visible results

UNESCO AND GENDER EQUALITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Innovative programmes, visible results

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FOREWORD

“Women are leading change in small ways that matter for their societies and communities – advancing quality education and access to health care, fighting for rights, struggling for full participation in political life, promoting peace, reconciliation and development¹”. This is also the vision shared by the 2063 Agenda of the African Union aimed at “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, an Africa driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”: this Vision of the African Union² (AU) is very much in tune with which the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Africa. Agenda 2063 was approved at the Golden Jubilee Summit of the African Union in May 2013 and adopted on 31 January 2015 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). Taking account of past achievements and challenges as well as the continental and global context, the transformation expected of the continent will be clearly people-centred and based on gender equality. Agenda 2063 aims to translate this Vision into an action plan to optimize use of Africa’s resources for all African men and women. This, in a nutshell, is the AU’s gender policy. It is explained by the gender disparity noted in a number of key development sectors such as politics, the economy, trade, agriculture, health and education.

Following the example of other UN agencies, AU and UNESCO pledges on gender equality in Africa are premised on international and regional instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the

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- 1 Mrs Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO on the occasion of the 50th celebration of the creation of the Pan African Women Organization (PAWO), 15th November 2012, UNESCO.
 - 2 AU Commission, May 2014, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, draft document, AU Commission, p. 10.

Rights of Women in Africa.³ More specifically, UNESCO has produced a Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021.⁴ This plan offers an operational framework for implementing this priority in UNESCO's five major programmes (education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, communication and information), each with a specific remit, which can work together holistically to promote gender equality through an original approach to implementing development goals.⁵

This study, initiated by the Africa Department in collaboration with the Division for Gender Equality, highlights UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, mainly through the Organization's two global priorities of Africa and gender equality, which it has been seeking to bring into the mainstream and give a higher profile. For over twenty years, UNESCO's work in Africa has been undertaken in a specific framework with a range of institutional mechanisms designed to help translate its priorities into action. In this respect, the study reflects the initiative on the part of the Executive Board to use the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa and the GEAP II as the frameworks for preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-21 (39 C/5) and to ensure that their objectives are fully mainstreamed.

By making 2015 the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Africa's Agenda 2063, the African Union gave UNESCO the chance to assess actual implementation of gender equality, a cross-cutting ambition common to both organizations.

Thus, using data collected by the Africa Department from UNESCO Programme Sectors and field offices, this study takes both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. The quantitative approach will entail itemizing, describing, ordering and explaining data collected from UNESCO Programme Sectors and field offices. The qualitative approach will use a positivist method to look beyond the logic of the facts in order to assess the relevance of the various strategies deployed by UNESCO for its major programmes in Africa, gauge the challenges and learn the lessons before going on to make suggestions and recommendations. The study covers the Organization's past two biennia programme and budget cycle (2012-2013 and 2014-2015) and focuses

3 NEPAD, 2011, *Revision of the AU/NEPAD African Action Plan 2010-2015: Advancing Regional and Continental Integration in Africa Together through Shared Values. Abridged Report 2010-2012*, p. 37.

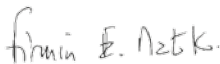
4 The first Gender Equality Action Plan covered the 2008-2013 period.

5 UNESCO, 2014, *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021*, p. 12.

on UNESCO's work to promote women's empowerment in sub-Saharan Africa for implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The study, which is by no means exhaustive, highlights good practice, results achieved and lessons learnt as well as putting forward suggestions and recommendations for the future. During this period, UNESCO achieved important results in the areas covered by its mandate. Innovative activities and programmes have been implemented with visible results and real impacts. We had very successful interventions in all sectors, allowing for the participation of both the public sector and the civil society.

We hope that this study will contribute to a better understanding of UNESCO's role and mandate as well as the strong engagement of member states to promote gender equality, a sine qua non condition for sustainable peace and development.



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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Sub-Saharan Africa has registered strong economic growth, and a number of countries have made notable progress regarding economic and democratic governance. Nevertheless, income disparities persist within and between countries, and poverty is generally more widespread than in other regions of Africa. According to the *EFA [Education for All] Global Monitoring Report 2015*,⁶ 41% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa is living in extreme poverty on less than 1 US dollar per day, and inequalities are more marked than in other developing regions. As in a number of the world's regions, men and women do not always enjoy the same conditions and opportunities, not only in the economic, educational, legal and institutional fields but also in terms of social and human development. In response to the many immediate barriers to full realization of women's potential (1.1.1), UNESCO's strategies will seek to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment (1.1.2).

1.1.1 Persistence of obstacles to full realization of women's potential

Sundry reports on economic development in Africa show that women are very active as economic agents. According to the *Agenda for Action* of the African Development Bank (AfDB), they perform the majority of agricultural activities, own a third of all firms and are key to the welfare of their families and the life prospects of their children.⁷ Ironically, they still face an array of barriers to achieving their full potential, from restrictive cultural practices to discriminatory laws and highly segmented labour markets.⁸ Yet gender equality and women's empowerment could definitely raise productive potential and boost the continent's development. Fortunately, as Irina Bokova, Director-General

6 UNESCO, 2015, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015*, p. 6.

7 AfDB, *Empowering African Women: An Agenda for Action*, pp. 1 and 5.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

of UNESCO, puts it, “There are no immovable barriers to gender equality.”⁹ This is the task that UNESCO is therefore going to tackle in sub-Saharan Africa.

UNESCO’s Priority Africa can thus be seen as a strategic tool intended mainly to put in place programmes to meet Africa’s needs and more specifically provide coordinated and innovative African answers to the challenges raised by the continent’s social, cultural and economic transformations. For that matter, UNESCO’s Priority Africa has gradually become a tangible reality in making it possible to implement some of the AU aspirations for 2063. It comes under the Africa Department, and together with gender equality are UNESCO’s two indivisible global priorities.

1.1.2 UNESCO’s strategies for achieving gender equality

In synergy with AU goals, the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy (37 C/4) focuses on two main areas for Priority Africa: (i) building peace through peaceful, resilient, gender-inclusive societies and (ii) building institutional capacities for sustainable development and poverty eradication. Innovative programmes for a gender-inclusive Africa seem to be the leitmotiv for UNESCO in Africa. To this end, six flagship programmes have been added, with youth and gender equality as two indivisible and cross-cutting priorities.¹⁰

These various programmes are expected to have specific outcomes: preventing the causes of conflict; improving quality of education; developing policy and building institutional capacities to support the production and dissemination of knowledge in Africa; strengthening cooperation in the fields of science, technology and innovation for sustainable management of natural resources; improving heritage management and protection; and creating an environment conducive for press freedom and free flow of information to promote development.¹¹

9 Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, at the launch of the Global Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education, 26 May 2011.

10 The six programmes are as follows: (i) Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence; (ii) Strengthening education systems for sustainable development in Africa; (iii) Harnessing STI and knowledge for the sustainable socio-economic development of Africa; (iv) Fostering science for the sustainable management of Africa’s natural resources and disaster risk reduction; (v) Harnessing the power of culture for sustainable development and peace in a context of regional integration; (vi) Promoting an environment conducive to freedom of expression and media development.

11 UNESCO, 2014, *Operational Strategy for Priority Africa: 2014-2021*, pp. 12/13.

1.2 Gender equality: a global priority and cross-cutting programme

In its Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021,¹² UNESCO has provided an operational framework for implementing the gender equality priority. It is in fact a companion document to the Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021 (37 C/4) as well as the Programme and Budget 2014-2017 (37 C/5) and 2018-2021 (39 C/5) and aims to operationalize the priorities and objectives in those strategic documents. Through this plan, UNESCO is making a significant contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa, since it is intended to promote women's rights and empowerment in deprived areas of the globe and specifically in Africa. It should be noted that, for Africa, UNESCO's action plan coincides with the work of certain international organizations also pursuing the same aims, thus indicating the importance of this UNESCO priority. To promote women's empowerment and gender equality in Africa more effectively, UNESCO plans to integrate gender equality in the overarching strategic framework and Priority Africa. The UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021 lays out, firstly, what gender equality and empowerment of women mean for UNESCO (1.2.1) and, secondly, its strategy for achieving concrete and sustainable results (1.2.2).

¹² Abbreviated as GEAP II by UNESCO.

1.2.1 About gender equality and empowerment of women

For UNESCO, “gender” refers to the social meaning given to being a woman or a man. The idea reflects social characteristics rather than biological differences in defining a woman or a man. The definition has three effects: firstly, it defines the boundaries of what women and men can and should be and do, secondly, it shapes and determines the behaviour, roles, expectations and entitlements of women and men, and thirdly, it provides rules, norms, customs and practices.

“Gender equality” refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men and girls and boys.¹³ It means that women and men enjoy the same status and have equal opportunities to realize their full human rights and potential to contribute to political, economic, social and cultural development and to benefit from the results. And it indicates that society values equally both the similarities and the differences between women and men and the different roles that they play. Gender equality is a human rights principle, a precondition for sustainable, people-centred development, and it is a goal in and of itself.¹⁴

The term “empowerment of women” refers to a collective and individual process designed to ensure that women have control over their lives, setting their own agendas, gaining skills, building self-confidence, solving problems and developing self-reliance. Consequently, strengthening women’s economic empowerment is a prerequisite for sustainable development and achieving all the Millennium Development Goals.

13 UNESCO, *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021*, p. 11.

14 UNESCO, 2014, *UNESCO’s Promise: Gender Equality - A Global Priority*, p. 3.

1.2.2 UNESCO's strategy for achieving concrete and sustainable results with regard to gender equality

The ultimate goal of UNESCO's Priority Gender Equality is to strengthen the Organization's ability, through its policies, programmes and initiatives, to support the creation of an environment enabling women and men from all walks of life to contribute to and enjoy the benefits of sustainable development and peace.¹⁵

To achieve concrete and sustainable results in promoting gender equality in all its fields of competence, UNESCO will be taking a dual approach: gender mainstreaming in all its programmes and activities, and preparation of programmes relating specifically to gender equality. The first approach will build UNESCO staff capacities with regard to gender equality, since staff members must have the requisite understanding and capacities to assess the gender-equality implications of their work and take steps to ensure that gender equality becomes an integral part of programme design, implementation and monitoring. Thus, in its areas of expertise, UNESCO will contribute systematically and comprehensively to gender equality and women's empowerment. As regards gender specific activities, UNESCO implements them through its five programmes, notably education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information.

¹⁵ UNESCO, *37 C/4 Draft Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021*, p. 17.

1.3 Synergy between UNESCO and the African Union's Vision

By making 2015 the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Africa's Agenda 2063,¹⁶ the AU has unquestionably given an extraordinary boost to gender equality, one of the AU's cross-cutting aspirations (Aspirations 3 and 6)¹⁷ and a goal of UNESCO programmes in Africa. The synergy between the two organizations occurs through a legal and institutional framework (1.3.1) and a platform for sharing knowledge and experience (1.3.2).

1.3.1 UNESCO and the AU: a shared legal and institutional framework

The AU is taking steps to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. From its inception, in its Constitutive Act, it affirmed its commitment to the values of gender equality. Article 4 states: "The Union shall function in accordance with the following principles: [...] promotion of gender equality". Moreover, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, generally known as the Maputo Protocol after the city where it was adopted, was

¹⁶ This was the theme adopted for 2015 at the 24th Summit of the African Union. Agenda 2063 is a plan for structural transformation of Africa that was approved by the African Union's Golden Jubilee Summit in May 2013.

¹⁷ Aspiration 3: "An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law"; Aspiration 6: "An Africa whose development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth".

drawn up under the auspices of the AU.¹⁸ This Protocol is instrumental in promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls in Africa. It thus enshrines women's empowerment, gender equality and elimination of harmful traditions and cultural practices that humiliate and belittle African women and girls. It is therefore playing a key role in restoring the dignity of African women and girls. Following on from the Maputo Protocol, the AU has adopted another legal instrument promoting gender equality: the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. This declaration lends further weight to the Maputo Protocol by specifically emphasizing the issue of gender equality. On top of this, in 2008 the African Union developed a policy vision for gender equality: the African Union Gender Policy. This policy stems from the gender disparities recorded in several key development sectors in Africa. These disparities are found in sectors such as politics, the economy, trade, agriculture, health and education. The policy's aim is therefore to eliminate such disparities through a number of initiatives.

In addition to the AU, another institution has highlighted the gender equality issue in Africa: the African Development Bank (AfDB). In 2015, the AfDB drew up an Africa Gender Equality Index,¹⁹ which has at least two qualitative advantages. Firstly, it is the only index that provides evidence on gender equality for 52 of Africa's 54 states. Secondly, it has been designed not just to measure gender inequality but also to promote development.²⁰ It also addresses three important aspects of gender equality: economic empowerment, human development, and laws and institutions. The index thus reflects the work of the AfDB in promoting gender equality in Africa.

1.3.2 A platform for sharing knowledge and experience

Synergies therefore exist between UNESCO, the AU and other African institutions also working for gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. UNESCO's gender equality vision is fully in line not only with that of the AU but also with a number of international legal instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, particularly MDG 3 on promoting gender equality and empowering women, and more

18 The Protocol was adopted in Maputo (Mozambique) on 28 March 2003 and came into force on 25 November 2005.

19 African Development Bank Group, 2015, *Empowering African Women: An Agenda for Action. Africa Gender Equality Index 2015*, p. 2.

20 Ibid.

recently, MD5 on gender equality. In this respect, a platform for sharing knowledge and experience would bolster action to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women in sub-Saharan Africa.

In a context where women are marginal beneficiaries of growth and economic development in Africa, where they remain outside the decision-making sphere and where they barely enjoy human rights, it is understandable that UNESCO is making gender equality a cross-cutting priority in its Priority Africa flagship programmes and has developed a Priority Gender Equality Action Plan. To increase the effectiveness of its gender equality work in Africa, UNESCO has decided to integrate Priority Gender Equality with Priority Africa.²¹

OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
4. A peaceful and secure Africa
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics
6. An Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth
7. Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

Figure 1.1: Aspirations and vision of the African Union, 2063 Agenda, second edition, August 2014, p. 2.

21 UNESCO, 2014, *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021*, p. 7.

Chapter 2
INNOVATIVE
PROGRAMMES,
VISIBLE RESULTS

In terms of its gender equality and women's empowerment goals, UNESCO has achieved some visible and compelling results. The Organization is making a systematic and integrated contribution to these two goals and is an obvious force for gender equality in all its areas of competence both regionally and at country level. It is also developing innovative programmes specifically on gender equality in various fields (culture, education, social sciences, natural sciences, human rights and democratic governance, and communication) in the course of its work. These will provide the logical framework for analysis of UNESCO's work in sub-Saharan Africa over the past two biennia (2012-2013 and 2014-2015), both generally from the Organization's headquarters and locally through field offices, in cooperation with various partners.

2.1 Women and culture

In its Operational Strategy for Priority Africa, UNESCO is committed to promoting a culture of peace and non-violence and harnessing the power of culture for sustainable development and peace in a context of regional integration (Major Programmes III and IV) in synergy with Aspiration 5 of the AU (“An Africa with a strong cultural identity, values and ethics”). For UNESCO, gender equality means ensuring that women and men enjoy equally the right to have access to, participate in and contribute to cultural life.²²

In its work, UNESCO aims to consolidate research, statistics and case studies in the field of culture and gender equality, focusing in particular on creativity and heritage, as a contribution to international debate on the post-2015 agenda.²³ The United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) proclaimed in 2013²⁴ offers an opportunity to combat our historical legacy of prejudice, racism and discrimination and encourage reconciliation and new ways of living together. This entails, among other things, new perspectives on the history of Africa, the slave trade and slavery and giving prominence to cultural expressions. For UNESCO this has specifically meant turning the spotlight on great women in history (2.1.1), promoting and encouraging women’s initiatives in culture (2.1.2) and involving women in the safeguarding of African cultural heritage (2.1.3).

22 UNESCO, *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021*, p. 37.

23 UNESCO, 2014, *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*, p. 17.

24 Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 68/237 of 23 December 2013.

2.1.1 Turning the spotlight on great women in African history

For promotion of gender equality in cultural life, UNESCO's approach is based on a commitment to cultural rights and cultural diversity and guided by the international framework for human rights,²⁵ which are here considered a precondition for enriching cultural diversity and enabling human creativity.²⁶ The Organization is thus using two major projects to turn the spotlight on great African women and emphasize their key role in Africa's development and history. These projects highlight African women's participation in and contribution to the continent's cultural life in a meaningful way.

(i) Women in African history: an e-learning tool

This project uses a multimedia platform consisting of digital comic strips, interactive teaching units and a range of teaching resources covering a selection of female figures central to Africa's history and its diaspora. The platform's target audience is quite wide, since it is intended not only for schoolchildren, educationalists and teachers but also for anybody interested in the history of Africa and the role of women in the continent's economic, social, cultural and political development.

A platform for spreading and sharing knowledge of women's role in the continent's history

Run by UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector, the project is a crucial step in spreading and sharing knowledge of women's role in the history of the African continent. It counteracts prejudice and stereotyping while making pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa*. This entails not only employing the information and communication technology (ICT) that is now more widely used and available on the African continent but also reviewing content in light of the developments in historical research. In this respect, UNESCO is paying special attention to the role of women and the new knowledge gained from gender studies.

25 Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13 of CEDAW, the Stockholm Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development (1998), UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Report by the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights. Cf. UNESCO, *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021*, p. 37.

26 UNESCO, *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*, p. 15.

Key results given the problems with e-learning tools

The project has had key results. Over 20 artists from Africa and the African diaspora, most aged under 35 helped to produce the multimedia content. Of the illustrators and singers who contributed to the teaching material, ten or so came from sub-Saharan Africa (Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal, etc.). This material is available on computers, mobile phones and tablets and can be downloaded free of charge as an open educational resource. Furthermore, the content, which has been validated by the Scientific Committee for the Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa*, accords perfectly with the objectives of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) and the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003).²⁷ It is also consistent with the efforts called for by the Memory of the World Programme to promote digital preservation of heritage across the African continent. The project is obviously helping to make UNESCO a platform for innovation, international cooperation and exchange through fruitful collaboration between artists, intellectuals, educationalists and digital technology experts.²⁸

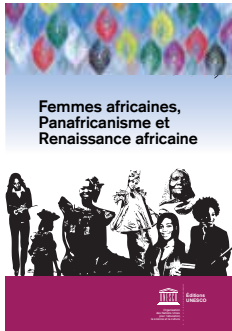
ICT-based literacy training for women: a challenge and an opportunity for e-learning

However, implementation of the project has not been without difficulties. In sub-Saharan Africa, multiple problems such as cost of equipment, expensive communication charges and lack of telecommunications infrastructure have in practice excluded a large swathe of the population, first and foremost women and rural communities usually engaged in the business of daily survival. Therefore the challenge for UNESCO is to interest women in literacy training, since use of the “Women in African history” e-learning tool assumes the ability to read and basic computer literacy. UNESCO has an opportunity to address this challenge by implementing relevant and imaginative literacy training programmes for women. This is precisely the purpose of UNESCO’s “Literacy project for girls and women” (PAJEF) in Senegal, which makes information and communication technology part of its teaching.

27 UNESCO (Communication and Information Sector), “Women in African History: An E-Learning Tool”, News and In Focus articles, 12/11/2013.

28 Ibid.

(ii) African Women, Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance



Knowledge of history is a key enabler of identity for unlocking the future. As AU Member States have pointed out, Africa, being the cradle of human civilization, is the custodian of a cultural heritage that has contributed immensely to human progress.²⁹ It is thus only logical that African cultural identity, values and ethics should become critical factors for Africa's re-emergence onto the global stage by 2063. In the same vein, UNESCO has published a book called *African Women, Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance*.³⁰ The project arose out of the celebration at UNESCO Headquarters of the fiftieth anniversary of the Pan-African Women's Organization (PAWO), organized jointly with the AU Commission in November 2012.

A book celebrating women's contribution to liberating the continent and asserting the values of pan-Africanism

The book highlights the struggle of African women to liberate the continent from colonialism and assert the values of pan-Africanism. The publication is a contribution to recognition of pan-Africanism across the continent, of the African cultural renaissance and of the commitment of these many women, often little known, to assuming their roles and responsibilities in Africa's future.³¹ Through this emphasis on greater recognition of women's contribution to cultural life, and by more outreach and better data-gathering and knowledge management, this UNESCO project is helping to legitimate girls' and women's' access to and participation in Africa's cultural life, including cultural heritage, creative expression and enjoyment of cultural goods and services. But because history is always in the making, *African Women, Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance* would benefit from being a long-term project with, for example, a number of new editions to update its information on great African women.

²⁹ AU Commission, May 2014, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, p. 18.

³⁰ UNESCO, 2015, *African Women, Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance*.

³¹ E. F. Matoko, "Introduction", *ibid.*, p. 6.

2.1.2 Promoting and encouraging women's initiatives in culture

Generally speaking, women's productive work is often obscured, as is their contribution to creating and safeguarding Africa's cultural heritage.³² Thus to capitalize on its goal of promoting and encouraging women's initiatives in culture, UNESCO has adopted a gender mainstreaming approach in two of its projects.

(i) Promoting cultural industries and initiatives in Senegal

The main aim of the project to promote cultural industries and initiatives in Senegal was to support implementation of national policies promoting culture as a driver of sustainable human development. The project was implemented by UNESCO over a four-year period (2008-2012) in cooperation with four other UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNIDO and UNWTO) working closely with local and national authorities. It concerned two areas of Senegal: the Bassari³³ country in the south-east and the Saloum Delta³⁴ in the centre, covering some 300,000 people. These sites were noteworthy for their natural and cultural diversity but suffered from lack of infrastructure and income-generating activities.

Focusing on a gender-balanced approach for conservation of African cultural heritage

The project has been marked by some major achievements. Firstly, the Bassari Country and the Saloum Delta have been entered in the World Heritage List. Secondly, the creation of the Grand Ballet Bassari with a company consisting of 60 artists of all ages and six different ethnicities (Bassari, Bedik, Yaulunka, Fula, Coniagui and Mandinka) has made it possible to perform the traditional music and dance of the main ethnic groups. The ballet gave its first performance in Kédougou in January 2012, followed by others in Dakar, Toubacouta and Conakry (Guinea). The challenge is now to organize further performances in Senegal and neighbouring countries. Cultural centres have also been built in Bandafassi (2012) and Toubacouta (2013), between them comprising facilities for young children, areas for women and young people and

32 UNESCO, 2014, *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*.

33 UNESCO, 2012, *African World Heritage: a remarkable diversity*, p. 144.

34 UNESCO, 2012, *African World Heritage: a remarkable diversity*, p. 140-141.

a village for local craftspeople. These results are particularly important because in the cultural industries, women face numerous obstacles relating to training and funding in general and, more specifically, structural, institutional and cultural barriers such as social and cultural norms, stigma affecting their reputations and abilities, stereotypes limiting their creative expression by confining them to “female” themes (polygamy, domestic abuse, etc.), and the problems they have in reconciling domestic and childcare responsibilities.³⁵ The project clearly demonstrates that advancement of women in the cultural industries cannot be considered in isolation as it is an integral part of women’s lives and environments in sub-Saharan Africa.

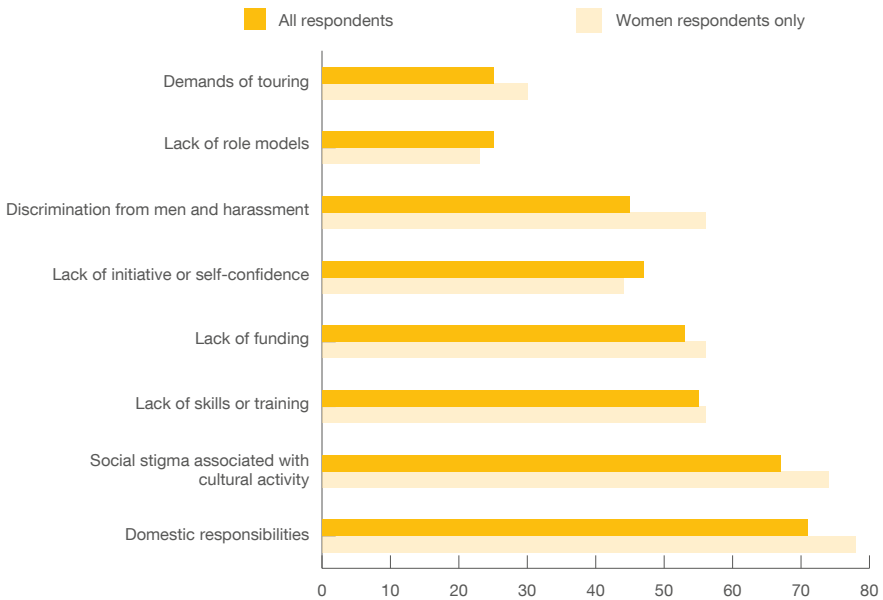


Figure 2.1: Obstacles to women’s participation in the performing arts sector in Africa [Source: UNESCO]

UNESCO’s focus on women with disabilities working in the cultural industries

In a more general approach, UNESCO is promoting African women’s initiatives through its World Heritage Centre by encouraging involvement of women in training workshops, either as participants or as trainers/experts.³⁶ The publication and publicizing of

³⁵ UNESCO, *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*, p. 39.

³⁶ Report of the World Heritage Centre on its activities and the implementation of the World Heritage Committee’s Decisions, WHC-15/39.COM/5A, p. 8.

UNESCO's report on *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity* is a major step towards a gender-balanced approach in world heritage conservation. Similarly, the World Heritage Education Programme is a programme in which effective mainstreaming of gender equality is possible due to advance monitoring of gender participation. In 2014, youth forums and capacity-building activities relating to youth mobilized 141 young people, of whom 57.4% were women. The World Heritage Centre also supports work encouraging women's involvement in professional heritage-conservation activities at the local level. More specifically, with financial support from UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), the UNESCO Regional Office in Yaoundé set up a project in Cameroon called "Offering opportunities to women with disabilities". This project aimed to provide professional training in design, arts and crafts for 30 unemployed young women with disabilities. These particularly vulnerable women were thus able to improve their know-how and gain new skills in order to earn more. The project has shown, at the very least, that offering equitable socio-economic opportunities in the cultural professions to women living with disabilities can add to creative and economic options, thus strengthening the basic link between culture, gender and development.

(ii) Sex-disaggregated Cultural Statistics Survey Report for Zimbabwe

The *Cultural Statistics Survey Report* for Zimbabwe was published by the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust (an NGO) with financial support from the IFCD. The report illustrates the professional involvement of men and women in the creative sector and its impact on the national economy. Data collected from professionals who were generally full-time employees show that close to 30% of those employed in the cultural sector (30.7% male and 28.2% female) worked in the performing arts, followed by those in the book industry, who account for 28% (29.8% male and 23.3% female). These data also show that there were more women than men working in the creative fields of visual arts, crafts and design. In general, women provide a unique resource for identifying good practice.³⁷

37 UNESCO, *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*, p. 23.

In most countries, cultural data are not systematically sex-disaggregated

Recognizing the shortage of cultural data, UNESCO has decided to take a number of statistical initiatives in this field in recent years. In August 2013 the Organization sent out a questionnaire on gender equality and culture to all its Member States. Only 31 of the 195 Permanent Delegations to UNESCO answered this questionnaire (including three countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Ethiopia, Niger and Nigeria), representing 16% of the total number of UNESCO Member States.³⁸ Yet most countries do not systematically collect sex-disaggregated cultural data, so that public stakeholders (politicians, civil society) that are supposed to exert an influence on the cultural sector or monitor public commitments to gender equality and gauge progress in effective policy-making often lack such data and are therefore unable adequately to address the problem of gender inequality.³⁹ Here UNESCO's periodic reports to monitor the state of implementation of its culture conventions on the national level could contribute to a general programme for compiling qualitative data.

Ensure that the general idea of sex-disaggregated data is reflected in the policy of every African state

UNESCO's findings from Member States urge caution. The statistics reveal a number of shortcomings relating, for example, to absence of regular and reliable sex-disaggregated data and research, absence of gender in impact assessments and monitoring mechanisms, mainstreaming gender in cultural policies, action plans and legislation, the gender gap in cultural consumption, targeted training and capacity-building, unequal access to decision-making roles in cultural professions, and gender stereotyping in cultural fields. The task remains of ensuring that the general idea of sex-disaggregated data is reflected in the policy of every African state.

38 Ibid. The responses can be found at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/gender-and-culture/gender-equality-and-culture/the-report/questionnaire-to-member-states/>

39 Ibid., p. 89.

2.1.3 Involving women in the safeguarding of African cultural heritage

UNESCO has taken a number of important steps, such as alerting the international community and various stakeholders on the need to protect Mali's heritage, contributing to resolutions of the United Nations, ECOWAS and the AU and to other appeals and resolutions concerning Mali, putting Timbuktu and the Tomb of Askia on the List of World Heritage in Danger, establishing a special account for the safeguarding of Mali's cultural heritage, advocating Mali's accession to the Second Protocol (1999) of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, sending assistance missions to Mali, taking emergency action and setting up an expert group for rehabilitation of Mali's cultural heritage, which led to preparation of an action plan adopted on 18 February 2013. This action plan aims to rehabilitate cultural heritage damaged during the conflict with the active involvement of local communities, put in place measures for sustainable safeguarding of manuscripts and provide capacity-building activities with a view to re-establishing appropriate conditions for the conservation, maintenance, management and safeguarding of cultural heritage and manuscripts.

Promoting greater involvement of women in decision-making mechanisms relating to cultural heritage

The World Heritage Centre devotes particular attention to UNESCO's two global priorities of Africa and gender equality (UNESCO document 37 C/4). In 2014, 55% of all approved World Heritage International Assistance requests were granted to States Parties in the Africa region.⁴⁰ The Centre works closely with the African World Heritage Fund to implement various capacity-building activities. In this respect, it may be advisable for UNESCO to consider specific measures for women with regard to rehabilitation of damaged cultural heritage in the various regions affected in northern Mali. UNESCO could therefore support Member States and the governing bodies of its normative instruments in establishing gender-sensitive, gender-responsive and gender-transformative policies and practices in the fields of heritage and creativity.⁴¹

40 UNESCO, Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, *Report of the World Heritage Centre on its activities and the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's Decisions*, 39th session, 28 June - 8 July 2015 in Bonn (Germany).

41 UNESCO, *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021*, p. 44.

As specified in the UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan, these activities would principally concern providing policy guidance on integration of gender equality into cultural policies, developing gender planning tools respectful of communities' cultural rights, encouraging equal access to capacity-building and specialized training in cultural fields, and supporting other measures that promote greater involvement of women in decision-making mechanisms relating to heritage and creativity.⁴²

⁴² Ibid., p. 38.

2.2 Women and education

Education unquestionably contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction. It develops cognitive and life skills, including literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking, thereby enhancing an individual's livelihood prospects.⁴³ Since the adoption of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, access to education has increased significantly in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly with rapid expansion of primary and secondary enrolment rates and an improvement in gender parity.⁴⁴ Over the past two biennia, four major projects put in place by UNESCO have clearly borne fruit, thus allowing Aspiration 6 of the AU's Agenda 2063 ("An Africa whose development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth") to take shape. Over and above access to education, central themes of UNESCO work are retention of girls at school (2.2.1), gender capacity-building in teacher training institutes (2.2.2) and ICT-based literacy training for women (2.2.3).

2.2.1 Working to keep girls in school

Data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) show that most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have not achieved all EFA goals by 2015.⁴⁵ For example, under 70% of primary school age children do not complete primary education, some 31 million children are out of school, including 53% of girls, while 22 million young people are out of school and some 182 million adults are illiterate.⁴⁶ More importantly, gender parity in education is still far from being achieved. This concerns both schoolgirls and

43 ECOSOC, 2011, *Imperative for Quality Education for All in Africa: Ensuring equity and enhancing teaching quality*, p. 4.

44 UNESCO, 2014, *Sub-Saharan Africa 2013 EFA Report*, Global Education for All Meeting, p. 5.

45 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015*. Only the Seychelles have achieved education for all, while 31 countries could achieve it after 2020. For 22 of them (half the countries of sub-Saharan Africa for which data are available), the challenges remain significant.

46 UIS, 2015, *Global Education Digest*.

women teachers, who are under-represented in schools. Yet it is now accepted that by deliberately refusing to educate girls in the same way as boys, and to provide literacy training for women as well as men, society is condemning these girls and women to ignorance and dependence in the short term, since lack of education diminishes women's ability to take the opportunities to develop long-term personal initiatives. This handicap also reduces the scope for their involvement in decision-making within the family, community or nation.

UNESCO's work to keep girls in school continues that of the Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education,⁴⁷ seeking to combat the persistent disparities between boys and girls, and covers different fields, such as: bringing down school drop-out rates (Crowdsourcing project) and school safety.

(i) Crowdsourcing girls' education in Ethiopia and Tanzania

A three-year project (2012-2015) called "Crowdsourcing girls' education to reduce drop-out rates in Ethiopia and Tanzania" and designed to improve school participation of girls was implemented by UNESCO in Ethiopia and Tanzania with funding from the Packard Foundation.

Link between under-representation of girls in secondary and higher education and high female drop-out rates at primary level



Figure 2.2: Safe space members at Selamagazi Secondary School in the group discussion during the training (Tanzania).
(Source: UNESCO/Dar es Salaam)

47 UNESCO, 2015, *Better Life, Better Future: UNESCO Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education*, p. 3.

In general, this crowdsourcing project is explained by the specific context of extreme poverty in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa⁴⁸ where drop-out rates are high and the percentage of girls in secondary education remains low in comparison with that of boys, even though there are differences between countries. The under-representation of girls in secondary and higher education springs from girls' low primary-school survival rates. For example, at primary level 12% of boys and 16% of girls of school age are out of school in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The situation is even more alarming in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), where over a third of primary school age children do not attend school, the figure being 40% for girls.⁴⁹ Consequently girls spend a shorter time in school than boys, with an educational life expectancy of 8.7 years in 2011 as against 9.9 for boys.⁵⁰ This disparity can be explained by, amongst other factors, early marriage, the absence or dilapidated state of toilet facilities in schools and the fact that girls have to look after the home.

In Ethiopia and Tanzania, where the project was implemented, the situation is the same. Teenage girls continue to drop out of secondary education and fail to complete full high-quality basic education because of non-gender-sensitive school management and teaching methods as well as sociocultural factors such as lack of support from their parents and communities that not only do not sufficiently value girls' education but also encourage early marriage. It thus seemed advisable to make sure that when children entered the various stages of school they could stay there until they had actually gained the knowledge they were seeking. To address this issue, UNESCO chose to empower girls as agents of change and work together with families, community leaders, community-level school inspectors and education officers to create safe, inclusive and learning-friendly environments in and around secondary schools. The success of its strategy is obvious, since this crowdsourcing project has led to tangible results.

A comparison of the project's actual impact in the two countries concerned shows that girls' retention and academic performance improved by 10% across all

48 Poverty affects length of primary education. In Nigeria, the primary completion rate among children from the poorest households has actually fallen, from 35% in 2003 to 22% in 2013, with the gap between average and poorest households increasing by about 20 percentage points. UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015*, p. 83.

49 Source: UNESCO, *Sub-Saharan Africa 2013 EFA Report*, p. 9.

50 ADF, AUF, Orange and UNESCO, 2015, *Digital Services for Education in Africa* (Savoirs communs No. 17), p. 18.

beneficiary schools (twelve in Ethiopia and fifteen in Tanzania). Six thousand girls in Ethiopia and 4,500 in Tanzania were thus provided with training in various fields such as entrepreneurship. Many girls gained life skills (1,341 in Ethiopia) and basic ICT skills (94 in Ethiopia) as well as receiving comprehensive sexuality education (244 in Ethiopia). The establishment of 32 school clubs in Tanzania, together with income-generating activities, provided assistance to disadvantaged girls. At the same time, special sanitary facilities were made available to all the girls, where they were provided with water, sanitary pads and soap, which resulted in girls remaining at school during their menstrual periods. Lastly, 135 members of teaching staff were trained in Tanzania in creating inclusive, learning-friendly environments and in gender-responsive teaching and management skills. The project was also designed to help implement national plans/strategies and particularly the Education and Training Sector Programme 2014-2024, which sets out national policy objectives for girls' enrolment. The results achieved in beneficiary schools can offer guidance to decision-makers on implementing girls' education strategy as well as provide information for future action at the regional level.

Reducing drop-out by girls in the ECOWAS and ECCAS regions and by girls with disabilities

This crowdsourcing project initiated by UNESCO will inevitably help to improve the school environment by making it pleasanter and more learning-friendly for girls, develop the institutional capacity of school administrators to ensure implementation of plans/strategies, policies and programmes relating to gender equality and improve school retention rates for girls. In view of its results and the needs in other sub-Saharan countries, the crowdsourcing project would benefit from being transposed to ECOWAS, ECCAS and IGAD regions, for example, which, as has already been noted, are facing major challenges. According to UNESCO's *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015*, in 32 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, at least 20% of children are likely to drop out of school before the final year. For this reason UNESCO must extend and adapt its crowdsourcing project to these regions. This would make it possible in practice to enrol an outstanding 2 million children in primary education in the EAC, 2.5 million in ECCAS, more than 17 million in West Africa, almost 6 million in the IGAD and 2.8 million in the SADC.⁵¹

51 UNESCO, *Sub-Saharan Africa 2013 EFA Report*, p. 9.

But disability and emergencies inevitably increase the risks of exclusion from education. According to a recent study for West Africa, girls with disabilities are more subject to ostracization, stigmatization and discrimination. They have more limited access to education and other opportunities of participating in communal life and are particularly at risk of abuse, including sexual violence in various forms. Moreover, the proportion of out-of-school children living in conflict-affected countries increased from 30% in 1999 to 36% in 2012.⁵² It may be remembered that at the Dakar Forum, the 181 signatory countries to the Dakar Framework for Action identified armed conflict and political instability as “a major barrier towards attaining Education for All”,⁵³ an observation also confirmed by UNESCO’s *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011* (gross enrolment rates in secondary education were 30% lower in conflict-affected countries than in peaceful countries with equivalent income). Of course, various avenues have already been explored, such as UNESCO’s “teacher emergency package” used for the first time in Mogadishu in 1993, UNICEF’s “early childhood development kits” used in emergency situations since 1991, and its “child-friendly spaces”, but the fact remains that they would benefit from being bolstered by a crowdsourcing project.

(ii) Promoting comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in Ethiopia and Ghana

In sub-Saharan Africa, girls encounter a number of problems at school that relate to sexual health. At all events, a lack of awareness among institutional stakeholders and partners and the absence of safe areas outside schools are major challenges in these countries. To address them more effectively, a project on promoting comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) has been implemented in Ethiopia and Ghana. In Ethiopia the CSE project is explained in part by the lack of information on comprehensive sexuality education and the fact that girls do not have free access to it, while in Ghana, it is mainly the shortcomings of curriculum content that form the focus.

Equipping girls with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality

Following a pilot phase to identify behaviour that would allow girls to enjoy healthy and responsible sexuality and equip them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values

⁵² UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015*, p. 103.

⁵³ UNESCO, *The Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments*, text adopted by the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000.

they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality, UNESCO has extended its strategy to cover higher-education institutions as well as training institutes for teachers, who must have basic knowledge and skills in the field of comprehensive sexuality education. Gender mainstreaming makes curricula and policies responsive to the social, economic, cultural and political realities that constrain or enhance reproductive health and satisfaction, as recognized in the USAID Automated Directive System (ADS).⁵⁴ There have also been studies of sexuality education and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in schools using SERAT (Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool), an analytical tool developed by UNESCO Dakar and presented in July 2012 at the 19th International AIDS Conference in Washington. SERAT has been tested in Guinea-Bissau and Senegal, where it has identified strengths and weaknesses of sexuality education curricula in primary and secondary schools. It is currently being used in other parts of Africa and the world and by other organizations (UNFPA, NGOs).

Encouraging although derisory results given the scale of the need

In the two countries of sub-Saharan Africa where the CSE project was implemented, the results were significant. In Ghana, the project led to validation of modules covering activities on diversity and gender in the classroom. The capacities of experts in the Ministries of Education, Health and Culture were also strengthened in order to provide training for teachers and other educators on how to include activities on diversity, non-discrimination and gender equality in their timetables. A hundred or so pupils improved their understanding of diversity and gender. For Ethiopia, the figures are just as edifying: six secondary schools in the Amhara and Benishangul regions had CSE courses; three teacher training institutes were selected to set up a technical working party; 1780 pupils, including 800 girls, took part in an information day on CSE; 14 institutional stakeholders working on CSE were identified; 326 girls in the third year had a course on CSE covering unwanted pregnancies and their consequences, and 186 girls were actively involved in and gained a basic understanding of CSE. While this UNESCO project may seem derisory given the scale of the need, the fact remains that the results in these two countries are encouraging and have undoubtedly blazed a trail.

⁵⁴ The ADS 200 and 300 series specify requirements for integrating gender considerations into policies, programmes and activities: for required technical analysis for strategic plans, including gender analysis, see ADS 201.3.8.4; for gender integration in activity design and activity approval, see ADS 201.3.12.6 and ADS 201.3.12.15 respectively; for reflecting gender in performance indicators, see ADS 203.3.4.3.

(iii) Promoting a culture of peace in Northern Nigeria: capacity-building for head teachers, teacher training institutes and journalists on safety and security of schools in the states of Northern Nigeria

In general, the acts of violence by the Boko Haram terrorist group pose huge security problems in sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, for example, over 1.5 million people have been displaced in three states in the North-East (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe). But the abduction of over two hundred girls from a school of the Chibok community in the state of Borno was final proof of its assault on girls' education and the empowerment of women and girls. As a result, the United Nations system in Nigeria has called for an integrated support package for North-East Nigeria. UNESCO's response to this call has taken the form of capacity-building and "safe school" kits.

Using training to improve school safety in Nigerian states currently destabilized by Boko Haram violence

To this end a capacity-building workshop for head teachers in North-East Nigeria was held in Abuja on 21 November 2014. Funded entirely by UNESCO, the workshop was intended to provide training for head teachers on how to improve school safety in the states of Nigeria currently destabilized by Boko Haram violence. Participants came from 114 schools and organizations, including 39 primary schools, 30 secondary schools, 30 higher education establishments, and other institutions such as the State Universal Basic Education Boards, the State Emergency Management Agencies, the Nigeria Union of Teachers, the Nigeria Union of Journalists and the police union in the three states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. As for the "safe school" kits, they contain a "safe school" manual, an instructional video DVD, an audio CD and a hand sanitizer. The "safe school" manual has four aims: firstly, to provide teachers, parents and pupils with a full set of school safety skills in simple language and an easy-to-understand format, together with an application and references; secondly, to empower school communities with special safety kits to improve their own security and their ability to assist the agencies responsible for security, with the underlying idea that "safety is everybody's business"; thirdly, to provide schools with the necessary information and skills to assess the specific risks and threats that they are facing; fourthly, to provide schools with planning and emergency action templates.

At the end of the workshop, UNESCO distributed 1350 "safe school" kits. They were developed under the "safe schools" programme which begun in 2011 and

implemented with the support and cooperation of the Nigerian police, the Civil Defence Corps, the National Emergency Management Agency and the Nigerian Medical Association.

2.2.2 Gender capacity-building in teacher training institutes

In global terms, sub-Saharan Africa has over half (63%) of the additional teachers needed to achieve universal primary education by 2015.

The under-representation of women teachers in the classroom has a negative impact on girls' enrolment rates

As has already been pointed out, democratization of education, together with population growth, if not accompanied by a radical reform of education systems "could otherwise produce negative effects on the quality of the teaching on offer",⁵⁵ and this could indirectly have an adverse effect on pupils' performance. According to the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010*, in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa up to 40% of young adults with five years of education have not acquired the basic skills to find a job or prevent their being illiterate. And for good reason: "Teacher training systems are generally not able to meet the quantitative and qualitative needs of training."⁵⁶ Training opportunities for millions of teachers who themselves have little formal education are thus urgently needed.

Moreover, women teachers are under-represented in the classroom in these countries. Yet there is a link between girls' performance and the presence of competent women teachers in a school, since it has been shown that under-representation of women teachers in the classroom, especially in rural areas, has a negative impact on girls' enrolment rates. In Mali, for example, this is a cause for concern. Candidate numbers and success rates for competitive entry to teacher training institutes (TTIs) are higher for men than for women.

Increasing women's presence in teacher training institutes

To meet the challenge of women's under-representation, UNESCO's Regional Office in Dakar has instituted a project for support for capacity-building of teacher training

55 ADF, AUF, Orange and UNESCO, 2015, *Digital Services for Education in Africa*, p. 20.

56 Ibid.

institutes and girls' education in Mali. This project seeks to reduce gender disparities in TTIs through specific preparation of women and the creation of conditions facilitating their access to and continuation in these training colleges. Implemented with financial support from the Governments of Japan and Mali, the project organizes training for women candidates taking the entrance examination for teacher training institutes in Mali in order to increase their chances of success and at the same time solve the problem of a lack of women teachers in schools. The project links up not only with UNESCO's general Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) launched in 2006 but also with the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP) adopted by African governments⁵⁷ and ties in with policies on girls' education and initial and in-service teacher training. UNESCO's project can thus be seen as a laudable attempt to rethink the question of women teachers. It should not be forgotten that there can be no high-quality education without qualified teachers. Generally speaking, the shortage of qualified teachers has been identified as one of the greatest challenges for achieving EFA. Seventeen countries in sub-Saharan Africa had over 40 pupils per teacher in 2013. Overcrowding thus remains an issue, particularly for Rwanda, Malawi and the Central Africa Republic, where the average number of learners per classroom exceeds 70.⁵⁸ *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/2014* projections suggest that sub-Saharan Africa needs almost 212,000 additional teachers a year to make up the shortfall across the continent.

UNESCO is providing gender-sensitive teacher training and preparing gender-sensitive teaching materials in partnership with other United Nations agencies

Quality of teacher training colleges depends on many criteria, including equal opportunities for men and women. This is in fact the purpose of UNESCO's project to support capacity-building for TTIs in Mali, the results of which are extremely significant. A marked improvement has been noted in both the presence of women in TTIs and the male-to-female ratio in these institutes, with a consequent increase in women students' completion rates in each year and a drop in repetition rates. Through this project, TTI teachers have been trained in teaching methods for large groups and for children with special educational needs, as well as in how to teach science and mathematics, how to analyse classroom practice and how to design and develop new

57 The BEAP has introduced the idea of basic education extending beyond primary school and lasting between 9 and 10 years if children's development needs and actual conditions in Africa are taken into account.

58 Source: UNESCO, *Sub-Saharan Africa 2013 EFA Report*, p. 11

gender-sensitive curricula. Thus the issue of women teachers has been considered not only in terms of teacher training but also in all its other aspects (status, social security, pay, career development, etc.).

As well as supporting gender capacity-building for teacher training institutes, UNESCO, in partnership with other United Nations agencies, has been taking steps to promote gender equality in teacher training and preparation of teaching materials, amongst other things. This is the case for the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI),⁵⁹ committed to narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 and ensuring that, by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to free, high-quality education.⁶⁰ This is also the case for the project on enhancing teacher education for bridging the quality gap in sub-Saharan Africa, implemented in cooperation with the Government of China as part of the UNESCO-CFIT partnership launched on 24 February 2014 and providing support for African countries to speed up their progress in achieving gender equality in education specifically regarding basic and further training for teachers. To this end UNESCO and the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA) organized a study tour in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa and Hawassa) from 8 to 10 June 2015 with the aim of agreeing project implementation and mobilization of local resources with stakeholders. Data on the management, trainers and trainee teachers of the two target teacher training colleges have been collected through surveys. The project supports capacity-building for in-service teacher training through new information and communication technology, thus tying in with another UNESCO flagship project in sub-Saharan Africa: ICT-based literacy training for women. A mid-term review has shown that UNESCO's various projects are dovetailing well, irrespective of their focus.

59 *Girls Too! Education for All*, UNGEI, 2006. UNGEI was launched in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar (Senegal) by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. UNESCO is one of the UN agencies that are UNGEI partners, together with the ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP. UNICEF acts as the UNGEI secretariat.

60 UN, September 2010, *End Poverty 2015. Millennium Development Goals. We Can. Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*. Fact sheet, issued by the UN Department of Public Information DPI/2650 C.

2.2.3 ICT-based literacy training for women

In sub-Saharan Africa, youth and adult literacy is one of the fields in which the least progress has been made.⁶¹ In the EAC, ECCAS and the SADC, literacy rates are relatively stagnant for young people and slightly less so for adults. The ECOWAS region presents the greatest challenge with the lowest average rates (only 69% for young people and 52% for adults): figures well below the respective averages for the region (73% and 67%). In four countries, just under 60% of the population is literate. This explains why EFA Goal 4 of halving illiteracy rates in the world by 2015 has not been met.⁶² In Senegal in particular, illiteracy is still a major problem, with 58% of the population unable to read, 62% of whom are women and 38% men. The situation is all the more worrying in that literacy is a key stage in acquiring the basic skills needed to confront the many challenges that these women will be facing throughout their lives. However, not only are too many girls likely to drop out of school while many with a very low level of educational achievement have already done so, but it has been established that the adults who improve their literacy skills are usually those who have had at least some formal schooling.⁶³ Therefore by working to keep girls at school with its CSE and crowdsourcing projects, UNESCO is having a positive impact on the literacy of tomorrow's women.

Fostering long-term interest in literacy courses by women learners

The ICT-based Literacy Project for Girls and Women (PAJEF) is an initiative by the UNESCO Office in Dakar in collaboration with partners responsible for various aspects of its technical implementation (DALN,⁶⁴ CNRE,⁶⁵ DRTS,⁶⁶ CNEAP⁶⁷ and CNOAS⁶⁸). It is designed to improve the literacy skills of girls and women aged between 15 and 55 and explore the role ICTs can play in this. The project is run as part of the Global Partnership for the Education of Girls and Women, begun in 2011 by UNESCO and the United Nations Literacy Decade. The Literacy Project for Girls and Women (PAJEF) follows on from the JOKKO initiative implemented between 2007 and 2009 by Tostan in

61 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015*, p. 137.

62 Ibid.

63 Barakat, 2015.

64 Senegal's Directorate in charge of Literacy and National Languages.

65 Senegal's National Centre for Educational Resources.

66 Directorate for School Radio and Television.

67 Senegal's National Coalition for Alternative and Popular Education.

68 Senegal's National Coordinator of Literacy Providers.

partnership with UNICEF Innovation and the Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA), which found that “the desire to read and write text messages is a major motivating factor in engaging girls and women in literacy learning”.⁶⁹ Since use of information and communication technology (ICT) has increased significantly in Senegal in recent years, UNESCO’s strategy has been twofold. Firstly, it aims to improve the literacy skills of girls and women through use of information and communication technology (telephone tutoring, distance learning and broadcasting of educational television programmes) to create a sustainable literacy environment and improve basic literacy skills. Secondly, it offers further training to help teaching staff make better use of the online training programme through easy-to-use technology (courses available on CD, on television, online and on mobile applications). The software and other equipment have been designed to encourage participation and thus promote an active approach to learning. They can be readily adapted to the learners’ needs and skills. Considered a model for improving national literacy, the PAJEF project is being implemented in the seven regions of Senegal with the highest illiteracy rates (Diourbel, Fatick, Kédougou, Matam, Saint Louis, Dakar and Tambacounda). Given its positive results in Senegal, UNESCO instituted a three-year PAJEF project (2014-2017) in Nigeria on 10 March 2014. Although the situation is less alarming in Nigeria, since only 32% of adults are illiterate, it is still the case, as in Senegal, that the majority of them (60%) are women.



Figure 2.3 : PAJEF Project, Senegal.
(Source: UNESCO/Dakar)

“Now I write the names of my clients and the amounts they owe me; before it was they who did it for me.”

Maty SAGNA, Dakar

“As president of the group, I lead meetings with ease and I take my own notes, with skills in literacy, numeracy and social education. We can manage our own activities and raise awareness on issues of health and environment in the district.”

Aminata Ndiaye, Guédiawaye class suburb in Dakar

69 UIL, 2014, *Harnessing the Potential of ICTs for Literacy Teaching and Learning*, p. 44.

The PAJEF project: an apposite solution with remarkable results

In Senegal the project has had dramatic results, justifying its replication on a larger scale. They include the following: 6,500 girls and women enrolled and trained; 253 face-to-face classes opened; 3,000 girls and women having followed the online training programme; 3,000 women enrolled in alternative education programmes to develop their skills in sewing, hairdressing and agriculture; 135 classrooms and 7 regional teacher training centres equipped with Sankoré digital kits⁷⁰ comprising a laptop, an interactive beamer and an infrared stylus touch pen for writing on a digital board; 1,900 primary school girls with learning problems supported by the project to complete school; 60 lessons in Wolof broadcast on national television (RTS1) and 20 classrooms equipped with solar energy with support from local communities.

After a year of implementation in Nigeria, the PAJEF project has already achieved tangible results, promising every success for the project. Firstly, 830 facilitators, including radio and television producers and writers, have been trained to develop high-quality literacy modules and programmes that can be made available to the public through radio and television and other ICTs. Secondly, educational tools have been produced for face-to-face training. Lastly, 20,000 girls and women have already been enrolled and are receiving basic and advanced literacy training to provide them with basic literacy as well as life skills.



Figure 2.4: Two facilitators carrying out a training activity on the Gender and Transformative Leadership curriculum at a training workshop held in Abuja, Nigeria. [Source: UNESCO/Abuja]

⁷⁰ Named after a programme produced by an educational partnership between the GIP ENA (a public interest group for digital education in Africa), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNESCO Dakar.

Rethinking literacy training for women by bringing together UNESCO's various initiatives

The PAJEF project serves as a model for improving national literacy through new technology (ICT, mobile phones, TV broadcasts) and creating a sustainable literacy environment while achieving economies of scale.⁷¹ Not only Nigeria but also Gambia and Namibia have expressed an interest in the PAJEF project. However, project implementation has met with some serious problems, such as a shortage of IT equipment (computers, laptops and smartphones, etc.) to enable all participants enrolled for online modules to work and access resources, inadequate ICT training for teachers to ensure greater involvement in validation of online modules, and limited participation by the authorities despite work on sharing the online training approach. Obviously the manufacture of parts for electronic devices, development of application software, and ICT capacity-building are so many business opportunities for the private sector in developing countries that so far have not been fully exploited.

In addition, UNESCO should combine the PAJEF project with other programmes such as the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) that it launched in 2006 with the aim of encouraging governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and development agencies to promote and galvanize literacy work. It should also be combined with the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy established in 2005 through the generosity of the Government of the People's Republic of China. This prize recognizes the activities of outstanding individuals, governments or governmental agencies and NGOs whose work in literacy serves rural adults and out-of-school youth, particularly women and girls. The prize-winners for 2015 include one country in sub-Saharan Africa: Madagascar.

71 UNESCO, *Harnessing the Potential of ICTs for Literacy Teaching and Learning*, p. 46.

2.3 Women and society

In Africa, ancestral social relations based on traditional values and social cohesion have been and continue to be sorely tested by modern economies. Economic inequality and the exclusion of certain social groups are among the many factors of instability that exacerbate the loss of meaning of the African traditions of solidarity and sharing. But it may also be noted that the prevalence of certain practices rooted in ancestral traditions does not always encourage the promotion of freedoms and rights, in particular those of women and girls. In Africa, too, many conflicts and wars between and within states have worsened over the last three decades with consequences such as mass displacement of entire populations, deterioration of the humanitarian situation and destruction of social and cultural infrastructure.

To support the work of the sub-Saharan states, UNESCO has therefore taken the following steps, reflecting a range of approaches: supporting action to combat gender-based violence (2.3.1), promoting social inclusion of girls and women (2.3.2), building the capacities of women entrepreneurs (2.3.3) and offering alternatives to out-of-school teenage mothers (2.3.4).

2.3.1 Supporting action to combat gender-based violence (GBV)

Violence remains an everyday reality in sub-Saharan Africa. It is thus obvious that, as required by its Constitution, UNESCO's primary task is to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men and women, since it is in their minds that wars begin.⁷² The cause of violence is principally cultural, even if its consequences are to be found in the social and human spheres. A number of projects have been set up by UNESCO

⁷² UNESCO, 2013, *UNESCO's Programme of Action. Culture of Peace and Non-Violence. A vision in action*, p. 3.

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), mainly round the Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas (STAREC), accompanied by a raft of advocacy activities in other sub-Saharan countries. UNESCO is thus making an effective contribution to combined implementation of the AU's Aspiration 4 ("A peaceful and secure Africa") and Aspiration 5 ("An Africa with a strong cultural identity, values and ethics") by, on the one hand, facilitating the emergence of Africa in 2063 as a peaceful and secure continent, a conflict-free continent with harmony among communities at the lowest level, and, on the other, helping to preserve cultural heritage at all levels, including languages, customs and traditions that are not harmful.⁷³

(i) Support for STAREC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

In 2012 the Government of the DRC recorded over 18,795 cases of gender-based violence (GBV) in its integrated database, of which 89% was sexual abuse (82% being rape, including gang rape, and 7% sexual assault). The data also show that 98% of the victims were female, and the age group most affected was 12- to 17-year-old girls (36%).⁷⁴ A number of factors have been put forward to explain the phenomenon, including recurrent wars and armed conflict, the violence fostered by militia groups and the climate of impunity prevailing in the family, community and country as a whole. In these conditions, making people aware of the damaging effects of sexual violence and the need to eliminate it entails a range of action including advocacy, outreach, training, and social, legal and psychological support for victims. As UNESCO has pointed out in its programme of action for a culture of peace and non-violence, "Peace should never be taken for granted. [...] [L]asting peace stems from a culture of peace, a collective and individual ethos animating spontaneous as well as reflexive behaviours conducive to tolerance, openness and dialogue."⁷⁵

Support to victims through a range of UNESCO actions

In these circumstances the international community, including UNESCO, has joined forces not only to sound the alarm but also to provide assistance to the victims. For its part, UNESCO has been supporting STAREC through four flagship projects. The first is a research project, involving Congolese academics, on different perceptions

⁷³ AU Commission, *Agenda 2063*, p. 17.

⁷⁴ DRC Ministry for Gender, Family and Children, and UNPFA, June 2013, *Ampleur des violences sexuelles en RDC et actions de lutte contre le phénomène de 2011 à 2012*, pp. 13 and 16.

⁷⁵ UNESCO, *Culture of Peace and Non-Violence: A vision in action*, p. 10.

of and motives for sexual violence. This has provided a scientific basis for action to combat GBV. The second project concerns prevention of sexual violence and is targeting students as drivers for change within the universities of North and South Kivu and their own communities. The third project is part of a programme commonly called “Tupinge Ubakaji” that combats impunity, supports GBV victims and empowers women in Eastern DRC, where it is developing behaviour change communication (BCC). In essence, the BCC project is one strand of a five-year programme (2013-2018) being implemented jointly with UNDP, UNFPA and the UNJHRO. It covers three provinces in the East, conflict areas extending westwards and non-conflict areas. It has received financial support from the Government of Canada through the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) with a grant of US \$15,000,000, of which \$1,500,000 has been allocated to the BCC project led by the UNESCO Regional Office in Kinshasa. UNESCO’s fourth project relates to emergency protection of girls against HIV and GBV in universities and secondary schools in the province of Bas Congo. The idea was to provide an appropriate local response over a two-year period (2014-2015) to the emergency situation that might be created by an explosion in the HIV epidemic and sexual abuse of girls, through prevention and protection based on educational communication in the cities of Matadi and Boma. The project was implemented with financial support from the Government of Japan through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). It began in August 2014 and ended in July 2015. Its partners included the provincial government of Kongo Central, the Provincial Secretariat of Bas Congo, university and higher education institutions and the local media.

Socio-educational approaches to socialization of young people help to make the GBV prevention strategy sustainable

UNESCO work in connection with the STAREC plan has shown very promising results, although some projects are still in progress. DRC school and university curricula have mainstreamed gender and its links to development (universities) and human rights (primary and secondary schools). From this point of view it is clear that socio-educational approaches to the socialization of young people help to make the GBV prevention strategy sustainable. Three hundred academics are involved in research, while 50 secondary schools (30 in Matadi and 20 in Boma) now include HIV and life education modules following the training of 300 teachers. The foundation programme of the University of Goma includes a course on gender, development and society, and representations have been made to the Ministry of Higher Education for this module

to be extended to all universities in the DRC. Seventy-five academics have been involved in research and 60 women students have been trained as peer educators to run discussion groups at the university and in the community. Seventy-five governmental focal points have been chosen and 50 traditional and religious leaders and 200 students trained. Five communication strategies have been developed at the provincial level with cooperation from local stakeholders in three eastern provinces in conflict areas (North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri) and two western provinces in non-conflict areas (Kinshasa and Bandundu). A National Communication Strategy for GBV Prevention has been drawn up. In Bas Congo the project has targeted 20,000 young people, 70% of them girls, through interactive radio broadcasts, while 3201 young people have taken part in interactive programmes promoting gender equality, sexual education and reproductive health through community video forums and at university. In the 80 schools targeted, 51,355 pupils, of whom 24,490 were girls, attended family life education covering sexual education, gender and human rights.

Investing in a culture of peace and non-violence to eliminate GBV

UNESCO is trying to remove existing barriers to gender equality in the light of lessons learned. The project to eliminate cultural norms and practices leading to GBV here offers an opportunity to act more effectively on the causes of GBV. As Farida Shaheed points out, "gender discrimination is so frequently defended by reference to culture, religion and tradition that it seems safe to conclude that no social group has suffered greater violation of human rights in the name of culture than women"⁷⁶ and it is often in the name of culture that women have been refused the right to vote and are constantly subjected to violence and customs that deny them personhood. In this respect, UNESCO has stated that gender equality in cultural life recognizes that no members of society should be privileged or disadvantaged in rights, choices, opportunities, benefits and freedom because they are born, or identify as, male or female.⁷⁷ Hence the value of a UNESCO project specifically addressing the issue of eliminating harmful cultural norms and practices in Africa.

⁷⁶ UNESCO, *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*, Foreword.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

(ii) Project to eliminate cultural norms and practices leading to GBV in Kenya and Ethiopia

As in most areas across the globe, in sub-Saharan Africa the domestic and community environments are the primary sphere in which the values, attitudes and behaviours needed to build peace are developed. With this in mind, UNESCO has undertaken awareness-raising campaigns among Samburu communities in Kenya with the aim of eliminating cultural norms and practices leading to gender-based violence (GBV), such as forced/early marriage and illegal abortions.

A need to engage with local communities

Forced/early marriages are an obvious factor in gender inequality and in girls' abandonment of schooling, poor reproductive health, high fertility and in limited opportunities for sustainable development more generally.⁷⁸ Because of their strong cultural value, it has been imperative to engage with communities in order to preserve positive cultural values while at the same time persuading cultural agents of change that it is possible to abandon these cultural norms and values. It was with this in view that UNESCO undertook its awareness-raising campaigns in Kenya. They covered nine areas and were initially directed at young men known as "Morans" (warriors), male elders who endorsed these practices, and young boys who were later to become Morans. They subsequently targeted girls who were the direct victims, as well as the community's women elders who were either facilitators or matriarchs.

Given the scale of the phenomenon in a number of sub-Saharan countries, UNESCO is planning to step up this awareness-raising and make it a long-term activity. It may be compared to UNFPA's Berhane Hewan project in Ethiopia, which used an integrated approach to enhance awareness of girls' rights through the adaptation of positive cultural values. The Berhane Hewan project provided adolescent girls with education to help them delay marriage and promoted community conversations in which parents and religious leaders discussed child marriage and issues that affected the girls' well-being. Here again it was noted that community involvement was one of the keys to the programme's success inasmuch as 96% of participants were still unmarried after two years in the programme.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ UNFPA, 2011, *Gender at the Heart of ICPD: The UNFPA Strategic Framework on Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment*, pp. 48/49.

⁷⁹ UNFPA, 2008, *State of World Population 2008. Reaching Common Ground: Culture, Gender and Human Rights*, p. 41; UNFPA, 2008, *State of World Population 2008. Youth Supplement*, p. 17.

Making the project sustainable by creating Gender Research and Documentation Centres

For maximum effectiveness in permanently eliminating harmful cultural norms and practices and promoting human rights for girls and women, UNESCO has supported the establishment of a Regional Research and Documentation Centre on Women, Gender and Peace-Building involving eleven countries in the Great Lakes region. The Centre's clearly stated ambition is to be a hub for research and documentation on the combined subjects of women, gender and peace-building. Technical support from UNESCO has here taken the form of involvement in the Board of Directors, staff recruitment, building of the website, open days and provision of documentation for setting up certain projects. Following on from this, UNESCO provided support to the Government of Kenya in 2015 to set up a National Gender Research and Documentation Centre. In Cameroon, in a joint project with other partners (UN Women, UNFPA), the Organization produced a documentary for communities displaced by the crisis in the Central African Republic in order to combat gender-based violence (GBV). Another documentary called *Ramatou, la petite écolière* ("Little Schoolgirl Ramatou") was broadcast on television with great success in the Central Africa region. All these activities have inevitably promoted elimination of harmful traditional values and practices in Africa within the meaning of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

2.3.2 Promoting social inclusion of girls and women

In sub-Saharan Africa, social relations are generally based on solidarity, which is itself based on mutual assistance and loyalty, precluding isolation and loneliness. In practice this solidarity is expressed through such obvious facts as a sense of community welfare and help for vulnerable individuals, so that banishment or exclusion from the clan or family group may be seen as the ultimate sanction. Two UNESCO projects are helping to achieve the AU's Aspiration 6 concerning equal participation of all segments of the continent's population in the life of society regardless of gender, age or socioeconomic circumstances, for example. They are projects for inclusion of women with albinism and for the socio-economic rehabilitation of women accused of witchcraft.

(i) Project to promote rights and social inclusion of girls and women with albinism in Burundi

According to a recent UN report, people with albinism face stigma and exclusion, and, as usual, women are particularly at risk.

Extreme vulnerability of women with albinism

In Burundi, as in many sub-Saharan countries, people with albinism face numerous challenges, which will vary according to where they live. In Bujumbura for example, the risks are limited, whereas in the Ruyigi, Cankuzo and Makamba areas bordering Tanzania, the difficulties are much greater. In order to educate people about the various damage that may be caused, the UNESCO Regional Office in Dar es Salaam has organized a number of awareness-raising campaigns on protection and promotion of rights of people with albinism in seven of Burundi's seventeen provinces (Ruyigi, Cankuzo, Bujumbura, Makamba, Ngozi, Kirundo and Gitega). In tune with these UNESCO campaigns, the Government of Burundi articulated a national policy on people with albinism, following a spate of attacks on albinos in 2010. This is a good practice that should be followed by every state in sub-Saharan Africa facing problems of discrimination and violence against people with albinism. By describing women with albinism as a group of women in an extremely vulnerable situation, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women means to draw the attention of States Parties to the need to grant them special protection. In the same vein, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACoMHPR) has urged States Parties to take all measures necessary to ensure the effective protection of persons with albinism and members of their families.⁸⁰

Significant impact on albinos themselves and in the non-albino community

UNESCO's project has had encouraging results in its first phase, as almost 150 women with albinism were given access to income-generating activities so that they could find employment and avoid exclusion and discrimination, and some 220 girls and boys with albinism were enrolled in primary and secondary schools, partly as a result of close collaboration with the Écoles de l'Espoir association. UNESCO's strategy of cooperating with relevant NGOs to promote social inclusion and rights for people with

⁸⁰ ACoMHPR Resolution on the prevention of attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism, adopted on 5 November 2013 in Banjul (Gambia).

albinism has undoubtedly borne fruit. In addition to income-generating activities for women with albinism, the Sport for Peace project has allowed children and young people with albinism to take part in sports activities and television broadcasts to combat violence, stigma and discrimination and promote tolerance and global solidarity. Given the success of this pilot phase, not only among albinos themselves but also in the non-albino community, UNESCO is planning follow-up activities both nationally and regionally. The resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 2014 proclaiming 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day now offers an additional opportunity to consider the particular situation of women with albinism.

(iii) Project for socio-economic rehabilitation of women suffering exclusion because of witchcraft accusations, in Burkina Faso

In some communities in Burkina Faso, such as the Mossi, many ageing women are accused of witchcraft and forcibly banished from their communities, despite their vulnerability. They generally have a similar profile, being mostly illiterate, widowed and no longer of child-bearing age. Some have never had children, or their children have all left the village. The economic circumstances of these women are also unenviable, especially as they have lost any right to assistance from the community. Run by the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar, the project for socio-economic rehabilitation of women suffering exclusion because of witchcraft accusations follows a MOST⁸¹ assessment of the social inclusiveness of public policies in Burkina Faso.

Extensive advocacy work in consultation with all stakeholders

For maximum effectiveness, UNESCO has brought together the various stakeholders in Burkina Faso with the aim of ensuring the social and economic reintegration of these marginalized women, condemned to poverty and loneliness. The stakeholders include the Government of Burkina Faso, representatives of traditional and religious authorities, NGOs and local associations. UNESCO is using the Delwende and Cour de Solidarité Reception Centres in the Tanghin and Paspanga districts of Ouagadougou to accommodate these women prior to their eventual return to their communities. Since the project's launch in September 2014 the results have been satisfactory, to say the least. Two centres have been specially adapted, and 352 women are living in

81 MOST: Management of Social Transformations.

them. In addition, all the women residents have received training in how to make soap and *sumbala* (a condiment made from African locust bean seeds). Extensive advocacy work is regularly undertaken in consultation with all stakeholders. In this respect, the project could be broadened to encourage full involvement of local communities in other sub-Saharan countries where the issue is still of concern.

2.3.3 Strengthening the capacity of women entrepreneurs

For women, economic empowerment is the capacity, above all, “to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes”.⁸² This explains why the UN has made MDG 3 (“Promote gender equality and empower women”) a linchpin for achieving the other Millennium Development Goals.⁸³

Women remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation

Women’s economic empowerment can therefore be seen as fundamental to strengthening women’s rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society. It is also accepted that women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home.⁸⁴ Yet, they remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Gender discrimination means that women often end up in insecure, low-wage jobs, and it curtails their access to economic assets such as land and loans. Because of this, UNESCO held two training workshops in Kenya on financial planning, management and resource mobilization for women entrepreneurs from 25 to 27 April 2015 in Ugunja (Siaya) and from 30 April to 2 May 2015 in Chwele (Bungoma). Facilitated by the Africa Centre for People, Institutions and Society (ACEPIS), these workshops were attended by 40 women entrepreneurs (20 from each region).

82 OECD, April 2011, *Women’s Economic Empowerment*. Issues paper, DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender/>), p. 6.

83 APF, *L’autonomisation économique des femmes dans l’espace francophone*, Session Report, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 5-8 July 2011, p. 3.

84 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment>.



“Such training could not have come at a better time than this. Since I started my business 3 years ago I have never had proper financial records for my business. I am happy that the skills and knowledge that I have gained from this workshop will not only enable me to expand my business but also make it sustainable”.

Ruth Chelongo, a participant.

Figure 2.5: Participants during the training workshop for women entrepreneurs on financial planning, management and resource mobilization. (Source: ACEPIS)

Equipping women entrepreneurs with knowledge and skills covering the basics of financial planning and management

UNESCO’s strategy is to equip women entrepreneurs with knowledge and skills covering the basics of financial planning and management so that they can track and analyse financial information in their businesses. The intention has also been to improve their ability to explore and select appropriate methods of generating income for their business activities. Because women’s empowerment is about them taking control of their lives, i.e. setting their own agendas, it is necessary for women to gain skills, build self-confidence, solve problems and develop self-reliance. But there may here arise the question of the actual impact of such action, a question all the more relevant as it basically entails identifying the various aspects of women’s economic empowerment. The UN has taken three: economic opportunity, improved legal status and rights, and inclusion and participation in economic decision-making.

Thus in prioritizing support for women entrepreneurs, UNESCO is using economic opportunity to promote a number of activities meant to build women’s entrepreneurial skills by creating a favourable business climate and increasing their management skills.⁸⁵ Some international organizations have already implemented projects along these lines. In 2009 UNIFEM, now UN Women, set up a multilateral Fund

85 UNDP, 2008, *Innovative Approaches to Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment*, p. 9.

for Gender Equality to advance women's political and economic empowerment.⁸⁶ In 2007, the World Bank, for its part, launched a Gender Action Plan to promote gender mainstreaming in the sectors of land, employment, agriculture, finance and infrastructure.⁸⁷ In this respect, the "Trade at hand - business opportunities through cell phones" initiative⁸⁸ might be a way of expanding business opportunities for women entrepreneurs by linking rural producers to urban markets. This capacity-building must be underpinned by opportunities in the legal and institutional fields. Hence the importance of greater inclusion of women in national parliaments – a criterion for democratic good governance, since increasing women's voice in decision-making bodies facilitates their inclusion in the economic sphere.

2.3.4 Offering alternatives to out-of-school teenage mothers

For sub-Saharan Africa overall, the statistics on retention of girls in the school system are very poor. Forty-two per cent of school-age children leave school early, and over half of them are girls. In Tanzania, for example, many adolescent girls and teenage mothers drop out of school owing to pregnancy or forced/early marriage. But a teenage pregnancy often has serious repercussions: not just for the health of mother and child, since perinatal deaths are 50% higher among babies born to mothers under 20 than among those born to mothers aged 20 to 29,⁸⁹ but also socially and economically, with detrimental consequences for the girls, their families and their communities at large, particularly if they drop out of school as a result. A number of factors contribute to these unwanted pregnancies, including social and cultural representations, family and community pressures, poor educational and employment prospects and inadequate sexuality education.

86 UN Women, 2014, *Annual Report 2013-2014*.

87 World Bank, 2006, *Gender Equality as Smart Economics. A World Bank Group Gender Action Plan (Fiscal Years 2007-2010)*: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/GAPNov2.pdf>

88 OECD, *Women's Economic Empowerment*, p. 11.

89 WHO, 2011, *Guidelines on Preventing Early Pregnancy and Poor Reproductive Outcomes Among Adolescents in Developing Countries*.



Figure 2.6: UNESCO's support to out-of-school young mothers in Tanzania. (Source : UNESCO/ Dar es Salaam)

Appropriate solutions to give these girls a chance to continue their schooling, or else training in life skills

Run by the UNESCO Regional Office in Dar es Salaam, the training programme in Tanzania began in 2014 and ended in May 2015. It was organized in two stages: firstly, basic courses covering communication skills, basic skills and simple mathematics, and secondly, general skills, entrepreneurship, cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender equality and the environment, ethics, and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health. The project's modest but visible results invite caution. Almost 220 teenage mothers were enrolled in the programme, of whom 80% wanted to pursue the open and distance learning (ODL) offered by the Institute of Adult Education, while ten training centres, five in Shinyanga and five in Kahama, provided alternative training. However, many countries still have problems offering alternatives to adolescent girls and teenage mothers who are outside the education system.

Among the persistent challenges identified in UNESCO's *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015* as barriers to achieving the EFA goals in Africa are, first and foremost, girls' low enrolment rates compared with boys' and a high drop-out rate. Thus by offering these adolescent girls and teenage mothers alternatives to the street, UNESCO has put in place a pragmatic and highly relevant strategy. It has come up with appropriate channels for giving any of these girls who so wishes an opportunity to continue her schooling. The Institute of Adult Education, UNESCO's main implementing partner for this project, has opened training centres in Shinyanga and Kahama for the open and distance learning (ODL) programme. For girls not wanting to pursue their schooling, the UNESCO project offers practical training enabling them to gain basic life skills such as sewing, hairdressing, soap-making, cooking and growing vegetables. Since it

addresses a recurring problem in all sub-Saharan countries, this UNESCO project for teenage mothers who have dropped out of the education system owing to pregnancy or early marriage is undoubtedly destined to endure. It would nevertheless be improved by also seeking to alter the girls' sociocultural environment in order to make school a greater part of it. We may here recall the project for eliminating norms and practices leading to GBV that UNESCO has introduced in Kenya and Ethiopia, which again demonstrates the complementary and cross-disciplinary nature of some UNESCO programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

2.4 Women, human rights and democratic governance

Representation of women in politics has improved since the 1990s owing to progress made by numerous African countries in terms of governance. However, women's leadership and political participation are still restricted in a number of countries, since women are under-represented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected office, the civil service, the private sector or academia.⁹⁰ This is due to both structural and short-term barriers, as women's under-representation is sometimes the result of discriminatory national laws and institutions that still limit women's ability to vote or stand for office and sometimes owing to a lack of means, restricting women's opportunities for receiving training, making contacts and having the necessary resources to become effective leaders. Obviously, we are still a long way from the Vision put forward in the AU's Agenda 2063 (Aspiration 3: "An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law"), in which Africa will have undergone a deepening of the culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law. UNESCO's activities in Africa over the past two biennia are thus a logical part of this paradigm: promoting women's political leadership and their human rights. Progress in political representation of women in sub-Saharan Africa has been made possible through education, advocacy for democracy, peace and human rights, training for the media and community stakeholders, awareness-raising among young people, etc.

90 UN Women, iKNOW politics, *Women's leadership and political participation*: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation>

2.4.1 Strengthening the political leadership of women

(i) “Gender and Transformative Leadership”: a contextualized curriculum for Nigeria

Together with the UNESCO Office in Dakar and in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, Nigeria’s Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Rutgers University and African universities (in Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana and Liberia), the UNESCO Regional Office in Abuja has been finalizing a contextualized curriculum for Nigeria, called “Gender and Transformative Leadership”, with the help of a regional workshop. The curriculum’s purpose is to build women’s leadership capacities in all fields, thus equipping women to compete for decision-making positions through appointment or election.

For a wider impact, the workshop’s participants were drawn from Nigeria’s six geopolitical zones and selected on the basis of their experience and expertise in leadership and gender equality issues. At the end of the workshop the participants adopted the modules making up the Gender and Transformative Leadership curriculum, which is generally designed to build the capacity of universities to develop common curricula on women and transformative leadership and also to improve the ability of government agencies and civil society organizations to promote gender equality. The curriculum thus adopted has been used to train over 200 facilitators across Nigeria and is currently in use in the English-speaking countries of ECOWAS. The fact remains that the lack of political will to follow declarations with actions to remedy gender inequality in terms of access, participation and promotion of human rights for women is still a major challenge in sub-Saharan Africa.

2.4.2 Strengthening women human rights

(i) Project to strengthen communication skills of women County Assembly members in Kenya

UNESCO set up its project to strengthen communication skills of women County Assembly members in Kenya as part of its capacity-building for women politicians. As a result, fifteen Kenyan women who were County Assembly members attended two days of training in media and communication skills on 7 and 8 April 2014 in Kisumu (Kenya).

The training workshop was organized by the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi in partnership with the African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC). It sought to build the capacities of women Members of County Assemblies (MCAs) by equipping them with media and communication skills to advance democratic governance in their counties and encourage county governments to embrace gender equality principles as a prerequisite for sustainable development. During the training, participants learnt how to produce gender-sensitive reports while working with the media and how to leverage gender equality for development, especially with the current devolved system of governance in Kenya.



“The media in Kenya has always failed to use its priming and framing abilities to capture the voices of women County Assembly Members. This training provides us with a great opportunity to gain knowledge and sharpen skills for future engagement with the media to increase coverage of issues affecting women in our counties.”

Lucy Nyagithii, Member of the County Delegated Legislation Committee

Figure 2.7 : Participants at the workshop in Kisumu, Kenya.
(Source : African Woman and Child Feature Service (AWC))

2.5 Women and science

According to the AU Vision,⁹¹ "Africa will by 2063 be a continent of shared prosperity, which finances its own development, and where [...] well-educated citizens and [a] skills revolution [will be] underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society".⁹² Science, technology and innovation (STI) is there identified as the key driver of economic progress and sustainable development, which, for Africa, will depend largely on the use of its human and natural resources. All recent African declarations tend to agree on this question.⁹³ UNESCO shares common ground with this AU Vision through its emphasis on harnessing knowledge and STI for sustainable socio-economic development in Africa and has translated this into action in four key projects: making science education accessible to women (2.5.1), involving women in science (2.5.2), involving women in preserving biodiversity and food security (2.5.3) and promoting women's participation in climate change adaptation (2.5.4).

2.5.1 Making science education accessible to women

In the Africa of 2063 envisaged by the AU, at least 70% of all secondary school leavers will go on to tertiary education, with 70% graduating in the fields of science, technology and innovation, thus laying the basis for competitive economies.⁹⁴ In synergy with this AU Vision, UNESCO is seeking to promote STI education, firstly in teacher training and secondly in careers guidance for girls, through two important and imaginative projects.

91 Cf. Aspiration 1: "A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development".

92 AU Commission, *Agenda 2063*, pp. 10/11.

93 See, for example, the Ministerial Declaration in Nairobi (Kenya) at the First Africa Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Youth Employment, Human Capital Development and Inclusive Growth on 3 April 2012, or the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology (AMCOST V) in Brazzaville in 2012.

94 AU Commission, *Agenda 2063*, p. 12.

(i) Project on gender-sensitive training of teaching staff and head teachers to promote girls' and women's access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STM) education in Kenya and Lesotho

Despite progress in access to primary education in sub-Saharan Africa, gender disparities persist throughout the education system. They are apparent, for example, in the relatively small number of girls and women taking subjects such as the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STM), leading to their under-representation in professions requiring knowledge and skills in these fields. There is now a better understanding of the various reasons for this. They include cultural perceptions of women's role and place in society, domestic poverty, a general environment of non-gender-sensitive practices and teachers prejudiced in favour of boys.

UNESCO's key strategic innovation: involving local communities

Faced with these challenges, UNESCO has helped to introduce an enabling environment and creative teaching methods allowing teaching staff and head teachers to build their capacities in order to attract and ensure effective participation of girls and young women in science subjects. This strategy entails peer review, mentoring and guidance. In addition, the project seeks to ascertain the constraints preventing actual participation of girls and young women in science subjects at school while involving the whole community in the process of programme implementation. The STM project was implemented for a three-year period (2011-2014) in two southern African countries (Kenya and Lesotho) by the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi with financial support from the GEMS Foundation. As a result of the training in Kenya, 1,800 schoolchildren and 10 Ministry of Education officials benefited by the project, and 30 head teachers and 60 secondary-school teachers were able to ensure gender-sensitive teaching and learning of science and mathematics. In Lesotho, 3,240 children in primary and secondary schools benefited by the project, and 48 teachers and head teachers were trained. Three primary and three secondary schools have become model schools for gender-sensitive teaching and learning of mathematics and science.

Acknowledging the unique perspectives of women scientists and women knowledge-holders, including indigenous and traditional knowledge

The STM project is very much in keeping with a succession of UNESCO strategies, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET), which was approved

in October 2012 by a conference of education ministers from fifteen West African countries. In addition, the BEAR⁹⁵ project, implemented over a five-year period (2011-2016) in five countries in Southern Africa (Botswana, DRC, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia), seeks to transform technical and vocational education and training in the SADC. Like the BEAR project, the STM project has helped to set standards through its work in support of the global science agenda. It thus ensures that the unique perspectives of “women scientists and women knowledge-holders, including of indigenous and traditional knowledge, are incorporated in solutions to the various challenges [...] such as climate change, biodiversity loss [and] freshwater management”.⁹⁶ However, UNESCO must be careful that by splitting up its activities it does not undermine its work on the ground.

(ii) Project on mentoring in STEM for informed career choices in Kenya

UNESCO’s project called “Mentoring in STEM for informed career choices” seeks to reduce gender disparities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at all levels of education and research in Kenya. The project receives financial support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and is planned to last three years (2014-2017). It arises out of the under-representation of girls and women in science, technology and mathematics already noted in the STM project. In the present project UNESCO is mentoring secondary-school girls in their first and second years to develop an interest in science subjects while encouraging them to take up careers in science, technology and engineering. The mentoring is organized through week-long Scientific Camps of Excellence. To ensure the programme’s success, UNESCO has mustered key contributors such as universities’ civil engineering departments and the engineering industry, which have thus given these girls an opportunity to see and experience the training and working conditions of scientists and civil engineers through visits to various laboratories.

Genuine opportunities through regional research and scientific mobility

The mentoring programme has been showing satisfactory results since 2014, as 443 secondary-school girls have been mentored and the skills of 40 science teachers have

95 Better Education for Africa’s Rise.

96 See the excellent book by Laurence Pourchez, 2016, *Women’s knowledge: traditional medicine and nature: Mauritius, Reunion and Rodrigues*, UNESCO.

been improved with regard to gender-responsive science teaching. The project's key aim is to combat the persistence of gender disparities in the natural sciences. Firstly, it makes it possible to collect and evaluate data in order to choose better operational policies, if necessary, which can then be shared as good practice, and secondly it helps to build the capacities of women working in the natural sciences and promote women researchers in this field as role models across the world, including Africa.



Figure 2.8: Demonstration on drones in a physics lab.



Figure 2.9: A female scientist taking students through her research in a physics laboratory.



Figure 2.10: Empowering through demonstration and practice.

[Source of Figures: UNESCO/Ochanda]

In this respect, the regional economic communities (RECs) are playing an ever larger part in scientific integration in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in recent years ECOWAS and the SADC have both adopted regional Science, Technology and Information (STI) strategies that complement the continent's ten-year plans. For its part, the East African Community (EAC) has instructed the Inter-University Council for East Africa to establish a common higher education area. Thus for UNESCO there are genuine opportunities for regional research and scientific mobility. Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (2005-2014) recommended introducing regional networks of centres of excellence and greater mobility of scientists across the continent. In 2012, the West African Economic and Monetary Union named fourteen centres of excellence, a label entitling them to financial support over two years, while the World Bank launched a similar project in 2014 in the form of loans. Countries in central and eastern Africa took part in the Plan of Action and embraced the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) that succeeded it. Five African institutes for mathematical sciences have been set up in Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania. Since 2011, the African Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI) has been helping improve the quality of data for Africa.

2.5.2 Involving women in science

One of UNESCO’s flagship activities for women and science consists in support for women research scientists, thus tying in with the AU Vision for 2063, in which “millions of Africans would have been trained, educated and skilled with special emphasis on science, technology, research and innovation” (under Aspiration 1). In this respect, the L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science partnership, like the Gender in SITE programme, offers a way of celebrating women role models and supporting and inspiring girls and women who are embarking on careers in science.

(i) L’Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science partnership

The L’Oréal-UNESCO partnership is in keeping with UNESCO’s task of fostering the development of scientific and other knowledge, working for parity and combating all forms of discrimination. Its programme highlights scientific excellence and encourages talent through the L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Awards, made every year to five outstanding women scientists – one per continent – for the contribution of their research and the strength of their commitment, and through national and international fellowships, awarded annually to promote the work of young women scientists at the doctoral or post-doctoral level and to encourage them to pursue their careers in science.

Figure 2.11: Winners of the L’Oréal-UNESCO Award since its inception.
 [Source: UNESCO]

1998	Nigeria	2009	South Africa
2000	South Africa	2010	South Africa
2001	Nigeria	2011	Kuwait
2002	Egypt	2012	South Africa
2003	Egypt	2013	Nigeria
2004	South Africa	2014	Kenya
2005	Tunisia	2015	Morocco
2006	Tunisia		
2007	Mauritius		
2008	Tunisia		

A benchmark for scientific excellence in Africa

The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme has become a benchmark for scientific excellence internationally and in Africa. Since 1998, the L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards have recognized over 87 award-winners from 30 countries, including two who went on to receive the Nobel Prize.⁹⁷ More specifically, in 2015, the International Year of Light, which celebrated science and knowledge throughout the world, the five women recognized were distinguished by their scientific accomplishments and the fact that they had demonstrated that women could play a key role and contribute to scientific progress in a still largely male-dominated field. For Africa, Professor Rajaâ Cherkaoui El Moursli from Mohammed V University in Rabat (Morocco) received the award for her key contribution to one of the greatest discoveries in physics: proof of the existence of the Higgs boson, the particle responsible for the creation of mass in the universe.

The L'Oréal-UNESCO fellowships have been granted every year since 2000 to fifteen promising young women scientists at the doctoral or post-doctoral level (three for each region) to encourage international scientific cooperation and the development of cross-cultural networks. This programme was replaced in 2015 by International Rising Talent Grants. Similarly, in 2007 the AU launched its Mwalimu Nyerere⁹⁸ Scholarship Scheme with the aim of enabling young Africans to study at leading African universities with a binding agreement that beneficiaries would work in an AU Member State for at least the same duration as the scholarship period after graduation. And to make this opportunity more widely available to young African women postgraduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and Education, in 2013 the AU Commission made a special call for applications (solely for women applicants).⁹⁹

Opportunities for scientific career development for women

By allowing young women researchers to advance in their chosen scientific fields, the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme undoubtedly offers them opportunities for career development. It also provides discussion, networking and

97 They are Professor Elizabeth Blackburn and Professor Ada Yonath, who both won the L'Oréal-UNESCO Award in 2008, and then in 2009 were awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine and the Nobel Prize for Chemistry respectively. See: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/gender-and-science/for-women-in-science-programme/>

98 Named after the first President of Tanzania.

99 Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme, Call for Applications, 2013: hrst.au.int/en/sites/default/french_female

support by organizing meetings and training sessions allowing grant-holders to share their scientific discoveries fully and establish new professional contacts.¹⁰⁰

Similar work has been done by the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), with support from the Elsevier Foundation. Since its scheme was set up in 2010, a total of 44 awards have been made to women in developing countries working in science (twenty in African countries). Like the L'Oréal-UNESCO awards, the Elsevier Foundation awards recognize and encourage women working in scientific research in the South at a relatively early stage in their careers (up to ten years after obtaining a doctorate). The awards have had a tangible impact on the research environment both regionally and internationally. Award winners each receive the sum of 5,000 US dollars and an all-expenses-paid trip to attend the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).¹⁰¹ The resulting development of networks of centres of excellence across the continent should facilitate scientific mobility and greater information-sharing, provided that barriers to free movement of scientists are removed. In this respect, the decision taken by Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda in 2014 to adopt a single tourist visa for all three countries is a step in the right direction.

(ii) “GenderInSITE” programme

In the scientific field UNESCO seeks not only to lend weight to figures who can act as role models for women in science but also to build women’s capacities in engineering and the natural sciences. The Organization has thus initiated international “GenderInSITE” campaigns to promote the role of women in science, innovation, technology and engineering.

Need to support and increase the promotion of women in SITE

Gender in SITE sets out to demonstrate how applying a gender lens to science, innovation, technology and engineering can provide deeper insights, more effective programmes and more sustainable outcomes. Through regional focal points such as the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and the African Network of Scientific and Technological Institutions (ANSTI), UNESCO is working with researchers and

100 Of these networks, the most representative is the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World, supported by The World Academy of Sciences, which work to promote science in developing countries and increase dialogue between women in science.

101 In 2015 the award-winners will travel to Washington D.C.

policymakers on issues such as mapping the nuances of local development challenges. According to the *UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030*,¹⁰² the representation of women graduates in scientific fields is improving in sub-Saharan Africa. The figures speak for themselves, particularly in agricultural science, where African eight countries have at least 40% of all the continent's women graduates. This trend must be supported and increased. Thus by raising the profile of women research scientists, the L'Oréal-UNESCO and Elsevier-OWSD awards and grants provide an incentive and an example for the next generation. They draw attention to women's scientific achievement and contribution to science, especially in the life sciences and physical sciences. And since this new knowledge will not only increase women's involvement in decision-making on the allocation, use and protection of resources but also build the development capacity of countries in Africa, the promotion of science, innovation, technology and engineering constitutes a major opportunity.

2.5.3 Involving women in preserving biodiversity and food security

Africa is one of the areas of the world most vulnerable to climate change, and the Sahel is particularly affected: all the reports are in agreement on this point.¹⁰³ The problems arise from factors such as rising sea levels, flooding, coastal erosion and drought and represent a challenge to humankind's survival, since they endanger biodiversity, weaken ecosystems, alter seasonal cycles and adversely affect food production. As far as biodiversity is concerned, a quarter of the planet's almost 4,700 species of mammals are to be found in Africa. And women are suffering the consequences of climate change much more than men. For example, because of desertification they are obliged to spend more time travelling long distances to get resources such as water and firewood, leaving them less time for education or finding other sources of income.¹⁰⁴ Thus in its various activities UNESCO is emphasizing the key role of women in preserving biodiversity on the one hand and food security on the other.

102 UNESCO, 2015, *UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030*, Executive Summary, p. 4.

103 UN, 2015, Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris Agreement), 11 December 2015.

104 UNESCO, 2015, *UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030*.



Figure 2.12: Underground tanks: Showing how they dug for constructing the tank.



Figure 2.13: Women demonstrating how they have been suffering carrying water in jerricans and dancing in praise of UNESCO for the support on rain water harvesting.

“We have been carrying these jerricans for too long; thanks to UNESCO for helping us to finally put them down.” “Our children will no longer have to fetch water from the river before coming to school; now they will do well in school”.

(Source of Figures: UNESCO/Ochanda)

(i) Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR) project in Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania

Sustainable use of natural resources by men and women for the benefit of humankind is the keystone of UNESCO’s Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR) project. This concern, which is part of UNESCO’s “Man and Biosphere (MAB)” programme, ties in with the AU Vision, in which “the continent while attaining prosperity maintains healthy ecosystems and preserves the African and global environment” (Aspiration 1).¹⁰⁵ The GEBR project is being funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and implemented over a three-year period (2013-2016) in three sub-Saharan countries: Ghana (Bia Biosphere Reserve), Nigeria (Omo Biosphere Reserve) and Tanzania (East Usambara Biosphere Reserve). The project is an effective method of reducing poverty through biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. It also covers immediate adverse effects on biodiversity and focuses on issues such as cumulative pressure on ecosystems owing to population growth and the negative social implications of human activity in the areas concerned.¹⁰⁶

Sustainable management of natural resources is a key concern of UNESCO

UNESCO has adopted a consultative and collaborative approach to selection and training for livelihood activities and in the design and implementation of other related activities. For greater effectiveness, there has been extensive consultation with local

¹⁰⁵ AU Commission, May 2014, *Agenda 2063*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁶ UNDP, 2014, *Human Development Report 2014. Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience*.

communities about biosphere reserves, thus enabling the parties concerned to ensure the project's success. On the one hand, the beneficiaries receive in-depth training on alternative livelihoods and in product marketing and basic business management skills, and, on the other, they are provided with the tools and equipment needed to start up their businesses, which must subsequently be reimbursed. Furthermore, to ensure gender-sensitive participation by all stakeholders and achieve the 40% target for women stakeholders, a gender specialist from Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency has worked with the project implementation team to carry out an initial survey-based gender assessment in communities.



Figure 2.14: Cross section of participants at one of the Alternative Livelihood training sessions at Omo Biosphere Reserve in Ogun State, Nigeria.
(Source : UNESCO/Abuja)



Figure 2.15: A group of beneficiaries undergoing training.
(Source : UNESCO/Accra)

Limited success owing to women's choice of livelihoods

In Ghana, success has been limited in terms of the total number of women beneficiaries. Although the 40% target for women beneficiaries has been met (231 beneficiaries, of which 91 are women), 57 of these women opted for palm oil production, a female-dominated activity. As a result, the key challenge for UNESCO is to ensure that more women enrol not only for female-dominated livelihoods but also for activities such as beekeeping, which is usually preferred by men. To meet this challenge in the long term, the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar is promoting educational activities aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour and is also introducing programmes to leverage scientific knowledge and encourage adoption of sustainable development policies. A number of projects along these lines are being carried out. Firstly, there is the "Policy brief on transboundary resources in Africa: case study of Lake Chad", a science diplomacy project set up by UNESCO in collaboration with the Lake Chad

Basin Commission (LCBC),¹⁰⁷ the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. It seeks to develop an integrated approach to conservation of Lake Chad's biological and cultural diversity and sustainable management of its natural resources.

The project is all the more important as, over past years, the lake's surface area has shrunk by almost 90%, resulting in a substantial decline in natural resources and considerable instability in the region's environment and ecosystems, while at the same time the population has grown to 30 million. Secondly, as an example of good practice there is the natural region of Ferlo in north-eastern Senegal, which in 2012 became Senegal's fifth biosphere reserve under UNESCO's MAB Programme. Similarly, since 2010 the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the EAC and the SADC have been implementing a joint five-year initiative known as the Tripartite Programme on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. Lastly, in 2013, SADC ministers approved preparation of a regional programme on climate change adaptation, and, in 2015, delegations from African countries demanded and obtained a reference in the Paris Agreement to "the need to promote universal access to sustainable energy in developing countries, in particular in Africa"¹⁰⁸ and a pledge of \$10 billion from developed countries by 2020 to support green energy in Africa.

(ii) Project on building women's skills for food security and agricultural development in Kenya

In sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture continues to suffer from bad land management and insufficient investment. And despite the continent's pledge in the Maputo Declaration (2003) to spend at least 10% of GDP on agriculture, only a few countries have met this target.¹⁰⁹ However, there have been some attempts to spur research and development. Botswana, for example, set up an innovative platform in 2008 for commercializing and diversifying agriculture, while Zimbabwe is planning to establish two new universities of agricultural sciences and technology. According to the FAO, 47% of irrigation labour is carried out by women.¹¹⁰

107 The LCBC comprises Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Niger and Nigeria.

108 UN, Paris Agreement of 22 December 2015.

109 UNESCO, 2013, *Climate Change in Africa: A Guidebook for Journalists*.

110 UNESCO and WWAP, 2009, *Gender and Water Data: Project for gender-sensitive water monitoring, assessment and reporting*, UNESCO, WWAP, Region of Umbria, Republic of Italy.

More vulnerable in recent years, Kenya has seen a rise in the cost of living owing, amongst other things, to an escalation in oil and food prices, climate fluctuations and women's lack of access to land. Consequently, a large part of the population are likely to suffer from food insecurity as a result of crop failure, loss of livestock and water shortages. This is why the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi decided to use the project on building women's skills for food security and agricultural development to empower women with regard to water management (whether for drinking or irrigation) and increase their agriculture production by methods that are economically viable and socially acceptable.

Despite mixed results, gender is now on the international water agenda

Central to UNESCO's project has been the training of two groups of women in the Kenyan counties of Makueni and Kajiado in rainwater harvesting and management of aquatic resources, which ultimately enabled them to become self-sufficient in foods such as tomatoes and other vegetables. The project also equipped 150 women and 20 men with the skills to build water tanks. But despite mixed results owing to the increasing desertification of a number of regions in Kenya, gender is now on the "International Water Agenda". From the Dublin Statement in 1992 to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in 2002, through General Comment No. 15 on the right to water adopted by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in 2002) to the 2008 UNICEF declaration on water and sanitation in the MDGs, the issue of gender has been formally recognized. This recognition internationally and even regionally is in part explained by the fact that women represent at least half the workforce in agriculture and food production, and if they are unable to obtain or control the necessary water, both local and global food production are put at risk. Nevertheless, these commitments have yet to influence the real practice of policymaking and priority-setting.¹¹¹ On top of this, there is an urgent need to maintain the transversality between some UNESCO programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, including the MDG Achievement Fund's Children, Food Security and Nutrition programme being run by the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar, which helps to prevent and treat child malnutrition in highly vulnerable regions by organizing functional literacy courses.

111 J. Seager, 2015, *Sex-disaggregated indicators for water assessment, monitoring and reporting*, UNESCO and WWAP.

2.5.4 Promoting women's participation in climate change adaptation

Water is an almost universal input into all areas of human activity, but its availability is now substantially affected by climate change. However, as the UN World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) has pointed out, while climate change is a global phenomenon affecting everybody, it is women who bear the brunt of evolving climate models.¹¹² Yet although women's vulnerability to climate change has been recognized, their crucial role in supporting their households and communities and adapting to climate change and mitigating its worst effects should be emphasized,¹¹³ since it is women who are behind many of the innovative and sustainable solutions to environmental challenges across the world. As early as 1995, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the environment was identified as one of the twelve critical areas of concern requiring specific commitments from states to advance women's rights.¹¹⁴

No realistic water assessments without a gender perspective

In sub-Saharan Africa, women's freedom of action is often circumscribed by cultural norms and laws that restrict their scope for economic activity, especially as many of them depend on agriculture and produce almost 80% of the area's food.¹¹⁵ This explains why the WWAP has pointed out that no water assessment can be realistic without a gender perspective.¹¹⁶ It is universally acknowledged that women are the main stakeholders as far as water and sanitation are concerned and that men and women generally have different needs, practices and priorities in these two fields.¹¹⁷ Likewise, there is ample evidence that lack of access to water and sanitation directly diminishes women's and girls' health, education, employment, income and

112 Ibid.

113 UNESCO, *Climate Change and Gender Equality*, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/gender-and-science/cross-cutting-issues/climate-change-and-gender-equality/>; UNESCO, *Climate Change and COP 21*, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002336/233685e.pdf>

114 C. Jouanno, 2015, *L'égalité entre hommes et femmes pour la justice climatique*, Rapport d'information du Sénat, No. 45, p. 5.

115 FAO, *Factsheet on Women and Sustainable Food Security* (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0171e/x0171e02.htm>); R. Lefton, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Are Key to Addressing Global Poverty*, Center for American Progress, 2013.

116 SEAGER (J), 2015, Indicateurs sexospécifiques pour l'évaluation, le suivi et la production des rapports sur les ressources en eau, UNESCO et WWAP.

117 R. Sommer, 1966, Man's Proximate Environment, *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 59-70.

empowerment in ways that are distinct from their male counterparts. The challenge is therefore to increase agricultural productivity while bringing value-added to the, largely female, agricultural workforce. Moreover, agricultural development supported by the food-processing industry may be seen as an opportunity to boost growth and economic transformation in sub-Saharan Africa.

UNESCO promotes women's participation in high-level processes shaping the climate change agenda

Having already mainstreamed gender in all its activities, working groups, committees, programmes and projects relating to climate-change adaptation and mitigation, UNESCO is now seeking to promote women's participation in high-level processes shaping the climate change agenda and is encouraging a better understanding and greater recognition of women's specific needs and roles in action to combat climate change at all levels worldwide.¹¹⁸

To this end, the Organization has been working with France, the host country of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, to ensure that full account is taken of women's role in combating climate change and that further gender equality and women's rights advocacy are mainstreamed both in national policy and in the various strands of the text to be adopted in Paris at the 21st UN Climate Change Conference (COP21).¹¹⁹ But it is regrettable that the issue of gender equality, although recognized in the Paris Agreement adopted on 12 December 2015 appears only in the preamble, having been removed from Article 2 setting out the Agreement's objectives. UNESCO will therefore continue its awareness-raising and advocacy regarding the need to give a greater role to women, recognize their specific situation when implementing strategies and ensure their active participation in decision-making on the environment at all levels (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action).¹²⁰

118 UNESCO, *Climate Change and Gender Equality*.

119 C. Jouanno, *L'égalité entre hommes et femmes pour la justice climatique*.

120 UN Women, 2014, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Beijing + 5 Political Declaration and Outcome*, pp. 155-164.

2.6 Women, communication and Information

Free flow of information necessitates enshrinement and promotion of the right to freedom of expression (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 9), including its corollaries of press freedom and freedom of information.¹²¹ UNESCO's key objectives in this field include overcoming gender imbalances universally and reducing poverty through communication and information.¹²² In practice, UNESCO must combine work on promoting gender equality in the media with work on gender representation in media content.¹²³ Access to information and knowledge is a powerful catalyst for providing women and girls with equal opportunities for self-fulfilment and prosperity in the social, political, economic and cultural areas.¹²⁴ But over the past two biennia, UNESCO has tended to focus on two flagship projects: establishing and rehabilitating community radio stations (2.6.1) and encouraging better media representation of women (2.6.2).

2.6.1 Establishing and rehabilitating community radio stations for gender-responsive information

UNESCO encourages community media, especially local radio stations, and alerts them to both gender policy in the workplace and recognition of the gender issue in content production.

121 UNESCO, 2013, 37 C/4, *Draft Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021*, p. 39-40.

122 UNESCO, *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021*, p. 41.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

124 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Key role of community-based radio stations

Like all media, local and community radio stations in sub-Saharan Africa and more specifically Cameroon reflect the discrimination and stereotyping that affect women there. Among the numerous causes are under-representation of women in decision-making positions, ingrained prejudice, foot-dragging by some gender-insensitive men and a lack of self-confidence on the part of some women in the media. Even so, as an alternative to public-service and commercial media, community radio stations play a key role. For communities living in remote and rural areas they provide outreach, ensuring better access to education, communication and personal expression. In the *Community Radio Handbook* published by UNESCO in 2001, community broadcasting is defined as a non-profit service owned and managed by a particular community through a trust, foundation, or association and therefore serving and benefiting that community.¹²⁵



Figure 2.16: Baré Studio 2.
(Source: UNESCO/Yaoundé)

Significant efforts to systematize gender programmes

The project to establish and rehabilitate community radios stations for gender-responsive information is being implemented by the UNESCO Regional Office in Yaounde over a two-year period (2014-2016) with financial support from the Government of Cameroon. It has helped to set up and rehabilitate community radio stations that deal primarily with women-related issues, producing and broadcasting programmes on women's rights. To increase the project's effectiveness UNESCO has involved women's associations and local leaders, thus enabling women to take leading roles and to be represented at all levels of responsibility, as management committee

125 C. Fraser and S. Restrepo Estrada, 2001, *Community Radio Handbook*, p. 3.

chairpersons, station heads, programme managers, presenters and technicians at these community radio stations.

The project has had appreciable results across the country. To date, twenty-one former community radio stations have been rehabilitated and, in collaboration with Cameroon's Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family, are now broadcasting programmes on women's rights and the need for women to be involved in public life, while five new community radio stations are in the process of being set up. These figures should not blind us to the problems encountered by such a project. Liberalization of community radio stations frequently falls foul of some African governments, which fear that, if run badly, they could represent a real risk to national unity by promoting ethnic and linguistic groups.

Given that community radio stations make it possible to broadcast locally to rural areas, their growth since the Kenyan experiment in 1982 has remained a challenge for UNESCO. It should be noted that this project complements a regional UNESCO project on improving information on climate change in the national community radio network, implemented by the Central African Network of Community Radio Operators (ReRaC) to promote sustainable management of natural resources,¹²⁶ with technical support from UNESCO. It is obvious that by prioritizing gender equality, UNESCO has focused on systematic production of gender programmes that promote women's involvement in the media and give them freedom of expression and access to information free of charge. UNESCO is thus lending its support to establishment of gender-sensitive community radio stations in a number of sub-Saharan countries. In Uganda, for example, eighteen community radio stations have ensured that their programming reflects gender-sensitive indicators for the media with a view to increasing the representation of women.

126 The project covers network members in the Sangha Trinational area, namely seventeen selected radio stations in Cameroon, two in Congo (Radio Bisso Na Bisso and Canal Pokola) and one in the Central African Republic (Radio Nola).

2.6.2 Encouraging better media representation of women

Although significant work has been done in the media in sub-Saharan Africa, discrimination and stereotyping affecting women is still quite widespread. Surveys conducted in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Uganda show, firstly, that women journalists and communication professionals are under-represented, with few attaining positions of responsibility, and secondly, that information content does not sufficiently reflect women's concerns and expectations, with women representing only a fraction of information sources. Yet development of equitable access to information and knowledge, like emphasis on free, independent and pluralist media systems, would seem to be a prerequisite for gender equality and women's empowerment in the media.



Figure 2.17: Metgani Radio Station in Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania.
(Source: UNESCO/Mello)

Combining awareness-raising with capacity-building for media professionals

With this in mind, from 11 to 13 August 2015 the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar organized a workshop for media professionals in Kaolack, 200 kilometres from Dakar (Senegal), on conceptualizing programmes on gender, gender-based violence and human rights. The object was to provide these journalists with training in how to prepare programmes mindful of the specific problems faced by women.¹²⁷ This timely event helped to improve social communication by encouraging dialogue, reflection and collective study of programmes to identify actual or potential circumstances resulting in denial of women's human rights and the beliefs legitimizing gender-based violence.

127 M. Toure Thiam, programme specialist at the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar; interview during workshop.

Through the workshop, 35 journalists from community radio stations in six regions of Senegal were trained with support from UN experts. To encourage the media, especially public-service broadcasters and community radio stations to address gender inequality and promote gender equality, freedom of expression and access to information, UNESCO has been leading a global alliance on media and gender together with other UN agencies, media partners and stakeholders across the world. Empowerment of girls and women in and through the media includes not only work to build their capacities but also awareness-raising among people in the media regarding editorial policies and strategies that promote non-stereotyped and balanced images of men and women.

A range of UNESCO tools for gender mainstreaming in the media

UNESCO has been using a range of tools to achieve its goals. Firstly, the Organization has provided Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM)¹²⁸ in French, English and Arabic to gauge the media's recognition of gender issues, decide on the strategies needed to remedy shortcomings, set quantifiable goals and monitor progress made. UNESCO's use of GSIM has spurred media organizations, especially those with a public-service mission, to address the issue of gender inequality and empower women in and through the media. Secondly, UNESCO has used its Women Make the News (WMN) initiative to draw the African community's attention to questions of gender equality in the media. By doing so, UNESCO is encouraging women and girls to receive training and gain skills in the media and information field on the one hand, and, on the other, to learn to use their new knowledge, skills and attitudes, particularly through online media. Lastly, by introducing massive open online courses in media and information literacy (MIL MOOCs), UNESCO seeks to promote training of women and men, girls and boys, in order to develop their basic skills. In partnership with the United Nations and development agencies, UNESCO is leading a flagship initiative for mobile applications for girls (Girls Mobile). Amongst other things, this entails developing 200 mobile applications (mobile apps) for 1000 young girls and boys to address issues relating to sustainable development and gender equality. To achieve its aim, UNESCO will continue to advocate and promote gender equality within the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) and in international forums such as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

128 Prepared by UNESCO in cooperation with the International Federation of Journalists.



Figure 2.18: Media and gender equality, Kenya.
(Source: UNESCO/Nairobi)

The various projects put in place by UNESCO in a number of sub-Saharan countries are encouraging from two points of view. Overall, more than 40 journalists and media organizations have received training in 17 countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe); 482 projects have been approved; 1,403 people, including 708 women, have already received training. More specifically, in Côte d'Ivoire, 37 girls and boys have gained media and information literacy through online courses, allowing them to participate in promoting gender equality and intercultural dialogue; 2,330 girls and boys have already been enrolled for the second phase of the project and are continuing with online training. In Kenya, forty journalists in the counties of Kisumu and Nyeri have been trained and empowered in new reporting techniques for science and development.

A number of other countries have received ad hoc support from UNESCO. In South Sudan, for example, twenty members of the Association for Media Women received UNESCO capacity-building support for gender equality. After the training workshop, the association formally adopted UNESCO's GSIM to measure gender equality in media content and women's work and representation in the media. In Togo, the Support for Women's Voices project, led by the management of Radio Etincelle, sets out to promote a substantial contribution by the media to building democracy and development through pluralism of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of information and recognition of the concerns of women and marginalized communities living mainly in rural areas. The project is to help the radio station improve its technical, editorial and institutional performance whilst developing women's contribution to the country's

major debates on development. In Congo, UNESCO has contributed its expertise to organization of a panel discussion on the subject "Gender and the Media" as part of the process of briefing media professionals and making them aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to gender equity and women's empowerment. Such events are so many opportunities for UNESCO to raise media awareness about use of the various tools that have been developed to measure gender equality and thus allow them to play their full part in providing information, training and awareness-building. The Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media are a crucial mechanism for state, private and community media to ensure that there is less gender bias in media content, leading to a fairer society for all.

Concurrently with this work, on 10 December 2015, as part of a joint project on capacity-building for girls and boys for production of radio programmes on human rights, the culture of peace, the environment and sustainable development, and sexuality education and reproductive health for teenagers and young people, UNESCO and UNFPA presented awards for the five best radio programmes produced by young people after a training course.

In all, twenty young people, including ten women aged from 18 to 25, were trained at the educational radio station of the National Institute of Pedagogical Research (INRAP) in Brazzaville in production and presentation techniques for programmes on the following themes: (i) Promotion of the culture of peace; (ii) Environmental protection and sustainable development; (iii) Dignity of girls and prevention of discrimination; (iv) Sexuality education and prevention of teenage pregnancies. The initiative is part of a process of empowering women and including them in the development process as well as promoting gender equality in the media. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNESCO provided support for preparation of a Charter for Women's Freedom of Opinion and Right to Information and Communication. This charter, which seeks to improve women's image and representation in the media, has been signed by twenty-one influential figures and representatives of professional media organizations, civil society and international organizations.

Chapter 3

RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite UNESCO's initiatives for gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa over the past two biennia (2012-2013 and 2014-2015), there are still glaring disparities on the continent between women and men and between girls and boys, not only in terms of education, scientific training, finding employment and their place in society, but also with regard to culture, human rights and communication. This sad reality has led UNESCO to look again at its various initiatives.

Thus, in the light of the observations in the previous chapter, UNESCO should take a series of steps to ensure that its work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across the entire African continent, and especially in sub-Saharan Africa. They should cover both the Organization's general strategies (3.1) and its specific strategies (3.2).

3.1 General recommendations

These priority recommendations for gender equality and women's empowerment require attention not just from the Organization itself but also from sub-Saharan states. The main aims are to bolster efforts to equip staff of national institutions with skills relating to gender issues (3.1.1), and addressing the lack of sex-disaggregated data (3.1.2).

3.1.1 Bolstering work of national institutions on gender issues

Given the noted lack of regular and reliable gender data and research in action plans, impact assessments and monitoring mechanisms for all sub-Saharan countries, it is necessary to bolster efforts to equip staff of national institutions with basic skills relating to gender issues, including by:

- (a) Creating dedicated gender units in the ministries concerned, and
- (b) Providing regular formal training.

UNESCO will assist the states concerned to establish gender-sensitive, gender-responsive and gender-transformative practices and policies.¹²⁹ In practice, UNESCO activities will focus on:

- (c) Development of gender planning tools respectful of local communities' rights and encouraging equal access to capacity-building and specialized training;
- (d) Support for other measures to promote greater involvement of women in decision-making mechanisms.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ UNESCO, 2012, *Evaluation of UNESCO Priority Africa*, p. 6.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

3.1.2 Address the shortage of sex-disaggregated data

Generally speaking, UNESCO Member States show weaknesses as regards the organization and gathering of sex-disaggregated data in relation to gender-specific issues. This does not facilitate relevant and constructive evaluation.

Furthermore, UNESCO has its Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021 and two priorities which, although cross-cutting, are separate: Priority Africa and Priority Gender Equality. In some cases, it would be useful to harmonize the approaches and practices between these two priorities at the field level and, to the extent possible, to institutionalize a monitoring and evaluation system that enables the assessment of impact of these two programmes. Likewise, it would be important to increase synergies at field level between the organizations that have undertaken extensive research on gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa, such as the AU, UN Women, UNFPA, the AfDB and FAWE.

3.1 Specific recommendations

These specific recommendations are meant for national institutions of sub-Saharan states on the one hand (3.2.1) and UNESCO on the other (3.2.2).

3.1.1 Recommendations for the authorities of national institutions

To give UNESCO's work on gender equality and women's empowerment in sub-Saharan Africa a greater impact, the states concerned are strongly advised to:

- (a) Set up a curriculum review committee in every educational institution to ensure gender mainstreaming and non-discriminatory education policies.
- (b) Recognize gender-based violence in schools as a factor for non-enrolment, and low rates of learning and academic achievement in Education for All programmes and policies. Because of this violence, girls are regularly afraid to go to school, are often punished for rejecting a teacher's advances (by bad marks, for example) and also suffer stress affecting the quality of their schoolwork and resulting in underachievement or drop-out.¹³¹
- (c) Accept the challenge of articulating gender-sensitive cultural policies, as in Ethiopia and Nigeria and gender sensitive media policies using the framework of the GSIM, as in the Southern African Broadcasting Association.
- (d) Include disaster risk reduction in all school curricula, as in the project on "Promoting a culture of peace in Northern Nigeria: capacity-building for head teachers, teacher training institutes and journalists on safety and security of schools in the states of Northern Nigeria".

¹³¹ M. Devers, P.-E. Henry and E. Hofmann, 2012, *Les violences de genre en milieu scolaire en Afrique subsaharienne francophone. Comprendre leurs impacts sur la scolarisation des filles pour mieux les combattre*, 2012 report, French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, p.6.

3.1.2 Recommendations for UNESCO

For academic reasons, the recommendations for UNESCO will be grouped around its five major programmes (Culture, Education, Social and Human Sciences, Natural Sciences, Communication and Information).

(i) Education

- Support the setting-up of curriculum review committees in individual states (curriculum designers, teachers in teacher training institutes and universities, representatives of the Education Sector Working Group). This group of representatives should include individuals from different religions and groups.
- Build capacities of education stakeholders for strategies to include conflict and disaster risk-reduction in the education-sector planning process and support a review of current policies to ensure that they are not discriminatory.
- Step up awareness-raising campaigns for introduction of gender-sensitive education programmes. To this end, ministries should launch information and awareness-raising campaigns to publicize the proposals contained in the education policy document, including the rights, responsibilities and obligations they entail.
- Transpose the crowdsourcing project to other African countries as it has undoubtedly helped to improve the school environment by making it pleasanter and more learning-friendly for girls as well as developing the institutional capacity of school administrators to ensure implementation of plans/strategies, policies and programmes relating to gender equality.
- Plan sustainability of UNESCO programmes through NGOs, the community and multisector involvement.
- Ensure the sustainability of the ICT-based Literacy Project for Girls and Women (PAJEF) by combining it with other programmes such as the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy in order to encourage governments, NGOs, the private sector and development bodies to promote and energize literacy work.

(ii) Science, technology and innovation

- Extend the project on “Gender-sensitive training of teaching staff and head teachers to promote girls’ and women’s access to science, technology and mathematics (STM) education” in order to make science education accessible to girls and women. To this end, UNESCO must ascertain the constraints preventing actual participation of girls and young women in science subjects at school while involving the whole community in the process of programme implementation.
- Promote prizes and fora to celebrate women’s scientific achievement and encourage talent development, through scholarship programmes such as those awarded by the Organization of Women for Sustainable Development – OWSD - which are designed to enable young African women to have access to scientific research training and career development.
- Promote greater involvement of women in the preservation of biodiversity and food security through MAB projects, such as the GEER project for sustainable management of natural resources.

(iii) Social and human sciences

- Increase awareness-raising of cultural norms and practices leading to gender-based violence by promoting a culture of peace and non-violence while combating impunity and providing support for GBV victims given the proliferation of conflict areas in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Set up a group for education and peace-building (under UN auspices) bringing together a wide range of political stakeholders and education professionals to help shape a new consensus and give policymakers a better understanding of potential dangers.
- Develop the peace-building fund. Many governments in post-conflict countries do not have the capacities or financial resources to begin large-scale planning. A larger fund focused on long-term planning for peace-building could complement the outlay already made by donors and be used to raise additional funding.

- Step up economic capacity-building for women, particularly by equipping them with knowledge and skills covering the basics of financial planning and management.
- Ensure sustainable alternatives for teenage mothers who have dropped out of the education system owing to pregnancy or early marriage and also seek to alter girls' sociocultural environment in order to make school a greater part of it.
- Put more emphasis on political capacity-building for women.

(iv) Culture

- Extensively publicize and share knowledge of women's role in the history of the African continent by providing easy access to the "Women in African history" e-learning tool. It is therefore important for UNESCO to interest women in literacy training, since use of the tool assumes the ability to read and basic computer literacy.
- Make the African women, Pan-Africanism and African renaissance book a long-term project by, for example, bringing out a number of new editions or producing more than one volume in order to update it with other great African women.
- Encourage women's involvement in professional heritage-conservation activities at the local level and in decision-making mechanisms relating to cultural heritage.
- Increase women's presence in international decision-making bodies in the field of culture.

(v) Communication and Information

- Expand capacity-building for both local and community media.
- Ensure systematic use of the Gender-Sensitive Indicators in Media (GSIM) in order to gauge recognition of gender issues by the media and the community, decide on the strategies needed to remedy shortcomings, set quantifiable goals and monitor progress made.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
AComHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFR	Africa Department
AU	African Union
BEAP	Basic Education in Africa Programme
CI	Communication and Information Sector
CLT	Culture Sector
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DG	Director-General
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDUCAIDS	Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FSC	Division of Field Support and Coordination
GAMAG	Global Alliance on Media and Gender
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GNI	Gross national income
GSIM	Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media

LISTE DES ABRÉVIATIONS, ACRONYMES ET SIGLES

HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	Information and communication technology
IFCD	International Fund for Cultural Diversity (UNESCO)
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IHP	International Hydrological Programme
IICBA	UNESCO International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa
ILO	International Labour Organization
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
MAB	Man and the Biosphere
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OUA	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PAJEF	Literacy Project for Girls and Women
PAWO	Pan-African Women's Organization
PEER	Programme of Education for Emergencies and Reconstruction
REC	Regional economic community
ROSTA	Regional Office for Science and Technology for Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SITE	Science, innovation, technology and engineering
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
STAREC	Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Eastern DRC
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STI	Science, technology and innovation
STM	Science, technology and mathematics
TTI	Teacher training institute
TTISSA	Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNJHRO	United Nations Joint Human Rights Office
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Africa
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For over twenty years, UNESCO's work in Africa has been undertaken in a specific framework with a range of institutional mechanisms designed to help translate into action its priorities: Africa and gender equality. During this period, UNESCO achieved important results in the areas covered by its mandate to promote gender equality.

This publication highlights UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, in the field of gender equality in Africa, through examples of good practice, lessons learnt as well as suggestions and recommendations for the future.

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