

Case Study

Gender imbalances among students in Kyambogo University of Uganda and development implications

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Kyambogo University (KyU) is one of the nine government universities in Uganda experiencing gender inequalities with glaring development implications in the country with 34.6 million people (UBOS, 2016) in which women are the majority. The central aim of the paper is to establish the gender imbalances in Kyambogo University and development implications with a specific focus on policies, facilities, and services for students and then provide the way forward. This study used a mixed-methods approach that combined desk reviews and interviews (Creswell et al., 2017). The findings indicate that nature is reflected in the admissions, completion, science and engineering programmes and student leadership while the development implications are colossal in terms of imbalances in

Kyambogo University dropouts, Student Leadership, Higher Degree Achievements, returns to education, and lose of Self-Esteem. In conclusion, it is now clear that gender imbalances in KyU is a reality and this paper recommends promoting gender equality by all stakeholders majorly through the KyU Gender Mainstreaming Directorate, and through the establishment and operationalization of KyU Gender Policy, Anti- Gender Violence Policy, Gender Responsive Budgeting, STEM Programme, and Gender Monitoring and Evaluation.

Keywords: Gender imbalances, students, higher education, Kyambogo University, development implications

INTRODUCTION

Kyambogo University (KyU) is one of the nine government universities in Uganda experiencing gender inequalities that are greatly affecting its development and the nation at large in such a populated country of 34.6 million people (UBOS, 2016) in which women are the majority. On the 18th of July 2003 by statutory instrument No. 37 of 2003 as provided in section 22(1) of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institution Act 2003 as amended, established Kyambogo University as a Public University as a merger of three institutions namely: Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK), Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK) and the Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE). It is now 15 years old with the vision to be a centre of academic and professional excellence hence this paper of gender

imbalances which is inhibiting it from realizing its vision. Girls in Uganda are disproportionately discriminated against in terms of education; they face harsher barriers when trying to gain an education and it has left the female population disenfranchised, despite government efforts to close the gap. Uganda's enrollment stands at 563913 in Pre-Primary, 8,655,924 in Primary, 1,284,008 in secondary, 258,866 at Universities (Ministry of Education and Sports MoES, 2019) and the completion rate stands at 359,725 (51.7%) girls and Boys at 336,068 (48.3%) at Primary leaving Examinations (PLE), Boys at 169,984(50.4%) and 166756 (49.6%) girls at Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE), boys at 53,359 (53.5%) and girls 41,296 (46.5%) at Uganda advanced Certificate of Education (UACE), (UNEB, 2020, 2019) and this

pattern continues up to universities. The paper therefore aims at showing the nature of gender imbalances at Kyambogo University and development implications on the development spectrum of the institution and beyond with clear presentation of the way forward.

STATUS OF GENDER IN UGANDA

The gender policy of 2007 of Uganda is to raise women to the status of men. The focus of women in Uganda is majorly three-fold: Is to raise status of women, increase their influence and participation in politics, economics, social issues, and education etc. and to reduce culture/other factors or a condition that inhibits the progress women (MGLSD, 2007).

The Gender Mainstreaming Programmes of 2007 at Makerere University now boosts of scholarships that have increased female enrolment into Mak through scholarship programs, engendering the curriculum; conducting and encouraging gendered research; developing gender sensitive policies and budgets; making campus space safe for all; enabling women to access management positions and inspiring student to respect one another's femininity and masculinity without any biases (Gender Mainstreaming Division, 2007). Makerere University has achieved this through its Gender mainstreaming programmes in two ways namely: The Access and Teaching-Learning Division which will majorly address three major strategic issues namely: Scholarships; Engendering university curriculum and University outreach programs - that are related to creating a good environment for student enrolment, teaching, learning and research as well as making men and women's concerns part of the University curriculum. Such innovations have kept enhancing the enrolment, retention and improvement of the academic performance of female staff and students at Mak. The Welfare Division endeavours to work towards the improvement of policies and practices that are related to the general wellbeing of male and female members of the University community. These majorly include; gender sensitization among staff and students; gender friendly human resource policies; housing and accommodation; recreation and sports facilities; campus security; staff recruitment, promotion and retention; and a wide range of social support services. Such innovations continue to enhance the enrolment, retention and improvement of the academic performance of female staff at Mak.

Kyambogo University Gender Policy of 2014 aims at mainly achieving /ensuring: Understanding of and sensitivity to gender issues among university members, Gender equity, equality and empowerment in leadership and management, Review and engender the curricular in the university programmes, Mainstream gender in research and innovations, Institutionalize gender responsive planning and budgeting, secure environment

for students and staff and Review and mainstream gender in existing and future policies and plans of the university (KyU Gender Policy 2014).

Gender issues are not only women issues (Lubaale, 2018). There is a misconception that gender issues are only women issues. This is wrong and it is so because advocates (majority) of gender issues are women. Gender issues are both for men and women. Gender seeks to get rid of unfair traditional marginalization and exploitation of women and men. There is need to involve both men and women to change society, such that the abilities and potentials of both male and female gender are maximally exploited and fairly rewarded (Mosse, 1994; Gender Mainstreaming Division, 2007; Ssali, 2007).

Gender

Gender refers to the culturally social constructed attributes/role/functions of male and female. It is the interpretation of our biology by our culture, how we ought to behave as male (masculine) or female (feminine) (Mosse, 1994). These constructed labels differ in different societies. For example, in some societies, there is a belief that women are weak and men are strong. So being weak is considered to be feminine and being strong is masculine. Though sex is genetic, you can do nothing to change it, gender is acquired through interaction in the social world and changes over time. We learn to be masculine or female and therefore, gender is determined by culture. Sex is determined by biological characteristics, which define a person as male or female. You have nothing to do with the difference between male and female. It is determined by sex organs, which happen (form) naturally. Examples of sex characteristic include: Menstruation, Change in body size, and Growth of hair among others.

Gender roles

Gender roles are what women and men are expected to do, how they are expected to behave towards each other? Gender roles are different across communities and across the world. They change over time in response to changing community circumstances (e.g during wars when women take on more leadership roles) and changing ideas about what are acceptable or not acceptable behaviours and roles. Gender roles and characteristics affect power relations between men and women at all levels and then result in inequality in opportunities and outcomes for some groups.

Gender stereotypes

A set of characteristics that a particular group assigns to women or men (e.g domestic work does not belong to

men's responsibilities).

Division of labour

This concept looks at the different tasks and responsibilities undertaken by either women or men. The allocation of activities on the basis of sex is learned and clearly understood by all members of a given community/society. The triple role of women includes productive work (production of goods and services for consumption by the household or for income). Reproductive work (bearing and rearing children, domestic work and maintenance of the household) and community work (provision and maintenance of resources used by everyone – water, health care, education, and leadership). Men tend to be more involved in community and productive work.

Gender relations

Social relations between women and men in particular how power is distributed between them, they impact on men's and women's position in society and tend to disadvantage women. Gender hierarchies are often accepted as natural but they are socially determined relations that are culturally based and subject to change over time.

Discrimination against women

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of man and women of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. Men and women are treated differently (restricted or excluded or violated) in the family, the workplace or society due to gender stereotypes. For instance, when a woman is not promoted to a leadership position (even when she has suitable qualifications and experience) because a society believes that only men can make important decisions.

Gender disparity or gap

A specific difference or inequality between girls and boys or men and women in relation to their conditions or how they access or benefit from a resource (e.g. men's and women's access to health services, school drop-out rates of girls and boys).

Gender blind

Unaware of gender concepts and the impact that they have on life experiences and outcomes for girls and boys,

men and women.

Gender condition and position

Condition refers to the material state in which men and women live (e.g. food, quality of health care and housing, etc). While position refers to women's and men's political, social, economic and cultural standing in society (e.g. unequal representation in the political process, unequal ownership of land and property).

Sex-disaggregated data

Quantitative statistical information on the differences between men and women, boys and girls for a particular issue or in a specific area. Looking at data for individuals and breaking it down by the sex of the individuals (e.g. data of life expectancy, school enrollment, smoking prevalence divided by men and women). Sex-disaggregated data shows us if there is a difference in a given situation for women and men, girls and boys, but it does not tell us why the difference exists.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis provides a deeper understanding of the situation for and between men and women, their constraints, needs, priorities, and interests. Gender analytical information (results of gender analysis) is essential in designing good policies because it tells us why the differences exist, and the causes. Gender analysis is an important part of policy analysis that identifies how public policies (or programmes/projects) affect men and women differently. Conducting gender analysis requires well-developed social and gender analytical skills and is usually carried out by appropriately trained and experienced social researchers or gender experts.

Gender mainstreaming

An approach or a strategy to achieving broad-based gender equality throughout society by getting gender issues into the mainstream. Broadening of responsibility for achieving gender equality. Essentiality involves acceptance by the mainstream of gender equality as a worthy goal and acceptance of responsibility by the mainstream to actively address the gender issues relevant to them, their relationships and work, with the aim of achieving gender equality throughout society. Gender mainstreaming can be viewed as a tool in achieving good governance because it seeks to ensure that the needs and priorities of all members of a society are considered and met, that all members of society

participate and contribute to the process of governance, and that the benefits of development are distributed equitably amongst all members of society. Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, it is an ongoing approach to the way we think, relate with each other and do our work.

Gender equity

Gender equity is the process of being fair to men and women such as equitable allocation of resources and opportunities. Equity can be seen to be the means and gender equality as the end. Equity contributes to equality.

Gender equality

Women and men similarities and differences are recognized and equally valued. Men and women enjoy equal status, recognition and consideration. In other words, women and men enjoy equal conditions to realize their full potential and ambitions; Equal opportunities to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from society's resources and development; equal freedoms and quality of life and Equal outcomes in all aspects of life (Gender Mainstreaming Division, 2007; Ssali, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed methods approach that combined desk reviews and interviews (Creswell et al., 2017). From the documents, quantitative data were gathered, while from the interviews, qualitative data were collected. Out of 25,000 students of Kyambogo University as target population, a total of 65 interviews from students were conducted. This helped to reach data saturation (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Content analysis was used for the qualitative data, while descriptive statistics was used to analysis the quantitative data.

Nature of gender imbalances

The nature of gender imbalances among students in Kyambogo University is manifested in the following ways:

Admissions

KyU being a Public University, the law requires that an advertisement is placed in the newspapers for the public to view and respond accordingly. KyU has been compliant to this since inception and many girls/boys have been responding to it. In the process of admissions,

girls are given 1.5 additional Marks which indeed increase the enrolment as statutory requirement, (Gender Policy, 2007). However, imbalances are seen in the admitted students in terms undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, as well as in Sciences, Engineering, Arts, Education, Humanities and Business Programmes in which the more boys are admitted than girls in the percentages of 55 to 45 respectively.

Completion rates

After thousands of boys and girls are admitted, studying starts with hope of completion. On the way a good number of student's boys and girls do not complete the programme, majority being girls who drop out due to various reasons (Table 1). Table 1 indeed shows the gender imbalances by gender in terms of completion with engineering programmes being worst represented as evident in 2015 with 12.4% females against 87.6% males.

Science and engineering programmes

The admissions lists and completion rates as indicated in (Table 1), it clearly shows genders imbalances in Kyambogo University, in which the males are the majority. The worst being in 2015 with 12.4% females against 87.6% males for engineering and sciences in 2017 with 25.4% females against 74.6% males. All this is in spite of the government efforts to promote sciences through scholarships, paying more salary to science teachers in Universities and secondary, putting up more Science Universities and awarding incentives to outstanding scientist as way of motivation.

Student leadership

The University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001, as amended 2003 and 2006 hereafter refereed as s the Act 2006, provides that in every public university shall have student's union. KyU has been compliant since 2003. The process involves elections of leaders among the student population. Since 2003, Kyambogo University Students Guild has had 15 guild presidents with only two females as guild. The guild minsters and councillors, the proportion has been at a ratio of 3:7 of girls to boys respectively (Kyambogo University Students Guild Records, 2019).

DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER IMBALANCES

Such gender imbalances as illustrated above have great implications in the university management and develop-

Table 1. Gender imbalances in completion rates at Kyambogo University by gender.

S/N	Programme	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total and %
2018	All Programmes	4119	53.8	3827	46.2	7646 and 100%
	Science	557	73.3	202	26.7	759=100%
	Engineering	932	82.2	201	17.8	1133=100%
	Postgraduate	80	71.4	32	28.6	112=100%
2017	All Programmes	4139	56.6	3165	43.4	7304=100%
	Science	494	74.6	168	25.4	662=100%
	Engineering	839	85.6	141	14.4	980=100%
	Postgraduate	153	72.1	59	27.9	212=100%
2016	All Programmes	3174	54.4	2655	45.6	5829=100%
	Science	351	74.5	120	25.5	471=100%
	Engineering	695	87.5	99	12.5	794=100%
	Postgraduate	39	54.9	32	45.1	71=100%
2015	All Programmes	3673	50.9	3529	49.1	7202=100%
	Science	406	68.6	185	31.4	591=100%
	Engineering	662	87.6	93	12.4	755=100%
	Postgraduate	60	60	40	40	100=100%
2011	All Programmes	4192	55	3409	45	7601=100%

ment process of Uganda as a whole and beyond in the following ways:

University dropouts

This is creating gender imbalances as more boys graduate than girls in total as well as in sciences in particularly hence gaps in the development process because women's contribution is lost. Role models to encourage young girls in school and before school is limited because a few have graduated thus creating gaps in motivation, admissions, completion, and working hence low contribution to the development process.

Student leadership

Since 2003, Kyambogo University Students Guild has had 15 guild presidents with only two females as guild president. The guild ministers and councillors, the proportion has been at a ratio of 3:7 of girls and boys respectively creating gaps in motivation, self-esteem, and freedom and working hence low contribution to the development process. Such a scenario becomes a stumbling block to the nurturing of talents particularly of leadership hence missing many women's leadership in KyU and Uganda as whole and beyond hence perpetuating development gaps. This further makes them to look natural yet they are socially constructed.

Higher degrees achievements

As illustrated in (Table 1), the completion rate being with such gender imbalances, it creates gaps in higher degree

achievements like Masters and PhDs and promotion both in the teaching and non-teaching areas of the KyU and the nation at large. This is evident at KyU with a total of 419 academic staff (KyU Employment Records, 2019), 152(36.2%) are female and 267(63.8%) are males a clear demonstration of gender imbalances in human resources capacity to serve the institution hence hindering its ability to achieve its vision and mission. This eventually kills motivation, self-esteem, freedom and hope among the current staff and students as well as those still in primary and secondary schools. Such a scenario becomes a stumbling block to the nurturing of talents particularly of academic excellence and achievement hence missing many women's scholarship, mentoring, nurturing, leadership, supervision, and research contribution in KyU and Uganda as whole and beyond hence perpetuating development gaps. This further makes them to look natural yet they are socially constructed.

Returns on higher education investment

Investment in education comes with both public and private returns. Public returns include increased entrepreneurship, job creation, good economic and political governances, health and social fabric, safety, tax base, savings and investments, delivery of services like teaching, legal counsel and treating, responsible population amidst decreased population, research and development. While private returns include salary, income, job, status, psychological and career development (Bloom et al., 2005). This theory is further buttressed by the Neoclassical who avow that there is a positive relationship between education and development (De Beer and Swanepoel, 2000). In addition, the human

capital theory equally asserts that the most efficient path to national development of any society lies in improving its population that is human capital (productive capacity of human power) (Ingemar and Saha, 1989). Besides, Higher Education (HE) leads to creation, preservation and dissemination of knowledge vital for development (Kasozi, 2003).

Finally, Todaro (2000) writes that most economists argue that it is the human resources of a nation, not its physical capital or its natural resources that ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development. Therefore, human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development who include both males and females. Therefore, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people both male and female as the case in KyU and Uganda as whole and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else (Todaro, 2000).

Self-esteem

Gender violence, Gender stereotypes and Gender roles as sighted in the literature above have greatly contributed to gender imbalances in our societies in general and eventual gender imbalances in enrolment and completion of university education at KyU as a result of history, perception, and practice hence perpetuating under development. They are not natural but socially constructed with far reaching impacts of women experiencing a lot of pain, stress, abuses, insults, as well as psychological torture which eventually reduce their self-esteem, freedom, motivation and ambition. This automatically limits women's chances to higher education access, excellent achievement and leadership in the university and beyond.

Conclusion

It is now clear that there are gender imbalances in KyU is manifested in the Admissions, Completion, Student leadership, Higher Degree Achievements, and Staff leadership. These gender imbalances are inhibiting the 15-year-old University from achieving its vision of being a centre of Academic and Professional excellence in terms of access to higher education, completion, offering Student and Staff Leadership, Higher Degree Achievements and low Self-Esteem which are essential in mentoring and shaping ambitions of young generation. Below are possible policy options and strategies of deconstructing the above gender imbalances in order to pave way for gender equality which will translate into holistic development of KyU and beyond.

Recommendation

Gender policy

Kyambogo University has a gender policy which was approved by the university council in 2014 and became effective in 2017. The Director of Gender Mainstreaming was established and become operation in 2017. The policy aims at mainly achieving /ensuring: Understanding of and sensitivity to gender issues among university members, Gender equity, equality and empowerment in leadership and management, Review and engender the curricular in the university programmes, Mainstream gender in research and innovations, Institutionalize gender responsive planning and budgeting, Secure environment for students and staff and Review and mainstream gender in existing and future policies and plans of the University (KyU Gender Policy 2014). This paper acknowledges the above and recommends increased funding to the Directorate, staffing, office space and equipment so that the above objectives can be achieved in order to enhance gender equality in the University.

Gender mainstreaming programme

The UN International Conference on Women that was held in 1995 established "gender mainstreaming as the internationally agreed strategy for governments, institutions and development organizations to promote gender equality and equity where Uganda is a signatory to the Beijing Declaration. Therefore, Kyambogo University should establish a full-fledged functioning gender mainstreaming programmes in the Directorate of Gender that will address all the imbalances mentioned above in terms of admissions, staffing, completion rate, and achievements among others. They should pick a leaf from Makerere University (Mak) gender mainstreaming programme that now boosts of scholarships that have increased female enrolment into Mak through scholarship programmes, engendering the curriculum; conducting and encouraging gendered research; developing gender sensitive policies and budgets; making campus space safe for all; enabling women to access management positions and inspiring student to respect one another's femininity and masculinity without any biases (Gender Mainstreaming Division, 2007).

Anti-gender violence policy

KyU must develop immediately the Anti-Gender Violence policy so that all that exploitation, mistreatment, suffering and injury caused on to people in the university as a result of being male or female is in detailed explained to stakeholders thus becoming preventable and in the event of occurrence, punishments are spelt out in clear terms.

From the above forms of violence, it is clear that there are largely; Sexual harassment, Sexual Based Violence, Domestic Violence and Gender Based Violence which require strict enforcement and in the event of breach, stipulated penalties ranging from warning, caution, counselling, compensation, taking responsibility of mother hood or fatherhood, treatment, renting, feeding, repeating a year, dismissal, and in case of grave criminality in nature then the laws of Uganda should be applied.

Gender responsive budgeting

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) refers to a budget that acknowledges gender patterns in society and allocates money to implement policies and programmes that will change these patterns in a way that moves towards a more gender equal society (Government of India, 2007). KyU has no choice but to adopt a GRB which will lead to elimination of discrimination on grounds of one's gender and pave way for equal conditions of male and female to realize their full potential and ambitions in all spheres of life. This will enable more equal access to resources, distribution of benefits and access to services by all genders as a result of appropriate budgeting. To achieve the above, KyU needs to develop guidelines of GRB and distribute them to all departments. There is need to lobby the University Council to make it compulsory for all Budgeting Officers to follow the GRB guidelines and also Train all officers in charge of budgeting how to make gender responsive budget. This will be possible and strengthened by developing sanctions and punishments to be administered to officers who fail to adhere to the budgeting guidelines, as well as develop rewards/incentives to officers who follow the GRB guidelines. The Gender Mainstreaming Directorate of KyU must ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the progress.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Affirmative policy passed and adopted by Makerere University council on at its 147th meeting held between 6th-8th August 2019 to ring fence 40% enrolment preserve for female applicants to the University programmes of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (Mak, 2019). KyU should adopt the same STEM Programme either in the same format or with modification according to KYU facilities and abilities in order to promote and give females greater opportunities to study those courses hence enhancing more enrolment thus closing the gender gap and eventually underdevelopment arising out from gender imbalances.

Gender monitoring

Gender monitoring involves checking and recording any deviations positive or negative planned or unplanned circumstances that takes place during implementation. It is easy for a KyU Gender Policy, Gender Budgeting Programme and Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy among others drift due to different activities that take place during implementation and this can be either deliberate or otherwise. It is important to keep on track for instance if the beneficiaries were the targeted ones at the designing stage of policy formulation or not. Monitoring requires the collection of information about the extent to which programme goals are being achieved or met. This will ensure success and proper decision making from time to time.

Gender evaluation

Policy evaluation is the examination of the extent to which policy objectives were achieved. That is, it will examine policy effectiveness. It requires relating qualitative and quantitative information derived during monitoring to policy objectives. It is done to decide whether a policy should be continued, modified or terminated possibly due to lack of effective or unintended negative consequences. Therefore, Gender Monitoring and Evaluation should be continuous to ensure that gender imbalances of Admissions, Completion, Student leadership, higher degree achievements, Staff leadership, and Management leadership are handled chronologically to ensure proper problem is identified from time to time. They should ensure that correct alternative is implemented; the policy is having the desired effect and from time to time to determine whether policy is to be redefined or modified to continue in present form or terminated. To determine whether policy is cost effective and from time to time to determine whether the intended beneficiaries adopted and gained from the policy.

Author's declaration

I declared that this study is an original research that was carried out by me by and I agree to publish it in the journal.

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