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STRENGTHENING gender research to improve GIRLS’ and WOMEN’S education IN AFRICA
Strengthening gender research to improve girls' and women's education in Africa

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Introduction

Research is fundamental to socio-economic development work. While it does not offer quick fixes to the complexities of poverty reduction and development, it has the potential to facilitate how we negotiate these complexities by generating knowledge on specific areas that require policy attention. As gender equality and women’s empowerment are key to development efforts, research that seeks to influence these efforts must necessarily be gender sensitive and must shed light on the realities, considerations and potential approaches to ensuring positive outcomes for all in the development process – female and male alike.

As regards education in particular, research can enlighten us on ways to ensure policy approaches, community attitudes, teaching practices and learning environments are fair, enabling and lead to enhanced learning outcomes for girls and boys and women and men. Knowledge generated from such research provides rationale for political decisions regarding education and its crucial role in poverty reduction and socio-economic development. FAWE’s objective is to ensure that the knowledge gained from this collection of studies on gender and education in Africa is integrated into decision-making processes on new and revised education policies and plans geared towards greater equity and development.

Moreover, it is essential that more women strengthen their research competencies and join the African research community in order to ensure that women’s perspectives on gender concerns are incorporated into priority research areas including quality education for all children; teachers and pedagogical practice; equality in education; and education in crisis and fragile situations. This, too, is key to development work. Greater research opportunities for African women open up more channels for them to influence their societies by asking pertinent research questions in all development areas. This also contributes to a more balanced distribution of power in the creation and use of knowledge and greater gender equality in policy dialogue on the continent.

This third cycle of research led by FAWE responds to the concerns and objectives raised above. First, the studies in this volume focus on key questions related to providing an enabling learning environment and creating the conditions for a successful transition to the world of work. They look at gendered concerns for young women on technology related degree programmes or seeking to become student leaders on their university campuses; harassment and sexual violence among secondary school learners with special needs; the interrelation among gender, education and labour market integration; and the role of the informal sector in supporting or hindering girls’ education.

Second, while male researchers brought valuable perspective and input to the studies published here, all the research teams were led by experienced female African researchers specialised in gender and/or education. The insights of these researchers can inform FAWE’s work in a strategic manner, while FAWE, taking advantage of its strong network for disseminating research, can in turn provide a platform for these researchers to widen their engagement and influence in the education policy and practice arenas. Mindful of the need to build research capacity among young African scholars, the teams also included at least two research mentees – young female or male researchers who were mentored by the lead researcher and other experienced researchers in order to strengthen their understanding and practice in the areas of gender research.
Third, with its privileged links to African policy- and decision-makers, the education sector as a whole, development partners from both within and outside the continent, and major African regional bodies and networks, FAWE is in a unique position to contribute to strengthening linkages between research, policy and practice. The three cycles of research that have been published thus far as the FAWE Research Series offer a prime opportunity to: infuse new knowledge into the African research arena and incite the continuous refinement of research agendas; offer new knowledge and perspectives to policy-making and implementation processes; open up greater channels of communication between the generation of knowledge through research and the harnessing of that knowledge through practical implementation; and create a common ground in which research informs policy and policy informs research.

The research initiative under which these studies have been conducted has been the focus of FAWE’s research activities since 2009. FAWE will endeavour to sustain its research efforts beyond this initiative, building on the continent-wide network, the mentoring of young researchers, and the FAWE Research Series over time. These are crucial to FAWE’s work and will continue to inform it.

FAWE would like to thank the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) for its unwavering support throughout the duration of the initiative and for enabling FAWE and its partners to make this important contribution. FAWE would also like to extend its sincere thanks to the research teams and institutions who have been our valued partners in this endeavour and have contributed so significantly to this volume.

Hendrina Doroba
FAWE Acting Executive Director
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The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AAWORD Association of African Woman for Research and Development
ADEA Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AfDB African Development Bank
AGEFOP Agence nationale de la formation professionnelle (National Agency for Vocational Training)
AGEPE Agence pour l'étude et la promotion de l'emploi (Agency for Training and the Promotion of Employment)
AIDS Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ALMA Africa Leadership and Management Academy
ANSD Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (National Statistics and Demography Agency)
ASHEWA Association for Strengthening Higher Education for Women in Africa
B.Com Bachelor of Commerce
BEAM Basic Education Assistance Model
BEST Basic Education Statistics
BREDA UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa
BTS Brevet de technicien supérieur (Advanced Technician's Certificate)
CADEFINANCE Caisse d'épargne financière pour le développement de la petite entreprise (Savings Bank for Small Business Development)
Camfed Campaign for Female Education
CDD Contrat à durée déterminée (Fixed-term, remunerated contract)
CDI Contrat à durée indéterminée (Permanent contract)
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEPICI Centre de promotion des investissements en Côte d’Ivoire (Centre for the Promotion of Investment in Côte d’Ivoire)
CERAP Research and Action Centre for Peace
CFPC Centre de Formation Professionnel et Commercial (Professional and commercial training centre)
CIFIP Centreinternationaldeformationetd’insertionprofessionnelle (International Centre for Vocational Training and Professional Integration)
CIRES Ivorian Centre for Economic and Social Research
CNPS Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale (National Social Security Fund)
CODIPRAL Coopérative de distribution de produits alimentaires (Cooperative for the Distribution of Food Products)
COFULEF  Association of University Women for Women’s Leadership
CONFEMEN  Conférence des Ministre de l’Éducation ayant le français en partage (Conference of Ministers of Education of French-Speaking Countries)
COOPEC  Coopérative d’épargne et de crédit (Cooperative Savings and Loan)
CORAF/WECARD  West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
COSEF  Conseil Sénégalais des Femmes (Senegalese Women’s Council)
CPA  Certified Public Accountant
CRVFE  Comité de Réflexion sur les Violences faites aux Femmes et aux Enfants (Study Committee on Violence Against Women and Children)
CSO  Civil society organisation
CSO  Central Statistical Office
CSREES  Cooperative State Research Extension Education Service
CV  Curriculum Vitae
CUWA  Catholic University of West Africa
CWP  Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians
DESS  Diplôme d’études supérieures spécialisées (Diploma of Higher Specialized Studies)
DR  Dropout rate
DSRP  Document de Stratégie de relance du développement et de réduction de la pauvreté (Strategy Paper for Reviving Development and Reducing Poverty)
DUT  Diplôme universitaire de technologie (University diploma in technology)
ECOWAS  Economic Community of West African States
EFA  Education for All
ENSET  Higher Technical Teachers’ Training College
ENV  Enquête sur le niveau de vie des ménages (Survey on Household Standards of Living)
ERNWACA  Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa
ESPS  Enquête de Suivi de la Pauvreté au Sénégal (Follow-up Study on Poverty in Senegal)
EU  European Union
FAO  Food and Agricultural Organisation
FASTEF  Faculty of Training, Educational Sciences and Technology
FAWE  Forum for African Women Educationalists
FDI  Foreign direct investment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FENACOVICI</td>
<td>Fédération nationale des coopératives de viviers de Cote d’Ivoire (Cote d’Ivoire National Federation of Foodstuff Cooperatives)</td>
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<td>FEWS NET</td>
<td>Famine Early Warning Systems Network</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
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<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross enrolment ratio</td>
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<td>GHAMSU</td>
<td>Ghana Methodists Students Union</td>
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<td>GPI</td>
<td>Gender parity index</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICLS</td>
<td>International Conference of Labour Statisticians</td>
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<td>ICRW</td>
<td>International Center for Research on Women</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communication technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFEF</td>
<td>Institutions de formation et d’éducation féminine (Training and Educational Institutions for Women)</td>
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<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILFS</td>
<td>Integrated Labour Force Survey</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>INS</td>
<td>Institut national de la statistique (National Institute of Statistics)</td>
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<td>ISL</td>
<td>Integrated sustainable livelihoods</td>
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<td>ISSBD</td>
<td>International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IUT</td>
<td>Higher Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>JCRC</td>
<td>Junior Common Room Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>JHS</td>
<td>Junior high school</td>
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<tr>
<td>JORDE</td>
<td>Journal of Research and Development in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>Life orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Masters of Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEF</td>
<td>Ministère de l’Economie et des Finances (Ministry of the Economy and Finance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METFP</td>
<td>Ministère de l’Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle (Ministry of Technical Education and Professional Training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METFPALN</td>
<td>Ministère de l’Enseignement Technique de la Formation Professionnelle de l’Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales (Ministry of Technical Education and Professional Training in Literacy and National Languages)</td>
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Overview

The studies in this third volume of the FAWE Research Series address two specific aspects of girls’ and women’s education in Africa. On one hand, they examine some of the challenges related to violence, abuse, harassment, discouragement and intimidation that prevent girls and young women from enjoying a complete, safe and enabling learning experience. On the other, they question the relevance and effectiveness of education and training programmes for African labour markets today, and take stock of the gendered attitudes and practices that influence young women’s experiences in transitioning into the world of work.

Education is at the heart of economic and social development in all modern societies. Yet the experiences and outcomes of education are quite different for boys and girls and for men and women. While both sexes experience obstacles or difficulties based on national, cultural, geographic and socioeconomic realities, it remains that literacy levels, educational attainment and economic opportunities are overall lower for girls and women than they are for boys and men. This has serious repercussions. Lower levels of education for girls and women limit their participation in the labour market, and this underrepresentation all too often results in lower aggregate income for households as well as persistent poverty. The education and socioeconomic emancipation of women thus emerges as a key mechanism for reducing poverty among communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ensuring that girls and women achieve the positive educational outcomes necessary for their successful integration into the labour market, develop appropriate technical and personal skills, and are able to make informed decisions about their future requires non-discriminatory education and training. Yet a range of discriminatory or discouraging attitudes, unequal practices, and various forms of harassment, abuse and violence within the learning environment continue to undermine their academic achievement as well as their skills acquisition and personal development. From verbal harassment and abuse to sexual and physical violence, the learning experience for many girls and young women at secondary and tertiary level is characterised by discouragement, fear, isolation and physical and psychological harm. The impact on their personal development and learning achievement is far from negligible, hampering their academic and professional advancement. Mechanisms that ensure the safety and protection of female students; initiatives that enable them to cope with challenges in the learning environment; and guidance, counselling and empowerment frameworks within learning institutions are some of the measures that are crucial to enhancing the experiences and achievement of female students.

Post-primary education: Addressing violence, harassment and discouragement in the learning environment

The education of women in technology in the Higher Institute of Technology at the University of Douala

The University of Douala in Cameroon investigated gender specific patterns affecting young women studying technology in the university’s Higher Institute of Technology. Concerned with the under-representation of young women in technology programmes it aimed to shed light on factors of under-representation, existing challenges and coping strategies adopted by the female students affected by these challenges. While highlighting the need for an analysis of the ways in which higher education learning environments perpetuate gender-specific
challenges, the research also investigated the strategies adopted by female technology students to deal with gender disparity experienced in their academic endeavours.

The study identified a lack of effective academic planning and follow-up targeting female students within the institute, as well as indications of verbal harassment and psychological violence against female students from their male classmates. Female study participants stressed self-motivation as a means of negotiating these challenges, as well as the positive influencing role played by educated parents, their siblings, their upbringing and counselling. Measures adopted by female students to cope with the challenges they encountered constituted powerful tools in self-building and mentality change. According to the study, this implies a need for more women’s empowerment and awareness frameworks within the university, as well as for formal counselling mechanisms and concrete measures to curb sexual harassment.

An exploration of the experiences of female student leaders in public tertiary institutions in Ghana

While student government bodies in Ghanaian universities have served as a platform and preparatory ground for some of the country’s political leaders today, the University of Education, Winneba, was concerned with why the former student leaders who have become political leaders are predominantly men. In fact, although women constitute about 51 percent of the population of Ghana, according to literature reviewed by the study they account for less than 15 percent of parliamentarians and less than 10 percent of Chief Directors at various government ministries. This research therefore chose to examine the experiences of female student leaders on the campuses of public higher education institutions in Ghana and explore how best the student leadership platform can be used to nurture and groom more female leaders.

The most prevalent challenge to female student leadership identified within the institutions studied was institutional bureaucracies that undermined their leadership efforts. Women’s commissioners in some institutions complained of a lack of budgetary allocation for their unit, while patronage for programmes organised for female students was very low and discouraging. However, female student leaders were encouraged to vie for their positions by external elements from friends, their predecessors and role models, and received financial, campaign and moral support from parents, siblings, male and female friends, fiancés, lecturers and mentors. The study suggests that tertiary institutions should establish gender directorates with qualified staff to focus on nurturing the leadership potential of female students; extend mentoring systems that target female students within the academic sphere into the leadership realm; and liaise with gender-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide financial and logistic support to potential female leaders.

Sexual violence in schools for learners with special needs: key findings from South Africa

The far-reaching ramifications of sexual violence at school, including HIV infection and school-related problems, represent a double violation of the right to education of learners with special needs who already face grave challenges in gaining quality education. The University of South Africa thus carried out a study focusing on sexual violence amongst learners with disabilities to understand how this form of sexual violence contributes to the disempowerment and marginalisation of learners with special needs.
In documenting forms of sexual violence at schools for learners with special needs and examining school processes and practices that motivate such behaviour, the study found that sexual violence among learners was common and took many different forms, with types of sexual violence varying depending on learners' different disabilities. The research also found evidence of practices and processes within schools that promoted sexual violence. These included limited adult supervision around school premises and in school buses; limited knowledge about sexual violence among school personnel; absence of school rules governing behaviour among learners; poor handling of reported cases of sexual violence; and peer pressure among perpetrators of sexual violence. The study recommends clear policies on sexual violence and reporting procedures within schools; well trained school personnel and appropriate sexuality education; intensification of security around school premises; and separate schools for younger and older learners. The aim is for schools to contribute towards reversing the damage created by an experience of school-based sexual violence amongst learners with special needs and promoting safe learning environments.

The labour market: Strengthening linkages between education and the world of work

Education and labour market integration for women in Abidjan

In Côte d’Ivoire, women suffer a higher unemployment rate than men, with 19.8 percent of women unemployed in 2008, compared to 12.1 percent of men. Furthermore, female illiteracy stood at 54 percent in 2009, against 39 percent for males. What are the implications for the integration of women into the labour market in Côte d’Ivoire, and more specifically in the city of Abidjan, and what is the role of education? CIRES sought responses to these questions by analysing the impact of women’s educational level on their participation in various segments of the labour market in Abidjan – public, formal private and informal private.

While educational level was not found to have any significant impact on the probability that a woman will be unemployed in Abidjan, there seemed to be a strong relationship between women’s educational level and their integration into particular segments of the labour market. Illiterate women made up 49.9 percent of women working in the informal sector, while women having secondary and higher levels of education were better represented in the formal sector, both public and private. Nevertheless, women’s participation in formal employment was found to be low. Whether in the public sector or the private sector, 70 percent of those employed in the formal sector in Abidjan were men. Women, when they worked, were more present in informal employment, accounting for 48.6 percent of those working in the sector.

The research calls for a questioning of ideologies concerning women’s roles in society and for a rethink of the means available to promote their socioeconomic emancipation and facilitate their integration in the labour market. It proposes a number of measures to be taken in this regard by different categories of education stakeholders.

Gender, labour market integration and the socio-economic impact of vocational training in Dakar

While women in Senegal have always participated in the service industry, light industry and agri-food sector, particularly in urban areas, their lack of accredited training has been a major obstacle to self-determination and productivity. ERNWACA focused its investigation on technical and vocational training in two institutions in Dakar. It posed the question as to whether gender
determines successful labour market insertion and analysed the socio-economic impact of technical and vocational education and training.

While the size of the sample made it difficult to generalise findings, the study showed that 60 percent of the women trained in the two institutions were employed, compared to 40 percent of the men. The women were also more often employed on permanent employment contracts while the men had a higher incidence of shorter, fixed-term employment contracts. It also emerged from the research that women were more likely than men to qualify as secretaries or executive assistants, while men were more likely than women to enrol in Accounting/Finance courses and International Commerce. Thus, while the labour market seemed to favour the women, their study courses did not always allow them to reach the same professional level as the men. Recommendations emerging from this study included promotion of self-employment through financing for small- and medium-sized companies in an effort to increase employment opportunities in the private sector; measures to encourage increased recruitment of graduates of technical and vocational education and training; and provision of practical guidance and preparation to both female and male students for job applications and interviews.

**Exploring the gendered nature of the education-labour market linkages in Tanzania: Beyond numbers**

A study carried out by REPOA in Tanzania explored whether increased enrolment of female students in higher education is a pathway to increased gender equality in employment. The key argument of this research was that despite increased enrolment of female students in higher education, inherent gendered attitudes and practices – the result of gender differentiated processes in various spheres of life – continue to produce gendered effects on other education outcomes that work to disadvantage female graduates in employment.

Recruitment data showed more male graduates recruited in some years and more female graduates in others, while the study also signalled attitudes and practices that might have a differing impact on the transition of male and female students from higher learning to the labour market. Job opportunities were found to be limited for both male and female university graduates but while both male and female job seekers had sent out many job applications, male applicants were generally more proactive in this area. Finally, employers expressed gendered concerns such as female employees having to go on maternity leave and recruiting women with young children.

The REPOA study called for an integrated approach to education and employment policy-making and implementation processes to effectively address problems of skills mismatch; measures to promote interaction and dialogue between education and the world of work as well as measures that promote avenues of equal opportunity and discourage gender differentiated processes; and further research to explore the extent to which gendered attitudes and practices that erode confidence in female students are prevalent in the education system.

**Women’s informal sector activities and support for girls’ education in Binga: Perspectives of women in the informal sector**

In Zimbabwe, as poverty among households headed by women has increased, women’s participation in informal sector activities has intensified, as has preferential treatment for sons over daughters when it comes to sending children to school. However, little has been done to establish the connection between women’s increased participation in informal sector activities and support for girls’ education.
activities and girls’ education, or its relation to female perceptions of girls’ education. A study undertaken by the University of Zimbabwe thus sought to establish factors that hinder girls’ education in Binga situated in north-western Zimbabwe; women’s perspectives of girls’ education and their priorities when they have an income; how their income-generating activities have helped to address some of the barriers to girls’ education; and other factors promoting girls’ education in Binga in recent years.

Findings from the study suggested women’s participation in the informal sector contributed positively to girls’ education. Better sources of income meant families were able to send children, including girls, to school, while an appreciation of the importance of education in their business activities resulted in positive attitudinal change towards girls’ education among women entrepreneurs. This in turn encouraged women who had previously dropped out of school to take advantage of opportunities for second-chance education, and to engage with young girls on the importance of education. However, women working in the informal sector often needed assistance with their household responsibilities and tended to call on the girls within the household to take over these duties. The findings suggest a need for awareness initiatives on children’s rights, including the right to education for both girls and boys, as well as on teenage pregnancy and the school re-entry policy for adolescent mothers. Furthermore, the study called for an analysis of the impact of women’s participation in the informal sector on girls’ performance in schools, as well as further study to establish the extent of gender inequalities and stereotyping within schools as regards the distribution of available educational resources, subject selection, and assignment of roles and responsibilities, among others.

**Strengthening the education research-policy partnership in Africa for greater impact**

The studies contained in this volume confirm that research by Africans operating within the African education context can be at the forefront of identifying policy solutions to some of the persistent problems in girls’ and women’s education and economic integration. If research is to contribute to measures that improve academic and professional achievement for girls and women, however, it is important that linkages between research and policy-making process are strengthened. On one hand, the capacities of African researchers need continuous reinforcement and their policy research agendas need constant refinement. On the other, it is essential that clear communication from the policy level enables researchers to target critical research areas and that research forms a key component of policy implementation processes. FAWE’s objective is to harness research to influence policy at both national and learning institution level in order to enhance educational outcomes for African girls and women. Strengthening partnerships between the African research community and education policy implementers is crucial in achieving this. Through such closer partnership, the potential for the knowledge emerging from the studies in this volume to contribute positively to policy dialogue can be increased.
Post-primary education: Addressing violence, harassment and discouragement in the learning environment
Post-primary education: Addressing violence, harassment and discouragement in the learning environment

The common theme of the three studies in this section is the safety, wellbeing and personal development of female students in specific post-primary contexts. In Cameroon, the University of Douala looks at the how young women studying technology – long considered a typically male domain – cope with the verbal, sexual and other forms of harassment that undermine their motivation, self-confidence and achievement.

In Ghana, young women seeking election to university student government bodies have found avenues of support and encouragement to overcome the mockery, frustrations and isolation their leadership ambitions incite. Yet, some of those who are elected are said not to take an active role in leadership and decision-making.

In South Africa, young girls suffering from physical and mental handicap find themselves the target of many forms of sexual violence, including rape, by male students who suffer from similar physical and mental disability. Despite having few mechanisms in place for their protection and to report or pursue the offenders legally, some girls put forward suggestions on ways to reduce incidences of sexual violence, including ensuring younger girls are not subject to the same abuse.

The studies suggest that those most affected by violence, harassment and discouragement in the learning environment have the potential to identify and employ ways of overcoming these situations and can suggest effective ways to ensure some of these challenges to their personal safety, wellbeing, learning achievement and skills development are eliminated.
The labour market: Strengthening linkages between education and the world of work
Strengthening linkages between education and the world of work

The four studies in this section consider the transition to the labour market and the role played by education and gender in how successful young women become in their professional lives. As regards transition into professional life, in Senegal, 60 percent of the women in the ERNWACA study were employed after completing their training, compared to 40 percent of the men. However, while women were also more often employed on permanent employment contracts than the men, women’s study courses did not always allow them to reach the same professional level as the men in the same disciplines.

The REPOA study in Tanzania found that female and male graduates had largely the same probability of finding work or being unemployed. However, male applicants were generally more proactive in seeking work and a number of discriminatory attitudes and practices were found to have an impact on the transition of female students into the labour market.

As regards the world of work, in Côte d’Ivoire, while both illiterate and educated women work and earn incomes, women account for just 30 percent of those in formal employment, whether in the private or public sector. The informal sector is thus a major employer for women. This is the case in Zimbabwe, too, where a study urges government authorities to make women in the informal sector aware of the support available for building up their businesses and their skills. This is in view of the role the sector plays in supporting girls’ education, although the study also signals risks to girls’ education as mothers working in the informal sector tend to delegate their household responsibilities to their daughters, hindering their participation in school.

Invariably, these studies call for awareness initiatives regarding transition into professional activity, guidance, support structures for job-seeking and business creation, and anti-discrimination measures to be applied within both learning institutions and the labour market.
Gender equality and women’s empowerment are key to poverty reduction and socio-economic development, and education plays a crucial role in this. Yet the experiences and outcomes of education are quite different for boys and girls and for men and women, more often than not to the disadvantage of girls and women.

The studies in this third volume of the FAWE Research Series ask several important questions about girls’ and women’s education and employment in Africa. Which factors within the school environment motivate or impede girls’ and women’s enrolment in science-related programmes? What motivates female students to vie for positions in student government? In both cases, what forms of support are available for these young women, what challenges do they encounter and what strategies do they adopt to cope with these challenges? Another study asks how sexual violence at school contributes to the disempowerment and marginalisation of girls with disabilities and how schools can promote safe learning environments for children with special needs.

As regards employment, what are the mechanisms of women’s integration and non-integration on the labour market? How are gendered attitudes and practices in higher education and in the labour market manifested? Do female graduates of vocational training have more success entering the job market than men and does gender determine the nature of entry-level employment contracts? Finally, how does women’s participation in the informal sector influence girls’ education?

These and other key issues examined in this volume of research papers can shed light on ways to ensure policy approaches, community attitudes, teaching practices and learning and working environments are fair, enabling and lead to enhanced outcomes for girls and boys and women and men.