

Ethiopian Gender Learning Forum



Information Booklet

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Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
EAS	Ethiopian Academy of Sciences
EGLF	Ethiopian Gender Learning Forum
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
INASP	International Network for Advancing Science and Policy
MoSHE	Ministry of Science and Higher Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
RI s	Research Institutions
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UoG	University of Gondar
WEF	World Economic Forum

Executive Summary

Various research reports show that there is a wide range of gender gap in Ethiopia. For instance, there is a gender gap in academia, in research, and in academic leadership. Some of the notable causes for gender inequality could be attributed to gender stereotyping, lack of female role models, work life balance, and supportive work environment.

The situation is even worse when it comes to higher learning institutions in Ethiopia. For example, gender disparities can lead to unfulfilled potential, gendered occupational segregation, unequal access to economic resources, lack of role models, increased vulnerability and risk of sexual harassment, less return to economic investment, and work place culture such as male bias and association of men with leadership and decision-making.

One mechanism for tackling gender inequalities in higher learning institution is to form forums like the Ethiopian Gender Learning Forum (EGLF). EGLF has been established

to serve as a national platform for promoting the implementation of gender equality in the Ethiopian higher learning institutions. It is strongly believed that the Forum will facilitate the alleviation of challenges associated with gender equality.

The main aim of EGLF is to engage and support higher education and research institutions in Ethiopia to deal with the challenges that emanate from gender inequality in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. This is because higher learning institutions are critical places for promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion not only within the sector but also in the society at large. One way of doing this is to mainstream gender in higher education. In other words, issues of gender need to be incorporated into the thought and activities of most people in the academic and research community, and to be included in the national curriculum. The outcomes of gender mainstreaming also need to be monitored and evaluated.

Introduction

Background

The Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS) is a not-for-profit independent organization established by an Act of Parliament in 2013. It aims to promote among Ethiopians a culture of scientific inquiry and creativity and the pursuit of excellence and scholarship in the sciences.

The International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP) is an international development organization working with a global network of partners in Africa, Latin America and Asia. INASP believes that locally generated knowledge and solutions are keys to solving local and global challenges.

In November 2018, EAS and INASP held a dialogue event that convened key stakeholders from Ethiopia's higher education, research and policy institutions with the objectives of discussing different dimensions of inequity within Ethiopia's research and knowledge system, and deliberating on approaches to enable an equitable research and knowledge system in the country (INASP 2019).

The dialogue came up with a vision for a strong, sustainable and self-sufficient Ethiopian research system which:

- values, aligns and responds to Ethiopian needs, informs national policy, delivers impactful research in support of national priorities and operates within an independent space;
- recognizes and builds on the wealth and variety of knowledge within Ethiopia, while also looking to shape the future of research globally;
- is collaborative, participatory, and trans/multi- disciplinary in approach, recognizing that all types of research have a role to contribute to achieving national development needs;
- supports and sustains diversity and inclusion by creating a conducive environment that values and encourages all research voices – regardless of gender, institution or region.

The event also emphasized the need for establishing a platform to systematically and cohesively contribute to addressing issues of gender inequity within Ethiopia's research and knowledge system. Then, holding continuous discussions with

representatives of higher education, research and policy institutions, the Statute was approved and EGLF was established in February 2020. This Booklet has been prepared to promote EGLF.

EAS and INASP co-hosted three **Gender Champion Workshops** with Arba Minch University, Arsi University and University of Gondar to introduce EGLF and invite institutional and individual membership. The workshops, involving a total of 78 participants (57 female and 21 male) from 30 public universities and nine national research institutions in the country, were aimed at publicizing the vision, mission, core values and objectives of EGLF. The workshops generated invaluable feedback regarding membership and future activities of EGLF, such as

establishing a board and convening a general assembly, and more importantly, ensuring the sustainability of the Forum.

The Booklet is prepared by two core members of EGLF with the joint support of EAS and INASP. It has the following major purposes:

- presenting the vision, mission, core values and objectives of EGLF;
- identifying the existing gender gap in Ethiopian higher education;
- introducing gender mainstreaming approaches in higher education and research;
- promoting gender champions; and
- encouraging Ethiopian higher education and research institutions to create and practice equitable research and knowledge systems.



Gender Champions Workshop at UoG

For whom is the booklet?

The Booklet is developed mainly for higher education and research institutions and individuals to enable them to recognize challenges and opportunities and to adopt and practise equitable research and knowledge systems in their respective institutions. The Booklet serves to induce higher education and research institutions to implement institutional changes related to human resources management, funding, decision-making and research programmes to enhance women's participation, representation and retention at all levels of their scientific careers and to promote the integration of the gender dimensions in academia, research and leadership.

As both women and men take part in academia, research and leadership, implementing equitable knowledge and research systems is not only women's issue. Thus, the Booklet explicitly calls upon men to engage, together with women, in initiatives towards gender parity in higher education and research institutions.

What is the Ethiopian gender learning forum?

The Ethiopian Gender Learning Forum (EGLF) was established in February 2020 in Addis Ababa envisioning an academic and research environment without any gender disparity.

EGLF serves as a platform with the mission of fostering gender equity in Ethiopia's knowledge system. It values collaborative learning, inclusiveness, and accountability in its operations. The objectives of EGLF include:

- continuously generating and analysing evidence on issues of gender equity;
- providing evidence-based recommendations to inform policy and program decisions and practices for advancing gender equity in Ethiopia's research system;
- advocating for and contributing to the design and/or implementation of policies, strategies and programmes that advance gender equity in Ethiopia's higher education and research institutions;
- capturing best practices from within and outside of Ethiopia in promoting gender equity in research systems and communicate insights/learning;
- serving as a platform for dialogue, networking, experience sharing, and collaboration within the membership and among other stakeholders; and
- forging partnerships and collaborating with national, regional, and international stakeholders working toward the common goal of advancing gender equity.

Gender Gap in Ethiopian Higher Education

According to the 2022 Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum, Ethiopia stands 74th out of 146 countries, reporting a 71% closure of the gap to date. Ethiopia ranks 15th out of the 36 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa gender gap index. Compared to Rwanda and Namibia, which globally rank 6th and 8th respectively, Ethiopia still has a very wide gender gap to close.

Gender Gap in Academia

In 2022, Ethiopia has closed the Educational Attainment gender gap by 85.3% and ranks 133rd globally. However, data on gender gap in Ethiopian higher education is not available in the 2022 Global Gender Gap Report. MoE (2016) reported that females' share of undergraduate enrolment (government and non-government) in all programs is 35.7%, and the total percentage of female postgraduate students is 17.8%. However, the 2021 Report shows that only 5.3% of Ethiopian high school females are enrolled in higher education compared with 10.9% of males. Among those enrolled, 1.7% of females and 3.7% of males have graduated. In 2022, females' enrolment reaches 7.76% while the enrolment rate for males is 13.03%.

The gender gap in lifelong learning

and skills prioritization indicates women still continue to be over represented in the fields of Education and Vocational training, and almost equally represented in Health and Welfare degree programs compared to men. However, women are significantly under represented in other fields, especially in STEM fields.

The share of female academic staff in tertiary education across Ethiopian higher education institutions is only 18% (WEF, 2021). According to MoSHE (2021), across the 46 Ethiopian public universities, the share of female academic staff by academic rank is as follows:

- Professors = 3.1%,
- Associate Professors = 5.1%,
- Assistant Professors = 9.7%,
- Lecturers = 13.9%,
- Graduate Assistants = 23.7%.

Gender Gap in Research

The global share of women in research is 33.3% in 2022 (WEF, 2022). In Ethiopia, women make about 16.4% of Ethiopian researchers (MoSHE, 2021). However, the representation of women in research decreases with the level of seniority. Women are less likely than men to be first or last authors and women-authored publications receive fewer citations. Moreover, men are invited to speak on scientific panels at twice the rate of women (Rosa et al., 2020). "Achieving equity within research and knowledge systems is

important to ensure that all research voices can participate in tackling the most pressing challenges and that nobody is left behind" (INASP, 2019).

Gender Gap in HE Leadership

The overall global share of women in senior leadership across public and private organizations is 33%, while women's representation in educational leadership is 46% (WEF, 2022). In Ethiopia, the gender disparity becomes even larger when looking at leadership in higher education. In 2019 and 2020, women held only 10.6% of executive management positions (presidents and vice presidents) across the 46 public universities, and made up less than 11% of middle level positions (directors and deans), and 17.2% of lower level positions (heads and coordinators (MoSHE, 2021).

Gender Gap at an Institution Level

The gender disparities in higher education, research and leadership at the national level demonstrate how gender inequity/inequality has become a big concern. But as individual institutions are expected to mainstream gender and maintain equitable research and knowledge systems, it is worthwhile to review the existing gender gap in a particular sample institution. Addis Ababa University (AAU) is the oldest and relatively well-structured university that comprises fifteen colleges and ten

research institutes. It can be considered as a mother university to all higher education and research institutions in the country. The existing gender gap at AAU can, therefore, reflect the situation in the other higher education and research institutions across the nation.

According to MoSHE (2021), the share of female academic staff is 16.95% while women count 29.29% at the top and middle level leadership positions. Regarding levels of study, female professors constitute 2.26%, associate professors 5.19%, assistant professors 13.44% and lecturers 19.43% of the academic staff. The total share of female students at AAU is 32.98%, in the undergraduate program 37.39%, Master's program 28.76%, and the PhD program 12.32%.

Why Gender Disparities?

The valid assumption is that after they graduate, women are also able to proceed and study for higher degrees that would enable them to occupy most academic positions, be involved in relevant research, and take on leadership roles in universities and research institutions. Yet, there are a number of underlying causes that hinder this (Gollifer and Gorman, 2018):

- **Gender stereotyping:** Cultural gender stereotyping of professions in and outside the education system dictates subject choice for students and subject specialties for

academic staff. Women may have lower levels of ambition and self-confidence due to stereotypes that they are less likely to succeed or are less competent. Women may be forced into low-level, high-volume administrative positions, with little scope for promotion, whereas men assume more career enhancing positions. Cultural perceptions that leadership positions are more suited to men may hinder women's career advancement.

- **Lack of female role models:** The under representation of women in academia and leadership positions reinforces stereotypical attitudes about suitable careers for men and women in a self-perpetuating cycle. Gender differences in subject choice result in lack of female role models in professions which are typically male-dominated (e.g., STEM subjects, research, and academia). This discourages women from considering these professions.
- **Work life balance:** Women are more likely to assume parental obligations with a resulting negative impact on their career advancement. Women may be more reluctant to take on positions that limit their ability to balance work and family life.
- **Lack of supportive environment and working conditions:** Lack of

supportive campus environment and limited access to resources are significant challenges of females in HEIs. Besides, requirements such as long hours, an unpredictable schedule, and extensive international travel may hinder a female academic's research potential and career progress.

Impacts of Gender Disparities on Higher Education Equity

According to Gollifer and Gorman (2018), gender gap in HE has the following impacts:

- **Unfulfilled potential:** The viewpoints, experiences and needs of half the population risk being overlooked or dismissed. This in turn leads to products, services and policies that are less than optimal because they are targeted at and serve only a proportion of society. Women are not being enabled to realize their full potential. This is a waste of valuable resources for a country's social and economic development.
- **Gendered occupational segregation:** HE is where the most highly skilled and knowledgeable work force is trained, in particular political and economic leaders. Gender gaps in subjects studied in higher education affect the pool from which professionals and leaders can be selected. So, gender inequality

will be perpetuated in the wider society among professionals and leadership positions.

- **Unequal access to economic resources:** Lower attainment levels for women means women are less able to compete with men for employment opportunities that offer the highest wage earning power.
- **Lack of role models:** Fewer women visible in professional and decision-making positions as role models for young girls. Female role models in traditionally male-dominated positions inspire girls to achieve more highly and to combat gender discrimination and sex-segregation in their communities.

The gender differences in subject choice perpetuate gender stereotypes about suitable subjects for men and women.

- **Increased vulnerability and risk of sexual harassment:** Where women are disproportionately represented, the patriarchal cultural values and gender stereotypes prevail, resulting in the increased vulnerability of women and risk of sexual harassment.
- **Less return to economic investment:** Much economic investment has been made to improve women's access to HE. If women can not

progress to reach their full academic and career potential in the HE system, this represents a lack of return on the investment made in their education.

- **Workplace culture:** Unconscious male bias and the association of men with leadership and decision-making results in male-dominated departments, interview boards and journal editors, performance indicators and promotion criteria which favor men. This creates a 'glass ceiling' effect that hinders women from advancing their academic career and is self-perpetuating. The association of academic career advancement with male characteristics such as aggression and competitiveness is a deterrent to women. Sexual harassment can also be an issue in male-dominated environments. The gender pay gap may deter women from pursuing a career in academia.

In view of the above, the Ethiopian Gender Learning Forum aims to engage and support higher education and research institutions in Ethiopia in dealing with the challenges through introduction of gender transformative approaches towards equitable research and knowledge systems.

Gender Transformative Approaches



International Women's Day 2020 Washington D.C. 6 March 2020 (PAHO)

Clearing Misconceptions - Key Gender Concepts

Sex: unlike gender, states to a fact of human biology and refers to a person's biological status; we are born male, female, or intersex referring to a typical features that usually distinguish male from female such as sex chromosomes, internal reproductive organs, and external genitalia. Biological functions of males include impregnation and for women include the ability to conceive, give birth, and breastfeed the human baby.

Gender: Who do you think the word 'gender' refers to - the 'man/boy' or the 'woman/girl' or both? No, it doesn't refer to sex as a man/boy or

woman/girl, but to the roles, activities, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given society at a given time associates with and considers appropriate for these persons' biological sex. Where the behavior is compatible with societal value expectations, the role becomes gender-normative; and it constitutes gender non conformity where the behavior remains incompatible with these expectations. Consequently, one may confirm his/her personal role, as determined by the societal values, either as male or female and identifies to be a man/boy or a woman/girl, respectively. Gender and sex are different (Gollifer and Gorman, 2018). These gender normative roles and behaviors are reflected in the Ethiopian

higher education system in the choices and success of fields and levels of studies and the share of females in academic leadership positions (WEF, 2022 and 2021).

How do sex and Gender Differ?

I. Sex:

- Remains the same and cannot easily be changed unless physically altered
- Born with a biological sex status based on differences in genitalia;
- Non-hierarchical

II. Gender:

- Socio-culturally determined and varies from culture to culture, and with the economic, social and political context;
- Context and time specific varying over time and changeable
- Learned attributes, opportunities, behavior, and status through socialization processes;
- Hierarchical

Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and

opportunities.

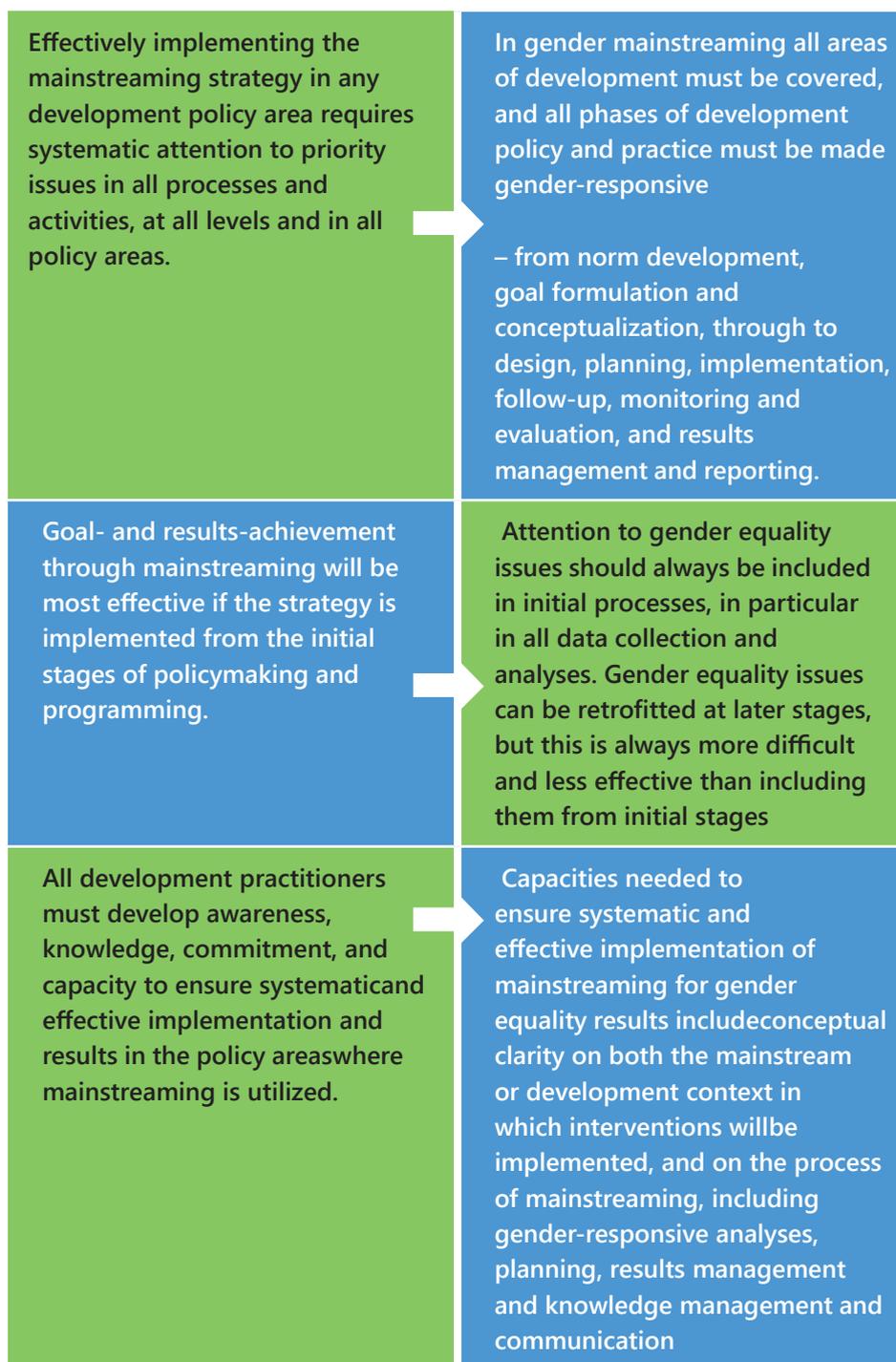
Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys.

Gender bias refers to the unfair difference in the treatment of women, girls, men and boys because of their sex.

Gender mainstreaming refers to the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels.

It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific policies and programs or positive legislation, nor does it substitute for gender units or gender focal points" (INASP 2019; UNESCO, 2020.)

MAINSTREAMING	GENDER MAINSTREAMING
<p>Mainstreaming refers to a strategy utilized in development policy and practice today for increasing attention and resources to a wide range of specific development issues which might otherwise be neglected -- including the environment, human rights, disability, and the situation of children.</p>	<p>Gender mainstreaming refers to the use of the mainstreaming strategy to bring attention and resources to critical issues of gender equality, women's rights, and empowerment, which otherwise may be ignored or neglected</p>
<p>The mainstreaming strategy requires that these prioritized issues are addressed in an explicit, visible, and sustained manner, as an integral part of development policy and practice, in order to bring change in processes, outcomes and results.</p>	<p>An essential element of gender mainstreaming is ensuring that prioritized gender equality issues are systematically and explicitly identified and addressed in all goals, processes, and outcomes to ensure positive change and 'transformation' and results for gender equality</p>
<p>Mainstreaming is not an end in itself. A strong explicit focus on achieving positive results in the areas where the strategy is utilized is a critical element of mainstreaming.</p>	<p>Gender mainstreaming should focus strongly and explicitly on achieving positive development results for gender equality, and women's rights and empowerment</p>



(UN Women, 2022a)

Mainstreaming Gender in Higher Education

Those thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and choices or the prevailing direction of activities or influences shared by most people and regarded as normal or conventional are what we identify as the *mainstream* (Michael, 2022). *Mainstreaming gender* in education thus implies the incorporation of gender issues into the thoughts and activities of most people in the academic and research community and regard them as normal or conventional; it diffuses gender contents throughout the curriculum so as to nurture a non-gender-biased citizen through value-based teachings of gender equity and equality (Reynoso et al., 2015). Making the issues of gender equity and equality inform the strategic and operational agenda of the Ethiopian higher education system is what needs to be done.

Core Principles of Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy operates on the following core principles (Gollifer and Gorman, 2018):

- 1) **Transformation of existing structures, cultures, general working environment and practices as well as attitudes:** It is not sufficient to add on women's concerns to existing systems and structures but requires transformation from a gender perspective;
- 2) **Women and men work together:** A gender mainstreaming approach involves working with both men and women, rather than working with women only. As gender equality requires balancing the allocation of resources between men and women; both men and women must commit to and be part of the process;
- 3) **Consideration of both men's and women's needs and interests in every function of the institution:** Gender mainstreaming does not preclude the need for women-specific (or men-specific) measures. Where women's and men's needs and interests are different, targeted measures may be needed where disadvantage or gaps are identified. Assumptions that issues are gender-neutral should never be made;
- 4) **The commitment to gender equality and active participation of all staff and students throughout the institution:** As an institution is the product of its social and cultural

environment, attitudes towards gender must be challenged at the level of the individual. The ultimate goal is for a gender equality perspective to become normalized in all working practices, processes and structures.

Does the Strategy Help?

Indeed it does. Gender Mainstreaming is a universally accepted strategy, an approach or a means, but not an end in itself, for promoting gender equity and equality. It involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to achieve gender equity and equality are central to all activities of policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programs and projects (UN Women, 2022b&c). It addresses the underlying structural conditions that perpetuate gender inequality in order to develop institutions that respond more effectively to the needs of both men and women. The strategy entails an analysis of existing

inequalities in order to address these. Overall, gender mainstreaming is aimed at generating more equitable societal benefits; with a gender lens to organizational efficiency and productivity, sustainable development and the creation of a more just and equitable society become the ultimate goals (Gollifer and Gorman, 2018):

A strong, continued commitment to gender mainstreaming is one of the most effective means for the Ethiopian government to support real change at all levels in the Higher Education - in research, legislation, policy development and in activities on the ground, and ensure that women and girls as well as men and boys can influence, participate in and benefit from development efforts. Implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy, therefore, requires systematic integration of gender perspectives in policies, programs and thematic issues. The following table depicts mainstreaming at program and institutional levels.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING	
AT PROGRAM LEVEL	AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL
o Gender Analysis	o Establish institutional arrangements to support gender mainstreaming such as gender units and gender focal point systems
o Program Design	
o Human and Financial Resource Allocation	
o Implementation	o Allocate financial and human resources to support gender mainstreaming efforts
o Monitoring and Evaluation	o Implement accountability mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality

Source: (UN Women, 2022b&c)

The Ethiopian Gender Learning Forum recommends a Gender Equity Plan with three major goals for transforming teaching and research in the Ethiopian higher education system:

- mainstreaming the gender transformative approaches within all university teaching, research and community engagement programmes and contents;
- teaching gender studies and conducting research on gender issues;
- working to maintain gender balance of students as well as

academic staff in different fields and levels of studies.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation implies a gender mainstreaming method that integrates gender equality concerns not only into the evaluation objectives but also into the evaluation methodology, approaches and use. All monitoring and evaluation processes must be made explicitly gender-responsive, which requires collecting sex-

disaggregated data and formulating gender-sensitive indicators. Gender responsive monitoring and evaluation frameworks must be able to track, measure, and report on (UN Women, 2022b&c):

- 1) positive changes and gender-related results;
- 2) areas for further improvement;
- 3) unexpected negative changes and backlash in terms of gender relations and gender norms;
- 4) ways to address the systemic and structural causes of inequality, discrimination, and exclusion.

Monitoring and evaluation uses a pragmatic approach and thus applies mixed methods, drawing from both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for the complexity of gender relations

and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. The monitoring and evaluation method applied needs to address the following specific issues (UNDP, 2022)

- 1)** Results of what Ethiopian Higher Education System has achieved in mainstreaming gender;
- 2)** Effectiveness of the partnerships that Ethiopian Higher Education System has used to promote gender equality;
- 3)** The extent to which gender mainstreaming has been institutionalized in the system;
- 4)** Effectiveness of the approaches used by Ethiopian Higher Education System in promoting gender equality.

Let's Be Gender Champions!



The first step that institutions and individuals in the Ethiopian higher education should take is to be gender champions, i.e., becoming members of EGLF. Then, they need to develop and integrate **Gender transformative approaches** into their research and knowledge systems. They need to demonstrate shared responsibilities for gender mainstreaming. They should build a supportive environment as the process and pace of gender mainstreaming in their research and knowledge systems depending on contexts and institutions. Besides, creating space for peer learning and support between institutions and individuals can boost awareness, understanding and motivation.

Institutions, therefore, should identify

and empower key influencers – **gender champions**. Those who wanted to be a member can contact the Forum at Ethiopian Science Academy, and also they can apply an online by using the following link;

<https://eas-et.org/individual-membership-application-form-eglf/>

How do higher education and research institutions create their gender champions? What qualities, behaviours and attitudes, skills and motivations should they have?

Gender champions should be critical thinkers, committed, communicative and persuasive. They should also be knowledgeable and skillful about existing gender issues/gaps in their institution. Moreover, responsibility,

decision-making, accountability, supportiveness, team-work, and personal integrity, and belief in humanity are essential qualities for gender champions.

Gender champions should be able to:

- communicate the importance of gender equity in research and knowledge;
- advocate for change for women and girls by challenging stereotypes and biases;
- create inclusive and enabling working environments;
- set a good example and be a good role model for others;
- mentor younger generations;
- support structures to advance gender equality (policies, strategies, programmes, etc.); and
- involve the top leaders in their institutions in all gender related matters/issues

Initiating EGLF Membership

EGLF entertains both institutional and individual membership. The institutional membership includes both public and accredited private higher education institutions and research institutes in Ethiopia, while individual membership requires being affiliated with those higher education and research institutions. Membership is open to all individuals regardless of their gender.

EGLF also has room to consider the membership of eligible candidates that are neither affiliated with the above institutions nor currently residing in Ethiopia. The membership criteria and the process are clearly stated in the EGLF 2021 Statute. The Statute can be found in person at the EAS office, or can be downloaded from the EAS website at www.eas-et.org/gender-forum-2/ by the name of "Ethiopian Gender Learning Forum Statute"

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