"Sarah" Anushka Virahsawmy

Education and training

Article 14

Take a girl child to work campaign in South Africa.   *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

KEY POINTS

- Many countries have reached gender parity in primary education, but the gender gap continues to widen in higher education, largely because of teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS related care work, economic constraints and deeply entrenched gender stereotypes that discourage girls' education.
- School administrations are greatly imbalanced with men dominating all spheres, especially higher management positions.
- Men predominate in faculties of Science and Law, while women predominate in some countries in Arts, Humanities and Health Sciences.
- While gender stereotypes still pervade institutes of learning, many SADC nations are challenging this through education policies and reforming national curricula.
- Sexual and gender-based violence in schools is a serious problem in the region, and greater measures must be taken to combat this trend.

Good gender balance at primary level in most countries.   *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Although relatively brief, Article 14 on Gender Equality in Education is a cornerstone provision in the Protocol, covering equal access to all levels of education; challenging gender stereotypes in education and also ensuring that institutions of learning are free from gender violence.

Like most of the articles in the SADC Gender Protocol, education and training provisions closely interlink with other goals and targets. Assessing the region's progress towards commitments to enhance access to quality education for males and females, and remove gender stereotyping in curriculum, career choices and professions, is a telling indicator of the likelihood of other achievements 2015 targets being met.

For example, as the foundation of future employment prospects and opportunities, education forms the basis for gender equal opportunities in economic empowerment. Levels and quality of education significantly determine what kind of work individuals may attain, and how much they may earn. In both formal employment and other occupational settings, education offers the chance to make more of the resources available, whether that is within salaried employment, starting a business, increasing the productivity of land, selling excess produce, or managing the household budget.

Education also links closely to such provisions as 50/50 in decision-making. Although there are exceptions, especially at local level, education is an important part of aspiring to government offices and other such decision-making bodies.

However, for girls, staying in school is not just about good grades. Early marriage and family responsibilities can take girls out of school early, especially given rising HIV and AIDS prevalence. Some families just do not see the value in educating girls. Add to this poor infrastructure, such as lack of water and sanitation facilities. Worse, sexual harassment, by both peers and teachers, can make girl learners unsafe. All of this can mean less education for girls.

A child's first social and cultural influences come from their parents, teachers, peers and others. This is the beginning of the process of learning the languages, norms, gestures, beliefs, and culture of the world in which one is born, as well as the roles one is expected to play in life. Girls learn how to be daughters, sisters, caretakers, wives, and mothers. In addition, they learn about the occupational roles that their society has in store for them. Once the child leaves the home, and enters into their first "public sphere," the schoolroom, they continue to acquire the characteristics of their society as well as the knowledge, ideas and skills that they will bring into their adult life. Addressing gender stereotypes along this path, in accordance with the Protocol, can translate into a greater range of options for girls and boys.

In most SADC countries, boys and girls enter primary education in roughly equal numbers. However, at progressively higher levels of education, the rate of girls' enrolment and retention dramatically decreases. In addition, the segregation of teaching staff into gender stereotypical subject areas reinforces gender divisions within schools.

For example, at the tertiary level the dominance of women in such faculties as Arts and Humanities means that more learners are also shuffled in that direction, regardless of personal aspirations and aptitudes. While there are efforts to revisit educational and curriculum based policy, the struggle still exists, requiring more work in this regard. However, the most dangerous element to learning institutions, far beyond any unhealthy and uneven philosophy about men and women's societal roles, is the presence of physical danger.

In the region sexual and gender violence is rampant in learning institutions. To put it simply, schools are not safe. Most of the violence involves rape or abuse of girls by male teachers or peers. Intimidation, hitting, coercion into sex acts, emotional and verbal abuse are also problems.

There are policies in place in most SADC countries, but lack enforcement. There is a growing awareness among educators, government ministries, NGOs and civil society organisations about the need to combat this problem.
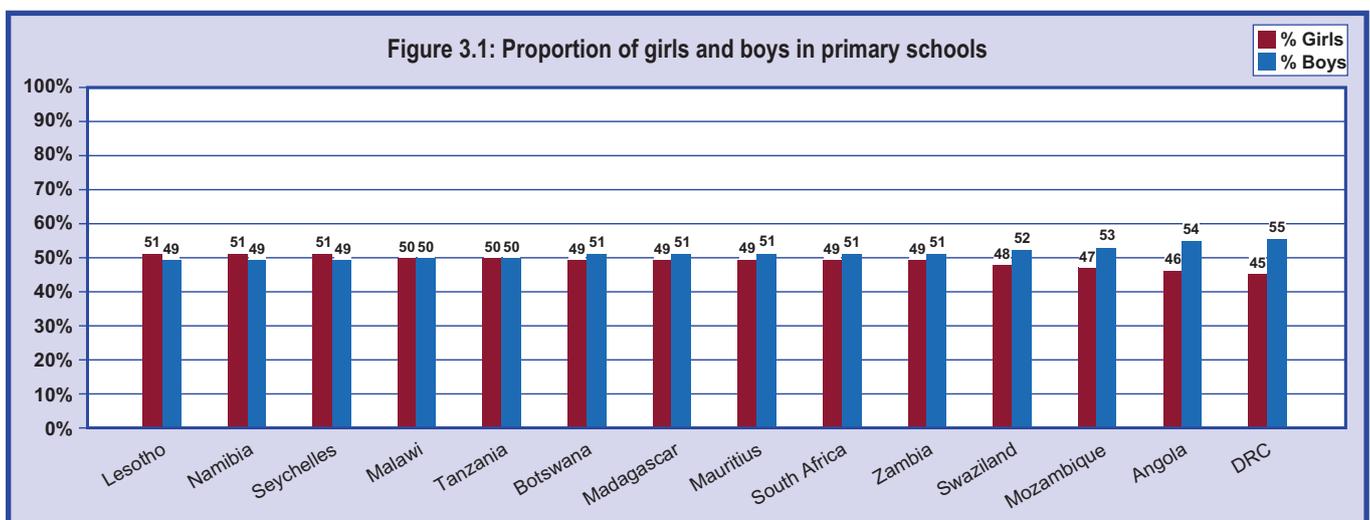
Enrolment and retention

The Protocol calls upon State Parties to enact laws that promote equal access to and retention in primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and non-formal education.

Recognising that gender plays a role in enrolment and retention in the education system, the Gender Protocol seeks to highlight factors that get, and keep, girls and boys in school. It also recognises that formal education is not the only type of training that can benefit girls and women. Vocational and non-formal approaches have their place in preparing women and girls for employment and other such opportunities.

Factors related to school presence can be categorised into push and pull factors. The push factors include cost of school requirements, poor teaching, poor learning environment, over-crowded classes, gender-insensitive schools and curriculum, insecurity at and out of school, insensitivity to children with special needs, harassment/corporal punishment, and lack of appropriate sanitation facilities. The pull factors include early marriages and pregnancy, initiation rites requiring girls to be out of school for extended periods, child labour, security concerns, stigma (special needs and ultra-poor children), cultural practices and beliefs that attach low value to education, and poverty. At different levels of schooling, and in various countries, all of these factors affect enrolment and retention in various ways.

Figure 3.1: Proportion of girls and boys in primary schools

Country	% Girls	% Boys
Lesotho	51	49
Namibia	51	49
Seychelles	51	49
Malawi	50	50
Tanzania	50	50
Botswana	49	51
Madagascar	49	51
Mauritius	49	51
South Africa	49	51
Zambia	49	51
Swaziland	48	52
Mozambique	47	53
Angola	46	54
DRC	45	55

Source: Gender Links

Gender parity in primary schools in most but not all countries: In most SADC countries, there are now roughly equal numbers of boys and girls at primary schools. The widest gaps are in Angola and DRC, where girl learners still comprise 46% of primary school-goers in classrooms.

More girls than boys in schools in Lesotho: In some countries, such as Lesotho, there are more girls than boys in primary schools, resulting mainly from families keeping boys back to herd cattle. A March 2005 study drew attention to the need to give herd boys the same opportunity and level of education as girl children. Since 2000, government also put in place free primary education and plans are at an advanced stage to make this mandatory, with the key target group being herd boys and domestic workers.

Not all children in school: Although the narrow gender gap is heartening, an estimated 30% of primary-aged children are not in school. There is also some suggestion that figures underestimate the actual number of children who, though enrolled, are not attending school with any regularity.

Education is key: primary school children in Leribe, Lesotho.
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

It is worse during and in post conflict situations: Enrolment in post conflict countries like Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo is still low. Challenges faced by Angolan school children are crowded classes and poor learning conditions. Many schools have no access to water and sanitation, meaning that girls are often forced to drop out after the onset of menstruation. Less than 60 per cent of primary school-aged boys and girls attend primary school, and many children repeat classes - leading to more overcrowding.[1]

Table 3.1: Access and enrolment in education sector																													
	Angola		Botswana		DRC		Lesotho		Madagascar		Malawi		Mauritius		Mozambique		Namibia		Seychelles		South Africa		Swaziland		Tanzania		Zambia		Zimbabwe	
%	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Literacy	59	84	83	83	54	81	83	80	65	77	65	79	85	90	33	57	87	89	92	91	87	89	78	81	62	78	61	81	88	94
Enrolment																														
Primary school	46	54	49	51	45	55	51	49	49	51	50	50	49	51	47	53	51	49	51	49	49	51	48	52	50	50	49	51	49	51
Secondary school	44	56	52	48	36	64	56	44	48	52	44	56	52	48	44	56	54	46	51	49	52	48	50	50	44	56	45	55	48	52
Tertiary level	40	60	53	47	26	74	44	56	49	51	39	61	54	46	38	62	56	44	57	43	53	47	50	50	32	68	53	47	n/a	n/a
Vocational and technical			39	61	61	39	52	48	27	73	31	69	37	63	31	69	29	71					54	46	45	55			n/a	n/a

Source: Angola: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/angola_statistics.html 22/07/09 (access and enrolment only); Botswana : CSO 2003 / 2006 (access and enrolment), CSO 2006 (university faculties); DRC: Annual statistics of primary, secondary, professional and informal education for the school years 2006-2007 and 2007 to 2008; Lesotho: Ministry of Education Statistics Bulletin 2006. National University of Lesotho Student Records for 2008/2009 academic year. The Human Development Report 2007/2008 gives adult literacy of 90.3% for females, and 73.7% for males (access and enrolment), Ministry of Education, 2009 (university faculties); Madagascar: Ministry of National Education, Annuaires statistiques 2006-2007, 2007-2008 (access and enrolment), MEN Statistical Yearbook 2007-2008 (school administration); Malawi: Government of Malawi (2008) Education Management System, Department of Education Planning, Education Management Information System; Mauritius: CSO 2008; Mozambique: NA; Namibia: Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture 2002 /Ministry Education 2008 (access and enrolment), Education stats 2008 (school administration); South Africa: Education Statistics in SA 2007 (access and enrolment), NA (school administration); Seychelles: Ministry of Education, 2009; Swaziland: CSO/EMIS 2007 (access and enrolment), Teaching Service Commission 2009 (school administration); Tanzania: Wizara Ya Fedha na Uchumi, Hali ya Uchumi waTaifa katika mwaka 2008, (219-222) Year June 2009 and Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST)2004-2008, National Data, June 2008; Zambia: Year Education Statistical Bulletin - 2008, ZDHS 2007. Zimbabwe: EMIS Report Year 2006 and Census report 2002 (Statistics only available in terms of percentages) (access and enrolment), EMIS Year 2006 (school administration) and OSSREA(2000): http://www.ossrea.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=350. All figures cross checked with UN.

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[1] Source: UNICEF (2010), 'In Angola, child-friendly schools bring new life to primary education' - http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/angola_53656.html

School is not free! The introduction of school and other user fees in many countries at primary level discourages parents from sending children to school. Increasing levels of poverty have also witnessed a growing proportion of boys dropping out of primary school to become hawkers and traders, as their parents find this economically more beneficial in the short term than the long-term investment in an education. Girls may be taken out of school also to work as sellers, but more likely to help in the home, caring for family.

One of the arguments of educationists is that children's education should not be left up to discretion or family finances; rather free and compulsory primary education for all children would guarantee both boys and girls get at least basic literacy and numeracy skills. Most of SADC has free and compulsory education in place. The exception is Zimbabwe, which is neither free nor compulsory, and Namibia, which is free, but not compulsory.

However, it is obvious that free and compulsory is not an answer in itself, as there are still significant numbers of children out of school. The compulsory aspect is rarely enforced. Despite "free" education, many learners still miss out because families cannot afford school uniforms and supplies, or simply need another income earner or carer. In countries like South Africa, private education surpasses the resources of the state "free" education, and this means more privileged learners have better opportunities.

While the region should celebrate the achievement of near gender parity in primary education, there is still need for caution. Where there is a choice because of limited resources, girls are inevitably the first to be withdrawn. Given the currently worldwide economic situation and increasing calls from some corners for such things as user fees to help finance government activities, the tide can quickly change.

Undocumented children in Angola
One of the issues facing access to education in Angola is that the Angolan government does not currently permit education to undocumented children. Many children in Angola are currently undocumented, and fees for birth certificates and identification cards remain prohibitive for impoverished families. Furthermore, although education is free to documented children, families often face significant additional costs such as books, travel and meals. Gender based discrimination occurs frequently in Angola despite the fact that the government has put in place legal provisions concerning discrimination in employment and occupation.
(2008, Human Rights report, Angola, US Department of State)

Secondary school

Figure 3.2: Proportion of girls and boys in secondary schools
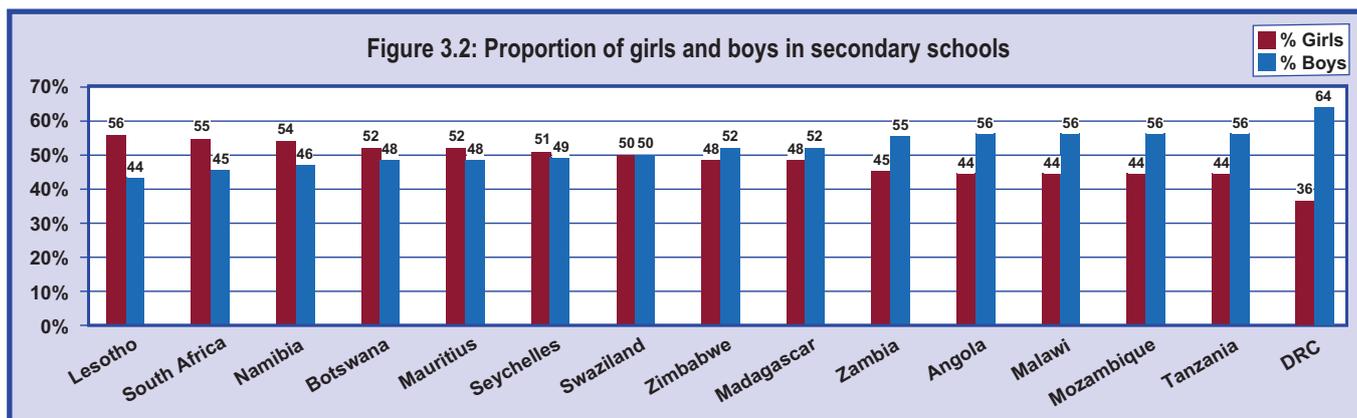
Source: Gender Links. Compiled from in-country research reports - based on interviews, internet search and Ministries of Education documents. See Table 3.1 for list.

The gender gap at secondary level is narrowing: SADC countries differ from their counterparts in the rest of Africa in that the gender gap at secondary school level is rapidly narrowing. Indeed, as illustrated in Figure 3.2, Lesotho (56% girls) has a considerably higher proportion of girls than boys in secondary school as a result of boys herding cattle. South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Seychelles and Swaziland have slightly more girls than boys in school, which is consistent with demographics.

But in some countries, there is still a worrying gender gap in favour of boys: In DRC, only 36% of secondary school learners are girls. In Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, and Angola, girls comprise just 44% of learners. In countries like Tanzania and Malawi, 44% at secondary level compares to gender parity at primary level. Questions arise as to why girls are fewer at higher levels of education?

Free education at secondary level is rare: Perhaps a contributing factor is that at secondary level free and compulsory education is much rarer than at primary level. Secondary level education is free in DRC and Seychelles, and not so in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, or Zimbabwe. It is not compulsory in any SADC country. In many countries, there are insufficient secondary school places for both boys and girls, and both sexes drop out at alarming rates.

A gender perspective provides insight as to why this is so: For boys, pressure to earn an income, for girls, family responsibilities and social stereotypes that undervalue girls' education are apparent. Rather, many are encouraged, or forced, to marry early, or if not, care for their parents and siblings.

High rates of teenage pregnancy in the region are also a factor of girls dropping out of school. Roughly one-third of all young women becoming pregnant by the age of sixteen, and the burden of care usually falls on the girl.
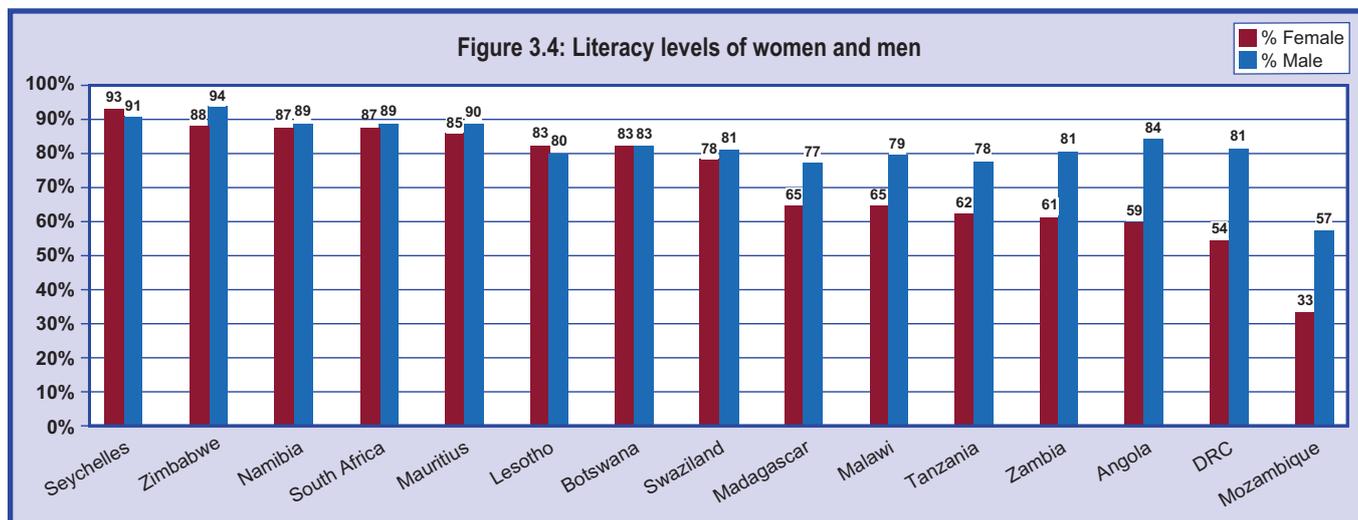
Tertiary level

Figure 3.3: Proportion of women and men in tertiary education
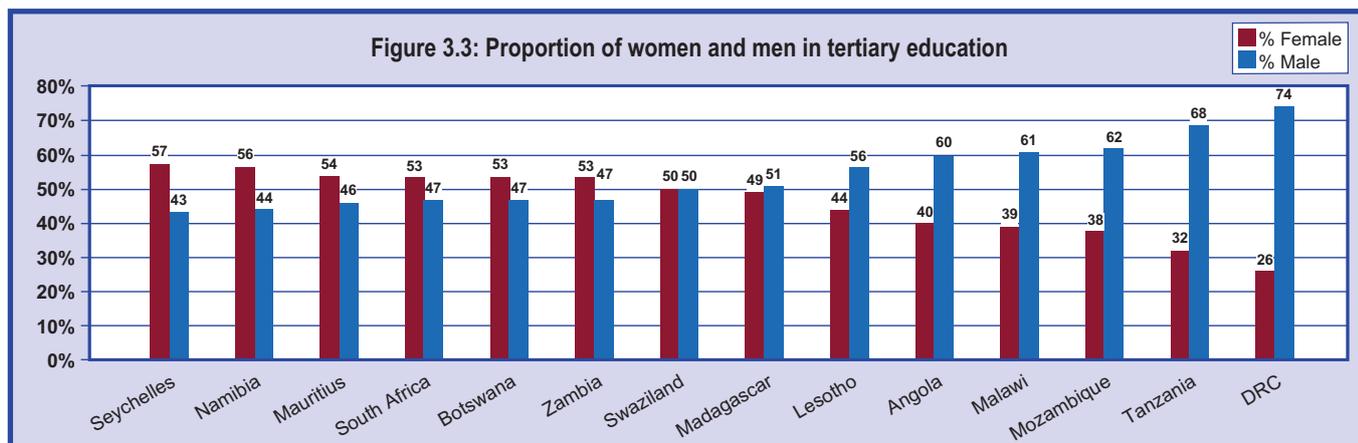
Source: Gender Links. See Table 3.1 for list of sources.

Higher proportions of women at tertiary education in five SADC countries: In almost half of SADC countries, tertiary institutions have equal numbers or more women, than men. Seychelles, Namibia, Mauritius, South Africa and Botswana have higher proportions of women than men at tertiary level.

But large gender gaps in others: However, there are large gender gaps in tertiary institutions in DRC (26%), Tanzania (32%), Mozambique (38%), Malawi (38%), and Angola (40%) show there are still worrisome trends in the region. This is especially important given that university education is the likely path to leadership positions, whether in business, governance, media or any other sector.

Literacy

Figure 3.4: Literacy levels of women and men

Legend: ■ % Female ■ % Male

Country	% Female	% Male
Seychelles	93	91
Zimbabwe	88	94
Namibia	87	89
South Africa	87	89
Mauritius	85	90
Lesotho	83	80
Botswana	83	83
Swaziland	78	81
Madagascar	65	77
Malawi	65	79
Tanzania	62	78
Zambia	61	81
Angola	59	84
DRC	54	81
Mozambique	33	57

Source: Gender Links. See Table 3.1 for list of sources.

Lower literacy levels for women in all SADC countries except Seychelles: Although not specifically referred to in the Protocol, basic literacy is a core issue. With the exception of Seychelles, women in Southern Africa have lower literacy levels than men. In some cases, the gap is very worrying, for example in Mozambique, only 33% of women are literate compared to 57% of men. Likewise, DRC, Angola, Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi, and Madagascar all have significant gender literacy gaps. The chart above reflects literacy rates in SADC countries, organised in descending order of literacy rates for women.

Quality of education

The Protocol not only speaks about enrolment and retention, but also specifically refers to

Girls often become full time care-givers.   *Photo: Gender Links*

quality education. Culture and tradition dictate that girls do more home chores while their counterparts (boys) are studying and waiting for food. The care work that society bestows on girls, which has increased with HIV and AIDS, means girls spend less time on studies, therefore affecting their performance and attendance. Further-more, girls often become not only care-givers, but also breadwinners for child-headed homes, especially where both parents have died from AIDS related illnesses. This can translate into lower pass rates and girls not benefiting as much as they otherwise would from education.

Girls would benefit more from education.   *Photo: Gender Links*
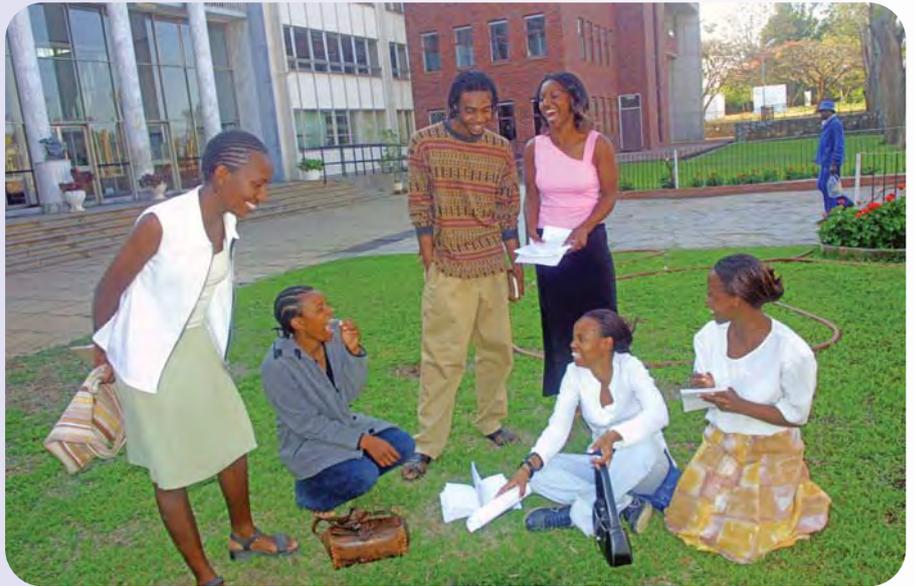
Education sliding backwards in Zimbabwe

Over the years, Zimbabwe has been recognised as one of Africa's education successes. At independence, the country's literacy rate was 63%. In 1983, the government embarked on a programme to promote literacy, and by 1999, Zimbabwe's literacy rate was estimated at 97%, one of the highest on the continent.

The government put in place measures to mainstream gender into the curriculum as well as allow for the retention of female students who fall

Students share a laugh at the University of Zimbabwe.

Photo: Trevor Davies

pregnant in school. Although enrolment of boys and girls in primary and secondary school are nearly equal, in secondary and tertiary levels females become fewer. Universities have introduced affirmative action to facilitate more women entering universities.

Regrettably, the Zimbabwean crisis has not spared the education sector, which suffered serious setbacks because of hyperinflation, brain drain (as teachers fled into the Diaspora), lack of supplies, and massive outward migration.

Though there is a basic right to education, it is practically neither free nor compulsory at any level. Without specific policy measures such as funding to address the gender constraints that limit women and girls access to education and retention, the positive trends risk erosion.

Current education systems in SADC have little adequate means of addressing girls' special needs to remove obstacles to education, or the social pressure put on boys. Yet there are many potential strategies for addressing these imbalances. For the most part, this involves applying a gender perspective, in an attempt to understand how gender affects the region's education progress.

Funding mechanisms

Lack of resources keeps many potential students out of tertiary education. Recognising this, institutions, governments, and civil society organisations have created funding mechanisms

to assist learners. To what extent are these equally open to male and female students? Moreover, do they attempt to redress some of the imbalances?

Like quotas in politics, affirmative action in financial assistance for higher education is a debated topic. Some argue that students should win support based on merit, not gender. Others argue that setting targets and quotas will ensure that women enter into the tertiary system, which will in turn mean a greater pool of likely candidates when it comes to leadership positions in the world of work. This argument also proposes that sometimes the multiple roles of girls, especially at secondary level, combined with

biased education systems, means that girls may underperform, a situation that can be corrected with the proper support.

A survey of countries demonstrates mixed approaches.

Angola: The Government of Angola through the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology adopted a Social Action Policy for Higher Education, which is to regulate internal scholarships at this level. These can come in the form of a tuition waiver, accommodation, meals, subsidies or financial. Scholarships are designed to support enrolled Angolan students who are economically disadvantaged, based on their good performance. Internal scholarships are for students attending universities in Angola.

DRC: Study bursaries, when allocated, are the same for women and men, but a few private initiatives encourage women to go further in their studies. For example, the Catholic Faculty of Kinshasa awards bursaries to women for certain subjects (economics and development).

Lesotho: There is education sponsorship mainly by government through the Department of Manpower, which provides bursary loans for higher education/tertiary institutions that is equally accessible to boys and girls.

Malawi: Government and students share costs for higher education. In the University of Malawi, there are two categories of students; residential and non-residential. Residential students (both men and women) can apply for loans; there is no affirmative policy at loan allocation level. The fees go directly to the University, not the individual student. To date all applicants have received a governmental loan.

Mauritius: All funds are accessible to both women and men. There is a variety of Loan Scheme and Scholarships/prizes for students given by the Government of Mauritius, as well as banks, family trusts, private sector, and overseas organisations.

Mozambique: There are scholarships managed by the Institute of Scholarship under the Ministry of Education for people with no resources to pay for their education; they are competitive for both boys and girls. Public and private universities do offer scholarships for students, boys and girls. The education policy states that girls from low-income families will be granted scholarship and supported to reduce their load of domestic work.

Namibia: The government provides annual bursaries to students who perform well. However, there are particular subjects that the government supports, like science, agriculture, law, geology and ICT. Access to these bursaries is open for both girls and boys, but since girls are not encouraged to take these subjects at primary and secondary levels, they cannot qualify for the bursaries.

Seychelles: Access to higher education happens in two modes. The first mode is after successful completion of post secondary education. Three post secondary institutions offer access solely based on results to higher education to students directly after successful completion of their studies. There is no gender preference; boys and girls have equal opportunity and access. The second mode is through government scholar-ships given to in-service employees. The policy is again clear that performance is the only criteria for selection and all indications are that this policy is rigorously applied.

South Africa: The legal framework provides for the same opportunities for women and men to benefit from scholarships and other study grants. The Constitution, education laws and the Equality Act prohibit discrimination in the awarding of scholarships and study grants. However, proving and challenging indirect discrimination that often masquerades as merit requirements, especially in research grants for academics, presents a challenge. The Further Education and Training Act, 1998 regulates further education, and addresses the advancement of women in further education as well as in previously male dominated fields.

Swaziland: The Ministry of Education assists needy pupils with bursaries for basic education. The government in 2009 allocated an amount of E130,000,000 (US$18,571,428) for this purpose. Which was an increase of E30,000,000 (US$4,285,714) from 2008 (approximately 23%).

Tanzania: There is a loan board for both men and women and is equally accessed depending on performance.

Zambia: There is bursary scheme for orphans and vulnerable children at secondary level; the grant for girls is 60% compared to 40% for boys. At university level students are sponsored 75% of the cost by government and equally accessible to both men and women.

Zimbabwe: Tertiary students receive a govern-ment grant under the cadetship scheme; students can apply to upon admission. Tertiary students can also apply for scholarships for studies outside Zimbabwe from the Ministry of Higher Education.

Though most countries provide equal access to bursaries, there is little doubt that multiple roles and social stereotypes affect girls' access to such support in practice. It is then appropriate that the Protocol also addresses the need for addressing such gender stereotypes.
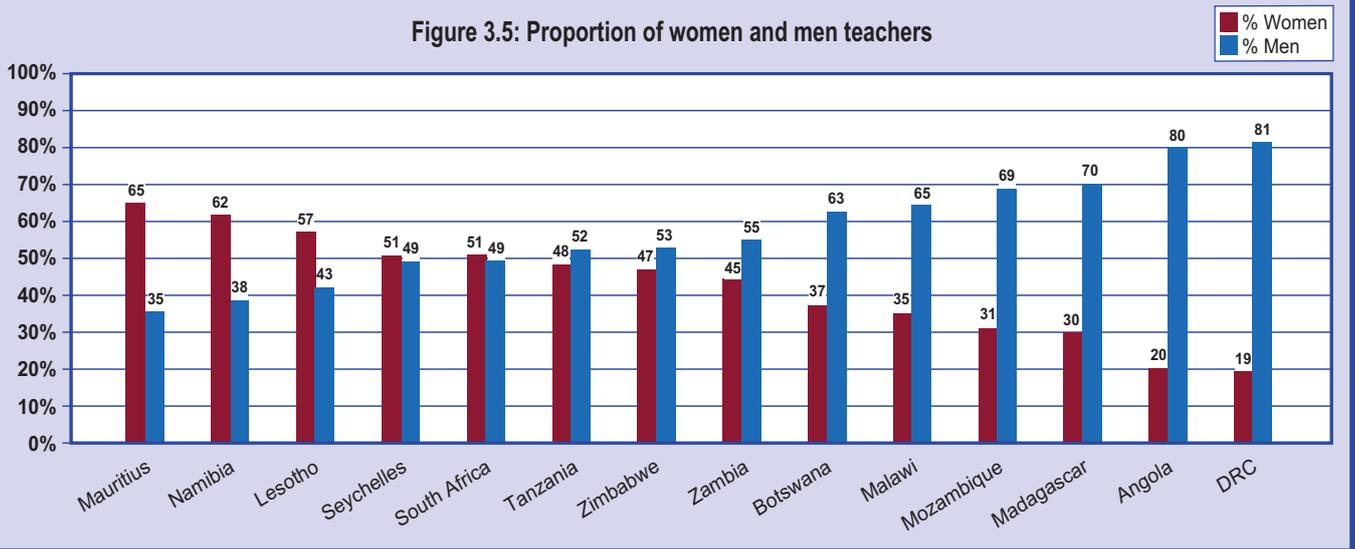
Challenging stereotypes

The Protocol requires that by 2015 state parties adopt and implement gender sensitive educational policies and programmes addressing gender stereotypes in education and gender-based violence.

Big variations in the proportion of male and female teachers: While data on school principals is incomplete, that on the proportion of male and female teachers is comprehensive. Figure 3.5 shows huge variations in the proportion of women and men teachers in the various countries. Seychelles, Mauritius, Namibia and Lesotho all have substantially more women than men in the teaching service. In Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia the proportion of women and men is close to parity. There are substantially more men than women in the teaching services of Botswana, Malawi, Madagascar, Angola and the DRC (19% women compared to 81% men). These figures do, however, require further interrogation:

Figure 3.5: Proportion of women and men teachers

Country	% Women	% Men
Mauritius	65	35
Namibia	62	38
Lesotho	57	43
Seychelles	51	49
South Africa	51	49
Tanzania	48	52
Zimbabwe	47	53
Zambia	45	55
Botswana	37	63
Malawi	35	65
Mozambique	31	69
Madagascar	30	70
Angola	20	80
DRC	19	81

Source: Angola, Botswana, Mozambique: UN Data. DRC: Annual statistics of primary, secondary and further education and informal education, school year 2006-7. Madagascar: MEN Statistical Yearbook 2007-2008. Malawi: Government of Malawi (2008) Education Management System, Department of Education Planning, Education Management Information System.

Gender balance in school administrations

Mauritius is one among four countries that are exceptions from the norm, where female teachers comprise 65% and male teachers 35%. Yet, when it comes to principals, the balance shifts the other way with 56% being male. Though this is near gender parity, when looked at in relation to the large number of teachers, it raises questions about why women are not moving from teaching to principal positions.

Seychelles: There are more female (51%) than male (49%) teachers but when it comes to principals and vocational school governing bodies the female proportion drops to 37% and 40% respectively. This reflects the absence of women in decision-making positions in schools.

Tanzania has virtually achieved gender balance within the teaching service, with a difference of only 5%. Yet, of the country's for which data could be obtained, Tanzania also has the lowest number of female principals (6%). This is probably related to the fact that Tanzania also has the second lowest number of females in tertiary education (32%), followed only by DRC (26%).

Across the region women are absent from the posts of principals and senior positions: Figure 3.5 shows that in the vast majority of countries there are fewer women than men in principal positions. The lowest numbers of female teachers in the region are in Swaziland (16%), the DRC (19%) and Angola (20%).

Gender imbalances in tertiary subjects

The data shows that women are best represented in the Arts and Humanities and in Health Sciences faculties, where nursing is incorporated. They are less often present within disciplines of Science or Law the world over. Gender stereotypes of this nature are certainly not new. In the region, the statistics are generally analogous. As children,

boys and girls learn that certain subjects are off limits to them. Consequently, as they grow up and pursue higher education and careers, these stereotypes continue. This also influences, if they are teachers, what subjects they may have the authority to speak on. The cycle continues when they, as role models, are living out the very same labels that were presented to them as children.

Table 3.2: Women and men in university facilties

	Faculty	Angola		Botswana		DRC		Lesotho		Madagascar		Malawi		Mauritius		Mozambique		Namibia		Seychelles		South Africa		Swaziland		Tanzania		Zambia		Zimbabwe	
%	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Year	1997		2006		2007		2008/9		2006/7		2009		2009		2007		2007						2007/8		2008		2008		2002	
Arts & Humanities Social Sciences	41	59	64	36			69	31	42	58	33	67	78	22	40	60	65	35	43	57					44	56	40	60	38	62
Science	40	60	28	72			26	74	33	67	37	63	59	41	23	77	39	61	34	66			27	73	30	70	35	65	76	24
Economic Sciences (& Law for Seychelles)	40	60	59	41			52	48	31	69							55	45	33	67			48	52	30	70			29	71
Law	34	66					51	49	31	69	29	71	62	38	43	57	52	48							23	77	42	58	43	57
Medicine/Health Services			55	45			58	42	31	69			59	41	49	51	77	23	34	66			56	44	33	64	33	67	33	67

Source: Angola, Mozambique: UN Data. Botswana: CSO 2006. DRC: Annual statistics of Higher Education 2006, 2007. Madagascar: Statistical Yearbook MENRS, 2006-2007. Malawi: Academic and Administrative Staff List; Chancellor College 2009. Mauritius: University of Mauritius 2009. Namibia: University of Namibia 2007. Seychelles: Ministry of Education 2009. South Africa: Education Statistics 2007. Swaziland: Report of Vice Chancellor 2007-2008 P116. Tanzania: Wizara Ya Fedha na Uchumi, Hali ya Uchumi waTaifa katika mwaka 2008, Year June 2009. Zimbabwe: Women and Men in Zimbabwe, Year 2002. Zambia: Year Education Statistical Bulletin 2008.

Figure 3.6: Percentage of women and men in Faculties of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
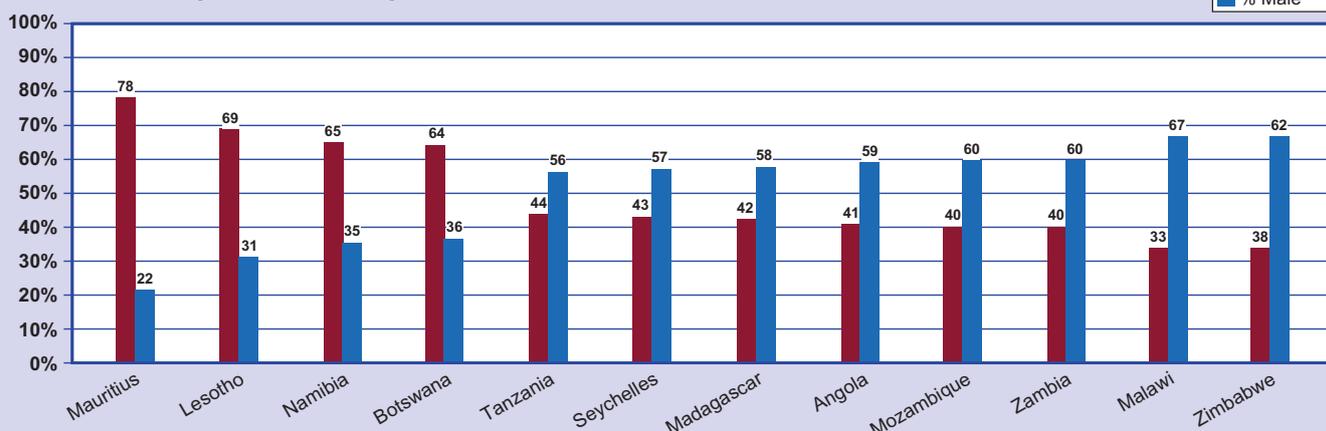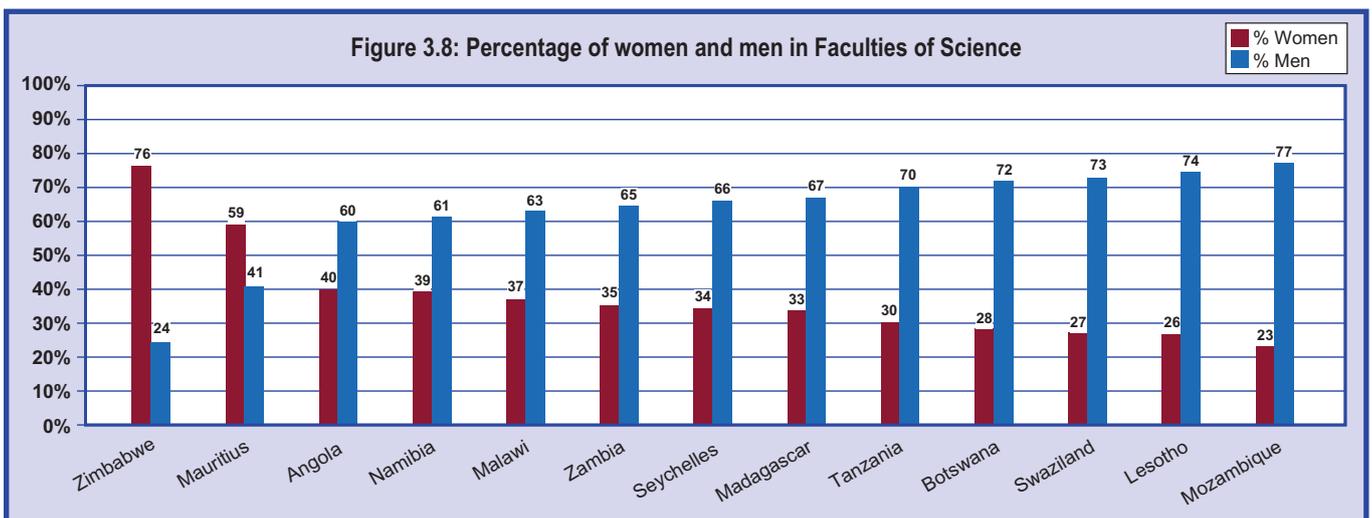
Source: Gender Links. See Table 3.2 for list of sources.

Women dominate in the arts, but not in all countries: In countries for which data could be obtained, and as reflected in the graph, women predominate in the arts, humanities and social sciences in most countries, but this is not universally the case. As demonstrated in the graph, men predominate in these faculties in Angola, Tanzania, Madagascar, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Figure 3.7: Percentage of women and men in Faculty of Law
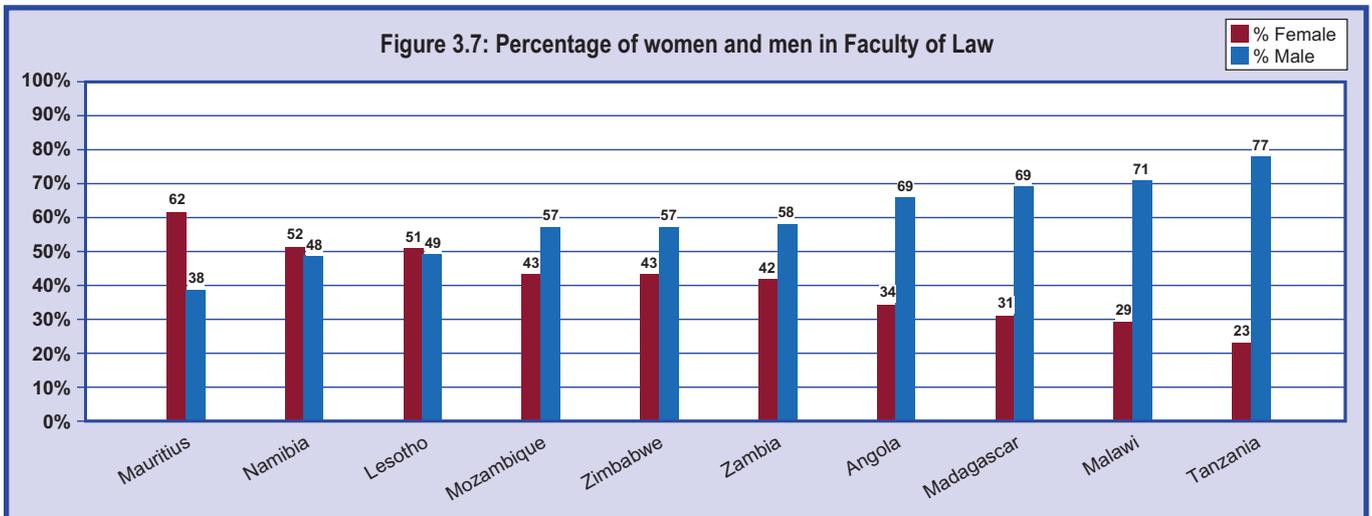
Source: Gender Links. See Table 3.2 for list of sources.

Law is largely male dominated, but there are notable exceptions: In the majority of countries for which data could be obtained, law is largely male dominated, but there are interesting exceptions, such as Mauritius, Namibia and Lesotho, where there is almost gender parity between female and male enrolment in the Law faculty.

Figure 3.8: Percentage of women and men in Faculties of Science

Source: Gender Links. See Table 3.2 for list of sources.

Women are under represented in the sciences, except for one country: The graph reflects the strong domination of men in the sciences, except in Mauritius, where women constitute 58% of those enrolled in the sciences.

Nature or nurture?

Some arguments propose that such compositions reflect the "natural" paths that women and men opt to follow. However, it is important to understand the social context. Even in early grades, girls start to believe that the subjects like maths and science are not for them, but for boys only. As they travel through their school career, such bias follows them, until they decide which professional course to pursue and studies to follow. As a result, they are socialised into choosing courses that they perceive as having a "feminine" identification.
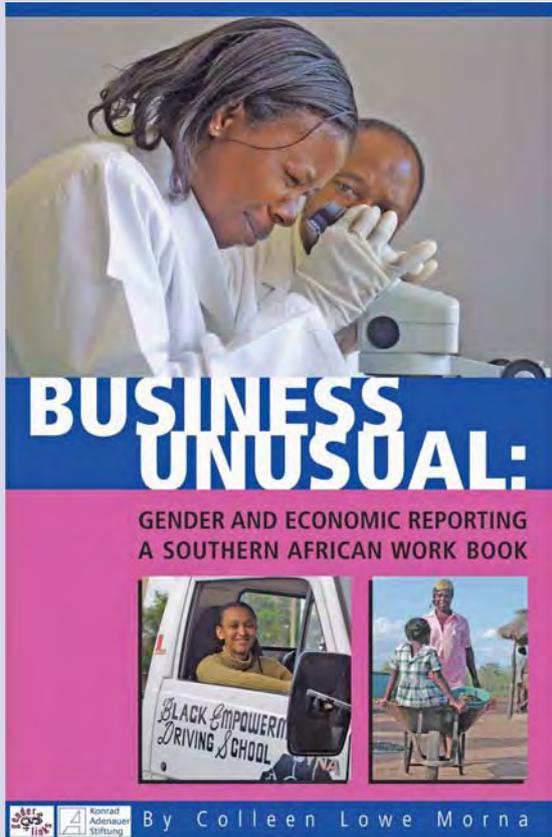
While this gender stereotyping applies to both boys and girls, the affect is more detrimental to girls. The roles that girls are socialised into tend to be the lower end of the scale, usually lesser paid and with fewer available options.

For example, while the Seychelles does not actually have a university as of yet, there is information available about post secondary institutions. According to a senior official at the Ministry of Education, areas such as construction, engineering or maritime studies are considered male-related fields. This stems from societal beliefs. There are very few women doing jobs such as carpentry, masonry, auto-mechanics or working in and around ships. However, fields such as nursing or teaching are considered female-related fields and mainly girls opt for courses in those areas. Hence, the stereotype that women can do some jobs and not others is perpetuated. In addition, most of these stereotypes are based on whether "a woman can climb a ladder with bricks" or "hose down a ship."

In Mauritius at lower secondary level, boys and girls study the same subjects. At upper secondary level, they choose from more or less the same options in the science, economics and humanities streams. The offer of such options largely responds to demands made by students themselves. The exception is the technical stream. Design and Technology is offered in boys' schools whereas girls' schools propose Food Studies and Design and Textiles. However, in some mixed schools, for example, the Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools or some private secondary schools, boys and girls are able to study both Communication, Design and Technology and Home Economics, at least during the first two or three years of secondary. While, the same choice is given to both boys and girls in these above mentioned mixed schools, there is a noted tendency towards stereotypes, with only very few boys opting for Food Studies and only very few girls opting for Design and Technology.

Further data reveals that in Madagascar men are 70% of the senior professors and researchers *(Professeurs titulaires and Directeurs de recherche)*. In the Schools of Arts and Humanities and of Medicine, women are beginning to emerge as a majority at lower levels. In the Arts and Humanities, they are 57% of associate professors and researchers, and in the Medical School, women are 55% of senior lecturers, and 50% of assistant lecturers and researchers. It seems that women are currently making up for the previous situation of male/female inequality in education. However, they still seem to be inclined to choose the subjects that are considered "feminine," according to stereotypes.

Education policy

In some countries, it is only recently that official policies have changed to try to take into account gender diversity:

Malawi: Before 1994, Malawi education policies tended to discriminate against girls and to some extent boys. Primary schools, which offered home economics and needlework, denied girls the opportunity to study science. This policy discouraged girl child interest to pursue science related subjects. All such discriminatory policies related to choice of subjects have since been removed, and programmes initiated to improve and increase the number of girls taking science related subjects.

Mauritius: With the New National Curriculum Framework at the primary level in Mauritius, gender diversity is being reinforced. Both boys and girls study the same subjects and are exposed to the same pedagogy. All gender stereotypes have been removed from instructional materials to create a more enabling environment for self-esteem and personal development of both sexes. In the field of sports, activities traditionally reserved for boys are now open to girls through infrastructural facilities. More and more girls are training in traditionally "male" disciplines.

Tanzania: Pro-active initiatives increasing girls university enrolment

The Dar Es Salaam College of Education (DUCE) has a pre-entry science programme for girls, designed to encourage their continued science studies at the university level. Such programmes can mean that girls, who otherwise would have dropped out of the system, have a chance to further their studies, and improve their futures. The beneficiaries of the DUCE programme are those whose grades fall short for university admission under government sponsorship after their advanced secondary schooling.

A similar programme has been going on at the University of Dar es Salaam for several years and has proved successful, not only increasing girls' enrollment in science faculties, but the university as a whole. Though women still only represent just one third of students found on campus, the female percentage at the University of Dar Es salaam has rise from 16% in the 1990's to 26%.

Pupil enrolment ratio in primary school is almost 50/50, but this goes down at the secondary and university level. In many instances, this is because of the pressures of family responsibilities and lack of priority placed on girls' education. Multiple responsibilities often make it more difficult for girls to get the grades needed to proceed to university, which was the catalyst for the programme.
(Ministry of Education 2008)

Mozambique: the education policy recognises that there are significant differences in the participation of girls and boys in primary school. To promote equality and equity in accessing education, the policy states that a gender sensitive environment will be created through:

• identification and definition of organisational modalities of the educational process and changes in the training of teachers;
• developing a district school map to identify the optimum location for educational institutions;
• sensitising society to reduce the domestic work load of girls;
• promoting alternative systems of girls' education of girls; and
• establishing agreements with NGO, churches, and other partners for their involvement in execution of educational programmes for girls.

Tanzania's education policy is not quite as progressive, and on the subject of gender stereotypes, it is neutral. However, at implementation level, there are efforts made by civil society organisations to encourage girls to pursue science. For example, the former Ministry of Higher Education initiated a programme to award girls who perform well in the sciences. However, the country's economic reform has allowed an open market system and has reduced the efforts set up during independence and during the socialist ideology of expanding industrial activities. This has in turn reduced the success rate of the aforementioned programmes.

Curriculum, gender and education studies

Research and surveys can inform policies, programmes, and strategies. To achieve the

Protocol commitment of removing gender stereotypes in education, there first needs to be an understanding of where those stereotypes are. Just as important as the gender make-up of the teaching staff is the gender content and approaches to curriculum. Countries exhibit various degrees of progress when it comes to assessing their curriculum, which is really at the heart of ensuring a gender friendly education system.

Young Malawian women leaners look to the future.
Photo: Frank Windeck

Swaziland: There have been no studies conducted on gender and curriculum. However, the national curriculum centre introduced the continuous assessment programme in the early 1990's and the slogan for this programme was "Every Child is a Successful Learner." During the implementation of this programme the NCC staff was trained by UNICEF and partners to incorporate the Girl Child training programme.

Zambia: There are no known studies conducted in relation to the curriculum. However, the Standards and Curriculum Directorate recently held a symposium and some of the issues that arose during the symposium intend to address concerns in the curriculum development, especially the removal of stereotypes in the textbooks. Another issue is mainstreaming of gender in the curriculum to take gender to the level where it will be appreciated as a cross cutting issue.

Malawi: There have been a number of studies done by the Ministry of Education on gender and education. One such study was "Knowledge and Policy Formulation: Reducing Gender Inequalities in Education In Sub-Saharan Africa, Malawi case study.[2] " The study recommended the need to evaluate subject selection policy and curriculum and to enhance the capacity of girls to pursue science related projects.

Lesotho: No studies have been undertaken on curriculum on gender and education.

Mozambique: The National Institute for Development of Education (INDE) is the government institution responsible for developing curriculum and other studies concerning education in Mozambique, in particular for primary and secondary levels. At the time of writing this report, we did not have access to a copy of one, but were assured that a study was conducted.

Seychelles: Several studies have been carried out to understand the situation regarding gender in the education sector and these have been used to inform policy making:

• Directors and Heads of Units in Education followed a course in Gender Planning and Management organised by the Ministry of Administration and Manpower in December 1996, to allow them to integrate gender into planning processes. This had some positive results. Recent policy documents are gender responsive and recognise the differing needs of girls and boys. National Examination results and education statistics are now more systematically gender disaggregated so that the progress of both genders in education can be monitored and all disparities highlighted. Gender has been successfully integrated into the new Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan (ESP), initial teacher training programmes and major projects such as the school improvement programme.

(ICPD Report 2003)

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[2] Center for educational research and training Esme Kadzamira (1998) Department of International Development

• The new Personal and Social Education (PSE) Programme, which is compulsory for all students, discusses family responsibilities and relation-ships in gender sensitive ways, not limited by traditional roles and tasks.

National curriculum offices and gender mainstreaming

It seems throughout the region, the first place change is taking place is within the books and education materials produced for schools. Changing the written discourse around gender is just the beginning. Hopefully, with continued efforts, these tools will create greater changes throughout the region.

Lesotho: The national curriculum office is working with UNICEF, UNFPA and UNESCO to mainstream gender into curriculum. This is meant to ensure gender is included under compulsory learning in social, personal, spiritual, and life skills education in formal and non-formal education in primary and secondary schools. The focus is on gender stereotyping, as well as gender laws and policies. A course offered relates to gender, sexual, and reproductive human rights, as well as inter-personal relationships. A Technical Education Sector Review meeting in Lesotho in March 2008 identified gender as an issue.

Malawi: The Primary Curriculum Assessment Reform (PCAR) process introduced subjects such as life skills, social studies and general studies. Gender is part of a module in social studies, and another module discusses promotion and respect for human rights. Civil society and human rights institutions are encouraged to work in schools to augment these courses.

Madagascar: The national policy expresses leaders' will to eliminate gender stereotypes. PANEF has set, among other operational objectives, translating gender non-discrimination into the curricula and textbooks. In addition, according to policies, teachers and school administration must observe the principles of equity and equal opportunities, and establish such relations with their students based on honesty and objectiveness.

Mauritius: Implementation of the Programme Based Budget is geared towards developing gender sensitive indicators to monitor gender gaps in learning achievement and developing appropriate strategies for gender differentiated pedagogy. Pending the finalisation of the National Curriculum Framework for secondary schools and the development of instructional materials, Pupils' Textbooks and Teachers' Resource Books for upper primary are being written where gender equality will be a high watermark.

Mozambique: Gender is being mainstreamed in the curriculum and in most school books gender is integrated.

Namibia: The institute for educational development is responsible for textbook development, review and syllabus to ensure that gender mainstreaming is built in.

South Africa: In 2010, 15 years after the official demise of apartheid, government estimates it needs at least 35 billion U.S. dollars just to fit all schools with the basics - classrooms, water, toilets and electricity. According to a report in Inter Press Service, teachers feel that when you teach pupils sitting on the floor with enrolment of over 60 pupils in one class, gender takes a back seat. Some school administrations do not even know how to deal with teenage girls getting pregnant; there is absolutely no sensitivity - let alone mainstream

gender equality in the curriculum[3]. However teachers in some secondary schools contend that curricula are becoming more advanced in promoting gender equality. There are many examples of text books and other resource materials that challenge stereotypes.

Swaziland: When developing new textbooks on the curriculum, a panel of experts assists with the audit of the new book. Gender sensitivity is one of the indicators that the panel must check for, as well as topical issues of abuse, disability and life skills.

Gender violence in schools

The Protocol earmarks addressing gender violence as part of implementing gender sensitive policies in education, with good reason. Gender violence is a huge issue within the SADC region. The reasons for this are many, and the extent to which it is recognised and addressed by government agencies varies.

The forms of violence vary, but generally revolve around rape or sexual abuse. The problem stems from gender inequalities between women and men, which then transfer onto girls and boys. Some other forms of abuse involve hitting, intimidation, verbal abuse and coercion to have sexual relationships with teachers. Bullying of girls by boys is a common phenomenon in schools and sexual abuse of girl children by teachers and other civil servants is extensive. Psychological abuse is another large problem, which unlike physical or sexual violence receives little attention. The violence touches everyone, including female

teachers, workers, girl children and boy children. The following are some specific findings from the research:

GBV in schools is a major problem in most countries: Thirteen out of the fifteen countries report large-scale problems with gender based violence and sexual abuse in education facilities. Nations that have bypassed this trend are the Seychelles and Mauritius. In some cases, lack of adequate fencing around schools is cited as a leading cause of violence. For the rest, it is a far more complex problem, needing more than physical barriers to uproot.

About half of the SADC countries have conducted studies on the issue of gender violence in schools that could help the education sector understand and address the issue. The situation in different countries is as follows:

Botswana: No studies have been undertaken to investigate the extend of gender based violence in schools.

DRC: A study was conducted on gender dimensions of formal and informal education. This showed gender is not integrated into local

associations and that reform must concentrate on thinking of a national policy that targets men and women.

Lesotho: No specific studies, but in some cases the issue is studied along other educational issues. The De Wet study reveals that sexual violence is a serious problem in Lesotho schools. The problem manifests gender inequalities and violence. Boys are the perpetrators and girls the victims of physical and sexual violence with about 11% of the respondents saying that pupils in their school had raped someone. 41% of pupils and 8% of teachers carry a weapon to school at least once a month.

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[3] Inter Press Service: (2010): http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50633

Madagascar: Violence in schools seems to be a main preoccupation among students in general, girls in particular. It is a deterring factor for going to school, and fosters relations of domination of boys over girls. *(UNICEF/MENRS/FOCUS 2008)*

Malawi: Safe School Programme (SSP) has assessed the prevalence of school-based gender violence and piloted intervention programmes in selected schools across the country. The study revealed inter alia that there is insufficient curricula and training related to prevention of gender violence; lack of institutional response; and lack of awareness, prevention and reporting by community members and parents; and lack of support services for survivors. USAID research focusing on school related gender based violence in Malawi reveals that gender violence is prevalent in most learning institutions. Such violence takes place in the school, on the school grounds, and when students are going to and from school or in school dormitories. Teachers, pupils or community members perpetrate such gender violence, and both girls and boys report such abuses. Most students reported verbal sexual abuse, pregnancy from relationships with teachers or male peers, as well as intimidation, threats, and coercion to have sexual relationships with teachers, along with outright rape.

Mauritius: A study carried out on discipline problems in schools related to both sexes addressed the problem of violence in schools and did not relate solely to gender based violence. Some factors contributing to discipline problems included:
• Lack of communication among family members or a lack of parental control over their children.
• Peer influence.
• Socio-economic factors.
• An absence of a guiding policy from the concerned Ministry.
• The psychological development of adolescents.
• A lack of awareness of existing laws.

Mozambique: A report revealed that sexual abuse in schools is among the social problems affecting Mozambican society, and that this is the main cause of HIV and AIDS infections among girls. It reveals that 6.6% of the girls interviewed reported forced sexual relations. According to this report, the prevalence of forced intercourse among girls in secondary schools is 8.7% and 7.3% in primary schools.

Seychelles: As of yet gender based violence in schools has not been the basis of any in-depth enquiry. This may be because gender based violence in schools has not been recorded on a frequent basis.

South Africa: There have been several studies. One, the Human Rights Watch report *"Scared at School"* highlighted girls' vulnerability to rape from teachers and classmates as well as in dating relationships. The report criticised schools in particular as perpetuating the insidious cycle of domestic violence. In 2006, the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation Gender based Violence Programme conducted a study with adolescent girls between the ages 13-17 that suggested that efforts to address violence against adolescent girls in South Africa are not a priority. Findings from 17 focus group discussions with adolescent girls at nine Gauteng schools suggest that minimal to no intervention efforts are underway at schools or in communities.

Swaziland: In 2003, the Ministry of Education conducted a study revealing that sexual abuse was high, but not reported. The perpetrators were mostly male uncles and teachers. The report found that this type of abuse was not reported because other teachers feared upsetting relationships and friendships within the staff room. Further, the study found that physical abuse was reported, as the

wounds were visible which eliminated the aspect of privacy.

Tanzania: A study was conducted by USAID/ Health Policy Initiative in November 2008, but was inconclusive.

Many schools in Southern African are fertile breeding grounds for potentially damaging gender practices that remain with pupils into adult life. Girls learn to accept the battery and assault, while boys, by contrast receive tacit permission to continue with the violent behaviour, because their violence is not condemned or interrupted. Across the region, institutions of learning are far from safe.

Children are at risk while at school, after school with teachers, in school dormitories or on their way to and from school. Within the confines of the school grounds, classmates or teachers may abuse them. In some settings where fences or walls are not in place, they are at risk from outside trespassers. Children are also often victims of rape or assault on their way in or out of school.

There is often a disconnection between the views of officials on the subject, and the situation experienced by children, families and teachers. Botswana is a nation that aspires to be "compassionate, just and caring" and "moral and tolerant" as declared in Vision 2016, yet has wide-scale physical abuse of children by teachers. In Lesotho, where educational officials have claimed that learning institutions are generally safe, research suggests that sexual violence is not only taking place, but is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. Often, even if officials acknowledge that gender violence is occurring, there is a lack of data.

Is safety an island of its own?

On a positive note, institutions of learning in the **Seychelles** are safe. Legally, the Education Act and school policies protect students. Most of these policies focus on issues of gender equity and gender sensitivity in instruction. Physically, there are systems and rules in place that ensure that children are watched over at all times. Additionally, schools are fenced and gated and are provided with security personnel. There have been a few cases of violence in schools over the last decade but these are rare and considered exceptional. They have been dealt with promptly and swiftly when they do occur.

Mauritius also takes gender violence in schools seriously, addressing the problem on a social, institutional and legal level. While there are a few intermittent cases of violence, overall the country is doing well. In Mauritius, it is believed that the very essence of education is to further equal opportunities for all and avoid non-discriminatory measures. Sensitisation campaigns on gender violence and violence against children occur on a regular basis in schools. The responsibilities, involvement and collaborative efforts of the school personnel, students and families also act as a stimulus in maintaining a safe school environment for both sexes. This is as much an externally imposed policy as an internal administrative affair.

There are problems of enforcement in all the SADC countries: All SADC counties have some form of protections for learners, and only two, Lesotho and Swaziland, do not have any specific provisions to eliminate gender violence in schools.

However, the problem usually lies with enforcement. Across the region, while there are relevant policies and legal protections against gender violence, action against the perpetrator is rare, even when reported.

DRC: In theory, safety is guaranteed but in practice, this is not the case. The law forbids sexual harassment, but there are still teachers and education professionals who abuse their power to exploit students. In some remote areas, girls undertake cleaning jobs for their teachers, and their presence in personal spaces makes them vulnerable to exploitation.

Namibia: Sexual relations between teachers and learners are prohibited and any teacher who breaches this faces losing their jobs. Teachers found guilty cannot teach for eight years, after which if they want to return, they need to reapply. However, there is evidence of some parents protecting teachers found to be having sexual relations with learners because they see them as a source of income. There are also cases where learners do not reveal the identity of the father to protect him from losing his job.

Lesotho: Perpetrators of GBV are generally dealt with under the Sexual Offenses Act of 2003. Teachers and principals are disciplined in line with the provisions of the Code of Conduct of Teachers (Lesotho Education Act No. 10 of 1995, Article 48[g]) which states that a teacher commits: "... a breach of discipline and is liable to disciplinary proceedings and punishment' if he/she '... conducts himself [sic] improperly in his [sic] duties as a teacher." The Codes cited above address the issue of teachers molesting students; however, interviews reveal enforcement is poor.

Mozambique: There is no standard treatment. Some perpetrators are transferred to other schools, some are brought to justice, and in other cases, action is taken. There is the issue of proof to indict the perpetrator. The law is clear on the treatment for such cases, but the handling of the process does not always follows the normal procedures. Maputo and Beira, according to the study, are the two cities that registered less cases of sexual abuse in schools, while in other provinces the rate is higher. This may be due to less law enforcement in the other provinces.

Malawi: Government employees are regulated under the Malawi Public Service Regulations (MPSR) and in cases where they are found guilty of malpractice they are subjected to interdiction and dismissal. The MPSR regulates disciplinary conduct of government-employed teachers but this does not extend to private schools, which appear unregulated. Government has come up with a code of conduct for teachers but there is a lack of awareness and enforcement. A study by Leach, Kadzamira and Lemani (2003) in Malawi provided evidence of teachers engaging in sexual misconduct with pupils in the three schools involved in the study. Little disciplinary action was taken by the authorities. Many cases go unreported and are condoned by school personnel, sometimes with the consent of the girl and her family. However, the greatest daily threat of gender violence to girls came from older boys in the school, who often engaged in aggressive behaviour and sexual harassment. Girls were also accosted by older men (sugar daddies) around the school and in the community, seeking sex in exchange for money or gifts.

Seychelles: All students are to be treated equally and fairly. Any violence against children, be it gender based or otherwise is punishable by law. There are clear policies regarding molesting any student, male or female. A teacher found guilty of such an offence, faces dismissal or court proceedings, depending on the findings of an enquiry.

Tanzania: SOSPA is binding to every perpetrator.

South Africa: The Employment of Educators Act states that it is a dismissible disciplinary offence for an educator to engage in sexual relations with or sexually assault a learner. While the government has progressive policies to address violence in schools and

gender based violence in the educational system, the problem remains one of enforcement and the creation of a human rights culture in the education system specifically and in society broadly.

Madagascar: Teachers are liable to punishment under the Penal Code, depending on the nature and seriousness of the violence committed. Possible forms of punishment include forced labour, imprisonment, loss of civil rights, fines, etc. Moreover, such teachers are liable to professional punishment, including salary suspension, demotion or even dismissal from the civil service.

Swaziland: When the Ministry of Education investigation office receives a report, they dispatch officers to the school to investigate. These officers are trained in gathering evidence required for successful disciplinary purposes by the Teaching Service Commission (TSC). If a teacher is found guilty they are dismissed from service. The TSC report of 2006 confirms this, reporting with concern the increase in the number of dismissals due to being found guilty of having intimate relationships with students.

Botswana: In 2005, the Botswana Girl/Boy Education Movement (G-BEM) was formally launched to coincide with the end of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender based Violence. G-BEM advocates for a child-friendly, gender-sensitive rights-based environment for children in - and out - of school. This initiative is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Education, the Women's Affairs Division, UNICEF and the Girl/Boy Child Network, a conglomerate of civil society organisations concerned with issues of the girl and boy child.

Zimbabwe: The Ministry of Education has come up with a statutory Instrument SI 1/2000 that seeks to regulate the con-duct of teachers in relation to gender based violence in schools. According to this, all

intimate relationships with schoolchildren by teachers are improper associations, even if the child in question is over the age of consent. Where allegations arise, teachers face disciplinary action from the Ministry. In addition, where the child in question is below the age of consent, the Ministry will lodge a criminal offence. Once found guilty, a teacher may face discharge. However, one of the biggest challenges is with parents who consent to marriages between the teacher and their child, which results in the charges being dropped or not being pursued.
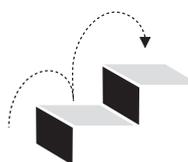
Next steps

Although the gender gap in education is closing, any gap has far-reaching impact on gender equality. Educated girls are less likely to be exploited, fall victim to trafficking and to become infected with HIV. Girls' education creates a positive cycle. Educated mothers are more likely to raise educated children *(Plan 2008)*.

According to a report published by Plan International, "investment in girls' education will deliver real returns, not just for individuals but for the whole of society" *(Plan 2008)*.

Primary education
This calls for key, targeted policy measures including:
- Reviewing policies on school fees and, where feasible, making education free and compulsory (Tanzania, for example, has reverted to a policy of free and compulsory education);
- Ensuring all learners have access to learner support materials and that these costs do not prejudice access to education by boys and girls;
- Special funds and scholarships, with specific gender targets appropriate to the particular country, to assist learners from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Monitoring enrolment and retention to ensure gender balance; and
- Engaging with parents on the benefits of educating boys and girls.

Secondary education

This raises a number of issues:

- **Sex education in schools:** Although schools are now introducing sex education in some countries, this is confined to the classroom, without involving parents. Some teachers believe they are being asked to assume parental responsibilities. The issue is controversial, especially in conservative communities. It needs far more integration into the whole school development approach.

- **Reproductive health facilities** for boys and girls: Adequate reproductive health facilities do not accompany sex education in urban, let alone rural areas. This issue needs addressing, together with those responsible for health facilities.

- **Blaming girls:** The issue of teenage pregnancies in schools is discriminatory. Young girls usually bear the entire consequences, without the boys who father the children called on to take responsibility or share the burden. While it may not be practical or economically desirable for both young parents to drop out of school, the school has a responsibility to a) take a stand against the stigmatisation of girls who fall pregnant b) emphasise the responsibility of young men who father children c) provide psychological and practical support to the young parents.

- **Girls who fall pregnant while at school resuming their studies:** Although theoretically in most SADC countries girls who become pregnant at school are free to continue and/or return to school, in practice they are stigmatised or expelled, and seldom complete their education. Schools have a responsibility to ensure that the girls who become pregnant while at school receive the practical and psychological support they need to return to school and complete their studies. In Botswana, for example, one school provided childcare facilities for young mothers wishing to continue their education. Evidence suggests that the physical presence of this facility at the school, and the burden of parenting while completing ones studies, deters the number of learner pregnancies at the school.

Tertiary education: Narrowing the gap requires some concerted strategies, including:

- Targets and timeframes for achieving gender parity in vocational and higher education;
- Supporting measures, such as affirmative point systems, scholarships and special funds for girls;
- Gender sensitive career guidance; and
- Special incentives for girls to enter non-traditional areas of training including partnerships with the private sector and parastatals.

Literacy

There is need to increase literacy drives for both men and women with targeted approaches to adult basic education to bridge the gender gap. Such literacy initiatives need to take into account the responsibilities that women and girls continue to shoulder in the home, especially related to approaches to learning, scheduling of classes and relevance of teaching material.

This calls for:

- Increased awareness raising campaigns, specifically targeting rural women and girls;
- Equal access of girls in institutions of learning, and additional resources such as books; and
- Eradicating gender stereotypes.

Gender violence in schools

There is a need to launch a campaign against sexual, physical and emotional abuse in schools. This should comprise a holistic approach with implementation of prevention, reporting and response activities to school violence and development of community action plans. Clearer links between education policy and the national legal and regulatory framework must be established. More awareness is required especially of the parents and guardians not to compromise at home, and to follow up with these tracking processes.

More in-depth studies should be undertaken at all levels of the educational system, to determine the causes of gender violence in schools: perpetrators, victims, etc. The results should be used to identify and decide on measures to be taken in future efforts.