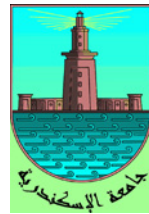


# HANDBOOK ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE EGYPTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM





## HANDBOOK ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE EGYPTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM



**Edited by** Heike Pantelmann

Freie Universität Berlin

Margherita von Brentano Center 2016

ISBN Print: 978-3-946234-60-9

ISBN Online: 978-3-946234-61-6

<https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/handle/fub188/24375>



Freie Universität  Berlin



Federal Foreign Office

### Co-Authors:

Silvia Art

Riham Bahi

Katrin Bub

Ahlam El-Adawy

Pia Garske

Aisha Ghoneimy

Samaa Hazem Hosny

Sabine Jenner

Dina Mandour

Hossnia Mohran

Nada Nabil

Heike Pantelmann

Jehan Ragab

Dina Rihan

Barbara Sandow

Zeinab Shata

Sahar Wahby

Swantje Winkel

### Proofreading:

Lou Priven

### Design & Production:

Sabine Schwarz

### Translation into Arabic

Ehab Omar

This text is published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (CC BY 4.0): <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Special thanks go to project coordinator Barbara Sandow for her enthusiasm for the DAAD-project and to Pia Garske for her help finalizing the text.

**DAAD**

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service

# HANDBOOK ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE EGYPTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

## Contents

Preface	6	Part III: Working on Equal Opportunities	56
Introduction	8	What does "equal opportunities" in higher education mean?	56
<b>Part I: Context</b>	<b>12</b>	Equal opportunity centers at universities	57
<b>Political Framework</b>	<b>12</b>	Administrative Structure	58
Gender Equal Opportunity at Higher Education Institutions	12	Legal Framework	58
Gender Equality in Egypt	16	Working Personnel and Procedures	59
Women in Egyptian Higher Education Institutions	20	Rights and responsibilities of the equal opportunities office and its staff	59
Solutions	23	Personnel and duties	60
<b>Economic Framework</b>	<b>25</b>	Qualifications of working personnel	62
<b>Legal Framework</b>	<b>31</b>	Selection of personnel	62
Constitution	31	Work methods	63
University Regulatory Law (i.e. Law 49 from 1972, plus its amendments)	32	Infrastructure and equipment	64
Labor Law	34	<b>Equal opportunities at universities – activities and instruments</b>	<b>65</b>
On another note	35	Obstacles	65
References Part I: Context	36	Counseling	66
<b>Part II: Equal Opportunity Policies/Work at Universities</b>	<b>44</b>	Researching social problems	67
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>44</b>	Raising awareness	67
<b>Promotion of Equality</b>	<b>48</b>	Training Courses/Workshops	68
Introduction	48	Co-operation with other women's organizations	68
Scholarships and grants	50	Family friendly environment	68
University Support	50	Social activities	69
Mentoring	51	<b>Possible future activities of project partner universities</b>	<b>69</b>
Information	51	References Part III: Working on Equal Opportunities	71
Networking	53		
References Part II: Equal Opportunity Policies/Work at Universities	55		

# Preface

Dear Reader,

The *Handbook on Equal Opportunities in the Egyptian Higher Education System* is the result of the combined efforts of many actors: All were participants in the DAAD-funded project *Gender Equality in the Egyptian Higher Education System* under the lead of Freie Universität Berlin, and in cooperation with the universities of Alexandria, Cairo, Sohag and South Valley. Freie Universität is an international network university represented in Cairo by a liaison office, which aims to increase academic cooperation between Freie Universität in Berlin and universities and research centers in Egypt and the Middle East. This region is of great importance to German universities in general, and it enjoys a particularly strong research focus at Freie Universität Berlin. The transformation process after the Arab uprisings of 2011 increased the attention given to the region, thus fostering research, cooperation projects and trans-cultural dialogue. In times of social and political change, international university partnerships provide platforms for exchange and support. Gender equality and diversity policy are integral parts of Freie Universität Berlin. Opening them up to a more international perspective was the goal of the DAAD project *Gender Equality in the Egyptian Higher Education System*.

The underrepresentation of women in (senior) academic positions is an enduring problem at the international level. As Van den Brink/Benschop (2012)<sup>1</sup> wrote: "Gender inequality resembles an unbeatable seven-headed dragon that has a multitude of faces in academic life". Of course, there is no such a thing as academic practice in general – practices vary and do not operate in the same

"Gender inequality resembles an unbeatable seven-headed dragon that has a multitude of faces in academic life"

way (Van den Brink/Benschop 2012: 72). They especially vary across countries with different academic traditions. However, the problem of inequality persists on an international level. The DAAD-funded project *Gender Equality in the Egyptian Higher Education System* addressed precisely this problem. The Handbook was the product of several workshops in Egypt and Germany. It was shared in a wiki so it could easily be continued between the workshops. The Handbook gives the project participants the ability to share their experiences regarding equal opportunities in higher education: These experiences were collected over the duration of the project, i.e. nearly three years, and they will hopefully help others overcome challenging structures in higher education, promote equal opportunities for women and men at universities, and achieve lasting change.

Enjoy the Handbook and help make equality a reality!

**Prof. Dr. Brigitta Schütt**

Vice President of Freie Universität Berlin  
Project Director

**Prof. Dr. Margreth Lünenborg**

Director of the Margherita von Brentano Center for Gender Studies  
Project Director

<sup>1</sup>Van den Brink, Marieke/  
Benschop, Yvonne (2012):  
*Slaying the Seven-  
Headed Dragon: The Quest for Gender  
Change in Academia.*  
In: *Gender, Work and  
Organization* 19 (1):  
71-92.

# Introduction

The DAAD-funded project *Gender Equality in the Egyptian Higher Education System* was carried out from 2012 to 2014 at Freie Universität Berlin. The Project partners were the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and the universities of Cairo, Alexandria, Sohag and South Valley. The project was funded within the framework of the DAAD program Change by Exchange: Cooperation with the Transformation Countries Egypt and Tunisia. The project funding primarily covered mobility/travel costs in the context of fact-finding missions, workshops, summer schools, mentoring stays, as well as training and support for the development of electronic communication and a well-structured learning environment.

The objective of the project was not only to establish an inner-Egyptian dialogue on gender fairness and equal opportunities in higher education but to also build a transnational network on equal opportunity issues between Freie Universität Berlin and the Egyptian partner universities. Furthermore, the project aims included developing and implementing measures which will better ensure equal opportunities in Egyptian higher education institutions in the mid- to long-term perspective, supporting Egyptian university management in promoting a family-friendly environment at universities in order to better promote women's careers, and qualifying faculty members for gender- and diversity-sensitive teaching and research. Through a variety of measures, the project contributed to the transformation process taking place at Egyptian universities and included an international perspective in gender and diversity discourses at Freie Universität Berlin.

students at the universities in Upper Egypt are women, they remain under-represented throughout all faculty levels. Furthermore, most universities lack programs which balance academic careers with family duties and facilitate the integration of female graduates into the labor market.

Partner Universities	Female Professors (W3)	Female Assistant Professors (W1)	Female Students
Alexandria University	35,8%	42,5%	53,3%
Cairo University	34,6%	41,9%	47,8%
Sohag University	11,3%	18,5%	55,0%
South Valley University	5,9%	14,6%	58,2%

Table 1: Share of female professors and students at Egyptian partner universities.

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education (Strategic Planning Unit). Data for 2009/2010.

Freie Universität Berlin	Female Professors (W3)	Female Professors (W2)	Female Assistant Professors (W1)	Female Students
2010	22%	31%	48%	–
2013	27%	34%	52%	60%

Table 2: Share of female professors and students at Freie Universität Berlin.

Source: Gender Equality Officer of Freie Universität Berlin (2014).

The first project phase included an exchange of good practice examples and sharing information about equal opportunity issues at the participating universities. Project objectives and measures were also discussed. In several meetings, the Egyptian project partners identified the promotion of a family-friendly environment at Egyptian universities and the enhancement of career opportunities for female university

<sup>2</sup>For more information

(German only):  
[www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2015/07/PD15\\_247\\_213.html](http://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2015/07/PD15_247_213.html)

As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2 (below), the universities in Cairo and Alexandria have a higher percentage of female professors than German universities (22% in 2014). The percentage of female professors at Freie Universität Berlin is slightly above the German average<sup>2</sup> (see table 2). Despite the fact that half of the

graduates and scientists as important topics. The second project phase implemented the good practice measures which were deemed appropriate in an Egyptian context. All of the measures were made public by the universities. A summer school titled "Implementation of gender and diversity management at universities" was provided for staff from the central and faculty levels of the Egyptian partner universities in order to foster the successful establishment of the measures.

The Egyptian partners established Equal Opportunity Offices as a project milestone: These offices are to promote equal opportunities and a family-friendly environment at Egyptian universities. Another key issue was the development of a *Handbook on Equal Opportunities in the Egyptian Higher Education System*. The aims of the handbook in front of you right now include spreading the idea of sustainable gender equality to universities in Egypt and throughout the Arab region, encouraging other universities to join the network, and providing good practices for many equal opportunity-based activities in higher education systems. Colleagues from Jordan joined the network – their country has also undergone substantial efforts in promoting gender equality at its universities. The Handbook is bilingual (English and Arabic), increasing its accessibility throughout the region and also paving the way for further studies and better equal-opportunity policy.

The Handbook consists of three sections: The first offers a general outlook on the context in which universities – especially those in Egypt – operate. It gives an overview of gender-equality issues and discusses the political, economic and legal framework in both an international and Egyptian context. The second section provides an overview of Equal Opportunity Policies/Work at Universities as well as information about measures for the promotion of equality. Part three, Working on Equal Opportunities, addresses specific measures

and instruments in a practical way. It provides information about the work of Equal Opportunity Offices, i.e. their infrastructure, staff, procedures, various activities and services. ■



Participants of the Summer School 2014 in El Gouna. © S. Schwarz

# Part I: Context

## Political Framework

### Gender Equal Opportunity at Higher Education Institutions

Equal opportunity can be defined as ideal situation in which resources are allocated solely according to merit, talent and work performance. Discrimination occurs when job allocation is affected by factors other than merit, such as race, class or gender (White 2010). Despite the fact that women attain the same levels of education and training as men, and more women graduate from higher education programs than men, gender inequality in employment persists as a universal phenomenon: It is expressed in persistently unfair salaries and by the fact that more women tend to work in low-status occupations and have diminished career opportunities than men. These trends continue despite legislation which promotes equality (Browne 2007).

Women are generally under-represented in leadership and decision-making positions. Even if gender equality is an upheld ideal and a desirable goal, it has not yet become reality. For example, despite the fact that gender equality is one of the founding principles of the European Union, women are underrepresented in fields of responsibility across the EU and are largely outnumbered by men in leadership positions in politics and business (European Commission 2014a).

This trend also extends to universities. In the UK, only 22% of university professors are female (Coughlan 2014; Tickle 2013). In 2012 in Germany, slightly over 20% of all professors were female, a proportion that has steadily increased since 2002, when it was only 12% (Deutschland.de). In Norway, 25% of professors are

women (Rice 2014). This lack of parity between men and women exists despite the fact that more than half of all university graduates in Europe are female (European Commission 2014b).

Efforts are being undertaken at higher education institutions worldwide to eradicate gender inequality on campus and provide models to be emulated in other professional environments. Equal opportunity offices established at universities take extra measures to combat and protect females from discrimination and to provide 'family-friendly' settings where childcare support is provided. Freie Universität Berlin is one exemplary university that aims at changing structural inequalities in the long term. It has developed programs for "the advancement of women" in all areas of the university. The goal of several activities carried out by the Gender Equality Office is to achieve changes within the different departments' and disciplines' cultures. The efforts of the university's central and departmental gender equality officers resulted in successful equality policies. They were an important reason why the university won the Total E-Quality Science Award (Freie Universität Berlin; Zentrale Frauenbeauftragte der Freien Universität Berlin).

Grant approvals depend on selection based on personal success (Hinz 2009). Appointments at top positions and the assessment of candidates within university echelons also depend on the selection of committees (Rossbauer/Abott 2008). During such selection processes, inequality and/or discrimination can take place. According to Sally Tomlinson, "Women and minority applicants for professorships still face overt and covert discrimination in higher education, as well as challenges around

childcare". Such "patterns of discrimination appear similar across national boundaries," according to Professor Louise Morley from the Centre for Higher Education and Equality Research, who analyzed evidence from an international group of female academics (Tickle 2013).

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (UN Women 1979) defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" (UN Women 1979).

Scholarly work on intersectionality highlights that discrimination against women does not occur in a 'single-axis framework'. Women's experiences are often a product of compounded identity factors, where factors such as race and class perpetuate their marginalization (Crenshaw 1989). Intersectional discrimination appears e.g. when certain races in a country are given inferior treatment, in cases where migrant women apply for jobs in the destination country or where women from rural areas migrate to the cities in search for jobs, and in many other instances. Women are often prejudged and perceived to be less competent than men.

Evidence of this happening within universities exists in the case of black women in the UK. A survey undertaken by Black British Academics found that 56% of respondents reported having suffered discrimination. One of the respondents describes a situation of "constantly being challenged by students and staff who have low expectations with regards to receiving a high level of education from a black female" (Parr 2014). Out of over 14,000 British professors, only 50 are black, and of these 50, only 10 are women (Shepherd 2011). According to data from the

Higher Education Statistics Agency, the numbers have barely changed in the last eight years (Parr 2014).

One of the most significant discriminatory practices against women, however, is the unequal valuation of equal work performed by men and women. The latest figures from the European Commission show that women work 59 days each year 'for free'. It takes women 59 days of working for free in order for them to receive the same amount of pay earned by their male counterparts. The gender pay gap, the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of male and female employees, stood at a 16.4% in 2012 ("Equal Pay Day"). In the US, women are paid as low as 64 cents for every dollar that men earn, according to a state-by-state analysis by the National Partnership for Women and Families. The average figure nationwide is 77 cents, i.e. for every dollar paid to men, women are paid only 77 cents (McVeigh 2014).

These persistent practices violate the principles of the CEDAW. Article 11 of the CEDAW states the following: "Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights." This includes "the right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work" (UN Women 1979).

These trends point to the necessity addressing women's lack of progression through their careers. This is especially true since women have increasingly become primary earners, and the level of gender equality significantly affects economic development. The UN quadrennial comprehensive policy review states that "... gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development." It states that "investing in the development of women and girls has a multiplier effect, in



particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained and inclusive economic growth, in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, industry and services" (United Nations General Assembly 2012).

### Gender Equality in Egypt

During the uprisings of 25th of January uprisings, many Egyptian women participated in protests solely in their capacity as citizens, with no regard to their gender (Sholkamy 2012). Some voice the argument that the status of women was among the things that women wanted to change during the Revolution (Taha 2013). In any case, women's meager political representation after the uprisings does not reflect their massive political participation in them. In some cases, some of the gains women acquired prior to 2011 were then reversed. For example, the parliamentary elections law operating during Mubarak's rule, which included a quota for women comprising 64 seats in parliament (The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights 2012), was repealed.

*"Gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development."*

Another contentious issue was Article 3, which initially compelled political parties to include female candidates in the first half of their lists of candidates. Islamists objected to this law, and it was then amended so that "each party list must include one female candidate" (Essam El-Din 2013). The results were as follows: The number of women who nominated themselves for office doubled since the previous year, 2010. However, women won only 9 out of 498 seats – their representation fell from 13% to 2% (Institute of Development Studies 2012). The proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament in previous years was a constant 2% from 2005 through 2009, followed

by 13% in 2010, and then it fell to 2% again in 2011 and 2012 (World Bank 2013b). In 2012 as many as 396 female candidates ran for the Shura Council elections, compared to only 9 women in 2010, but only 5 out of the 180 seats were won by women, or 2.7% (The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights 2012).

The Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development Centre issued a report in which it criticized former President Morsi for not fulfilling his promises to empower women and increase their representation in government. The Hisham Qandil cabinet had only two female ministers, or 6% representation (Salah 2013).

Furthermore, the first constitution drafted after the 2011 uprisings, the 2012 Constitution, was condemned by women activists. The Chair of the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, Nehad Abou El-Komsan, explained that the only article addressing



During the uprisings of 25th of January uprisings, many Egyptian women participated in protests solely in their capacity as citizens, with no regard to their gender. ©REUTERS/Mohamed Abd El Ghany

women as a particular group was part of the "moral foundations of society" chapter and stated that "the state shall provide free motherhood and childhood services and shall balance a woman's obligation between the family and public work. The state shall provide for special care and protection for single mothers, divorced women and widows" (Samir 2013). Abou El-Komsan argued that it implied a limitation to the role of women as "caregivers" and that it does not consider raising children to be a societal responsibility but rather only the mother's individual responsibility (ibid.).

Other criticism concerned the generic terms used to protect women, the lack of concrete measures, and the inclusion of the article's Sharia-compliance which states that equality is ensured by the state. This was criticized and refuted on grounds that extremist interpretations of Sharia are different from those of liberals, especially with regards to women (ibid.).

As for representation and the rights granted in the 2014 Constitution, it was the first time that a constitution granted Egyptian women the right to pass full citizenship on to their children (Egypt Independent 2013). However, criticism has been previously directed at the Committee of 50, which drafted the constitution, because the committee itself included only 5 women, or 10% of the members. The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights protested against such a small proportion of women representatives, highlighting the role women played in ousting the Muslim Brotherhood, which marginalized women. The Center issued a statement saying that this representation resulted in a draft constitution "that does not heed the minimum requirements of women" (Ibid.).

The charter's article 11 addresses the state's role in protecting women and children and ensuring equality between men and women. The Salafist Nour Party, which participated in the committee drafting this constitution, is against the quota of women in parliament and therefore rejected an amendment

that states that "the State is obliged to take the necessary measures to ensure the appropriate and balanced representation of women in parliaments and local units". Feminist groups and activists protested the absence of a parliamentary quota in the amended constitution (Ahram Online 2013).

The state's role in ensuring women's equality was eventually defined, however, in Article 11, as "The state shall take measures that ensure women are properly represented in representative assemblies, as prescribed by law, and shall guarantee women the right to hold public office and the highest administrative roles in the country, as well as their appointment to judicial bodies and authorities, without discrimination. The state shall also be committed to protecting women against all forms of violence and shall guarantee women are empowered to reconcile their family responsibilities with their work commitments" (The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights 2013b).

Other issues concern the perception that women are primarily responsible for the home, and that women's work is a secondary issue. Nagwa El-Badry, Chair of the Biomedical Sciences at Zewail University, describes the challenge facing women scientists in Egypt, saying that Egyptian women are expected to be women first, and scientists second. It is expected that women returning home from work are to start carrying out their household duties, though this is not expected of men (Al Sharq Al Awsat 2014).

It is important to note that according to Islam, a woman is not required to work or financially support her home in any way. This is solely the responsibility of the man, whether he is a husband, father or some other relative. However, if the woman desires to work, her earnings are her own independent property and her provider does not have the right to ask her for her money. This is confirmed by Amna Nusseir, Professor of Theology and Islamic Philosophy and former Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Al-Azhar University. She says this independence is a

divine requirement and that a woman can participate in public life just like a man. This is part of the divine mission for which God granted humans authority on Earth. Saying that women are not supposed to participate in work outside the house is an act of selfishness on the part of men, and a desire to exclude women from dignified and important human occupations, such as those associated with jurisprudence or political representation (Alwaei Al-Islami 2013).

### Women in Egyptian Higher Education Institutions

© S. Schwarz



Egyptian women have been appointed to top positions in several universities as school deans, but not as presidents, though this changed with the appointment of Hind Hanafy in 2009. This was the first case where an Egyptian woman was appointed to be president of a public university, in this case, Alexandria University (Khaled 2009). However, according to a discussion by some women scientists, the number of women who reach the position of dean in a scientific field is smaller than the number of men who do so (Al Sharq Al Awsat 2014).

According to figures Dr. Nagwa El-Badri attributed to the Supreme Council of Universities, 20% of full professors are females, despite the fact that 60% of those occupying entry level junior faculty positions are females (El-Badri 2013). In order to test this figure, staff compositions at Egyptian universities were randomly sampled. Out of 25 staff members holding the position of professor of Political Science at Cairo University, the percentage of female professors is 56%. The percentage of female staff holding the position of professor of Law at Zagazig University is 22%.

As for scientific fields, here are some percentages: Out of 1325 professors in the Medicine department of Cairo University, at least 833, or about 63%, were male and at least 470, or 35%, were female. For 22 faculty members the information was unavailable. Out of 146 professors of Pharmacy at Cairo University, 78

were women and 68 were men; the percentage of women professors is 53%. The percentage of female professors of Pharmacy in Zagazig University amounts to 50%. The percentage of female professors of all faculties of science is 22.5%; in Zoology the share is 66%, in Botany 50%, in Mathematics 22% and 20% in Chemistry. The percentage of female Chemistry teaching staff at Mansoura University is 57%, though only 18% of the professors are female. The faculty of Computers and Information at Cairo University consists of four female professors and six male professors. This share is higher than the average – 20% – that is found in many countries.

Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the periodical *Nature*, Arabic Edition, Karim El-Digwy, claims that issues of inequality extend to scientific research in laboratories. In a discussion of the issue he stated that he and his team talked to men and women who head laboratories, and they would say that they do not particularly prefer the appointment of female researchers because they fear women would not provide full-time dedication to their work, or that they would decide to stop working, which is less likely in the case of male researchers (Al Sharq Al Awsat 2014).

The Universities Regulations Law provides the general guidelines regarding faculty employment, tenure and the governing of student life. Guidelines that make particular mention of measures tailored to women faculty are maternal leave and accompanying a spouse abroad; they state that maternal leave should not amount to more than 10 years (Article 91, Universities Regulations Law). This is a very positive sign of support for women's family-related decisions, especially considering the fact that advancement in their academic career is not affected by the leave which they are permitted to take.

In addition, and most significantly, women and men in equal positions receive equal pay. The law does not state this because there are no cases of unequal pay for the same work value in-

volving faculty or other university staff. In other countries, the law demands that universities adhere to equal pay policies, but universities can break those rules (BBC News). Also, the law does not state that student applicants should be accepted into any given subject regardless of their gender. Gender-based policies and recruitment practices do not exist at Egyptian universities.

The subject of harassment has received heightened attention after an incident took place at Cairo University in which a group of students harassed a female colleague for wearing an outfit which was perceived as inappropriate to be worn on campus. Student witnesses say that she was assaulted verbally, not physically (Abdelhamid 2014). In response to the assaults coming from many directions, she hid in the bathroom until security personnel were able to escort her from campus (Ahram Online 2014). Women activists condemned the incident and voiced their anger at the university dean. They say that his response placed blame on both the girl and the students guilty of harassment, because he emphasized the more revealing clothes which she was wearing despite the fact that she had previously passed through the campus gates wearing a longer garment (Rizk 2014; Abdelhamid 2014).

*"Among the principles of Sharia is the right to protection from violence and discrimination, which necessitates the issuance of legislation that criminalizes all forms of violence to which women might be exposed."*

The Chair of the ECWR placed particular blame on the university dean, stating that he justified the students' criminal acts by placing blame on the girl. The Chair is determined to prove that the girl is not guilty and to prevent her from being punished. Referring to the fact that the head of Cairo University was actually one of the Committee of Fifty who drafted the constitution, and should be a defender of rights and freedoms, the Chair describes his position as passive (Abdelhamid 2014). In

one article she proposed pursuing the harshest punitive measures against anyone found guilty, or against anyone who knew about the incident but did not take measures against it (The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights 2013a).

The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a report on ending violence and discrimination against women, which includes the following statement: "Among the principles of Sharia is the right to protection from violence and discrimination, which necessitates the issuance of legislation that criminalizes all forms of violence to which women might be exposed." It describes the legal efforts taken to criminalize all forms of violence against women. The possibility of execution as a punishment for rape is considered. It states that "sexual harassment, through the use of force or threatening to do it, is penalized by Article 269 of the Penal Code, as amended by Decree No. 11/2011" (Ashraf 2014).

### Solutions

Recently, fifty academics at Cambridge University have called for new methods to make senior faculty appointments eliminate the lack of women professors. One suggestion was that a wider range of skills should be taken into account in order to produce a more 'inclusive' recruitment process. Including academic contributions such as teaching, administration and outreach work when evaluating success and promotion is likely to help women advance. The current assessment depends on a narrow set of achievements, like publications in academic journals and receiving research grants, and does not include a broad spectrum of work-based competencies which could better account for women's academic contributions (Coughlan 2014).

However, it is important to be careful when drafting responses to inequality at higher education institutions, especially if these efforts aim to increase the proportion of women in senior positions. Active efforts to promote and encourage the selection of

women can have adverse consequences in that they could create the impression that women and men are not equally competent, and that the recognition of women's achievements is somehow artificial as opposed to truly accomplished and self-attained. The case involving the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) shows some of the thorny problems that can be faced.

In 1999, MIT acknowledged that it discriminated against women in "subtle but pervasive ways". Subsequently, MIT started a push for hiring women, of which the results were described as being a "stunning progress" in a new study published twelve years later. But some disadvantages remain, and an entirely new set of different issues which need to be addressed has been created. For example, one consequence of these efforts is the creation of the perception that women are receiving unfair advantages. When women earn prizes and accolades, the assumption is that they did so because of their gender, and not because of merit or ability (Zernike 2011).

Also, because every committee now is required to include a woman, and there are fewer women than men, more time is spent by women on work associated with these committees, so women lose up to half of their research time. They also lose time which would be otherwise spent in outside consultancies, time which brings their male counterparts a great deal of money. Female undergraduates are sometimes perceived by their male classmates as having been accepted at MIT only because of affirmative action (Ibid.).

Moreover, when women are supposed to regard work-life balance as a criteria for success, inherent inequality remains, as men are not praised for their work-life balance. It is as if raising children and taking care of the home is the sole responsibility of women. According to some faculty members, when men are given family leave, they spend this time doing outside work, resulting in even more professional inequity. Society influences gender stereotypes as well, and as one female pro-

fessor explains, women have a narrow "acceptable personality range", one that is "neither too aggressive nor too soft". One significant issue which needs to be addressed is the perception that combatting bias results in lowering standards for women. Finally, the fundamental issues in gender equality are a reflection of societal issues, as the dean of the School of Science, Marc A. Kastner, concludes (Ibid.).

## Economic Framework

Education is a crucial dimension for development. It builds up human capital, one of the important resources required for economic growth. Studies have shown that countries which reduced illiteracy by 20 to 30 % have witnessed a jump in their gross domestic product (GDP) of 8 to 16 %. Education has positive effects on almost all measures of human development, including health, nutrition and life expectancy. Consequently, ensuring access and providing high quality education is a prerequisite for every country which plans to fulfill its developmental goals (USAID 2008). However, the challenge of achieving long-term developmental goals from which all agents in the economy would benefit can only be achieved when all available resources are used efficiently. Allowing women to lag behind would be a misallocation of resources that would always leave a country with idle resources, thus hindering the country from reaching its maximum attainable level of output or from achieving sustainable growth. Therefore gender equality, defined as when "males and females have equal opportunities to realize their full human rights and contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political development", should be regarded as the second pillar, besides education, that every development process requires in order to reach its own goals and thrive (World Bank 2012).

Realizing gender equality in various areas constitutes "smart economics" (World Bank 2012). This is due to a number of positive outcomes and effects which result from making educa-

tion and employment opportunities more accessible to men and women. These outcomes and effects include considerable improvement to productivity and growth and increased investment in children's health and education. Moreover, politics, policymaking and institutions are more likely to be representative of the entire society when men and women are given equal chances to be socially and politically active (World Bank 2013a). There are other positive externalities for gender equality on a wider scale, such as expanding the country's ability to compete internationally, particularly if the country specializes in exporting goods and services for which men and women workers are equally well-suited (World Bank 2012). Therefore neglecting gender mainstreaming in education would not only reflect economic costs through reduced economic growth and an increase in poverty, but would also have negative impacts on families' welfare as well as on health indicators like malnutrition and child mortality (El-Said 2006).

Mainstreaming gender throughout the education process is not only about having equal enrollment rates at various educational stages. In order to best address gender equality in education, a wider vision which pledges equality of access, equality in the learning process, and equality of educational outcomes should be adopted. Equality of access means giving males and females equal chances to be enrolled in any type of education, at any level. Equality in the learning process refers to the equal treatment of males and females, i.e. providing them equal amounts of attention and learning opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, both sexes should be exposed to the same curricula and learning environment, and only teaching methods which are free of gender bias should be implemented. Equality of educational outcomes means that males and females are evaluated with objective assessment mechanisms which are based solely on the learner's own capabilities and efforts (USAID 2008).

Egypt is confronted with several development-related challenges, many of which have an important gender aspect. A number of stud-

ies emphasizes the strong link between women's education and improved gender indicators in various areas and sectors like labor market participation, health, political participation and poverty. Such studies pinpoint the importance of addressing gender gaps in education as a necessary and sufficient condition to resolve gender gaps in other areas and sectors (Mandour 2009; World Bank 2003; Malhotra et al. 2003). Other empirical studies proved that once wealth is accounted for, parental education, especially the mother's, is a major factor which contributes to the degree of accessibility of university education (Asaad 2010).

Egypt is classified as a lower middle-income country with a population of approximately 80.7 million; 49% of the population is female. At PPP constant 2005 terms, GDP reached 125 USD billion in 2012 or approx. 1560 USD per capita. Economic growth remains weak, GDP and GDP per capita experienced a growth rate of about 6.2% and 4.4%, respectively, between 2006 and 2010, decreasing further to 2% and 0.3%, respectively, in 2011 and 2012. Low growth rates pose a danger to mounting social frustrations, as they will not deliver the needed jobs and opportunities. Indeed, unemployment exceeded 13% in 2013. Literacy rate reached 74% in 2012, though males (82%) are noticeably more literate than females (66%) (World Bank 2013b). Nevertheless, the country has witnessed some minor improvements in overall socio-economic development. In 2012, it ranked 112 out of 187 countries on the human development index, with an average growth rate of 0.92% from 2000 to 2012, despite the small changes of the last two years (UNDP 2013). Nevertheless, gains were more evident for women and girls. Child health indicators, such as immunization rates and infant mortality, have improved for both genders. Fertility has been declining, and women are getting married at a later age (World Bank 2010). Poverty still constitutes a major challenge – the percentage of the population living under the national poverty level increased from 21.6% in 2008/09 to 25.2% in 2010/11 (CAPMAS 2012).

Education receives moderate attention from the government, as depicted in the 4.1% education expenditures as a percentage of GDP. However, this amount is highly skewed in favor of university education, where the ratio of spending (higher education student vs. pre-university education student) averaged 3.2 between 2005 and 2008 compared to only 1.1 in OECD countries (Assaad, 2010; El-Baradei 2012).



In the 2013 Gender Gap Index, Egypt ranked #125 out of 136 countries. The gender gap index, published by the World Economic Forum, is measured by four sub-indices: Economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment and health & survival. Though Egypt's ranking moved up one spot in 2013, its overall score has been decreasing since 2006, placing the country among the weakest countries in terms of closing their gender gap.

Focusing on the detailed classification, the political empowerment sub-index reveals the major challenges the country is still facing: With a political empowerment sub-index of only 3.4%, the country's position is even below the 7% average of the MENA region. It is worth mentioning that this index measures the gap between men and women at the highest level of political decision-making – it assesses the ratio of women to men in both minister-level and parliamentary positions. Less than half of the economic participation gap is closed (44.2%), a rate that is near the average of the MENA region, though far below North America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where the average rate exceeded 60%. On the other hand, Egypt ranks relatively higher in terms of education and health & survival; its level of achievement reached approx. 92% and 98% respectively (World Economic Forum 2013).

Gender disparities in education have narrowed rapidly in Egypt over the past two decades. The ratio of females to males in primary education has increased from 89% in 2001/02 to 94% in 2009/10. Secondary education has witnessed a reverse gender

gap which started in 2000/01 – there were nearly 1.2 times as many females as males. University education followed the same trend: The female-to-male ratio increased from 84% in 2000/01 to 96% in 2009/10. Females constituted 49% of all students enrolled at public universities in 2009/10 as opposed to 46% in 2001/02. In 2008/2009 females represented 53% of all students at public universities (CAPMAS 2012). A similar representation can be seen in the employment level, where the percentage of female academic staff members has experienced a constant increase from 29% in 2000/2001 to 33% in 2006/07 reaching 45% in 2012 (Ministry of Higher Education 2012; El Masry El Youm 2014). In addition, the number of females enrolled in post-graduate studies increased from 39.7% in 2000/2001 to 50.8% in 2009/2010 (NCW, 2014). Egypt follows the same world trends regarding gender differences in fields of studies – females tend to gravitate towards social sciences and theoretical studies, and they tend to avoid "the hard sciences". Another aspect where Egypt is no exception is the fact that females who have gained access to higher education outperform males when it comes to grades, and completing their degrees.

In spite of these promising trends, females still have a relatively low representation in leading positions in Egypt, this includes as department heads, faculty deans and vice deans, and they are almost completely absent at the university-wide level. Correspondingly, females tend to be under-represented in the highest-level academic positions (associate professors or full professors). Deeper analysis of the status of (free) public university education showed that, despite much higher government spending on university education than on basic education, inequality was still significant. Assaad (2010) highlighted the fact that the degree of accessibility to university education is affected by more factors than ability and effort, i.e. wealth, family background and gender. Although minimal disparities regarding secondary and university education accessibility, and attainment across regions in Egypt (except for border governorates), has been revealed, women from rural and poor backgrounds

still face geographical restrictions to access higher education. More specifically, females from rural areas who belong to the lowest income quintile and have illiterate parents have only a 2% chance to pursue a university education; a male with the same characteristics has a 9% chance. In contrast, females from urban areas who belong to highest income quintiles and have educated parents have a 100% probability of attending university, as compared to 97% for males. This leads to the conclusion that inequality of opportunity is more evident for females when their ability to participate in higher education is more affected by income, family background and regional variables. Assaad (2010) argues that higher education is more likely to be viewed as a necessity for boys who come from rural areas (and have illiterate parents). Higher education for girls under similar circumstances, however, is more likely to be viewed as a luxury. For the wealthier group, the higher probability of female access was explained by the fact that, on average, girls tend to outperform boys in education when all other variables are constant.

Furthermore, there's still a missing link between education and labor market participation. Unemployment hit females harder: In 2012 about 24% of females were unemployed, opposed to 9.3% of all males. This discrepancy is even more evident within the youth category, where the unemployment rate of young females reached 54% in 2010, as opposed to only 15% for young males. Most importantly, there is a positive link between the gender gap in employment, and education level: The higher the education level, the wider the gender gap. In terms of people who have completed secondary education, 13.8% more females were unemployed than men; for tertiary education, 16.5% more females were unemployed. One can conclude that highly-educated women are more susceptible to unemployment than their male counterparts (World Bank 2013b). Moreover, women are concentrated in a few sectors – the government sector accounted for about 54% of all female employment, as opposed to only 10% in formal private sector (World Bank, 2010). Exacerbat-

ing the vulnerability of employed women, the percentage of females in the informal self-employed sector highly exceeds that of males (American University in Cairo 2014).

In 2009/10, 46.5% of the students at Cairo University were female. Nevertheless, other universities in Egypt, like South Valley, Alexandria, Menya and Helwan, have a higher share of female students than Cairo University. Moreover, a number of faculties within Cairo University have experienced a reverse gender gap (FEPS, Alson, Mass Communication, Social Services, Arts, Archeology and Fine Arts). In addition, some faculties only have female students (Faculty of Nursing and Faculty of Child Care). The proportion of female academic staff members, however, is lower than the share of female students. Since the establishment of Cairo University in 1908, none of its Presidents were women and only one female Vice President (for Environmental and Society Services) was appointed.

## Legal Framework

### Constitution

The current Egyptian constitution promotes equality of opportunity. There are more than 20 articles explicitly benefiting women. Article 11 e.g. states that the state shall ensure the equality of men and women in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural aspects. Moreover, the State is also responsible for the "appropriate" representation of women in the parliament and other representative bodies, although the term "appropriate" is debatable. The State also guarantees women the right to be appointed to public positions and high leadership positions; no discrimination is permitted against them. The State is responsible for protecting women against all kinds of violence and for enabling women to have a suitable work/life balance. The constitution explicitly mentions the care and protection of motherhood and childhood, female heads of households, elderly women, and women who are most needy. In addition,



women also benefit from all the other articles of the constitution as full citizens whose rights include social protection and social equality.

This support is clearly stated in the constitution's preamble: "We are drafting a Constitution that holds all of us equal in rights and duties without discrimination of any kind. We, the citizens, women and men, the Egyptian people, sovereigns in a sovereign homeland, this is the manifestation of our volition; this is the Constitution of our revolution."

Article 53 relates to public rights, freedoms, and duties: "All citizens are equal before the Law. They are equal in rights, freedoms and general duties, without discrimination based on religion, belief, sex, origin, race, color, language, disability, social class, political or geographic affiliation or any other reason."

### **University Regulatory Law (i.e. Law 49 from 1972, plus its amendments)**

As for the legal framework, all Egyptian public universities (Al-Azhar University is not included) must follow the university regulatory law, i.e. Law 49 from 1972, plus its amendments. Private and international universities are subject to other laws. All professors – from Assistant Professors to Full Professors – are subject to university law. Teaching assistants and assistant lecturers, however, are not considered to be faculty, so they are subject to public servants' law, as are administrative staff working at university.

All departments within Egyptian public universities are subject to Law 49 from 1972. Further bylaws are imposed at the faculty and department levels, including within administrative departments, but all must follow the law.

It is worth mentioning that the laws are completely gender-blind. However, due to the nature of the Arabic language, the

generic masculine grammar is used. It is understood that the language is intended to include both women and men. However, one could recommend including both male and female forms of the nouns and verbs or amending the preamble by stating that this law is equal for both male and female professors.

This is especially important in the articles that mention the leadership positions in higher education, and very clearly stated in Article 13 (which was amended in 1994): "The Minister of Higher Education in charge is he who is also the Head of the Supreme Council of Universities, and he oversees the universities according to his position". This subconsciously enhances the perception that the Minister of Higher Education has to be a man, which so far has always been the case. The same goes for all professional – masculine – titles throughout academia.

Another important note is included in Article 13, the amendment from 2012. It stipulates that leadership positions are no longer permitted to be given by appointment – now, leaders must be chosen through fair elections. These positions include heads of scientific departments, deans, and presidents of universities. This is a positive amendment that enhances equal opportunity and decreases discrimination, at least in terms of the legal aspects. It remains to be seen whether elections truly end discrimination. Social factors, gender and other forms of discrimination might continue to influence the selection of university leaders.

One of the exceptions in the 2012 amendment offers special bonuses to tenured professors at the Universities of Assiut, Tanta, Mansoura, or Cairo University in Khartoum, or to faculty at institutes outside Cairo, Giza, and Alexandria governorates.

© S. Schwarz



### Labor Law

Labor law is another law that regulates workplaces. Article 35 of the 3rd section states: "It is prohibited to discriminate employees' salaries based on sex, origin, language, religion, or faith."

In addition, there an entire section is dedicated to women's labor: Articles 88 to 97. These ten articles address women's equality with other workers and their protection from having to take hazardous or unsuitable jobs. For example, Article 89 allows the minister under whom a woman works to specify cases where it might not be possible for women to work from 7pm to 7am. Article 90 allows the minister to specify which specific jobs are considered too hazardous or physically tough for women.

The Law provides special care is given for mothers and lactating mothers.

*"It is prohibited to discriminate employees' salaries based on sex, origin, language, religion, or faith."*

Article 91 obliges all employers to give 90 days of paid maternity leave (at least 45 of them immediately following delivery) for any woman who has worked for them for the last ten months.

Article 93 allows lactating mothers (during the 18 months following her delivery) an additional hour for rest and lactation without any deduction from their pay. Article 94 states that (for enterprises with at least 50 employees) women are allowed up to two years of child-care leave.

Article 96 obliges employers employing at least 100 female employees to establish or coordinate a nursery facility for the children of female employees.

### On another note

In June 2014, Dr. Gaber Nassar, President of Cairo University, has launched an initiative to combat sexual harassment and violence against women at Cairo University and other Egyptian universities. The initiative includes establishing a supreme committee, headed by Dr. Gaber Nassar himself, to set the policies required for this purpose. ■

*Hoda Shaarawi, protesting against British colonialization, 1919. Photographer unknown.*





## REFERENCES PART I: CONTEXT

Deutschland.de: Over 20 Percent Female Professors. Frankfurter Societäts-Medien. July 16, 2013. [www.deutschland.de/en/news/over-20-percent-female-professors](http://www.deutschland.de/en/news/over-20-percent-female-professors).

Egypt Independent (2013): Women's rights center denounces representation of women in Committee of 50". Egypt Independent. 2. September 2013. [www.egyptindependent.com/news/women-s-rights-center-denounces-representation-women-committee-50](http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/women-s-rights-center-denounces-representation-women-committee-50).

Essam El-Din, Gamal (2013): Egypt's Shura Council Approves New House of Representatives' Law. AhramOnline. 11 April 2013 <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/69038/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-Shura-Council-approves-new-House-of-Represe.aspx>.

European Commission (2014a): Equal Pay Day: Gender Pay Gap Stagnates at 16.4% across Europe. 28 February 2014 [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-14-190\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-190_en.htm).

European Commission (2014b): The Situation in the EU. European Commission. 28 February 2014 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-pay-gap/situation-europe/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-pay-gap/situation-europe/index_en.htm).

El-Badri, Nagwa (2013): Women and Science in Post-Revolution Egypt: The Long Road Ahead. Nature Middle East. 7 March 2013 [www.nature.com/nmiddleeast/2013/130307/full/nmiddleeast.2013.31.html](http://www.nature.com/nmiddleeast/2013/130307/full/nmiddleeast.2013.31.html).

El-Baradei Mona (2012): Inequity of Opportunities in Higher Education in Egypt: Indicators and Reasons, Unpublished Document.

El Masry El Youm (2014): [www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/405678](http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/405678).

El-Said Hala (2006): The Role of Women in Economy: Economic Empowerment of Women, presentation.

European Commission: Gender Balance in Decision-Making Positions. 7 March 2014. [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index_en.htm).

European Commission (2010): More Women in Senior Positions: Key to Economic Stability and Growth. European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. [www.witnet.org/uploads/documents/More\\_women\\_in\\_senior\\_positions.pdf](http://www.witnet.org/uploads/documents/More_women_in_senior_positions.pdf).

Fraunhofer: New Pathways- Equal Opportunities: Gender Equality over Women's and Men's Life Courses. January 2011 [www.fraunhofer.de/content/dam/zv/de/ueber-fraunhofer/110217\\_GB\\_Summary\\_Engl\\_Final\\_tcm7-82020.pdf](http://www.fraunhofer.de/content/dam/zv/de/ueber-fraunhofer/110217_GB_Summary_Engl_Final_tcm7-82020.pdf).

Freie Universität Berlin: Gender Equality and Diversity at Freie Universität Berlin. 17 June 2013. [www.fu-berlin.de/en/universitaet/profil/gesellschaft/gleichstellung/index.html](http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/universitaet/profil/gesellschaft/gleichstellung/index.html).

Hinz, Thomas (2009): The Gender Challenge in Research Funding – Assessing the European National Scenes: Germany. European Commission. November 2009 [http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document\\_library/pdf\\_06/germany-research-funding\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/germany-research-funding_en.pdf).

General Assembly resolution 67/226: Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, A/RES/67/97. 21 December 2012. [www.un.org/en/development/desa/oesc/qcpr.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/oesc/qcpr.shtml).

Institute of Development Studies (2012): Bringing Gender Justice to the Egyptian Parliament. Policy Briefing, Issue 30. [www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/INF30.pdf](http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/INF30.pdf).

International Labour Organization (2012): International Employment Trends for Women. [http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_195447.pdf](http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_195447.pdf).

Khaled, Ashraf (2009): Egypt: First Female Vice-Chancellor Appointed. University World News. 14 June 2009 [www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20090612091625225](http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20090612091625225).

Mason, Mary A. (2011): The Pyramid Problem. The Chronicle of Higher Education. 9 March 2011 <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Pyramid-Problem/126614>.

Malhotra, Anju/Pande, Rohini/Grown, Caren (2003): Impact of Investments on Female Education on Gender Equality, International Center for Research on Women, Paper commissioned by the World Bank Gender and Development Group; <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/ImpactInvestmentsFemaleEdu.pdf>

Mandour, Dina (2009): Impact of ICT on Gender Gap in Egypt, paper presented within Gender and Work Project organized by Social Research Center (SRC), Cairo University and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA),

## REFERENCES PART I: CONTEXT

[www1.aucegypt.edu/src/wsite1/pdfs/rewebsite\\_cida/Dina\\_No4.pdf](http://www1.aucegypt.edu/src/wsite1/pdfs/rewebsite_cida/Dina_No4.pdf)

McVeigh, Karen (2014): Equal Pay for Women Taken Up by Senate as Study Highlights Gender Gap. *The Guardian*. 8 April 2014

[www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/08/equal-pay-women-senate-as-study-gender-gap](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/08/equal-pay-women-senate-as-study-gender-gap).

Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) (2012): Women in University and Higher Non- University Education (In Arabic);

لإي عمالغ ري لولغ ي لاي عمالغ لآت ع ل مي ف ي لآ قأرم;

<http://egy-mhe.gov.eg/sites/default/files/woman.pdf>

National Council for Women (NCW) (2014): She and the President: Future of the Egyptian

Woman after Revolution, Numbers and Statistics for Woman Status in Egypt;

[www.conference.ncwegypt.com/index.php/docsara/153-numberara](http://www.conference.ncwegypt.com/index.php/docsara/153-numberara)

Parr, Chris (2014): Race Discrimination in Universities Still a Problem, Reports Survey. *Times*

Higher Education. 6 April 2014 [www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/race-discrimination-in-universities-still-a-problem-reports-survey/2012474.article](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/race-discrimination-in-universities-still-a-problem-reports-survey/2012474.article).

Rice, Curt (2014): A New Leader for the Norwegian Committee on Gender Balance in Research.

13 January 2014

<http://curt-rice.com/2014/01/13/a-new-leader-for-the-norwegian-committee-on-gender-balance-in-research>.

Rizk, Mariam (2014): Activists condemn victim blaming after Cairo University mob sexual as-

sault. *Ahram Online*. 19 March 2014

<http://english.ahram.org/NewsContentPrint/1/0/97016>

[/Egypt/o/Activists-condemn-victim-blaming-after-Cairo-Unive.aspx](http://egypt.o/Activists-condemn-victim-blaming-after-Cairo-Unive.aspx).

Rossbauer, Maria/Abott, Alison (2008): German Professor in Sex-Discrimination Battle.

*Nature*. 6 August 2008

[www.nature.com/news/2008/080806/full/news.2008.1009.html](http://www.nature.com/news/2008/080806/full/news.2008.1009.html).

Salah, Fady (2013): Rights Groups Address Plight of Egyptian Women. *Daily News Egypt*. 22

May 2013

[www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/05/22/rights-groups-address-plight-of-egyptian-women](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/05/22/rights-groups-address-plight-of-egyptian-women).

Samir, Dina (2013): Egyptian Women Still Struggling for Rights Two Years After Revolution.

*Ahram Online*. 12 Feb 2013.

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/150/63114/Egypt/-January-Revolution/Egyptian-women-still-struggling-for-rights--years-.aspx>.

Shepherd, Jessica (2011): 14,000 British Professors – But Only 50 are Black. *The Guardian*.

27 May 2011

[www.theguardian.com/education/2011/may/27/only-50-black-british-professors](http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/may/27/only-50-black-british-professors).

Sholkamy, Hania (2012): Women Are Also Part of This Revolution. In: Korany, Bahgat/El-Mahdi,

Rabab (Eds.): *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond*.

Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012. 153-174.

State Information Service: "History of Women in Egyptian Life.

[www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?CatID=827#.U2kXhjCQZcU](http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?CatID=827#.U2kXhjCQZcU).

Taha, Rana (2013): AUC Roundtable Discusses Egyptian Women. 19 February 2013

[www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/02/19/auc-roundtable-discusses-egyptian-women](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/02/19/auc-roundtable-discusses-egyptian-women).

The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (2012): Report on Egyptian woman conditions in 2012.

2012 ... Women get out to the streets. [http://ecwronline.org/pdf/reports/2013/egyptian\\_women\\_conditions\\_in2012.pdf](http://ecwronline.org/pdf/reports/2013/egyptian_women_conditions_in2012.pdf).

The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (2013a): 10% is Women's Share in the

50-Member Committee for Amending the Constitution. 2 September 2013

<http://ecwronline.org/blog/2013/09/02/o-is-womens-share-in-the-50-member-committee-for-amending-the-constitution>.

The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (2013b): Egypt's New Constitution:

A Victory for Women's Rights to Full Citizenship. 2 December 2013

<http://ecwronline.org/blog/2013/12/02/egypts-new-constitution-a-victory-for-womens-rights-to-full-citizenship>.

Tickle, Louise (2013): Gender Equality in Higher Education Must Be Made a Global Priority.

*The Guardian*. 6 March 2013 [www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2013/mar/06/gender-equality-universities-global-issue](http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2013/mar/06/gender-equality-universities-global-issue).

Tomlinson, Sally (2013): "My University Life as a Woman Professor". *Guardian Professional*. 31 January 2013

[www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2013/jan/31/female-professor-university-life-equality](http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2013/jan/31/female-professor-university-life-equality).

## REFERENCES PART I: CONTEXT

UNDP (2013): Human Development Report. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World.

United Nations General Assembly (2012): Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/226](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/226).

Universities Regulations Law.

Ministry of Higher Education. Law 48/1972. Available at [www.ad.gov.eg/NR/rdonlyres/7F5A0326-E1F9.../Law491972.doc](http://www.ad.gov.eg/NR/rdonlyres/7F5A0326-E1F9.../Law491972.doc).

UN Women (1979): CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women),

(In Arabic) [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/o360793A.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/o360793A.pdf).

(In English) <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

USAID (2008): Education from a Gender Perspective,

[www.ungei.org/resources/files/Education\\_from\\_a\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_Perspective.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Education_from_a_Gender_Equality_Perspective.pdf)

White, Stuart (2010): Equality. Encyclopedia of Political Theory.

<http://search.credoreference.com.library.aucegypt.edu:2048/content/entry/sagept/equality/o>.

World Bank. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments.

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>.

World Bank (2003): Arab Republic of Egypt: Country Gender Assessment 2003.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMNAREGTOPGENDER/Resources/CGA.pdf>

World Bank (2010): Arab Republic of Egypt: Gender assessment 2010. Narrowing the Gap.

Improving Labor Market Opportunities for Women in Egypt.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/3003/546980ESWop112oderRep orto2010oFinal.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

World Bank (2012): Gender Equality and Development. World Development Report.

<https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/>

[7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/](http://www.worldbank.org/2012/05/12/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf)

[Complete-Report.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/2012/05/12/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf).

World Bank (2013a), Opening Doors Gender Equality and Development in the Middle East and North Africa, MENA Development Report.

[https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/12552/751810PUBoEPI002060130Openingodoors.pdf?sequence=1)

[bitstream/handle/10986/12552/751810PUBoEPI002060130Openingodoors.pdf?sequence=1](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/12552/751810PUBoEPI002060130Openingodoors.pdf?sequence=1).

World Bank (2013b), World Development Indicators (WDI).

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/WDI-2013-ebook.pdf>.

World Economic Forum (2013): The Global Gender Gap Report.

[www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GenderGap\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf).

Zentrale Frauenbeauftragte der Freien Universität Berlin. (In English) "Gender Equality Officer at Freie Universität Berlin". 3 March 2014

[www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/frauenbeauftragte](http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/frauenbeauftragte).

Zernike, Kate (2011): Gains, and Drawbacks, for Female Professors. The New York Times. 21

March 2011. [www.nytimes.com/2011/03/21/us/21mit.html?pagewanted=all&r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/21/us/21mit.html?pagewanted=all&r=0)

*Prof. Dr. Hossnia Mohran (Sohag University), Prof. Dr. Jehan Ragab (South Valley University),*

*Nada Nabil (South Valley University), Prof. Dr. Ahlam El-Adawy (Sohag University) © Heike Pantelmann*



# Part II: Equal Opportunity Policies/Work at Universities

## Introduction

Equal opportunity offices are responsible for advancing and monitoring equal opportunity policies and programs at universities in many countries of the world. New governance at universities around the globe brings many challenges, but also often includes gender equality and/or equal opportunity policies. Very often international competition, organizational development and societal pressure are key drivers for the establishment or strengthening of equal opportunity policies in institutions like universities. Even funding schemes or programs initiated by organizations for science and research or ministries for higher education can further intensify focus on this subject. In the European Union, Gender Mainstreaming became a union-wide strategy for fostering gender equality and was translated into the

*Gender stereotypes and gender bias are not always visible nor are they noticeable at first glance, but they are still prevalent in academia.*

national agendas of all member countries. Over time, equal opportunities often became a cross-sectional objective for many universities. In many countries equality work has become a field of occupation which went through a phase of professionalization during the last two decades.

Changing agendas – from gender equality to equal opportunities (focusing more on inequality than simply gender) to what is often referred to today as "diversity management" – creates new

challenges, new duties and new conflicts. After all, the field is characterized – like many others in times of "economization" of universities – by the constant battle for scarce resources in a "competitive environment". But this battle is often fought at the expenses of the equal opportunities' causes.

Gender stereotypes and gender bias are not always visible nor are they noticeable at first glance, but they are still prevalent in academia. In order to overcome the existing structures that hinder women (and/or other (minority) groups) from advancing their careers, a great deal of change needs to take place.

Although universities continuously strive to become modern, diverse and equal, structures of inequality prevail. In order to change those structures, studies of gender (and other) inequalities, and their structural integration in academic politics and processes, should become a well-rooted subject of interdisciplinary academic research. Especially in the fields of political and social sciences and economics, interesting questions for scholars might stem from work- and occupational studies, highlighting gender specific and hierarchical divisions of labor, the role of migration and (anti-)migration politics, and the conditions that enable or disable women and members of social minorities from participation and success in many things, including academic professional qualification.

There are at least six explanations (for the German context, see Blome et al 2013: 55ff) which explain the phenomenon of "leaky pipelines", "glass ceilings" and/or "sticky floors" (metaphors which describe the disproportionately low percentage of women who have achieved higher levels of professional qualification). These elements are often interwoven, addressing both individual and structural barriers that may lead to an underrepresentation of women in academia. The survey done by Blome et al. shows that even if women occasionally underestimate their ability to succeed in academia, it is of prime importance to remove not only individual barriers but structural ones as well. Examples of these barriers include "old boys networks" that recruit their personnel from a homogeneous (read: male) pool of candidates, concepts of family and work-life-balance that heavily depend on a stay-at-home mother, aspects of childhood socialization that prevent girls from pursuing an academic career, stereotypes and gender biases, and official rules and regulations that tacitly work in favor of men (ibid., 68).

Depending on which explanation appears to be most convincing and the priorities of the different problems (usually it is a mix of more than one), the work of equal opportunity actors at universities has many parallel goals: First and foremost is often improving the representation of women on all levels of qualification. Guiding principles of work could include the "cascade-model of equalization": every level up the job ladder should include at least the same percentage of female professionals as the preceding level. Another principle is mandatory gender quotas or target ratios. Ideal would be 50%/50%, but in some circumstances other compositions are preferred. For example: Since 2015 Germany has a gender quota of 30% women on corporate boards (New York Times 2015).

Other structural goals of equal opportunity actors include the development, enactment and implementation of rules, legislation and processes that remove deficits and foster equity, as well as planning accompanying projects such as support

programs, workshops and publications. For example, workshops and campaigns could be used to raise awareness for job inequality, discrimination and/or sexual harassment, but also for possibilities to improve promotion prospects and job opportunities in academia. Dual career services which serve both parents and envision a more balanced division of all labor – i.e. both at work and within the family – are also an important area of activity.

*"... even if women occasionally underestimate their ability to succeed in academia, it is of prime importance to remove not only individual barriers but structural ones as well."*

Each explanation and task requires the inclusion of various actors, for example, members of the executive committee and university-administration, deans of faculties, scientists and scholars, lecturers, students, as well as members of professional networks inside and outside the institution.

In this respect, working towards equal opportunity has to combine established methods with (relatively) new instruments and fields. Using gender mainstreaming and diversity management to bring together these strategies which allow for a work-life-balance, provide family- services, and ensure equal treatment in vocational and recruitment processes is a huge task which requires cooperation, alliances and support throughout all levels of higher education. In order to comply with the increased expectations and duties, equality work should reflect research outcomes of gender, diversity and intersectionality studies (e.g. Choo/Ferree 2010, Cho/Crenshaw/McCall 2013, Hill-Collins/Bilge 2016). Given the interlinked institutionalization of gender studies and equal opportunity policies at universities, this is important for dealing with changing agendas. But it is most necessary when rhetoric modernization isn't sufficient but equal opportunity policies target a modernization of structures of prejudice.



## Promotion of Equality

### Introduction

Universities in Egypt and Germany should pursue the goal of equal opportunity for men and women. By doing so, universities emphasize the fundamental necessity of taking each woman's special situation at the university into account. The following guidelines on promotion of equality of women and men are intended to eliminate structural disadvantages for women and to also guarantee equal opportunities in career development. The promotion of women complements and substantiates the university's goal (and legal obligation in some countries, e.g. Germany) to reduce existing underrepresentation in some fields (in Germany, these are typically the MINT/STEM-disciplines). This also goes for higher academic positions across all disciplines. The implemented measures should bring significant improvement to the learning and work environment and should also help increase the proportion of women in fields in which they are underrepresented.

In order to improve the situation of staff, students and employees, it is very important to give them support which can be provided on different levels and by different persons or institutional facilities/units. Actions to be taken for the promotion of women in academia include:

- Offering female staff, students and employees readily available opportunities in career development and advancement.
- Systematically including women or, with a focus on structure, mainstreaming gender equality with regard to the allocation of scholarships and research grants.
- Equalizing the ratio between women and men amongst student employees and in subjects in which women are underrepresented (e.g. STEM), and improving each female student's study situation.

- Providing more childcare and/or care for dependents of men and/or women working/studying at the university – especially for single parents.
- Promoting the institutionalization of gender studies as well as diversity and intersectionality research in across departments and/or institutions.
- Taking pre-emptive action against sexual harassment.

In the following chapter we will suggest instruments which have been implemented at many universities and have proven to be successful in resolving some of the obstacles that prevent women from developing their full potential. The necessary measures require support from both ends of the employment spectrum, i.e. top-down and bottom-up. On the one hand, people in power (deans, university presidents, etc.) have to support the idea, and on the other, staff/employees/students have to be actively involved in the matter of equal opportunities. Recommended tools or components include workshops, trainings, mentoring systems, scholarship programs, information strategies and networking. These effective instruments will be explained in detail in this chapter.

© S. Schwarz



Examples of such activities at Egyptian universities will be given in chapter 4. All participating universities are partners in the DAAD project *Gender Equality in the Egyptian Higher Education System*. The measures and strategies which were developed during the project were then proposed as a way to reduce existing gender disparities in access and achievement in higher education.



© Friederike Meier-Menzel.

### Scholarships and grants

One important tool is the promotion and support of young researchers who write proposals for research projects. This support includes providing young female academics information about scholarships and grants and encouraging them to actually write proposals. Concerning the latter, such support can focus on two elements: It can be directed especially towards young female researchers and support them in a research topic of their choice, and/or it can be directed towards projects which focus on questions regarding equal opportunities or gender relations. In order to provide the best possible support, joint effort and coordination by professors (as project leaders) and equal opportunity officers is required.

### University Support

The university as an institution could provide resources for activities and qualification workshops, advanced training for staff and doctoral students would be of great significance. Examples of such programs are leadership trainings which would also focus on two elements: Providing young female professionals with the necessary skills for leadership, and establishing leadership trainings that promote a concept of (gender) equality and gender- and diversity-sensitive leadership skills throughout all levels of the academic hierarchy. Workshops might cover topics such as personnel policy, communication, science management, applying for and administering funds, public relations and other skills relevant for an academic career. The university could organize awards for excellence in different fields, such as outstanding research, teaching, or raising financial support from third parties in the field of equal opportunities. In Egypt, universities celebrate public holidays, such as Mother's Day on March 21, to honor the importance of parenting. Such an occasion could be the basis for family-friendly university activities.

### Mentoring

Mentoring is another important tool for the advancement of women in academia which takes various shapes and includes many topics and target groups. For example, faculty members could be enabled by their respective equal opportunity offices/branches to set up programs that promote gender equality at the faculty level. On a more central level, a female counselor at the university should be accessible for all questions concerning women in academia. Such a counselor, or other equality-sensitive ombudspersons, could be installed to conciliate between disagreeing parties, and to make the voices of university members heard who experienced discrimination or gender-related job difficulties. Furthermore, psychological advice should be provided by the equal opportunity office.

In order to make the highest possible number of university members aware of the equal opportunity aspects of academic conduct and procedures, the university's equal opportunity center can provide mentoring programs with a special focus on leadership, research and/or teaching. Institutionalized peer mentoring is one way to evaluate and sustain the knowledge and capabilities of students and staff.

### Information

Another important tool is to make information from the equal opportunity office available to all members of the university. Universities should ensure that their members know their rights and have access to university support structures, as well as to information about legislation which applies to their respective situation. All university members should have their voices heard.

The most common ways to promote this include websites, public blackboards, posters, flyers and brochures issued by

equal opportunities offices, university administration and through staff or student associations. Other means of information include open forums such as "Qualification Days", where senior and junior graduates can meet and discuss their experiences and prospects. A special variety of such a forum is "Girls' Day", where all departments, especially those in which female students are typically underrepresented (especially STEM), open their doors for curious/interested girls. The very first Girls' Day to take place at an Egyptian university occurred during the course of the DAAD project at South Valley University in 2013<sup>3</sup>. In a Girls' Day event, female pupils have the whole day to get to know the university, ask questions, take part in scientific quizzes, solve tasks and assist in experiments (under supervision). The goal is to help girls become more informed when it comes to deciding what they will study, and also to empower their self-perception as scientifically capable, and finally, to increase the share of female students. Information and mutual peer-education, for example in post-graduate follow-up sessions or (concluding) colloquia where master and doctoral students participate and present their current research progress (e.g. in gender equality related topics), are a helpful tool not only in the early stages of studying, but also in the graduate and post-graduate phases.

<sup>3</sup>For more information see:  
[www.svu.edu.eg/equal/  
events.html](http://www.svu.edu.eg/equal/events.html)

*The first "Girls Day" at South Valley University, 2013. © South Valley University*



## Networking

Networking structures are another important topic. One can assume that networking structures exist both overtly and tacitly in every institution, and that being able to navigate within such networks contributes significantly to personal progress.

Two prevalent types of networks are to be identified: formal and informal.

Formal networks within the university connect gender equality offices, university presidents, vice presidents, departments, as well as other relevant actors in equal opportunity work (such as working groups, initiatives on the faculty-level, and counselors). Other networks might also reach outside the university and bring together actors from universities with political actors, e.g. national (or federal) councils for women, representatives of parliaments, ministers, members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other equal opportunity associations. Such networks can provide information and strategies that might be useful for implementing new instruments for the advancement of women in academia. Examples might be the NGO "Harass Map"<sup>4</sup> which developed a "Safe Schools and Universities Program"<sup>5</sup> that was adapted by Cairo University in the 2014 fall semester or the NGO "Ikhtyar 'Choice' for Gender Studies and Research"<sup>6</sup>, an initiative with the goal of developing an Arabic-language knowledge base of gender and sexuality trends and dynamics from the Arabic world.

Other important networks include international collaborations between universities or individual departments. This document is just one outcome of such a collaboration. On another level, national and international academic professional associations connect professionals, disseminate knowledge, and enable temporary or sustainable connections between researchers, decision makers and political activists.

<sup>4</sup>For more information see:  
<http://harassmap.org/en/>.

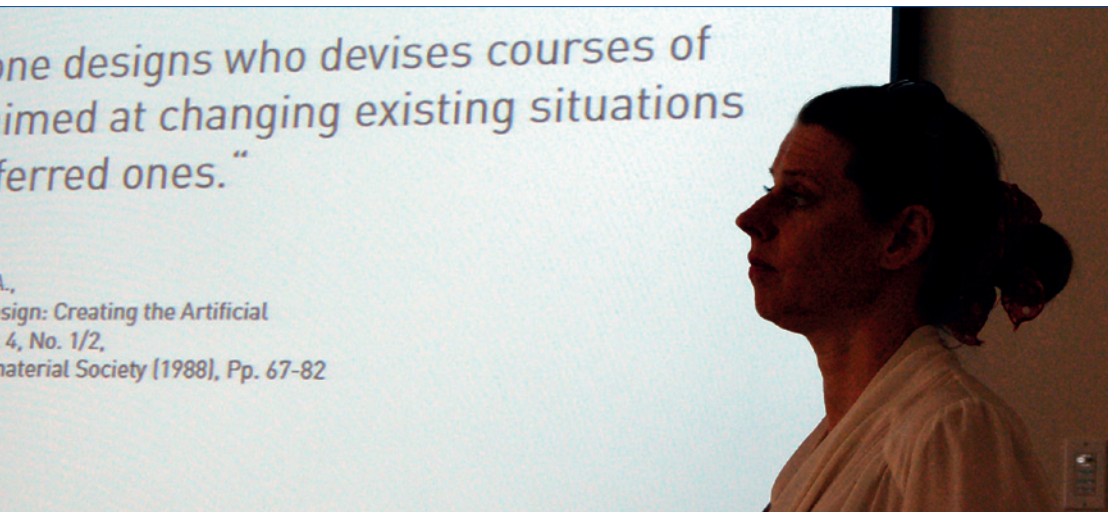
<sup>5</sup>For more information see:  
[http://harassmap.org/en/  
what-we-do/safe-schools-  
and-universities/](http://harassmap.org/en/what-we-do/safe-schools-and-universities/).

<sup>6</sup>Ikhtyar "Choice" for Gender Studies and Research is on Facebook.

Informal networks in the field of gender equality can empower people to voice their experiences, or to search for pragmatic, ad-hoc solutions. One could assume, that such networks involve informal meetings between office members and persons that are interested in equality related issues (e.g. Post-Docs, researchers, etc.). Such situations might arise when there is a perceived lack of formal structures addressing existing challenges, or in early stages of formal networks, when actors want to find out if there might be other interested actors with whom a more formal network could be developed. Social networking tools (wikis, Facebook, Twitter) can contribute to the circulation of information through both informal and formal networks.

Universities can support women by making access to formal networks more open, and by reducing any possible negative effects from pre-existing informal "old boys" networks, as well as by encouraging actors of equal opportunity to build up new networks and strengthen their influence on equal opportunity politics, both inside and outside the institution. ■

*Dr. Friederike Meier-Menzel. © S. Schwarz*



*Summer School 2014 in El Gouna. © S. Schwarz*

### References Part II: Equal Opportunity Policies/ Work at Universities

Blome, Eva/ Erfmeier, Alexandra/Gülcher, Nina /Smykalla, Sandra (Eds.) (2013): Handbuch zur Gleichstellungspolitik an Hochschulen: Von der Frauenförderung zum Diversity Management? Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Choo, Hae Yeon/ Ferree, Myra Marx (2010): Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions, Interactions, and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities. *Sociological Theory* 28: 129 – 149.

Cho, Sumi/Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams/McCall, Leslie (2013): Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis. *Signs* 38: 785–810.

Hill-Collins, Patricia/Bilge, Sirma (2016): *Intersectionality*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

New York Times (2015): Germany Sets Gender Quota in Boardrooms. [www.nytimes.com/2015/03/07/world/europe/german-law-requires-more-women-on-corporate-boards.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/07/world/europe/german-law-requires-more-women-on-corporate-boards.html?_r=0).

# Part III: Working on Equal Opportunities

## What does "equal opportunities" in higher education mean?

In terms of access, most countries have made substantial progress in closing the gender gap in higher education. Women are increasingly gaining access to higher education, and in Egypt, female enrolment is nearly as high as male enrolment. However, the increase in female enrolment does not necessarily mean that gender equality has been achieved: The cascade model, the equal representation of women on each career stage from bottom to top, has not been realized yet. The same goes for Germany (GESIS 2014). The European Commission has confirmed this finding by stating that "Gender differences are not big in enrolments, but inequality comes later in the transition to the labor market." (European Commission 2013). In addition, female students still face more financial and social barriers than male students with regard to access to higher education. Women from wealthier, more educated urban families are more represented in higher education in Egypt.

Equal opportunity offices at the university are just one component of many which aim to ameliorate the situation of women in the educational system. In order for even more progress to take place, many regulations and adjustments should take effect in much earlier stages of their educational careers, such as in schools or day-care centers. Nonetheless, universities have the obligation to support all students equally, and to reduce existing inequalities. To support this goal, equal opportunity offices have a range of activities at hand.

## Equal opportunity centers at universities

In June 2012, as an outcome of the DAAD Transformation Partnership project *Gender Equality in the Egyptian Higher Education System*, the Egyptian project teams started to establish Equal Opportunity Centers at their universities. At South Valley University in Qena, the Equal Opportunity Center<sup>7</sup> was founded as an office for the promotion of equal opportunities and a family-friendly environment at the university. The Center's main goal is supporting the work-life balance and career development of all university members. This includes counseling young researchers and graduates, offering soft skills courses to faculty members, and enhancing offers for child-care at the universities. The center supports female staff members and female post graduate students in making progress in their academic career and social lives. Young female scientists now can consult with the Center when facing problems related to equal opportunity issues. Furthermore, the Center has organized trainings for young scientists and an open day at the university for school girls ("Girls Day") that first took place at South Valley University in 2013.

<sup>7</sup>For more information see: [www.svu.edu.eg/equal/index.html](http://www.svu.edu.eg/equal/index.html).

© Friederike Meier-Menzel



## Administrative Structure

The administrative structure of the center includes its integration in the university organizational hierarchy, an official name and logo, and the assignment of a chief office manager. Related issues include the question whether it should be a single central office or many decentralized offices, or a combination of both, and the number of people working in each office. Throughout the duration of the project, the partner universities established offices for equal opportunities, as follows:

**South Valley University (SVU):** The office was established in April 2012 and is affiliated with the Vice President of Social Services and Environmental Affairs, namely Prof. Sayed Taha. The office is called the "Equal Opportunity Centre" and managed by Prof. Jehan Ragab.

**Alexandria University (AU):** The office was set up and is affiliated with the Vice President of Research and Postgraduate Studies, namely Prof. Seddik Abdel-Salam. The office is labeled "SCOPE", which stands for "Support Centre for Equal Opportunities and Parental Enhancement". It is managed by Dr. Zeinab Shata.

**Sohag University (SU):** The office was established in 2012 and is affiliated with the university President, namely Prof. Nabil Nour El-Deen. The office is called the "Family Support Centre" and is managed by Dr. Ahlam El-Adawy.

At **Cairo University (CU)**, the Faculty of Economics and Political Science established "FORUS" for contact regarding the fields of equal opportunity or gender-related research.

## Legal Framework

The administrative structures of the equal opportunity office are often connected to and regulated by legislation. In Germany, for

example, national and federal law prescribe the equal treatment of men and women and prohibit discrimination against people based on sex, gender, origin, religion, political belief, or disability (German Basic Law, Art. 3). Deriving from the basic law and the German anti-discriminatory law (General Equal Treatment Act) there are federal laws specifically intended for higher education which prohibit discrimination in the academic context. On a local level, each university is obligated to establish rules regarding the work of its equal opportunity office, a task which is defined in the respective constitution of each university (Blome et al 2013: 98ff).

## Working Personnel and Procedures

This section refers to qualifications, duties, rights and responsibilities of the staff of the equal opportunity office. It specifies the necessary skills for all staff members who work in the office.

### Rights and responsibilities of the equal opportunities office and its staff

In some countries, e.g. in Germany, equal opportunity officers can work in a paid position as either full-time or part-time officers, depending on the respective university and/or according to federal or national laws. Such officers should be able to be (partially) indemnified from their regular occupational tasks in order to have enough time to invest in their positions as equal opportunities officers.

Another important aspect is that equal opportunities officers should take part in all decision-making processes of academic boards, and they should always have a voice. This is crucial in the recruitment processes of all positions, including high-profile positions. The degree of authority of each equal opportunity officer may vary from university to university, but should be specified in university legislation.

### Personnel and duties

The equal opportunity office is headed by the chief equal opportunity officer. A deputy officer, and/or assistant officers, an IT administrator, a secretary and, as the case may be, other office representatives such as speakers or advisers complete the team. The office manager is responsible for planning and supervising the work, programs and activities running in the office with other personnel, and in collaboration with national and international partners.

Each school or department should be assigned a deputy equal opportunities officer. The office – or a branch of it – can also be located in the university administration building. The main equal opportunity office should be well connected with any branch offices.

One of the core tasks of the office is to develop visions regarding gender and equality for the development of the whole university. One practical approach employs one-year action plans that are presented to the university administration as well as to internal and external partners. Such action-plans could act as guidelines for gender- and equality issues in any decisions taken by university authorities. Discussing these plans and getting the consent of all parties involved helps secure the financial and technical support needed.

*Prof. Dr. Sahar Wahby, Prof. Dr. Ahlam El-Adawy, Prof. Dr. Hossnia Mohran (all Sohag University)*

© Heike Pantelmann



In order to provide basic information for all such decisions, the office collects, handles and edits statistical data from the whole university. The office then presents this data to the administration and individual departments along with analyses and recommendations for action. One such recommendation could be the establishment of a program for career development, including PhD and post-doctorate programs, which would ensure the advancement of women to higher management positions.

Decentralized equal opportunities officers have many similar tasks but their actions take place on another level. One important task is managing conflicts that arise among faculty members, providing counseling to staff and students, and liaising with the chief equality officer.

The chief equal opportunities officer is responsible for the coordination among the decentralized equal opportunities officers. Periodic meetings are an important tool for discussing problems, providing feedback and finding suitable solutions. Important news from other faculties with issues related to career development, e.g. motivating and encouraging women to apply for higher positions, can be shared.

Another important element is consultation with the university president and/or vice presidents to discuss activities, current problems, financial needs and future plans, as well as networking with higher authorities (e.g. Ministry of Higher Education) and other policy makers.

On the faculty level, the officer should meet with deans and other faculty members on a regular basis. This can be the result of the officer's presence in vocational procedures for faculty jobs and professorships, and/or to help solve gender or equality related problems or conflicts which were presented to the office by staff members. In addition, this collaboration can lead to individual

rules for one faculty area, and can thus provide best practices, e.g. establishing a nursery or children's daycare.

While these activities target networks inside the university, equal opportunity work also deals with networks outside university. Officers build connections with higher levels of the administration, authorities, policy makers and other relevant partners and organizations to get support for all sorts of office activities, i.e. administrative, financial and/or technical. A good example is the previously mentioned collaboration between the NGO "Harass Map" and Cairo University.

### **Qualifications of working personnel**

In order to achieve the best results, equal opportunities officers and their coworkers should have qualifications in the fields of equal opportunity and counseling as well as profound knowledge of higher education administration, decision-making channels, political relations, statistics and law. Also recommended are good management and communication skills, experience managing or moderating groups, and a wide range of networking capabilities with university administration, as well as with personnel in higher positions inside and outside the university, e.g. governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Officers are often required to be faculty teaching staff members of the university.

All staff members in the equal opportunity office should be able to find common ground and be able to represent the office's goals and aims publicly with a strong voice. Also, trainings about equality/gender topics are required for all staff members.

### **Selection of personnel**

A primary selection of personnel for the equal opportunities office may be carried out by the president, vice president or uni-

versity council. After the office has been established and awareness of its services has been disseminated among university staff, officers should be selected by election, for example, by the university's women's council. Announcements for such positions come from the president or vice president; they trickle down to the deans, and then continue to the departments. In the end, every staff member should be made aware of them via the department council. The announcements should include details on the qualifications and competencies needed for these jobs, where to get the application form, the timing for interviews and those responsible for holding the interviews with applicants.

### **Work methods**

Establishing a system of working methods inside the office is important in order to ensure that all work done by the office is effective. Such a system should be written down and approved by all involved personnel as well as by the higher administration of the university. Each university is to inform the office members about its system and all working personnel are expected to approve the system before starting work.

Work-day shifts between the manager and her deputy are expected to cover all days of the week. Specific times should be allocated for counseling, and they should be targeted at specific groups e.g. 10-12 am on Sundays and Tuesdays.

Regular meetings with deputies and university administration should take place in order to ensure the advancement of the office's work.

Statistical data from different departments should be collected by the office manager. The analysis, interpretation, and recommendations based on this data that should be presented in an annual report, which should also include all achieved activities, programs, and trainings conducted throughout the year. The report should be made available to all university members.



### Infrastructure and equipment

Space, equipment and resources are another important topic. In order to guarantee discretion when providing counseling for sexual harassment, a separate room is strongly advised to ensure the consultant can act in an independent manner. It is best to locate the office near the administrative building of the university to best facilitate communication and connections with higher level authorities. In addition, the office should be easily accessible to all faculty members and institutions affiliated with the university, it should provide wheelchair access and the path to the office should be clearly indicated. Moreover, it should be clearly labeled and the logo of the office should be placed on the front of the door, so no one has difficulties to find it.

In order to ensure good working conditions in the office, it should be equipped with suitable furniture, according to occupational health and safety regulations, which might include air conditioning and/or heating. A self-contained computer infrastructure, with computers for all staff members, a printer, internet connection and an independent phone number should be self-evident. Files and records that are generated over time should be kept secure and stored in the office. A small library with essential literature and a presentation area or table with the office's own publications and further helpful information, posters and flyers for clients and the general public are also recommended. To make the office more visible and easy to access, business cards or flyers with all the important information, such as working days, opening hours as well as activities covered by the office and exact areas of provided counseling, are helpful. This information should also be published on the office's website, which ought to be independently administered, and regularly provided with accurate, up-to-date statistics about equal opportunity by the office's IT administration. It should be accessible from the university's main page or public internet presence.

### Equal opportunities at universities – activities and instruments

Equal opportunity offices at universities have the goal of supporting female staff and female students of the university and encouraging the advancement of women in higher education. In order to achieve this, equal opportunity offices can take actions in different fields, such as:

- Information/counseling/support regarding equal opportunity related questions
- Establishment and support of women's networks
- Encouragement of research on gender equality related topics
- Creating awareness for equal opportunity actions
- Workshops/trainings/skill-building courses for female staff and students to facilitate and/or improve their work/studies

### Obstacles

Equal opportunity officers may face some obstacles in the course of their work. They are related to the broader, overall societal situation of women which has to be taken into consideration and can rarely be changed immediately. These obstacles include society's low acceptance of women in leadership positions (especially in governmental positions, engineering and law). This is closely related to certain cultural restrictions and role models (e. g. early marriages) which constitute an obstacle for the higher education of women. That is not to say that women aren't legally authorized to study and take their rightful places in leadership positions. But there is a huge discrepancy between the guaranteed legal rights of women and the actual implementation of these rights in daily life. Another previously mentioned obstacle that girls (and boys) from poor families face is their underrepresentation in education, especially in academia. Support and measures ensuring economic justice have to be implemented to change their underprivileged status

and ensure their full participation. Also, limited mobility (resulting from many different causes) can be a huge problem for women, as distances between home and university are too large and would result in inordinately long travel times. In order to increase the percentage of women from all social backgrounds in higher education, these obstacles have to be overcome.

The sustainable work of equal opportunity offices can not only help create awareness of these obstacles but also work towards their removal.

### **Counseling**

Equal opportunity offices are supposed to be the central point of contact for gender and/or equality-related issues. Counseling provided to women by an equal opportunity office can be seen as a short-term intervention offering advice about how to solve concrete equal opportunity related problems. The counseling topics include career development/qualification in academia; study-related problems; conflicts at work, or with students, colleagues or direct superiors; sexual harassment, mobbing or stalking; questions regarding work/life balance and other family related questions.

In the short-term counseling situation, the role of the counselor is to create an atmosphere of trust in order to find out precisely what the client wants and needs. Since most women know the answers to their problems, the counselor's attitude should be supportive in order to help them be able to see their answers on their own and to offer additional ideas when they are suitable. The counselor's task is to understand the limits of counseling and establish a professional relationship with the women who are seeking advice. Sometimes, the outcome of a counseling session can be referring the client to another counselor. Even though face-to-face-interaction is preferable, sometimes counseling over the telephone is a good way to enhance the accessibility of counseling.

Some examples of counseling activities of equal opportunity offices from Egyptian universities include cases in which families refuse to permit a woman to continue her education after completing her BA degree and cases in which families urge female students to get married and drop out of university before finishing their BA degree. Another common problem occurs when staff members with children, other family obligations, or spouses living in distant cities have long commuting distances – this can result in problems balancing work and home duties. Violence against female students or staff members is another severe problem. However, it is not only blatant abuse or violence, but rather subtle, even overt discrimination that female candidates often face in job interviews. One solution for the problem of long commuting distances was solved at Sohag University, where new housing for female staff members was built next to university.

### **Researching social problems**

In order to improve conditions for female staff members and female students, it is important to gather, analyze and publish data about their experiences at universities. Questions and problems might differ from university to university, even from department to department. A survey among university teaching staff members, conducted at Alexandria University, assessed that university's equal opportunity situation and family friendliness. At Cairo University, data about the current situation of women was collected. These are good starting points for developing equal opportunity action. Encouraging gender related projects, theses and PhDs throughout the university can add knowledge to the field.

### **Raising awareness**

Raising awareness about equality related questions is one of the vital tasks of equal opportunity offices. Initiating meetings with female staff members and students, like those held at South Valley University, helped address gender equality topics, as

well as visualizing and promoting the work of the Equal Opportunity Office. Most notably at Cairo University, difficult topics, like sexual harassment on campus, were discussed. All these actions raise awareness for equality related issues at universities.

### Training Courses/Workshops

The equal opportunity office can organize training courses. Skill-building courses on leadership, as well as on writing academic papers, proposals or CVs can be organized in cooperation with specialists in the field, for example in cooperation with the DAAD academy (DAAD) or in cooperation with universities that have extensive experience in equal opportunity action. Workshops on women in science, like those held at Cairo University, or on female participation in politics, like those conducted at Sohag University, contribute to increased understanding and appreciation of the importance of providing active roles for women in universities and society.

### Co-operation with other women's organizations

Equal opportunity offices can choose from a broad variety of possible cooperation partners for joint activity and/or support: The National Council for Women, UN Women's organizations, NGOs, and foreign institutions which support individual countries' efforts to realize gender equality. Equal opportunity offices can seek sponsors for activities among local business contacts and the university administration.

### Family friendly environment

Creating a family friendly environment at universities can be realized on different levels and through various measures which are supported by the equal opportunity office. A center for social services, social clubs for staff members, non-profit shops for underprivileged students and on-campus grocery shops for staff members, like those found at Sohag University, are examples of

support for students and staff members with families. Scheduling certain medical services for staff members – like a specific day of breast cancer screening at Alexandria University – are another good example. There are countless possibilities, including correspondence courses, digital learning environments and other learning opportunities (without compulsory attendance). The specific needs of the female staff members and female students, as well as the university, must be taken into account.

In a more general way, the equal opportunity office can raise awareness for societal change and thus enhance the situation of women. Discussing with female staff members and students how many children they might want, as well as receiving support from husbands for household chores, teaching children how to look after themselves, creating childcare networks and developing time management skills can contribute to a new awareness regarding sharing responsibilities and improving women's work-life balance.

### Social activities

In order to empower girls and promote higher education and professional fields which are still mostly dominated by men, some countries have a Girl's Day action. On this special day, universities and companies open their doors and invite girls to become more aware of higher education or certain fields of activity, mostly in the STEM/MINT disciplines. The first Girl's Day in Egypt took place on December 4th, 2013 and was supported by the National Council for Women in Qena and a delegation from a German university (Freie Universität Berlin)

### Possible future activities of project partner universities

There are many possible future activities. Project partner universities have planned many different activities according to the special needs and interests of the women involved. At Cairo



Dr. Barbara Sandow  
(project coordinator),  
Prof. Dr. Hossnia Mohran  
©Heike Pantelmann



Prof. Dr. Sahar Wahby, Sohag University. © S. Schwarz

University, a Gender Diploma and the gender-sensitive development of curricula are being discussed – the objective is to focus more on gender issues and promote gender sensitive academic teaching. At Alexandria University, daycare and child care during conferences and workshops have been provided since December 2014, when it began during the Annual University International Scientific Conference. At Sohag University, a child care center is planned as well. South Valley University plans to make the equal opportunity center's website available in Arabic (until now it has only been available in English), and to organize training courses in cooperation with the DAAD<sup>8</sup> in Cairo. Also, there are plans to create a video about the activities of the center in order to promote equal opportunities.

<sup>8</sup>For more information see:  
<http://cairo.daad.de/en/>

Many more activities are possible. In order to promote equal opportunities in higher education, please share ideas, spread the word and make equality happen! ■

## References Part III: Working on Equal Opportunities

General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz – AGG): [http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/publikationen/AGG/agg\\_in\\_englischer\\_Sprache.html](http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/publikationen/AGG/agg_in_englischer_Sprache.html)

Blome, Eva/ Erfmeier, Alexandra/Gülcher, Nina /Smykalla, Sandra (Eds.) (2013): Handbuch zur Gleichstellungspolitik an Hochschulen: Von der Frauenförderung zum Diversity Management? Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

European Commission (2013): Egypt. Union for the Mediterranean country fiche.  
[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/Tempus/participating\\_countries/documents/13\\_egypt\\_en.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/Tempus/participating_countries/documents/13_egypt_en.pdf)

GESIS (2014): [www.gesis.org/uploads/pics/20\\_d\\_13.gif](http://www.gesis.org/uploads/pics/20_d_13.gif), <http://www.gesis.org/en/cews/resources/statistics/thematische-suche/detail-anzeige/article/the-leaky-pipeline-frauen-und-maenneranteile-im-akademischen-qualifikationsverlauf-2014>.

German Basic Law (Grundgesetz – GG), §3:  
[www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_gg/englisch\\_gg.html#p0022](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0022).

Many References in this section are not quotable, since the topics evolved during workshops and mutual visitations. Recommendations are read off from existing structures of equal opportunity and experiences of equal opportunity offices in Germany and Egypt.

Summer School 2014 in El Gouna. © S. Schwarz





Top: Handbook Workshop Berlin Nov. 2013. © Florian Kohstall

Bottom: Wiki-Workshop, Berlin. © Florian Kohstall

Top: Workshop in Cairo Dec. 2012. © Florian Kohstall

Bottom: Dr. Samaa Hosny, Prof. Dr. Riham Bahi Sept. 2014 (Cairo University). © Heike Pantelmann



German Science Day 2013 at DAAD Cairo. © Nour El Refai.

Top: Closing Conference in Cairo Nov. 2014. © Heike Pantelmann

Bottom: Summer School in Berlin July 2013 © Florian Kohstall

## PART I: CONTEXT

Workshop at Cairo University in December 2012; photo: Florian Kohstall

Meeting with German Delegation and female staff members at South Valley University; photo: SVU

Wiki-Training at South Valley University, March 2013: Project coordinator in Egypt Elisabeth Trepesch with trainees; photo: SVU

Summer School on university management in the context of gender equality, July 2013 at Freie Universität Berlin; photo: Florian Kohstall

First Egyptian Girl's Day at South Valley University in December 2013: Dr. Nada Nabil, Silvia Arlt, Prof. Jehan Ragab; photo: SVU

Girl's Day 2013 at South Valley University: female students from Secondary and Preparatory Schools; photo: Jehan Ragab

Counseling in the Equality Center at Sohag University: Prof. Hossnia Mohran with guest; photo: FU Berlin

Workshop on handbook, November 2013 at Freie Universität Berlin: Participants with project responsables Prof. Brigitta Schütt, Prof. Margreth Lünenborg and project coordinator Dr. Barbara Sandow; Photo: Elisabeth Trepesch

Workshop on handbook, November 2013 at Freie Universität Berlin: Prof. Jehan Ragab, Prof. Zeinab Shata, Silvia Arlt; Photo: Elisabeth Trepesch

Workshop on Handbook at Alexandria University in September 2014: Project coordinator Dr. Barbara Sandow with Prof. Hossnia Mohran  
Photo: Heike Pantelmann

Workshop on Handbook at Alexandria University in September 2014: Heike Pantelmann, Aisha Ghoneimy, Dr. Samaa Hazem Hosny, Swantje Winkel, Prof. Riham Bahi; Photo: Ahlam El-Aldawy

Workshop on Handbook at Alexandria University in September 2014: Prof. Ahlam El-Adawy, Heike Pantelmann, Prof. Sahar Wahby, Katrin Bub, Dr. Barbara Sandow (project coordinator), Prof. Hossnia Mohran; Photo: Ahlam El-Aldawy

First version of the Handbook is ready in November 2014  
Prof. Hossnia Mohran, Prof. Jehan Ragab, Prof. Ahlam El-Adawy  
Photo: Heike Pantelmann

Closing conference in Cairo in November 2014; photo: Heike Pantelmann

Closing conference at Cairo University in November 2014;  
Photo: Ahlam El-Adawy

# صرفال ؤفاكت لوح بيترك يرصملا يلالعلا ميلعتلا ماظن يف

# HANDBOOK ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE EGYPTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

