

# GENDER AWARENESS AND TRANSFORMATION THROUGH EDUCATION PROJECT

## Policy Brief # 3



University of Dar es Salaam  
Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE)



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### Introduction

The Gender Awareness and Transformation through Education (GATE) project was a four-year project implemented jointly by the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD). The project was designed to support the development of gender expertise and capacities in research and education at DUCE through integration of training of current and future academics in gender-based research and education. The ultimate result was to establish a centre for excellence within DUCE so as to provide gender expertise in research and teaching to the College; and, over time, to other Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs). As an overarching ambition, the project was also used to strengthen Institutional Partnerships between higher education institutions in Ireland and Tanzania on Gender Equality

### Background

The need for implementing gender initiatives through this project emanated from the fact that HLIs represent important sites of epistemic power where gender norms and cultural practices can be examined and explored, reinforced and reproduced. DUCE presents a unique portfolio as a teacher-training college where future gender influencers are produced. Teachers who are shaped with attitudes, perspectives and norms that are gender responsive are important workforce to bring gender transformation of future generations.

At the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE), gender equity and equality are at the centre of the College's key functions and is supported by its Motto "Quality Education for All". As such, DUCE has defined specific role to promote gender and is committed to mainstreaming gender in all its core functions. Its aim is to mobilize all general policies, programs and practices to support the purposes of gender equity and equality. The strategy is to ensure the needs and interests of both women, men and people with special needs are fairly considered and served as an integral part of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes and activities at DUCE and beyond.

In the past few years DUCE's has envisioned and strived to mainstream gender in its policy and core functions. Using the UN Women guidance in redefining working relations that are usually affected by gender, DUCE has operated under the belief that "gender which involve social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men" is important at any workplace. The attributes of gender, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. As such, DUCE encourages inclusion of a learning process on gender through which improvements in working relationships, equality and equity in sharing opportunities can be harnessed, shared and enjoyed by all. Ultimately, such situation will be an incentive, which in turn will promote improved performance by all leading to the collective improved performance of the institution. It is from this perspective that DUCE implemented a four-year project that intended to build a culture of gender responsive attitude among the University key players and college community at large.

The project capitalized from the longstanding partnership and collaboration between DUCE and Trinity College Dublin. It was therefore taken as an additional opportunity to extend and strengthen Institutional Partnerships between higher education institutions in Ireland and Tanzania on Gender Equality. This led to framing one of the project objectives to include support the delivery of institutional collaboration partnership to facilitate capacity-building and development of a Centre for Excellence on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in Higher Education in Tanzania. In addition, the project aimed at mainstreaming gender in curriculum as well as ensuring that routine academic and administrative procedures and activities are gender responsive. This external evaluation was planned to assess the extent to which these objectives have been attained.

## Scientific Approach

This policy brief was developed following the GATE project external evaluation conducted at the end of the project. The evaluation employed the OECD-DAC criteria where relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability were the core measures used. Similarly, the evaluators used a combination of two evaluation frameworks namely process evaluation and performance monitoring framework for measuring the performance of individual components of the project and monitoring indicators so as to answer the evaluation objectives. Evaluation participants included academic and non-academic staff at DUCE, students and leaders of the Students' organization at DUCE, DUCE management as well as project implementers from DUCE and from Trinity College Dublin. The original plans were to also include students from TCD as well as their supervisor but due to reasons beyond the capacity of the evaluators, these were not reached. The evaluation was conducted in the period between September and November, 2022 and covered a total of 18 participants.

## Learning from GATE Project

The evaluation findings were able to notify important lessons that the implementing institutions as well as the Higher Learning Institutions from Tanzania and beyond can draw. Among them include the following:

**# Change of perception and attitude towards gender as a concept within the HLIs:** Several evaluation participants admitted that their perceptions on gender and attitude towards gender responsive practices have changed due to what they learnt and experienced from the GATE project.

**# Empowerment of female staff and students to actively take part in senior leadership of the University:** Women were empowered leading to some female candidates for as high a position as the Deputy Principal (at University level) and Vice Presidents for the Students' Association. Similarly, a significant proportion (58%) of the interviewed staff felt that University leaders at DUCE exercise integrity and competence of gender issues; About 53% of staff interviewed felt that the working environment for women in the University has improved; more than 78% of interviewed staff hailed the management for effective implementation of maternity leave policy; 61% think that the University was doing well in ensuring that staff with special need are given considerations and 62% of all staff interviewed perceived that the DUCE management was doing well in ensuring

that there are equal opportunities for career development as well as on allocation of leadership positions.

**# Inclusion of gender in the University Research Agenda:** According to the University management, there used to be only two arms of research namely Social research and Humanities. Gender was lightly taken and considered as a small part of studies of humanities. However, from the learning and capacity building supported by the GATE project, gender will now constitute a complete research agenda. This includes also intention and plans to establish a Gender Research Centre at the University.

**# Lessons from GATE project lead to review of Gender Policy of the University:** The Finance, Policy and Planning Department of the University has used the learning from the project to review the existing gender policy and update based on the new DUCE community envisioning of gender and gender practices.

**# Intention to further integrate gender in curriculum across all programs of study at the University:** The policy review is keenly awaited to provide guidance to mainstreaming and integrating gender in all curricula of all programs at the university. This shall include also integrating gender in non-academic functions and activities of the University.

**# Perceived reduction of incidents of sexual harassments and sextortion:** A majority of the evaluation participants perceive that, the gender awareness and in-depth understanding of the concept of gender and its dimensions has helped to empower the DUCE community against sexual harassment practices hence reducing their incidences.

**# Reaching the outer community through DUCE Alumni:** At least one example was made available through this evaluation of one DUCE Alumni student has taken the learning from the project to initiate own gender related project implemented in secondary schools where the student works. This is one practical example of spill-over effect of the project beyond the DUCE boundaries.

**# Creation of foundations of sustainability of the project impact through sponsored students:** The students who were part of the project training initiative provide a strong and reliable promise for sustainability of the project outcomes and impact.

**# Strengthened relationship between TCD and DUCE as well as Universities in Ireland and Tanzania:** The longstanding partnership and relationship between DUCE and TCD was further strengthened through the GATE project. The intended capacity building of DUCE academicians on gender equality was demonstrated through the PhD/post doc training, through a series of gender related training of DUCE staff and students as well as through publications and planned book write up.

### **New Knowledge and Added Value**

Gender equality is one of the core values upon which any organization should value and uphold for its integrity and success. Equality between women and men in all aspects of running any institution defines gender and should be one of the organization's essential aims. To achieve gender equality, institutions must adopt an approach of mainstreaming this topic in all policies. In spite of a clear commitment to gender equality as a common goal, as well as the principle of mainstreaming gender equality in all fields, many institutions across the world are not yet actively following a systematic policy of mainstreaming gender equality.

Institutions are not gender-neutral entities. There are always gender issues within an organization that are partly visible and partly tacit. Literature has documented extensively that the representation of women and men at all hierarchical stages of an organization is only one (visible) indicator that institutions are gendered but not necessarily in the practical manner and institutional cultures of those organizations.

### **Policy Recommendations**

The University decision to start reviewing the Gender Policy of the University precedes policy recommendation from this evaluation. However, the evaluation recommends to the University Management in collaboration with the GATE project implementation team in collaboration with DUCE Management through the Finance, Policy and Planning and with the support of Trinity College Dublin to continue with its plan, through the formed committee to review the University Gender Policy while making use of recommendations from the Institutional Gender Analysis study as well as the Gender Action Plan.

Similarly, a strategic dissemination of the lessons learned from the project through multiple channels is highly recommended to communicate what was learnt through GATE project to other Universities. This is in effort to influence the University Gender Policy perspectives hence making DUCE a centre of excellence and leadership in gender. If possible, the dissemination should involve all universities in Tanzania to influence gender responsive academic set up in universities as learned through GATE project. This can be achieved through a series of webinars and or conferencing.

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