



CONCEPT NOTE

NOVEMBER 2023

THE 3RD FAWE TRIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GIRLS' EDUCATION IN AFRICA



TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN AFRICA: WHAT WORKS!



**TUESDAY 21ST AND WEDNESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2023
BOMA HOTEL, NAIROBI, KENYA**

INTRODUCTION

As a Pan-African organization, FAWE has provided interventions to advance quality education for girls and young women in Africa for the past 30 years. The interventions such as influencing curricula and policy development, capacity strengthening of education representatives and innovative research have consistently positioned FAWE as a thought leader in matters education in Africa and beyond.

The effects of COVID 19 remain alive. Some of the education system that were brought to their knees continue to struggle and gains made in so many years continue to be eroded. For instance, the re-entry programme for girls was heavily affected. For some countries, the discussions on favourable re-entry policies seem to start afresh, Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes grappling with the next causes of action since they receive little focus during crisis and the need to enhance conversations on gender-based violence and comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Overall, the pandemic revealed the need to strengthen education systems and ensure that the systems are resilient and can provide access to quality education even during times of crisis. For example, adoption of technology for education is now inevitable for any progressive country.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call on governments to ensure that learners including girls and women have equal access to quality education and to also improve infrastructure including utilizing technology to ensure access to quality education. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) strategies provide for rehabilitating school infrastructures as well as harnessing the use of ICT in education making these prime areas for consideration in strengthening school systems. It further calls for accelerating processes that lead to

gender parity and equity which would require a holistic approach in rebuilding education structures.

In this regard, the FAWE 2023 3rd Triennial International Conference on Girls' Education in Africa serves as a point of reflection to assess what works and what needs to be improved after taking into consideration the emerging trends and unique circumstances that learner's phase in their education.

International treaties such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC), The Maputo Protocol[1], and The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter)[2] oblige governments to ensure that children enjoy the right to education that is adaptable to their unique needs and specific contexts.

The FAWE Triennial International Girls conference is a platform that FAWE uses to allow education stakeholders to discuss issues affecting girls' education in Africa. The 1st conference was held in August 2017 under the theme "Towards Gender Equality in Education: Positioning youth to champion Africa's Education Agenda" which conference enabled participants to share experiences and reflect on achievements of sustainability development goals (SDGs), Continental Education Strategy of Africa (CESA) 16 - 25, and Agenda 2063. A key highlight of this conference was the launch of African Girls Education Fund. The 2nd International Conference was unprecedentedly held online in November 2022. The theme of the conference was "Towards effective approaches for girls' engagement and excellence: Preparing African Girls for the 21st Century Skills". The conference provided an opportunity for aesthetic experiences and artistic interventions to explore alternative ways for thinking about preparing African Girls for the 21st Century Skills and strengthening STEM uptake among girls and women.

Taking place at the height of COVID 19, the conference also focused on use of technology for resilience during crisis and for progressive education in Africa.

2.0 FAWE'S 3RD TRIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL GIRLS CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION IN AFRICA

FAWE will host the 3rd Triennial International Girls Conference on Education in Africa the theme being "Transforming Education Systems: What Works" to be held on Tuesday 21st to Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at the Boma Hotel, Nairobi Kenya. The theme will allow participants to reflect on advancing girls' education through innovative solutions for emerging trends that affect access to quality education.

The conference targets 300 participants drawn from different sectors of education including FAWE membership, Ministers of Education, representatives from Regional Education bodies, Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), Development Partners, Researchers, Education and Gender Specialists from National, Regional, Sub-regional and International Organizations.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF 3RD TRIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL GIRLS CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION IN AFRICA



Generate knowledge for effective incorporation of ICT in education



Facilitate dialogue between teachers, policy makers, youth and educationalists on addressing the increased numbers of teenage pregnancies and ensuring access to education for all



Highlight appropriate teaching and learning methodologies at all levels of education for enhanced gender equality in education



Interrogate Technical Voluntary Education Training (TVET) as an integral part of formal education

4.0 EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE CONFERENCE.

1

i) Accelerated learning and sharing of knowledge and evidence for effective policy influence

2

ii) Increased stakeholders' commitment to invest in ICT, CSE, GRP, and TVET for improved learning outcomes for girls'.

3

iii) New and/or Strengthened partnerships for FAWE including, commitments by private sector, development agencies and individuals.

4.1 OUTPUTS OF THE CONFERENCE

1

Conference Journal documenting Transforming Education Systems: What Works

2

Communique on common position on transforming education systems to adopt to emerging trends

5.0 CONFERENCE THEME AND SUB-THEMES

THE CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD UNDER FIVE SUB-THEMES AS BELOW;

1) Enhanced gender equality in Education: The power of teaching and learning methodologies

The socioeconomic and political development of nations depends significantly on gender equity and equality in education. To ensure that no one is left behind, achieving gender equality in and through education necessitates systemic institutional change in how policies and strategies are created. The development of pedagogical approaches and learning settings is essential to achieving systemic change. Education stakeholders need to address gender-related disadvantages that lead to differing outcomes for girls and boys, women and men, as well as institutional arrangements, managerial structures, societal norms, and relationship dynamics that affect education. This entails looking at educational institutions and systems from early childhood education through higher education. This conference will look at effective teaching and learning strategies to advance gender equality at all levels of education.

2) Education and Technology: Lessons learnt and the way forward.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic saw school turn to online platforms as a learning tool. The need to utilize technology for learning caught most schools off guard and many failed to continue with lessons out of physical classes. ICT became a source of discrimination than the progress intended. Learners from poor social economic status were left behind. However, based on the importance of ICT schools are increasingly adopting online platform for learning as early as ECE level to tertiary Level. This comes with various challenges including limited internet connectivity and lack of capacity by various stakeholders to fully utilize the platforms. Overall, for the 21st Century it is inevitable that education systems in Africa must embrace technology as this is the trajectory the globe is taking. The conference will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to address questions such as how we break the rural urban divide in access to technology, further what the role of government in is ensuring that ICT is inclusive irrespective of environment, economic status or gender. The conference will also provide a platform for evidence-based sharing on what works to ensure ICT is effectively used in learning environments e.t.c.

3) TVET as integral to formal learning for girls

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4) Addressing the increasing numbers of teenage pregnancies and ensuring access to education for all women and girls

Incidences of teenage pregnancies have increased steadily since the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a result, some mothers and young girls have been unable to enroll in school. In its recommendations to Tanzania, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACERWC) stated that Tanzania should take proactive measures to prevent the expulsion of pregnant girls, investigate cases of pregnant girls being detained, consider re-admitting girls who have been expelled for reasons related to pregnancy and marriage, and offer child-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. Governments and education stakeholders are prompted by this decision to pause and consider how to reduce adolescent pregnancies and guarantee that girls continue their education. The conference will provide a platform for teachers, governments, and other stakeholders to explore ideas of how to address teenage pregnancies and the effect it has on education. This will also be an opportunity to look at bright spots and extract best practices and lessons learnt.

5) Education: A catalyst to Girls and Young Women taking up Leadership positions

The need to progress towards equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of political and economic decision-making for women is recognized by all. To ensure that this goal is realized, there must be deliberate steps made by stakeholders and governments to provide an equal footing for boys and girls to compete favorably for opportunities. In most circumstances, girls and women lose out on leadership positions because they lack the pre-requisite qualifications to hold the positions. This is further exacerbated by the cultural beliefs which places women and girls as subjects of leadership rather than leaders. To ensure that learners are empowered and are self-conscious about inclusion of girls in leadership, education systems must work towards breaking stereotypes and creating equal opportunities for boys and girls to participate in leadership opportunities at all levels. This conference will therefore provide an opportunity for learning and adaptation of best practice to encourage women leadership. Further, the conference will provide an opportunity for advocacy amongst governments and ministries of education to adopt learning models that will enhance women leadership.



6.0 STRUCTURE AND APPROACH FOR THE CONFERENCE

6.1 Date & Venue:

The FAWE's 3rd Triennial International Conference on Girls' Education in Africa will take place on 21st to 22nd November 2023 at The Boma Hotel in Nairobi. The conference will be a hybrid; some participants can join online.

6.2 METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

The conference will bring together 300 participants drawn from different sectors of education including FAWE membership, Ministers of Education, representatives from Regional Education bodies, Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), Development Partners, Researchers, Education and Gender Specialists from National, Regional, Sub-regional and International Organizations will take on the following methodology:

- The conference will have a keynote address cutting across the conference sub-themes.
- There will be a high-level plenary panel session with Ministers of Educations from different parts of Africa discussing the thematic areas of the conference. This session will be at the opening session of the conference.

- The conference will focus on paper presentations from researchers in line with the theme of the conference as well as the sub-themes.
- There will be breakout sessions on the 5 sub-themes where 2 - 3 presentations will be made per theme. The breakout sessions will allow for learning and exchange within each sub-theme. Panel discussions with prominent experts on the thematic areas and plenary sessions will also be part of the breakout sessions.

The conference will be supported by logistics as listed below;

- FAWE will organize debriefing session for all participants to familiarize themselves with the conference rooms and breakout sessions. Online participants and presenters will have an opportunity to attend an optional 30-minute online tutorial in advance of the conference to learn how to navigate the features of zoom to allow meaningful participation during the conference.
- Rapporteurs will record the proceedings that will form part of the conference report. The material for conference will be in French and English.
- The conference will have simultaneous interpretation (French & English) and have provisions for video conferencing.

6.3 CALL FOR PAPERS: 3RD INTERNATIONAL GIRLS CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION IN AFRICA

A call for abstracts will go out to planning team will send invites for paper abstracts[1] from various stakeholders such as researchers, students and educationalists, covering the following sub-themes.

- 1)Enhanced gender equality in Education: The power of teaching and learning methodologies
- 2)Education and Technology: Lessons learnt and the way forward
- 3)TVET as integral to formal learning for girls.
- 4)Addressing the increase of teenage pregnancies and ensuring access to education for all women and girls
- 5)Education: A catalyst to Girls and Young Women taking up Leadership positions

[1] Detailed information on the abstracts is separately posted.

Submission guidelines: - The expected length of the abstracts is **not more than 1,000 words** excluding references/bibliography. The abstracts must be submitted in Font type – Calibri Body, Font size 12, paragraph spacing of 1.15 and on uniform normal margin (2.54 cm). The abstracts should be addressed to the Executive Director, emailed to **girlsconference@fawe.org**. Only electronically sent abstracts will be considered. Additional guidelines on preparation of full papers will be provided to authors whose abstracts will be approved for second level.



SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Advertisement of the call	Thursday 27th April 2023
Close of Submission of Abstracts	Friday 19th May 2023 at 1700Hrs EAT
Feedback on Abstracts (Done by 3 reviewers)	Friday 2nd June 2023.
Submission of full papers and power point presentation	Friday 28th July 2023
Feedback on full papers (Expert + Peer Review)	Friday 25th August 2023
Submission of final papers	Friday 22nd September 2023 at 1700Hrs EAT
Translation of full papers	Friday 6th October 2023
Conference dates	Tuesday 21st and Wednesday 22nd November 2023

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Interested participants are requested to SAVE THE DATE! Details of registration and payment will be sent out by Saturday 6th May 2023. All participants will be required to pay registration fees of USD. 50 (admitting 4pax and allowing branding). Organisations are also invited to sponsor any of the sub- themes breakout sessions and/or host an exhibition tent to showcase their work related to education for girls in Africa. For more details write to conference organizers girlsconference@fawe.org

CONCLUSION

Change is the only thing that is constant inevitable. FAWE effectively adapts to changing times while taking stock of the lessons learnt and best practice from our experiences. To ensure that education systems provide the necessary knowledge and skills to learners, regardless of their unique circumstances and specific contexts, there must be transformative action in all spheres of education systems.