Trends and Achievements in Girls’ Education (1970-2010) and Best Practices for Promotion of Girls’ Education in Africa

1.0 Trends:

1.1 Enrolment in Tertiary Institutions (Female): Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction & Sciences (Source: UNESCO statistics, 2000-2010):

1.1.1 Overall, enrolments in tertiary institutions continued to rise in many Sub-Saharan African countries from 2000 to 2010. For countries where data are available, enrolments in Sciences, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction disciplines also rose as a percentage of overall enrolment. However, with the exception of Namibia which reported 43% women’s enrolments in Science and Technology disciplines, in the other countries where data were available, women comprised less than 30% of enrolments in these disciplines (UNESCO).

1.2 Education and Employability:

1.2.1 Evidence from country survey data indicates that higher education attainment/certification significantly enhances women’s employability in salaried work, thereby reducing the gender gap in employment in general (Mali EPAM, 2007; Botswana LFS-2005/06). However, while the focus on quantity of higher education and training as well as increased number of years of schooling is needed, it must be directed to quality and labor market relevance, focusing especially on training and certification of women in subjects that make them competitive and confident, and increase women’s earning capability in the labor market.

1.3 Secondary School Enrolment:

1.3.1 Gender Parity, defined as the ratio of female to male secondary school enrolment, has improved for most countries since the 1970s. The ratio represents the percentage of females divided by the percentage of males enrolled in secondary school education. A ratio greater than 100% implies that more females than males are enrolled in secondary level education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, this ratio increased from 46% in 1970 to 76% in 2004 (AfDB Database). For Africa as a whole, at least 8 countries have already achieved gender parity in secondary school enrolment: Cape Verde, Mauritius, Tunisia, Libya, Swaziland, Sao-Tome and Principe, Lesotho, Namibia. A number of countries have also made significant progress since the 1970s, albeit no parity yet. These include the Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Gabon, and Malawi. In these countries, the number of females enrolled in secondary school relative to males has more than doubled between 1970 and 2008.

1.4 Gross Secondary School Enrolment (Females):

1.4.1 But even though the ratio of females to males in secondary schools has improved substantially across Africa, with at least 8 countries having achieved gender parity in secondary school enrolments, the actual number of females and males enrolled in secondary education remains unimpressive in many countries. For Africa as a whole, between 2005 and
2008, only 33% of secondary school enrolments were female. Female enrolment in secondary schools is as low as 8% in Niger, and only 20% or less in Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Burundi, and Rwanda (AfDB Database).

1.5 Primary School Enrolment:

1.5.1 The ratio of females to male primary school enrolment has improved significantly for all African countries since the 1970s. In Sub-Saharan Africa, this ratio rose from 64.8% in 1970 to 87.3% in 2004 (data available up to 2004 only; AfDB Database). For Africa as a whole, 8 countries have already achieved gender parity in primary school enrolment: the Gambia, Mauritius, Rwanda, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, Uganda, and Senegal. Others that have ratios of over 90% and will likely attain parity by 2015 include: Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Sao Tome & Principe, South Africa, Tunisia, Tanzania, and Zambia.

1.6 Primary School Teachers (Female):

1.6.1 By 1970, only 5 countries - Swaziland, Lesotho, Egypt, Seychelles and Botswana - had 50% or more primary school teachers who were female. In Seychelles 90% of the primary school teacher population were female. For Africa as whole, less than 1/3 of the primary school teachers were female in 1970 (27%). Between 2005 and 2008, the number of countries with 50% or more primary school teachers who were female had increased to 18. For Africa as a whole the percentage of female teachers in primary schools was still just under 50% (47.8%) and 46.7% for Sub-Saharan Africa.

1.6.2 The proportion of female teachers at primary or secondary level is an important indicator for gender equality later. There is compelling evidence that equal number of male and female teachers in schools, more or less, has a positive impact on girls’ enrollment and retention, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO).

1.7 Secondary School Teachers (Female):

1.7.1 In the 1970s, data were available for 28 out of the 53 countries. Between 1970 and 1975, only Seychelles had a proportion of female secondary school teachers higher than 50%. Zimbabwe and Lesotho came 2nd with the percentage of female secondary school teachers at 40.3% and 45.3% respectively. Between 2004 and 2008, thirteen countries were doing relatively well, with the percentage of female secondary school teachers reaching 40% and above. These included: Algeria, Botswana, Cape Verde, Egypt, Kenya, Lesotho (64%), Mauritius (57%), Namibia, Seychelles (56%), Sudan (56%), South Africa (52%), Zambia, and Tunisia.

1.8 Adult Literacy, Population Aged 15+ years (Females):

1.8.1 While adult literacy rates have generally improved for much of Africa over the last 50 years, there are still a number of countries where literacy rates for females, in particular, have remained significantly low. In countries such as Benin, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, adult literacy rates for females are under 30% (UNESCO 2008 figures.) On the other hand Libya, Botswana, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe recorded female adult literacy rates of over 80% in 2008 (UNESCO)
1.9 Adult Illiteracy, Population Aged 15+ years (Females):

1.9.1 Across Africa, among population that is considered illiterate, the majority are female. This proportion ranges from 50% in Botswana to 78% in Equatorial Guinea (AfDB Database).

1.10 Youth Illiteracy, Population aged 15-24 years (Females)

1.10.1 While overall illiteracy rates among youth population has dropped sharply across much of Africa, it remains relatively high among females (15-24 yrs). For Africa as a whole, between 2005 and 2007, one in five (20.8%) female youth (15-24 years) was illiterate (AfDB Database). Female youth illiteracy rates ranged from 2.1% in Cape Verde to 77% in Mali. Other countries with high illiteracy rates among female youth population include: Sierra Leone - 56%, Burkina Faso - 67%, Benin - 59%, Mozambique – 52.5%, Niger – 74.3%, Senegal – 56%. Data for many countries are missing.

1.11 Primary School Repetition Rates (Females):

1.11.1 Primary school repetition rate as a percentage of total enrolment has remained relatively stable since 2005, although some countries have seen a slight increase while others are experiencing a decline in the proportion of primary school students who repeat a class. For Africa as a whole, the percentage of girls who repeated a class in primary school ranged between 8.3% in 2005 to 8.7% in 2007. However, between 2007 and 2008, a few countries continued to have persistently high primary school repetition rates among females. These include Burundi – 34%, CAR – 27%, Sao Tome & Principe – 23% and Republic of Congo – 22%, Equatorial Guinea – 23%, Chad – 23%, and Togo – 24%.

1.12 Primary School Completion Rate (% of relevant age group):

1.12.1 Over the years, primary completion rates have continued to improve for many countries. Among the 48 countries for which data are available for the period 2005-2008, primary completion rates of the relevant age group ranged from a low of 32% in Chad to a high of 120% in Seychelles. Overall primary school completion rates remain below 50% of those who should graduate in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Cote d’Ivoire, and Niger. Close to half of the countries graduate more boys than girls each year, including those with the lowest primary completion rates overall.

2.0 Best Practices for Promotion of Girls’ Education: Some Examples

2.1 Promoting Girls’ Education: Various Efforts and Initiatives from around the Continent:

2.1.1 In this section, we will capture the efforts of major partnerships in the promotion of Girls’ Education in the continent. The United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI), which attained ten years in 2010, has achieved a lot. The publication, UNGEI at 10, provides some of the best practices cited in item 2.1.
2.1.2 UNGEI was launched in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 by the then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. UNGEI promotes girls’ education and works for gender equality in education through a network of partners at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels.

2.1.3 Other examples are drawn from the practices of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), the World Bank supported projects, USAID and UNICEF, just to mention a few.

2.2 Promoting Girls’ Education through Law Reform:

2.2.1 Pregnant school girls are usually expelled from school, and the expulsion is often cited as a disciplinary measure that the girl faces as a consequence. However, this issue has become controversial among people at various levels of the social stratum; between those who support the status quo and those favor reform.

2.2.2 Botswana and Tanzania were the first in Sub-Saharan Africa to demonstrate the possibilities and applicability of reinstating pregnant school girls into the mainstream education systems through pilot projects supported by the Carnegie Foundation as early as 1986. After 10 years of advocacy, the Tanzania model was not easily re-integrated, but Zanzibar made progress in the area by enacting the Spinster’s Act (2005), which allowed girls to continue with their education after delivery. (Source: Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations, Statement by Hon. Margareth Simwanza Sitta, Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children, The United Republic of Tanzania at the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 2008)

2.2.3 SADC protocols on Gender and Development (2008) reinforced commitment of member countries to ensure, among other gender related issues within the region, that girl-children were protected against gender-based violence and other rights, including access to quality education. It is in line with this commitment that Tanzania as of 2009, allowed all eligible pregnant primary and secondary school girls and young mothers to write their national exams. This was a result of follow-up consultations on the reinstatement mechanisms supported by UNICEF in Tanzania to the Ministry of Education, Vocational Education and Training (MoEVT) in 2007 in collaboration with the Social Committee of the Parliament, Ministries of Health, Social Welfare, Gender and Community Development, Justice, and various stakeholders including the academia, NGOs, religious leaders, parents, teachers, school-aged girls and boys and selected girls who were expelled from school due to pregnancy.

2.3 Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET)

2.3.1 “COBET (Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania) was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), with support from UNICEF Tanzania to provide basic education for children, and in particular girls, who had never had the chance to attend primary school or who had dropped out. COBET learners were divided into two cohorts: 8–13-year-olds and 14–18-year-olds. It consisted of a compressed, competency-based curriculum, which took three years to complete primary school education instead of seven as in the formal system. The teachers (‘facilitators’) initially attend two three-week intensive
training during the first year, followed by subsequent two weeks training in the second and third years. The school day is shortened; there are no direct costs to learners or their families. Children do not wear uniforms and corporal punishment is not allowed.” (Source: Scaling up Good Practices in Girls’ Education: Report of the UN Girls’ Education Initiatives, Policy Consultation, Nairobi, Kenya, 2004.)

2.4 Programme for the Advancement of Girls’ Education (PAGE)

2.4.1 “Zambia’s Programme for the Advancement of Girls’ Education (PAGE) began with research that analyzed the barriers to girls’ education. PAGE developed into a multi-faceted programme with about a dozen components. These included education policy on pregnant girls returning to school, public awareness of girls’ education issues, affirmative action for female teachers and officials, classroom teaching and learning, teacher education, and water and sanitation improvements at PAGE schools. In eight years, with donor support from at least six major donors, PAGE activities were going on in 1000 schools in over nine provinces. Although change was not uniform throughout districts and schools where PAGE components were implemented, PAGE effected changes in girls’, educationalists’ and community behavior and outcomes. For example, girls’ retention increased and the number of girl mothers who re-entered school also increased.” (Source: Scaling up Good Practices in Girls’ Education: Report of the UN Girls’ Education Initiatives, Policy Consultation, Nairobi, Kenya, 2004.)

2.5 Girls’ Education Movement (GEM) (Uganda and South Africa)

2.5.1 “GEM (Girls’ Education Movement) in Uganda, South Africa and other countries is a continent-wide movement by and for girls, which gives leadership opportunities to girls and recruits boys to be their allies. GEM promotes community mobilisation and advocacy for girls’ enrolment and retention in education; it sees girls not only as beneficiaries of educational change, but as participants in that change. Launched in 2001 by the President of Uganda at a meeting of education ministers, GEM was conceived as a local, national and continent-wide initiative. In Uganda, GEM has developed in partnership with FAWE, and it is also linked to the child-friendly schools’ movement. Fifty children on average have returned to school in each district where GEM is operating effectively in Uganda. In South Africa, the Department of Education owns GEM, budgets for it annually and is facilitating its rapid scaling up throughout the country. GEM South Africa also organised a major region-wide GEMCAMP in Durban (5–9 July 2004), at which GEM girls from nine countries in Eastern and Southern Africa received leadership training” (Source: Scaling up Good Practices in Girls’ Education: Report of the UN Girls’ Education Initiatives, Policy Consultation, Nairobi, Kenya, 2004.)

2.6 Prompting girls’ education among marginalized and vulnerable communities:

2.6.1 “Within poor, marginalized and vulnerable communities, girls face a double disadvantage, particularly in the rural areas and among nomadic groups.” (Source: United Nations Girls’ Education Initiatives: Regional Up-date, 2007).
2.6.2 Nomadic Education (Eastern Africa). “A study funded by the African Development Bank1 and others on the education of nomadic children in eastern Africa – Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – revealed that less than 16% of primary school age children in some nomadic areas are attending school. Nomads comprise a wide variety of groups (‘pure’ pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, fishermen and tea harvesters). The social organisation of each ethnic group is based on a systematic and commonly accepted division of labour based on sex and age. The two broad constraints to girls’ and boys’ school attendance are poverty (i.e. lack of or poor markets for livestock, poor infrastructure, harsh climate and recurrent drought) and access (nomadic people live in inaccessible parts of the country where school networks are thin and housing for pupils who stay behind to attend school after parents move is lacking). Present options for providing basic education to nomadic communities are complementary education programmes such as COBET and COPE, and alternative basic education programmes. Positive factors in the education of nomadic children include providing appropriate training to people who work with nomadic communities and involving members of the communities in design, implementation and maintenance of development inputs, and providing income-generating opportunity.” (Source: Scaling up Good Practices in Girls’ Education: Report of the UN Girls’ Education Initiatives, Policy Consultation, Nairobi, Kenya, 2004.)

2.6.3 Providing Education for Girls in Conflict Situation. The Girls Left Behind project in Sierra Leone was implemented within the framework of the Child Protection Network and the community-based reintegration approach, and focused on girls and young women who were either still living with their captors or who had been abducted (before reaching the age of 18) and had been released or had escaped. Through intense sensitization of communities, the implementing partners were able to identify 1,014 girls and women in need of help, of which 560 (55 per cent) were provided with services and training. (Source: The Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls in West and Central Africa and the UNICEF Responses, 2005)

2.6.4 Partnerships for gender mainstreaming in education

2.6.4.1 UNGEI has engaged in policy dialogue and advocacy in all the regions where it operates. The development and dissemination of technical inputs, coupled with capacity-building activities and continuous dialogue with government counterparts, have contributed to strengthening gender related elements in education policies in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. UNGEI activities have been instrumental in the development and formal approval of ‘gender in education’ policies in the Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Burundi and Madagascar have reviewed their gender strategies to address gaps, with gender audits playing an instrumental role in the review.

2.6.4.2 UNGEI has also contributed to the development and rolling out of national communication strategies that address girls’ education and awareness raising campaigns in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. UNGEI developed a concept paper on post-primary transition, which then provided the basis for policy discussions on the education of adolescent girls. The UNGEI network in Malawi has advocated for a readmission policy for pregnant teenagers who leave school due to stigma and ridicule. The West and Central Africa region has focused on advocacy with key political actors. UNGEI provided input on

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1 In 2002-2003, UNESCO was commissioned by the African Development Bank to carry out a study entitled ‘The education of nomadic peoples in East Africa’.
gender and other issues of exclusion in education to the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education, in order to influence education policy. The West and Central Africa regional partners have conducted a joint study on violence in educational settings, with a special focus on gender-based violence. This report will be followed by a review of initiatives taken to end violence, which will then be used to support countries in their efforts to promote children’s and girls’ rights to protection and quality education. (See UNGEI at 10, page 27).

2.6.4.3 “Coordination and alignment at the sub-national level. In Nigeria, UNGEI was formally launched in 2007 by the First Lady. The network is known as the Nigeria Girls’ Education Initiative. The northern region of Nigeria has a discernible gender gap, and UNGEI has been instrumental in establishing ‘girls’ education state chapters’ in many northern states. These chapters have developed girls’ education plans, which are now likely to be integrated into state education sector plans. The involvement of the First Lady, as the patron of the initiative at the national level, and of the wives of governors at the state level, has enhanced high-level advocacy for girls’ education and made it a central issue in education policy and planning in Nigeria. Decentralizing the initiative to the state level, with broad participation by local civil society organizations and traditional leadership systems, has also created effective channels for addressing socio-cultural factors that negatively affect girls’ education. UNGEI partner organizations in Nigeria, such as UNICEF and the United Kingdom Department for International Development, have jointly developed advocacy materials aimed at different groups. They have also established Technical Working Groups at the national and state levels to drive the initiatives.” (Source: The Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls in West and Central Africa and the UNICEF Responses, 2005)

2.6.5 Adolescent Education:

2.6.5.1 “Once children reach adolescence they are frequently required to assist with household chores, generate income and care for younger siblings. They are rarely given a voice in community decisions or in choices affecting their wellbeing such as whether to go to school, ways to generate income or whether to marry. Essentially, young people aged 12-24 have few positive roles within most refugee communities and very limited constructive outlets through which they are able to develop into productive, healthy members of society, prepared to aid in the rebuilding of a community in exile. Neglect of this age group compounds their already vulnerable position and leaves them open for recruitment into military service, prostitution, or young marriage. On a community level, lack of opportunity for youth hampers reconstruction efforts and increases the likelihood of a return to conflict as economic growth remains stagnant (Lowicki, 2000). In order to prevent this from occurring, humanitarian agencies need to work together, to provide educational programs that will allow youth to have a constructive role in the community.” (Source: Lost Generation: The Importance of Adolescent Education in Refugee and IDP Communities and the Barriers to Access 27 Spring 2005)

2.7 Cross-sectoral interventions:

2.7.1 Not all problems affecting girls’ education are “girls’ problems” per se. Girls and other disadvantaged groups are particularly vulnerable to the effects of generic problems associated with poverty, low GDP, HIV/AIDS, poor education resource mobilization and management and poor education quality. USAID’s Morocco Education for Girls Program and Girls’ Education Advocacy Program are examples of broad-based cross-sectoral interventions.
The most crucial cross-sectoral interventions, now and in the future, are probably programs addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis. In some African countries, infection rates among teenage girls are more than five times higher than the rate for boys. In addition to being infected themselves, girls are also more likely than boys to miss or drop out of school to care for sick parents and siblings, even at the primary school level (Chesterfield and Enge, 2000; UNAIDS, 2000).

2.8 Enhancing participation:

2.8.1 Some current programs use school and cross-Ministry-based initiatives in conjunction with a wide variety of delivery mechanisms such as mass media, peer-based learning, theatre for development, and clubs. All such programs in Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, for example, have multiple strategies for addressing school participation. The South African program includes the routine testing of teachers, plans for single-sex schools and efforts to reduce the age range in co-educational schools.

2.8.2 Multiple interventions: Most successful approaches consist of a flexible package of interventions in response to a continuing analytical process of “thinking through” challenges and change. Projects that have used this approach to iterative design have produced dramatic rises in girls’ enrollment and persistence.

2.8.3 A World Bank evaluation of projects in both Gambia and Bangladesh attributed their success to multiple interventions, multiple donors and strong government and other stakeholder support. In the Bangladesh project, which saw a 45% rise in girls’ enrollment in areas of Bank-supported construction, multiple interventions included new buildings, improvements in water supply and sanitation services schools, more female teachers and a scholarship program to reduce opportunity costs for girls. (Source: UNGEI, 2004)

2.8.4 Another example is the Centre of Excellence (COE) or FAWE Gender-Responsive School Model. A gender-responsive school is one in which the academic, social and physical environment and its surrounding community take into account the specific needs of both boys and girls. This implies that the teachers, parents, community leaders and members, as well as girls and boys, are all aware of, and practice gender equality. It also transforms school management systems, policies and practices so that they recognize and address the gender-specific needs of both girls and boys.

2.8.5 FAWE’s Gender-Responsive School intervention package includes: bursaries for needy girls, Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) and management training, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) training, SMT programme for girls, TUSEME, a girls’ empowerment programme, guidance and counseling desks, sexual maturation programme, community participation and gender-specific facilities. FAWE’s Gender-Responsive Schools are in Senegal, Gambia, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Guinea and Chad.

2.8.6 Gender-neutral interventions: Some strategies are gender-neutral but benefit girls than boys. The bilingual programs (education in the mother tongue), for example, are gender-neutral but may better serve girls, because females often tend to have less exposure to the world outside their community and to languages other than those used in the home. The South African program includes the routine testing of teachers, plans for single-sex schools and efforts to reduce the age range in co-educational schools.
2.8.7 The *Pédagogie convergente* method used in Mali has also been reported to lead to better classroom participation by girls.

2.8.8 Local/female teachers. Africa has the lowest proportion of female teachers in the world, and relatively few international donor projects target this intervention area. And yet, using female teachers as a strategy was reported to be statistically significant in several studies conducted by World Bank for example. In Botswana, a consistently positive relationship was found to exist between schools with a higher proportion of female teachers and improvements in girls’ achievement levels, which was accomplished without any disadvantage to boys (Source: *USAID ABEL, 1994; Rugh 2000*).

2.8.9 Single-sex schools/classes. One of the few studies in the Strategies Data Base that provides the data needed to assess an intervention (Jiminez and Lockheed, 1988) showed better school achievement by girls in single-sex schools. Although this issue is important in other regions as well, cultural concerns are often the first barriers to girls’ participation in Sub-Saharan African countries, even before any cost issues arise. Single-sex classes were reported to be effective in a review by Hyde (1993), and have also been shown to have a positive impact on boys’ enrollment in a study in Pakistan (Alderman et al., 2002).

2.8.10 Addressing costs. Reducing household costs of school attendance may be one of the major policy areas in which visible short-term benefits can be achieved. Cost measures may include the elimination/reduction of fees, as in Uganda and Benin, as well as the provision of scholarships, stipends (although project experience has shown they can be costly and difficult to administer and, therefore, may not be sustainable) and assistance with transportation costs, materials, etc., as in Mozambique, Pakistan, Malawi and other countries.

2.8.11 Reducing distance to school through a variety of approaches, including building schools closer to home, developing satellite schools and boarding facilities and the provision of transportation services are alternative ways of addressing education costs. Various studies in China, Ghana, India, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Peru and the Philippines show that household demand for girls’ education is more sensitive than that of boys to distance to school (Mingat, 1999; Canagarajah and Coulombe, 1997; Lavy, 1996; Gertler and Glewwe, 1992; among others). However, recent research by Lehman suggests that, while there is dramatic evidence from Chad and other Sahelian countries of the impact of distance on enrollment—for example, when children are expected to travel 2–3 kilometers to school, their enrollment is only one-tenth as high as those of children in villages with schools—there is no marked difference between boys and girls. However, in countries where there are few differences, it is yet another example of an intervention that can have important benefits for both sexes. (Source: *UNGEI report, 2004*).

2.8.12 Other examples: Working with the Zambian Government, UNICEF has partnered with the Ministry of Education to protect vulnerable children by building dormitories for female students at public schools. UNICEF provided the Ministry of Education with USD $235,000 to construct the facilities and provide materials, including mattresses. “With this support, we trust that more girls will stay in school and focus on their studies without worrying too much about the burden of long journeys,” said Ms. Sylwander. UNICEF is also working with the Ministry to provide boarding facilities with solar panels and water and sanitation facilities.

2.8.13 In Madagascar a low-cost and girl-friendly dormitory model was developed by
UNICEF. A cooperation agreement was signed with the NGO, Caritas, in Farafangana to experiment the construction of these dormitories. The community was mobilized to prepare for the construction.

3.0 Conclusions. This brief has provided a glimpse of trends and achievements in girls’ education in Africa over a period of more than 30 years. It has also provided examples of efforts being undertaken in RMCs to promote girls’ education. Indeed much progress has been made in many countries to improve literacy rates, and girls’ enrolment and graduation in primary, secondary and tertiary education and in retention of girls in school. Still, significant work remains to be done to ensure that all girls in Africa have an equal opportunity to benefit and succeed in various education programs.

Contributors: Elena Ferreras-Carreras (AfDB Senior Gender Specialist), Amel Hamza (AfDB Senior Gender Specialist), Alice Nabalamba (AfDB Principal Statistician), Maria Mdachi (AfDB Senior Education Analyst)