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Gender Responsive Pedagogy

*By
The Forum for African Women Educationalists
(FAWE)*

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1. ABSTRACT

In a nutshell, quality of education cannot be achieved without addressing the gender dimension. However, from FAWE's review, the majority of the schools in Sub-Saharan Africa are not gender responsive. The lack of gender responsiveness in the school environment permeates to the classroom. It was due to this realization that FAWE developed a Teacher's Handbook on Gender Responsive Pedagogy as a contribution to the on-going debate on how to improve quality in education provision. The handbook has been designed as a practical guide to making teaching and learning processes gender responsive. It covered various issues.

The Handbooks begins by explaining what Gender Responsive Pedagogy is, then proceeds on how to make gender responsive the various issues in the teaching process such as lesson planning, teaching and learning materials, language use in the classroom, classroom set up and classroom Interaction. The Handbook goes further to delve into certain issues which greatly affect gender relations in the classrooms but which are rarely if ever tackled in pre-service training. These include management of Sexual maturation and sexual Harassment. Finally, the Handbook discusses the key issue of the role of school management in supporting gender responsive pedagogical approaches in the school.

This paper seeks to provide a synopsis of the issues covered in the Handbook.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In a nutshell, quality of education cannot be achieved without addressing the gender dimension. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has over the past five years been exploring the concept of a gender responsive school through the Centres of Excellence programme. A gender responsive school is one where the academic, social and physical environment and its surrounding community take into account the specific needs of both girls and boys. The academic delivery including teaching methodologies, teaching and learning materials, classroom interaction and management of academic processes is also gender responsive. The physical environment in the school including buildings, furniture and equipment is also gender friendly.
2. From FAWE's review, the majority of the schools in Sub-Saharan Africa are not gender responsive. The lack of gender responsiveness in the school environment permeates to the classroom. For example, teaching and learning materials contain gender stereotypes; teachers are not aware of gender specific needs of both girls and boys; discriminatory practices against girls take place in classroom participation and distribution of learning materials. This discourages girls from participating effectively in the teaching and learning process.
3. The major obstacle facing teachers today, however, is an apparent lack of gender skills for instruction, yet the ability of the teacher to effectively use gender responsive pedagogy can be accomplished if the teacher is well grounded in gender responsive teaching skills. It was due to this realization that FAWE developed a Teacher's Handbook on Gender Responsive Pedagogy as a contribution to the on-going debate on how to improve quality in education provision. The handbook has been designed as a practical guide to making teaching and learning processes gender responsive. It is specifically focused on how to create a gender responsive academic environment.
4. The Handbooks begins by explaining what Gender Responsive Pedagogy is, then proceeds on how to make gender responsive the various issues in the teaching process such as lesson Planning, teaching and learning materials, language use in the classroom, classroom set up and classroom Interaction. The Handbook goes further to delve into certain issues which greatly affect gender relations in the classrooms but which are rarely if ever tackled in pre-service training. These include management of Sexual maturation and sexual Harassment. Finally, the Handbook discusses the key issue of the role of school management in supporting gender responsive pedagogical approaches in the school.
5. This paper seeks to provide a synopsis of the issues mentioned above covered in the Handbook.
6. **Gender responsive pedagogy** refers to teaching and learning processes which pay attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys. Gender responsive pedagogy, calls for teachers to embrace an all encompassing gender approach in the processes of lesson planning, teaching, classroom management and performance evaluation. For example, in lesson planning for practical science lessons, the teacher has to take into account the specific gender needs of girls and boys. He or She will ensure that boys do not dominate learning processes to maintain their superiority in the presence of girls. It is important that teachers are aware that the language they use in the classroom can reinforce negative gender attitudes. Teaching and learning materials should be scrutinized in order to eliminate gender stereotypes. Good teacher-student relationship is emphasized during teacher training. However, in

practice, teachers tend to be authoritarian, unapproachable and distant. This makes it difficult for students, especially girls, to seek guidance and assistance from teachers particularly for personal problems e.g. sexual maturation issues.

7. In lesson planning the teacher decides on the learning materials, methodologies, content, learning activities, language use, classroom interaction, assessment and classroom set up. A **gender responsive lesson plan** is therefore a teaching plan that takes into consideration the specific needs of girls and boys in all the teaching-learning processes listed above.
8. Textbooks in schools transmit messages that portray girls and women in traditional and limited roles. Women and girls are depicted as weak, passive and submissive. As a result, the **teaching and learning materials** reinforce gender stereotypes. The teacher should review the teaching and learning materials for gender responsive including the language used in the teaching and learning materials.
9. **Language** can also reinforce gender differences and inequalities. Some teachers reflect their own gender biases through language such as their beliefs that girls cannot perform as well as boys, or that boys should not allow themselves to be outperformed by girls academically. Teachers often discourage girls from taking science subjects by telling them that science subjects are for boys or too difficult for girls. Teachers should be conscious of gender-biases in languages. Language use in the classroom that is gender responsive treats boys and girls as equal partners and provides a conducive environment for learning to both.
10. **The classroom set up** is important in enhancing teaching and learning processes. Many schools do not have adequate or appropriate infrastructure and furniture. These constrain the teachers' ability to organize the classroom set up for effective learning. Despite these limitations, innovative teachers are able to organize the classroom set up in such a way that it is conducive to learning. In many cases, however, no attention is paid to the gender responsiveness of the classroom set up. A gender responsive classroom set up responds to the specific needs of both boys and girls. For example, many girls are socialized not to speak out. Seating arrangements which place them at the back or in corners, reinforce this tendency which in turn leads to poor performance; high stools in science laboratories are constraining to girls' participation in science practicals, especially if their uniform is fitted skirts.
11. **Classroom interaction** is an important factor in pedagogical processes. There are many dynamics in classroom interaction that have an impact on teaching and learning processes, one of them being gender relations. The teacher needs to be aware that the students are also boys and girls with specific gender needs. As such, the gender roles and relations impact on the classroom interaction processes. Gender responsive classroom interaction takes gender considerations into account in all the dynamics in classroom interaction such as: teacher-student interaction; student-student interaction, teacher presentation (dress, physical appearance, walking style); teacher behavior (harsh, arrogance, lateness, drunkardness); teacher and student morale (commitment, motivation).
12. **Sexual Maturation** is a normal process of growing up, characterized by physical and emotional changes. The rapid body changes that accompany maturation in both boys and girls may interfere with learning. The issue of sexual maturation should be carefully examined within the context of teaching and learning processes, as this will impact on learning outcomes.

13. **Sexual harassment** is an unfortunate experience that girls and boys face daily in their schooling lives. Sexual harassment harms both boys and girls physically, psychologically and emotionally. Sexual harassment has far reaching implications on the teaching and learning processes. Teachers must create a conducive classroom environment which is free from all forms of sexual harassment.

14. The effort to establish a gender responsive pedagogy will not succeed if it is not supported by a **gender responsive school management system**. Often school rules and regulations are not gender responsive and can cause undue problems and inconveniences, which impact negatively on teaching and learning processes. The school management has a critical role to play in transforming a school into a gender responsive environment which is necessary for nurturing a gender responsive pedagogy. For example, it is the role of the school management to provide teaching and learning materials that are gender responsive and to train teachers in gender responsive pedagogy. Moreover, the school management should provide the necessary human resources for efficient gender responsive management and governance of the school.
For the school to have a gender responsive management system, the teacher has an important role to play by working closely with the school management through regular communication on classroom related gender issues.

3. Introduction

15. The quality of education has become an issue of paramount importance. This is reflected by the fact that quality was the theme of the 2003 ADEA Biennial (The quest for quality: Learning from the African Experience) and remains the theme for the 2006 ADEA biennial.
16. The 2003 Biennial Discussion paper under the theme: The challenge of learning: improving the quality of basic education in Sub-Saharan Africa was based on an extensive study on quality which highlighted the following issues. Overall, it was noted from the study that “poverty, rural residence and gender persist as the strongest correlates of school attendance and performance”. The study also noted that quality is a multi-faceted concept requiring various elements to address it. The study highlighted an important conclusion that “the most effective measures to favor students from disadvantaged milieus are found directly in schools and classroom, particularly in those that focus on basis skills, learning and use direct instruction. It therefore goes without saying that the teacher’s role is central. Fullan (2000) notes that it is important to recognize that changes in teaching and learning not only involve teachers’ behavior but teachers’ beliefs.
Finally the study also noted that “to address the problems of access and quality for the rural poor and especially poor rural girls, marked priority will have to be given to examining the obstacles and possible inequities that affect the population. In a nutshell, quality of education cannot be achieved without addressing the gender dimension.
17. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has over the past five years been exploring the concept of a gender responsive school through the Centres of Excellence programme. A gender responsive school is one where the academic, social and physical environment and its surrounding community take into account the specific needs of both girls and boys. This implies that the teachers, parents, community leaders and members, boys and girls are all aware of and practice gender equality. In addition, the school management system, policies and practices recognize and address the gender-based needs of both girls and boys. The academic delivery including teaching methodologies, teaching and learning materials, classroom interaction and management of academic processes is also gender responsive. The students, both girls and boys, are empowered to practice gender equality and protect the democratic and human rights of both genders. The physical environment in the school including buildings, furniture and equipment is also gender friendly.
18. However, in this endeavor, FAWE found itself confronted with the issue of how to transform the environment inside the classroom to make it more gender responsive more precisely gender responsive pedagogy.
19. The imperative of girls’ education is understood and accepted by all stakeholders, nevertheless, from FAWE’s review, the majority of the schools in Sub-Saharan Africa are not gender responsive. For example, school management systems do not sufficiently address gender constraints such as sexual harassment and bullying; and many schools do not have adequate or separate toilets for girls and boys. As a result the schools do not provide a gender responsive environment for effective teaching and learning to take place. In addition in many societies, there are unequal gender relations, which are socially constructed, as a result of which girls and women are considered to be inferior to boys and men. Women are not given the opportunity to be involved in decision-making, they are not given equal access to resources and their human rights are violated. This gender discrimination in the society is reflected in the provision of education and is carried into the school environment.
20. The lack of gender responsiveness in the school environment permeates to the classroom. This is evidenced in school processes such as teaching and teacher-student interaction. For example, teaching and learning materials contain gender stereotypes; teachers are not aware

of gender specific needs of both girls and boys; discriminatory practices against girls take place in classroom participation and distribution of learning materials;

21. What happens in the teaching and learning processes in the classroom is critical to the quality of education. As the teacher plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning processes, her or his understanding and awareness of gender responsiveness is key to the effective participation of the girls and boys in learning processes.
22. Many times teachers are not aware of situations that are discriminatory against the girls. For example, many teachers use language in the classroom, which implies that girls cannot perform as well as boys. This discourages girls from participating effectively in the teaching and learning process.
23. The major obstacle facing teachers today, however, is an apparent lack of gender skills for instruction, yet the ability of the teacher to effectively use gender responsive pedagogy can be accomplished if the teacher is well grounded in gender responsive teaching skills.
24. It was due to this realization that FAWE developed a Teacher's Handbook on Gender Responsive Pedagogy as a contribution to the on-going debate on how to improve quality in education provision. The handbook has been designed as a practical guide to making teaching and learning processes gender responsive. It is specifically focused on how to create a gender responsive academic environment. It explores the various ways of making the teaching and learning processes respond to the specific needs of girls and boys.
25. The Handbooks begins by explain what Gender Responsive Pedagogy is, then proceeds to address the various issues including:
 - Lesson Planning
 - Teaching and learning materials
 - Language use in the classroom
 - Classroom set up
 - Classroom Interaction

The Handbook however goes further to delve into certain issues which greatly affect gender relations in the classrooms but which are rarely if ever tackled in pre-service training. These include:

- Management of Sexual maturation
- Sexual Harassment

Finally, the Handbook discusses the key issue of the role of school management in supporting gender responsive pedagogical approaches in the school.

This paper seeks to provide a synopsis of the issues covered in the Handbook.

4. WHAT IS “GENDER RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY”

26. Gender responsive pedagogy refers to teaching and learning processes which pay attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys. Gender responsive pedagogy, calls for teachers to embrace an all encompassing gender approach in the processes of lesson planning, teaching, classroom management and performance evaluation.
27. There are many innovative pedagogical approaches used by teachers including role plays, group discussion, case studies, skits, demonstrations and study tours. However, in most circumstances, these approaches are not gender responsive. For example, in lesson planning for practical science lessons, many teachers do not take into account the specific gender needs of girls and boys. Due to socialization and cultural conditioning, girls may fear or be reluctant to touch some animals or insects that are used as specimens in biology practicals. They may also be inclined not to handle chemicals or electricity since it is considered ‘dangerous’ for girls to do so. Boys tend to dominate learning processes to maintain their superiority in the presence of girls.
28. Classrooms are usually arranged in the typical traditional seating layouts with desks arranged in a line of several neat rows facing the teacher. This kind of arrangement has been popularized in most teaching institutions and has certain strengths. However, it has been observed that this arrangement reinforces the traditional socialization processes. For example, since girls are not brought up to speak out, when they sit at the back of the class they are less likely to participate unless the teacher makes a special effort to involve them. A different arrangement such as breaking the class into smaller groups would encourage the girls to participate better.
29. In many instances, teachers are not aware that the language they use in the classroom reinforces negative gender attitudes. For example, language that gives the impression that girls are not as intelligent as boys, or that girls do not need to perform well because they will get married.
30. Often, teachers use teaching and learning materials without scrutinizing them for gender stereotypes. As such, many books and teaching aids reinforce attitudes and beliefs that men are superior to women by portraying men as doctors, engineers, pilots and women as nurses, cooks, mothers, secretaries and homemakers.
31. Good teacher-student relationship is emphasized during teacher training. However, in practice, most teacher-student relationships are not favorable to effective learning. Teachers tend to be authoritarian, hostile, unapproachable and distant. This makes it difficult for students, especially girls, to seek guidance and assistance from teachers for both academic and personal problems e.g. sexual maturation issues. It also makes it difficult for the teacher to be sensitive or recognize and respond to the special needs of students.
32. School management systems normally do not include gender considerations in their design and implementation. For example, most rules and regulations do not provide for action and sanctions for gender related concerns such as sexual harassment and bullying which affect both girls and boys. They also are not sensitive to the special needs of girls for example absence of facilities to manage menstrual hygiene like privacy, water, incinerators, sanitary towels and bins.

5. GENDER RESPONSIVE LESSON PLANNING

33. Lesson Planning is a key factor in the teaching-learning process and the quality of the lesson depends on it. As a rule, teachers should plan their lessons well before the lesson begins. In lesson planning the teacher decides on the learning materials, methodologies, content, learning activities, language use, classroom interaction, assessment and classroom set up. Whereas many teachers have the skills to develop good lesson plans, most do not have the skills for making the plans gender responsive. It is therefore important for teachers to acquire skills to develop a gender responsive lesson plan.
34. A gender responsive lesson plan is therefore a teaching plan that takes into consideration the specific needs of girls and boys in all the teaching-learning processes listed above.
35. The content of the lesson will be determined by the syllabus. Once this is decided on, the teacher has to see how the lesson plan takes into account gender considerations in the delivery of this content in the class. In order to do this, the lesson planning has to consider the following:
- **Teaching and learning materials:** The teacher should review the teaching and learning materials for gender responsive. For example, does the materials contain gender stereotypes? If so, what techniques will the teacher use to address them? For instance, if a history textbook only portrays male heroes, the teacher should include a list of female heroines in his or her planning notes. If a chemistry textbook only portrays male scientists as inventors, the teacher should include a discussion of female scientists. In lesson planning the teacher should review the gender responsiveness of the language used in the teaching and learning materials.
 - **Teaching methodologies:** The teacher should select teaching methodologies that will ensure equal participation of both girls and boys. Some teaching methodologies like group work, group discussions, role play, debates, case studies, explorations and practicals are more effective in encouraging student participation and will therefore give the girls opportunity to participate more actively.
 - **Learning activities:** the lesson plan should make sure that all students participate in the learning activity. For example, when doing a practical science experiment, the teacher should ensure that both girls and boys have a chance to use the equipment and chemicals. There should be equal participation in such activities as making presentations. When undertaking project, the teacher should ensure that both girls and boys are given leadership positions and roles. The lesson plan should take into account how the learning materials will be distributed equally to both girls and boys, especially in cases of shortages.
 - **Classroom set up and interaction:** The lesson should indicate the classroom set up. The teacher should plan how to set up the classroom and interact with the students in a way that will promote equal participation of both girls and boys. For example, the teacher should plan how to ensure that questions will be asked to both girls and boys. The teacher should also plan how he or she is going to position himself or herself in the classroom.
 - **Planning for management of other gender constraints to learning inside the classroom:** The teacher should also provide time to deal with gender specific problems, if any, such as girls who have missed class due to menstruation, household chores or family responsibilities, bullying, sexual harassment, adolescent hormonal upheavals, impact of HIV/AIDS, peer pressure among others.
 - **Feedback and Assessment:** The teacher must plan on how he or she will make sure that adequate feedback is received from both girls and boys and that both girls and boys have understood the lesson.

6. GENDER RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

36. Teaching and learning materials are central to the pedagogical processes and are critical for shaping young minds. Yet an examination of textbooks and other learning materials reveal that they implicitly communicate differentiated gender roles thereby reinforcing negative perceptions about women and girls.
37. Textbooks in schools transmit messages that portray girls and women in traditional and limited roles. Women and girls are depicted as weak, passive and submissive. For example, they are mostly depicted in domestic, care-giving and supportive roles. Men on the contrary are portrayed as powerful, assertive and intelligent as well as leaders in society. Personality attributes portrayed in textbooks are consistent with traditional societal notions of male superiority and authority.
38. As a result, the teaching and learning materials reinforce gender stereotypes. It is therefore important for teachers to be able to review the textbook and other teaching aids for possible gender stereotypes. They should also be able to develop and utilize gender responsive teaching and learning materials.
39. An analysis of textbooks from different countries in sub Saharan Africa shows that there are distinct gender stereotypes. For example, in many science textbooks, most illustrations mainly portray males only and it is usually the boys who are depicted in pictures as carrying out experiments. In most English language text and literature books, the pronoun “he” is conspicuous and most names refer to boys and men. In history textbooks, it is only heroes who are mentioned in liberation struggles, yet it is known that there were also heroines. In civics, whenever there is reference to top leadership the pronoun “he” is predominantly used.
40. In view of the challenges posed by textbooks, there is an obvious need to review them with a view to portraying positive images of women. This would involve changing language use and removing sexist languages that are damaging to the image of women.
41. Immediate and complete overhaul and change of textbooks may not be practical since the selection of approved texts is not determined at the school level. However, the first step teacher can adapt the existing text to make them gender responsive. Whenever the teacher recognizes gender-biased chapters and/or statements in a textbook, he/she should add their own interpretations to capture gender responsiveness. They can also develop their own gender responsive teaching and learning materials.
42. An effort should be made to use gender responsive illustrations, charts, pictures and diagrams to fill the gender gap in textbooks. These can also be displayed on classroom walls to give a gender responsive environment.

7. GENDER RESPONSIVE LANGUAGE USE IN CLASSROOMS

43. Language is a tool of communication, which reveals a lot about what we think and believe and therefore must be used appropriately. Incorrect language use can transmit negative message and inhibit learning. For example, if a teacher constantly tells the student “you are stupid”, he or she may actually believe this to be true and this may negatively affect academic performance. If a teacher constantly uses harsh, abusive and threatening language, this may instill fear in the students and hinder communication between them. Similarly, a teacher can enhance students’ performance by using encouraging language in the classroom.
44. Language can also reinforce gender differences and inequalities. For example, language used in the classroom often reflects male dominance and relegates females to an inferior position. Teachers reflect their own gender biases through language such as their beliefs that girls cannot perform as well as boys, or that boys should not allow themselves to be outperformed by girls academically. Teachers often discourage girls from taking science subjects by telling them that science subjects are for boys or too difficult for girls. When a girl is assertive, she is told to stop behaving like a boy and when a boy cries, he is cautioned to stop behaving like a woman.
45. Teachers should be conscious of gender-biases in languages. For example in the English language male nouns and pronouns are used to refer to both men and women. The word ‘man’ can be used to describe the human race and he/him can be used to describe both men and women for example the saying ‘he who laughs last, laughs loudest.’ The teacher should make an effort to use the pronouns he and she so as not to exclude one gender.
46. Teachers need to re-examine the kind of language they use, in order to ensure that it is gender responsive. Language use in the classroom that is gender responsive treats boys and girls as equal partners and provides a conducive environment for learning to both.
47. Most of the offensive communication takes the form of non-verbal communication. This includes gestures and body language such as winking, touching, brushing, grabbing and other overtures. This is the type of communication that goes unnoticed by others for a long time, but can be extremely damaging to classroom participation to the one to whom the communication is targeted. It is also difficult for the victim to take action to stop it because there is often no tangible evidence. Most sexual harassment starts in this way.

8. GENDER RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM SET UP

48. The classroom set up is important in enhancing teaching and learning processes. Some schools put a lot of effort into creating a neat classroom set up such as, the layout of the furniture in the classroom or laboratory, use of walls for illustrations, the quality of chairs and desks as well as the overall physical infrastructure.
49. However, many schools find it difficult to address the issue of classroom set up, particularly when there are large classes. Many schools do not have adequate or appropriate infrastructure and furniture. These constrain the teachers' ability to organize the classroom set up for effective learning. For example, if the classroom is overcrowded, it is difficult to organize classroom-seating arrangements that can enhance child-centred learning. Additionally, teachers may have no say about what type of furniture is found in the school. Despite these limitations, an innovative teacher should still be able to organize the classroom set up in such a way that it is conducive to learning.
50. In many cases, however, no attention is paid to the gender responsiveness of the classroom set up. In particular, high stools in science laboratories are constraining to girls' participation in science practicals, especially if their uniform is fitted skirts.
51. As mentioned earlier, many girls are socialized not to speak out. Seating arrangements which place them at the back or in corners, reinforce this tendency which in turn leads to poor performance.
The typical traditional seating layout with desks arranged in a line of several neat rows facing the teacher does not encourage student-centred learning environment which is the most appropriate for enhancing active student participation. This is particularly important for encouraging girls' classroom participation.
- 52. What is a gender responsive classroom set up?**
A gender responsive classroom set up responds to the specific needs of both boys and girls. This includes:
- Classroom set up that mixes girls and boys
 - Classroom set up that enhances participation of both girls and boys
 - Arrangement of the desks which encourages girls to speak out and overcome their shyness
 - Stools in laboratories that are appropriate in size and shape thus enabling effective participation of both girls and boys
 - Fixtures and visual aids on the walls that send gender responsive messages
 - Appropriate shelf heights in the libraries
 - Appropriate size, shape and weight of desks and chairs.

9. GENDER RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM INTERACTION

53. Classroom interaction is an important factor in pedagogical processes. There are many dynamics in classroom interaction that have an impact on teaching and learning processes. Some of these include the following:
- Content delivery by the teacher (competence, mastery, knowledge of the subject, innovation)
 - Teacher-student interaction
 - Student-student interaction
 - Teacher presentation (dress, physical appearance, walking style)
 - Student presentation (uniform, physical appearance, walking, sitting style, gesture)
 - Student behavior (bullying, arrogance, shyness, teasing)
 - Teacher behavior (harsh, arrogance, lateness, drunkardness)
 - Teacher and student morale (commitment, motivation)
54. All these dynamics are critical to the success or failure of teaching and learning processes. Yet, teachers often attach little attention to these issues.
55. Another dimension of classroom interaction is gender relations. The teacher needs to be aware that the students are also boys and girls with specific gender needs. As such, the gender roles and relations impact on the classroom interaction processes. This is where such matters as sexual harassment, male domination and female passivity come into play. Therefore it is important to create gender responsive classroom interaction
56. **What is gender responsive classroom interaction?** Gender responsive classroom interaction takes gender considerations into account in all the dynamics mentioned above.

10. GENDER RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT OF SEXUAL MATURATION

57. Sexual Maturation is a normal process of growing up, characterized by physical and emotional changes. The rapid body changes that accompany maturation in both boys and girls may interfere with learning. Both girls and boys become self-conscious of their bodies and this has an impact on their self-esteem. For example, the monthly menstruation for girls may lead to pain and discomfort. The girls may also fear staining their dresses. There are also those girls who are too poor to afford sanitary pads and therefore they miss school altogether for several days each month. Often schools do not have adequate and appropriate sanitation for example enough water, sanitary bins, or emergency sanitary wear. All these interfere with girls' classroom participation.
58. Boys too get conscious of their bodies when they reach maturation. For example, as they break their voices, become muscular, experience wet dreams, they become self-conscious about these physical changes and they too become affected in class and this can be very disturbing and can impact negatively on their classroom participation.
59. Much of the deviant behavior among boys and girls becomes more pronounced at this time, as their body and hormonal changes become more evident. Teachers therefore need to be sensitive and offer appropriate counsel to students both girls and boys.
60. The issue of sexual maturation should be carefully examined within the context of teaching and learning processes, as this will impact on learning outcomes. It has been observed that the rate of absenteeism among girls due to menstruation-related causes is high. For example, some girls miss school for 3 days each month, which amounts to about 30 lessons of one subject per year, yet they are still expected to sit for the same exams as their classmates. The teacher is expected to take remedial measures to assist such girls to catch up with their classmates.
61. In addition, as girls go through their menstruation cycle, they need sanitary protection. It is clear that many girls from poor socio economic backgrounds will come to school inadequately equipped with sanitary towels. This will obviously affect their classroom concentration.
62. As boys go through maturation changes, they also go through similar motions of lack of concentration, short attention span and day dreaming during class sessions. Boys also tend to become aggressive due to pressure both from their peers and from the society.
63. In the African cultural context, both girls and boys often have to go through initiation rites which also encourage them to behave in certain ways to show their maturity.

11. SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

64. Sexual harassment is an unfortunate experience that girls and boys face daily in their schooling lives. Apart from the forced sexual act, sexual harassment includes abusive language and gestures, sexual advances, touching and groping, passing unwanted notes and character assassination through graffiti. The victims are often times the silent sufferers particularly when they are in the same school environment with the perpetrators. As such, it has a negative impact on teaching and learning processes.
65. Sexual harassment harms both boys and girls physically, psychologically and emotionally. Further, it embarrasses, humiliates and shames the victims. Girls are particularly vulnerable which renders them susceptible to early pregnancy, STIs and HIV AIDS, which leads to poor performance, stigmatization, dropping out of school and death.
66. There is a lot of pressure on boys, culturally and from their peers to engage in sexual practices in order to prove their manhood. Because they are men, the society expects them to handle such pressures. Therefore, there are no mechanisms to assist boys to deal with such pressures.
67. Sexual harassment has far reaching implications on the teaching and learning processes. For example, imagine a girl who has just been sexually harassed by a male teacher now sitting in class taught by the same teacher. Such a girl will be traumatized and not be able to concentrate on her studies. The presence of the perpetrator will elicit anger, fear and resentment that may hinder learning.
68. Because of the negative attitudes and practices in the African cultural set up, such as forced marriage, abduction and considering women as sexual objects, sexual harassment is unfortunately viewed as part of normal practice and is therefore tolerated.
69. Teachers, like other members of the society, carry these values and attitudes into the classroom. Increasingly, the teachers themselves are perpetrators of sexual harassment in the schools. In addition, the education system does not adequately address the issue of sexual harassment in teacher training. Therefore teachers do not have the necessary skills to detect and handle sexual harassment in the classroom as well as its impact on teaching and learning. In addition, in case they are the perpetrators, the teachers are not willing to stop the practice.
70. Teachers must create a conducive classroom environment which is free from all forms of sexual harassment. This starts with the teachers themselves as educators exercising sexual self-control and avoiding any situation that may lead to sexual harassment. Teachers must see themselves as guardians and remember that they are responsible for the students' safety, welfare and well-being.

12. SUPPORTIVE GENDER RESPONSIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

71. The effort to establish a gender responsive pedagogy will not succeed if it is not supported by a gender responsive school management system.
For example, a lot of the actions discussed above may require the introduction of new approaches and practices in the teaching and learning processes. This will need a lot of support from the management.
For example, changing the classroom set up to make it more participatory may require a change in the school policy, the agreement by other teachers and human and financial resources.
A girl who has been sexually harassed in the school requires action from the school management to deal with the perpetrator, the services of the guidance and counseling teacher and the support of her fellow students to ease the stigma.
72. Often school rules and regulations are not gender responsive and can cause undue problems and inconveniences, which impact negatively on teaching and learning processes. For example, some schools lock dormitories for the whole day, which makes it difficult for girls who are going through their menstruation period to use the dormitories to change their sanitary towels. In many schools, even when toilets for boys and girls are separate, they are too close together and may not provide adequate privacy for girls. In addition the girls' toilets may not be conducive for girls to change their sanitary wear. For example, a simple attachment like a hook or a nail on the inside of the toilet door may be necessary. Many schools do not give enough priority to provision of water, which is a big hindrance to personal hygiene particularly for girls for their menstrual hygiene.
School management systems do not provide rules and regulations that cater for girls who miss schools for genuine reasons such as menstruation-related causes.
73. All these issues impact negatively in the teaching and learning processes, and therefore require action by the school management. Yet, one teacher in isolation cannot transform the pedagogy to be gender responsive. It is a process that requires the action and commitment of all stakeholders, including teachers, students both girls and boys, led by the school management.
74. The school management has a critical role to play in transforming a school into a gender responsive environment which is necessary for nurturing a gender responsive pedagogy. For example, it is the role of the school management to provide teaching and learning materials that are gender responsive and to train teachers in gender responsive pedagogy. In addition, the management should formulate, apply and monitor rules and regulations that address issues that will transform the school into a gender responsive environment. Moreover, the school management should provide the necessary human resources for efficient gender responsive management and governance of the school. When parents do not send girls to school, the management should intervene and sensitize the community about the importance of girls' education.
75. For the school to have a gender responsive management system, the teacher has an important role to play by working closely with the school management through regular communication on classroom related gender issues.

13. CONCLUSION

76. The issues discussed above are all ones that relate to improving the quality of education provision with specific reference to the context in sub Saharan Africa. These issues are at the heart of ensuring that all students and particularly girls not only access schools, but also perform well and do not drop out, by creating a conducive classroom environment for this. It is FAWE's belief that if efforts are directed in making pedagogy gender responsive, major changes could occur that would be beneficial not only in the school but spread to the society at large therefore accomplishing the purpose of education provision.

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