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Challenges facing female learners in various levels of education in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the challenges facing female learners at various levels of education, with a view to generating strategies and recommendations that would assist in promoting their full participation in the education sector in the country. In addition, the study investigated the challenges faced by female employees in the participating institutions. The participants were drawn from four institutions, purposively selected to represent middle level colleges, public as well as private universities. The study established that females faced challenges throughout the various education cycles as learners. The challenges seemed to increase as the female students went up the education ladder. Although identified challenges ranged from social-economic to policy and institutional based, sexual harassment was identified as a serious one cutting across all levels of education. This and other challenges call for urgent redress at institutional and government levels if gender equality and women empowerment is to be realized. The study concludes by discussing strategies that can be adapted to enhance participation of females at various levels of education in Kenya. Some of the strategies had implications for policies while others demanded social transformation in terms of change of people's culture and attitudes. Others challenged institutional policies and practices. Specific strategies included the need to promote access to education; provision of safe, friendly

and secure learning and teaching environment; establishment and upgrading of single sex schools in the learning of science, mathematics and information technology (SMIT); teaching of life-skills and retooling of teachers for gender sensitive pedagogy.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Education, Challenges, Female, Learners.