



United Nations
Economic Commission
for Africa



CONCEPT NOTE



6TH GIMAC STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH AU, RECS, AND PARTNERS: ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION FOR GENDER EQUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY TOWARDS AGENDA 2063.

**DATES: 13 – 15 JULY, 2023
HYBRID MEETING ACCRA, GHANA**

6th GIMAC Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs, and Partners: Advancing Educational Transformation for Gender Equity and Sustainability Towards Agenda 2063.

AFRICAN UNION THEME OF THE YEAR :

Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa.

GIMAC NETWORK THEME:

Educational Transformation for Gender Equity and Sustainability.

DATE:

13-15 JULY, 2024

LOCATION:

ACCRA, GHANA

HYBRID



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Schedule of Meetings

WED. 19 – FRI. 28 JUNE '24

48th Ordinary Session of the PRC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SAT. 13 JULY '24

12th GIMAC Young Women Advocacy Training

SUN. 14 JULY '24

6th GIMAC AU-RECs Coordination Meeting

MON. 15 JULY '24

6th GIMAC AU-RECs Coordination Meeting

TUE. 16 JULY '24

AUC Gender Pre Summit

WED. 17 JULY '24

AUC Gender Pre Summit

THU. 18 – FRI. 19TH JULY '24

Forty-Fifth (45th) Ordinary Session of the Executive Council,
Accra, Ghana;

SAT. 20 JULY '24

AUC WGYD High Level Breakfast Meeting

SAT. 21 JULY '24

Sixth (6th) Mid-Year Coordination Meeting of the African
Union and the RECs, Accra, Ghana

I. Introduction



In 2024, the African Union (AU) declared its theme of the year as 'Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning,' Africa's Agenda 2063 serves as the strategic blueprint for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse. It prioritizes inclusive and sustainable development, emphasizing social and economic progress, regional integration, democratic governance, and peace.

Closely aligned with Agenda 2063, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016 – 2025 (CESA 16-25) aims to revolutionize education and training, ensuring that Africa's human resources align with core African values and contribute to the vision of the African Union. Both frameworks recognize the pivotal role of education in achieving sustainable development and enhancing human capital.

Building on the momentum of the 40th GIMAC CSO Pre-Summit Meeting held in February 2024, the 6th GIMAC AU-RECs Meeting offers a critical opportunity for women-led CSOs and various stakeholders to accelerate in achieving educational gender equality in Africa. The 40 GIMAC Pre Summit meeting yielded an outcome statement by CSOs, urging accelerated political, social, and economic commitments on education. These commitments underscore the imperative to rethink the purpose and content of education to achieve a truly transformative education fit for the 21st Century. Such an education system should be responsive to local, national, and global needs, diverse cultures, and individual capacities.

Moreover, it must foster the holistic development of all learners throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their aspirations and contribute meaningfully to their families, communities, and societies. To realize this ambitious vision of educational transformation, particular focus has been placed on areas such as:

1. Increased Funding: Allocate 20% of the national budget or a minimum of 6% of GDP to education through gender-responsive budgeting, addressing existing disparities.
2. Universal Free Education: Guarantee free, high-quality education for all learners, including measures to retain girls in school, provide back-to-school programs for pregnant teens, and eradicate child marriage.
3. Digital Education: Invest in digital education programs with inclusivity in mind, ensuring equal access for all demographics. Focus on benefits for women and girls, particularly in STEM fields.
4. Gender-Responsive Education: Implement gender-transformative pedagogy across all levels of education, including dismantling cultural barriers, promoting gender equality, and providing sexual and reproductive health education.

Further, aligning with the African Union's Roadmap on Education[1], this will delve into strategies for achieving enhanced equitable access to quality education, particularly for girls, women, youth, and people with disabilities. Furthermore, we will prioritize the protection of children in emergencies and conflict zones, adhering to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Our discussions will explore best practices and collaboration opportunities to strengthen mechanisms such as the African Union International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) and others. By bringing together CSOs, UN agencies, and key stakeholders, we can develop powerful advocacy messages for the #AfricaEducatesHer campaign and ensure learning continuity for crisis-affected children.

The meeting will also focus on building resilient education systems to withstand future shocks. This meeting will contribute to other ongoing efforts such as the AU Youth Manifesto Roadmap and support the development of resources for the AU Youth Empowerment Toolbox[1].

Additionally, we will facilitate dialogues, including public awareness campaigns to promote a safer online environment for women, youth, and children. Through collective action, we can ensure that the AU's vision for educational transformation translates into tangible progress for all.

1- https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43425-doc-CONCEPT_NOTE_with_Roadmap_AU_Theme_Eng_VF.pdf

2- https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43425-doc-CONCEPT_NOTE_with_Roadmap_AU_Theme_Eng_VF.pdf

II. Background and Justification



Some progress has been made in primary education completion rates, and basic education quality across Africa over the past two decades. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, 66% of girls complete primary education, compared to 61% of boys, showing a decrease in the gender educational gap at the primary education level[1]. However, significant disparities remain, particularly in gender equality. While enrolment rates have increased, girls still face major obstacles in accessing education, and while the gender gap in primary school enrolment has narrowed, among enrolled girls, completion rates lag behind boys. Secondary Education: Disparities widen at the secondary level. Only 44% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary education, compared to 46% of boys. In upper secondary education, the completion rate for girls is 26% while that of boys is 29% [2]. These enrolment and completion disparities translate into lower learning outcomes for girls. Across Africa, female adult literacy rates remain lower than males, hindering future opportunities. Girls often miss out on critical skills development, particularly in STEM fields, limiting their future career options. These gender disparities in education have significant consequences, hindering economic growth, perpetuating poverty cycles, and limiting women's full participation in society.

Compounding these challenges are teacher shortages and a lack of female role models in education leadership positions. This can contribute to a less welcoming environment for girls and reinforce traditional gender biases. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing inequalities. School closures disproportionately affected girls, with many facing increased risks of child marriage and domestic labor.

The current education system is failing to deliver equitable outcomes for all learners, particularly girls. Without significant changes, achieving the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25), the AU Agenda 2063 and SDG 2030 - particularly its focus on gender equality - remains at risk. This GIMAC Strategic Engagement meeting aims to accelerate strategies to address these challenges and chart a path towards a more equitable and sustainable education system for all African children.

3- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/07/education-africa-girls-boys-gender-school/>

4- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/07/education-africa-girls-boys-gender-school/>

III. Objectives



The main objectives of the 6th GIMAC Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs and Partners on the AU Theme of the Year ' Education ' are:

- 1.To foster collaboration and partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including AU bodies, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), civil society organizations (CSOs), UN agencies, and other partners, to promote inclusive education. This objective will focus on leveraging collective expertise and resources to address the unique needs of marginalized groups and ensure their full participation in educational opportunities.
- 2.To develop strategies to ensure enhanced equitable access to quality education for marginalized groups, including girls, women, youth, people with disabilities, and children in emergencies and conflict contexts, with a specific focus on promoting inclusive education. This objective will involve identifying barriers to access and implementing targeted interventions to address them, ensuring that educational opportunities are inclusive and accessible to all.
- 3.To advocate for the implementation of policies and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equity, sustainability, and inclusive education in alignment with the AU Theme of the Year. This objective will involve engaging with policymakers at national, regional, continental, and global levels to prioritize inclusive education and allocate resources effectively to support marginalized groups.
- 4.To establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress towards achieving inclusive education objectives outlined in the AU Theme of the Year. This objective will involve setting indicators, collecting data, and conducting regular assessments to track the impact of interventions and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, it will ensure accountability and transparency in the implementation of inclusive education initiatives.

IV. Expected Outcomes



The expected outcomes of the 6th GIMAC Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs and Partners on the AU Theme of the Year ' Education' are:

- 1.A common understanding and consensus on the gender dimensions of education and its implications for women's rights and empowerment in Africa among GIMAC members and other stakeholders, as evidenced by a joint statement or declaration adopted at the end of the event.
- 2.A set of concrete and actionable recommendations for mainstreaming gender in education implementation at national, regional, and continental levels, based on evidence-based research and best practices, as documented in a report or policy brief disseminated to relevant actors within eight months after the event.
- 3.A strengthened network and coordination mechanism among GIMAC members and other civil society actors to advocate for gender-responsive education policies and practices in Africa, as demonstrated by a joint action plan or strategy developed and implemented within a year after the event.
- 4.A strengthened dialogue and partnership between GIMAC members and other stakeholders such as AU organs and institutions, RECs, UN agencies, development partners, private sector, academia, media, and other civil society actors on gender and education issues in Africa, as indicated by a memorandum of understanding or cooperation agreement signed or renewed within one year after the event.

V. Proposed Topics

The proposed topics for the 6th GIMAC Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs and Partners on the AU Theme of the Year ' Education' will be in line with the AU Roadmap for implementation the AU Theme for the year which can be accessed using the following link https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43425-doc-CONCEPT_NOTE_with_Roadmap_AU_Theme_Eng_VF.pdf

VI. Proposed Structure



The proposed structure of the 6th GIMAC Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs and Partners on the AU Theme of the Year ' Education ' is:

- A three-day event consisting of plenary sessions, panel discussions, networking sessions,
- A participatory and interactive approach that encourages dialogue, exchange of views, sharing of experiences, and identification of best practices and recommendations among GIMAC Network members and other stakeholders.
- A gender-balanced representation of speakers, moderators, facilitators and participants from various sectors and backgrounds.

VII. Proposed Participants

The proposed participants of the 6th GIMAC Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs and Partners on the AU Theme of the Year on education are:

- Representatives from GIMAC member organizations from various thematic clusters and regions.
- Representatives from AU organs and institutions such as the AU Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP),
- Representatives from RECs such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA),
- Representatives from UN agencies such as UN Women, UNECA, Office of High Commission on Human Rights, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNAIDS
- Development Partners such as ActionAid, Oxfam in Africa, Plan AULO, Action Against Hunger,
- Research Institutions such as African Population and Health Research Center
- Women's Rights Organisations outside of GIMAC Network
- Private Sector



#6GIMACRECsMeeting

ORGANIZED BY:



WITH SUPPORT FROM:

