Handbook of South Valley University

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Objectives

In the context of the project of gender equality in higher education system in Egypt, the South Valley University has the intention with the partnership of the free University of Berlin, to publish this handbook about the project in order to make the project more effective and well known, not only inside the university but also outside it.

This handbook will guide you to know a lot about our project and its goals and achievements.

1. Project Overview

Project partners:

Freie Universität Berlin  
Cairo University  
Alexandria University  
Sohag University  
South Valley University  
Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education (Strategic Planning Unit)

Website:
website of the project in SVU:
http://www.svu.edu.eg/equal/index.html

Project support

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) program "Transformation partnership with universities in Egypt and Tunisia"

Duration

April 2012 to December 2014

Goals

- To establish a dialogue on gender justice in higher education and beyond between Free University of Berlin and Egyptian universities
- To improve mechanisms for equal opportunities in Egyptian higher education institutions
- To promote a family friendly environment at the university
- To promote gender sensitive teaching and research at Egyptian higher education institutions
2. **Introduction**

The South Valley University has been already set an office for the promotion of equal opportunities and a family friendly environment at the university. The center mainly aim at supporting work life balance and career development of all university members. This includes counseling of young researchers and graduates, offering soft skills courses to faculty members, and enhancing offers for child care at the universities.

### 2.1 What is a gender equality in higher education?

Most countries have made substantial progress in closing the gender gap in higher education in terms of access. Women are increasingly gaining access to higher education, and even female enrollment outnumber(s) that of male students in Egypt. However, the increase in female enrollment does not necessarily mean that gender equalities are realized.

Female students are still facing more financial and social barriers to accessing higher education than male students. Survey results indicate that women from urban, wealthier, and more educated families are more represented in higher education in Ethiopia. In Egypt, average family allowance to female students is only 89 percent of the average allowance given to male students.

#### 2.2 Gender equality center at south valley university

In June 2012 the Egyptian project teams started to establish *Equal Opportunity Centers* at their universities. At South Valley University in Qena, the *Equal Opportunity Center* has recently started its work. The Equal Opportunity Center at the South Valley university has the objectives to improve mechanisms for equal opportunities in Egyptian higher education institutions, and to promote a family friendly environment at the university. We are supporting the females Staff- member and the female post-graduates students to achieve progress in their educational and social lives. Young female scientists already
consult the center when facing problems related to equal opportunity issues. Furthermore, the center organized trainings for young scientists and an open day at the university for school girls, took place at South Valley University.

2.2.1 Project Coordinator

The project coordinator of Gender equality project at SVU is prof. Dr. Jehan Ragab Daoud, Vice-Dean of Faculty of Veterinary Medicine for Social Services and Environmental Affairs. The project receives support and encouragement from Prof. Dr. Abbas Mansour, the president of South Valley University and Prof. Dr. Sayed Taha, Vice President for Social Services and Environmental Affairs.

2.2.2 Project members

The project is being carrying out with help of some of the university staff members (males and females are working together in order to support the project:

1. Ms. Nada Mohamed Nabil Fahmy, Ass. lecturer, Faculty of Science.
2. Ms. Shaimaa Ahmed El-Saghir, German Lecturer, faculty of Arts.
3. Ms. Marian Nashat Farah, Ass. Lecturer, faculty of Arts.

2.2.3 Address & contact details

South Valley University, Equal Opportunity Center, central Building of the university, Telephone:1948
Website:
E-mail: jehan.ragab@yahoo.com
Opening time: Sat till wed, 9:00 am till 2:00 pm.

2.3 Activities

Our office is offering:
1- Help and support for female staff and students inside the university.
2-Organizes training courses and workshops for the young university staff members in different fields in order to improve their work and outcome in the academic and social fields.

3-Organizes technical workshop based on the wiki-platform with the partnership of the free university of Berlin.

3. counseling

3.1 what is a counseling?
How do we define Counselling?

- short-term intervention
- solutions to concrete problems
- giving advice
- spontaneous

Topics of Counselling

- Career Planning/ Qualification
- Fundraising
- Study-related Problems
- Conflicts in the working Place
- Sexual Harrassment, Mobbing, Stalking
- Work/Life Balance or other family related questions

What is the role of the Counsellor?

- Aim: You have to find out the women’s wants and needs
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Attitude: Mostly the Women do know the answers to their problems, but need help to see those themselves
- Professional relationship

3.2 Females Problems
The numbers of female students who came to the center is 8, and there are 7 who represent their problems by contact with project coordinator & members orally without
visiting the center because it's far away from their faculties. The numbers of female staff members who came to the center is 6, and there are 4 who represent their problems by contact with project coordinators & members orally without visiting the center because it's far away from their faculties. The total number of female students and staff members who have visited the center is 14.

3.2.1 **Problem of female Staff members and students:**

Problems of female students and staff members who came to the center for counseling were facing:

1- Some Families refuses to allow female student continuing education after she obtained a BA degree (after graduation).
2- Some Families wants female student to get married and drop out of university before finishing BA degree.
3- Female demonstrator with two children who lives in another governorate far away from the university has problems to balance between work duties and home duties.
4- Female assistant lecturer with three children whose husband lives in another city has problems to balance work and home duties.

3.2.2 **Meeting of German delegation with Female Staff members and students:**

On the mentoring stay at SVU, 26-30 April 2013, a German delegation visited SVU, Prof. Dr. Jehan asked some questions to female staff members, e.g. What issues do the Gender Equality Principles cover? Why are the Gender Equality Principles needed? and How is gender related to culture? Also she arranged the meeting of some female students with the German delegation and asked some questions to female students, e.g. Why do most of the female students study humanities and literature, not science and engineering? What are the problems faced by girls in taking opportunities for education? What is the opinion of your parents and the surrounding community?

Central topics of meetings with female students and staff members

- low acceptance of women in leadership positions in society (especially in governmental positions, engineering, law); women are only accepted in certain fields
limited mobility of women as a huge problem: distances between home and university can be an obstacle for higher education or an academic career

to overcome cultural restrictions, role models and awareness raising for gender equality, especially in schools and at university, are necessary

early marriages constitute an obstacle for higher education of women

economic obstacles: poor girls (and boys) are underprivileged -> offering scholarships could be a solution

discrepancy between legal rights of women and actual implementation

to achieve work-life balance, the following suggestions were made:
little number of children, support from husband, availability of kindergarten/nursery, teaching the children to look after themselves, improving time management skills, using modern technology (distance education)

4. Girls Day

4.1 What is a girls day?
Every year technical enterprises, enterprises with technical departments and technical training facilities, universities, and research centers are invited to organize an open day for girls. Girls'Day – ‘Future Prospects for Girls’ initiated a large campaign in which a wide range of professions and activities is presented to girls of 10 years upwards. The vocational choices of girls are influenced in a very positive way. For companies, Girls Day has evolved as an important instrument of their recruitment policy. The Girls'Day or similar actions take place in fourteen other European countries: Beside Germany in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Czech Republic, Belgium, Kosovo, Poland, Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, Hungary, Norway and Liechtenstein. Cross-border activities are conducted together with Austria, Luxembourg, Belgium, Poland, the Czech Republic and Switzerland. In 2012 the first Girls’Day outside of Europe was held in Kyrgyzstan. In 2013 the first Girls’Day was held in Estonia and Egypt.

4.2 Why is a girls day

Girls'Day encourages the surroundings of the young women - i.e. families, school, media and employers to participate in the campaign and change their common attitudes towards vocational orientation. Information material, an all-embracing interactive website and an individual advisory service provide support for all target groups. The campaign includes a scientific evaluation. And in recent years there has been a significant increase in female professionals in technical fields. Now the growth in employment of women is stronger than that of men in almost all scientific and technical professions. The Girls’ Day at South Valley University offered school girls the opportunity to gain an insight into different faculties and departments at the university and into academic life in general. This should contribute to awaken and promote their interest for university departments at which women are usually underrepresented, especially in the higher positions like professorships, heads of department, and deans. It also aimed to show them an academic career as a possible job option.

4.3 Girls day activities:

On 4 December 2013, South Valley University hosted the first Girls’ Day at an Egyptian university, an open day for schoolgirls at the university. One hundred female students from four preparatory and secondary schools in Qena attended the event that was
conducted under the auspices of Prof. Dr. Abbas Mansour, President of South Valley University, and Prof. Dr. Sayed Taha, Vice President for Social Affairs and Environmental Development. It was organized by Prof. Dr. Jehan Ragab project coordinator and Manager of the University’s *Equal Opportunity Center* and her team.

The female students were distributed to several workshops at eight different faculties, including: Faculty of Science, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Specific Education, Faculty of Physical Education & Faculty of Nursery. Staff members of the departments gave the girls a guided tour through the labs and facilities of the faculties and explained small experiments and technical devices used in teaching and research.

The idea to organize a *Girls’ Day* arose in the context of the project “Gender Equality in the Egyptian Higher Education System”, cooperation between Freie Universität Berlin and four Egyptian universities. Freie Universität Berlin has participated in the nationwide “Girls’ Day – Future Prospects for Girls” since 2002. Having started with 100 schoolgirls in the first year, the number of participants has reach about 1000 now.

South Valley University also intends to slowly increase the number of participants and involved departments in the coming years. Educating women and introducing them to academic life is very important, especially in Upper Egypt, the project team agreed. The representatives of Freie Universität Berlin, who visited South Valley University on the occasion of the *Girls’ Day*, were impressed by the good organization and the enthusiasm of the participants. Silvia Arlt, who works in the Office of the Chief Gender Equality Officer of Freie Universität Berlin, emphasized: “With regard to the *Girls’ Day*, South Valley University can serve as a role model for other Egyptian universities.”
South Valley University
Community Service and Environmental Development Sector:

Girl's Day
Wednesday 4 December 2014

In cooperation with Free University of Berlin

Panel discussion on the aspects of Gender Equality in Egyptian higher education systems.

Panelists include:
- Prof. Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Taha
- Prof. Dr. Mostafa El-Hawary

South Valley University
Community Service and Environmental Development Sector:

Panelists include:
- Prof. Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Taha
- Prof. Dr. Mostafa El-Hawary

Event organizers:
- Prof. Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Taha
- Prof. Dr. Mostafa El-Hawary
4.4 Girls day publications at SVU:

In the girl’s day event at SVU, a flyer was designed to be distributed to the attendance during the event, the flyer included general information about the project and it’s activates, information about the girls day and contact information.
Workshops:

One of the activities of the office is making many workshops for different categories. The workshops involve human resources, awareness and career development.

Types:

Gender Equality office in SVU made two workshops in corporation with DAAD entitled:

- Project management
- Research management

Participants:

Each workshop was attended by around 22 participants from varied faculties and varied positions.

29/12/2013