

Eunice Nyamasyo



African Feminist Thinkers: Our Voices [1]

My doctoral training is in Linguistics ? the Syntax of the English Language, and this forms a key part of what I teach, as a Senior Lecturer, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Other areas of teaching and research at graduate level in which I am involved include Gender and Society; Critical discourse analysis; Variationist studies, Language and gender and cultural and linguistic diversity within the broad area of Sociolinguistics. I have just completed working with two doctoral students ? one on language variation in Kenyan teachers? spoken discourse (examined and successful), and the other on speech accommodation in two language contact areas in Kenya (being examined). I have four students in our Masters of Arts in Linguistics - two of whose work have gender as a category of analysis.

I hold the following academic positions:

Chairperson ? Department of English and Linguistics Postgraduate Studies

Chairperson - Board of Graduate Studies of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Member of the Board of Kenyatta University Graduate School.

External Examiner of a number of both under-, and/or graduate programmes of the following Universities: University of Nairobi; Moi University; Western University College of Science and Technology; African Nazarene University.

Called upon variously, as Member- in Boards of Examiners on graduate theses on both Language/Linguistics, and gender/women?s studies.

I consult for the national Commission for Higher Education (CHE) on new and, or revised University programmes on Language and Linguistics and On Gender/Women?s Studies, I have recently been the first Director of a newly established Centre for Gender Studies of the University, and which is in the process of developing academic programmes in this area. Once fully established, I will be involved in the programmes offered. At the moment, I do however participate in the graduate courses on gender/women?s studies currently being offered by the university?s Department of Sociology. I have recently offered a first year unit entitled ?Gender and Society? in this Department?s MA programme. Besides, these engagements within the University, gender/women?s issues form an important discourse in the country and the Eastern African region and thus provide me with many opportunities for consultancy, research and other forms of involvement. These include, for example the

ongoing Gender Mainstreaming Project in the management and administration of institutions of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). There is also the ongoing efforts to review the 1985 (UN) Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS) by the National Commission on Gender and Development both of which I am involved.

The regional research project on the 'Impact of Gendered Tenure Systems on Social and Economic Development of the Peoples in the Wetlands of the Lake Victoria Basin', in which I am involved is in its second and final phase. Other members of the research team in this project are from Tanzania and Uganda . Coordinated by the Interuniversity Council of Eastern Africa (IUCEA), the popularly known VICRES Project as it is known is sponsored by SIDA-SAREC.

My recent three month stay at the AGI in the Associate's Programme has helped to ground me in both the literature and theoretical perspectives in gender/women's studies. This programme has provided me with the experience of the best practices possible in this area and which I hope our Centre for Gender Studies will learn from.

I am a co-patron of a University-wide student's association 'The Gender Action Group (GAP)', started in 2001 and through which gender awareness-raising and sensitization activities as well as transformative leadership training for students have been undertaken.

Beyond the academy, I am an active member of and researcher with the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) 'Kenya chapter. I have recently been the Secretary to this Association, and been involved in various research work and organizing on women's issues undertaken by the Association and, or its individual members and also in collaboration with other links and networks with organisations including the Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW 'Kenya Chapter)

I am the Vice Chair of the Kenya Oral Literature Association (KOLA) which has been involved in a number of national level (research, gender training) programmes including the Gender Consortium for the National Civic Education Programme (NCEP) Kenya I (2000-2001 completed) and II (initiated September 2006 to 2007).

I am a founder member and Programme Coordinator of a community-based organisation, Kenya Initiatives for Development (KID) based in one of the Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASAL) in the eastern part of Kenya 'Makueni District. To date, KID is coordinating a Global Environmental Facility-United Nations Development Programme (GEF/UNDP) sponsored set of programmes some of whose projects involve sustainable land use and management and the use of indigenous knowledge in mitigating the effects of the unpredictable climatic conditions of the region.

I am inspired by my work with university students at different levels of their training, and my teaching and research colleagues in my two areas of interest. Being in the academy, and a member of various organisations in which I am actively involved continue to provide me with opportunities for various forms of engagement in gender/women's studies and related work. I have a lot to learn as yet and much to experience in this area of studies. I am very grateful for the opportunities I have got (especially Associates experience at the African Gender Institute) and important interaction I have had with brilliant minds in this area (Prof Amina Mama, Prof Jane Bennet; Dr Salo; Prof Tamara Shefer) and colleagues in the programme. I am privileged too to be actively engaged with Kenyan women across many ages, disciplines and boundaries, and in the various forms of organizing and discourse going on around me. I am

involved in various activities ? academic/non-academic -; and I believe I have a lot yet to learn; and also to offer.

Publications: (partial list)

- ?Wifehood? and ?Marriage? in the Academy: Sexuality and academic performance of freshmen in the Kenyan Public University (2006).
- The Economic Costs of Violence against Women in Kenya : A Situational Analysis (2006).
- Researching Gender/Women?s Studies in the Kenyan Academy : The Case Of Kenyatta University (2005 ? ongoing).
- Gender, Globalization and Human Resource Development in Kenya : Critical Issues on Current Economic Policies and their Impacts. AAWORD ? Dakar , Senegal (1998)

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The African Gender Institute is a research grouping within the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cape Town University of Cape Town

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