

EQUALITY IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (E3)

A Peer Learning Platform for Gender-Smart Higher Education

16 Institutions | 12 Countries
Africa, the Middle East and Latin America

THE CHALLENGE

Women now make up the majority of higher education graduates in many emerging markets, yet the returns on their education remain deeply unequal. Female graduates are 50 percent less likely to reach top earning positions than their male peers. Only 35 percent of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduates are women.

This gap reflects specific, addressable failures in career support, employability programming, institutional culture, data use, and industry linkages that higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to fix.

WHY E3

Graduate employment outcomes directly influence institutional reputation, enrollment, and financial sustainability. Institutions that invest in women's career progression expand their talent pipeline, strengthen employer relationships, and build the diverse alumni networks that drive long-term growth.

WHAT E3 IS AND HOW IT WORKS

Launched by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) at the IFC Global Education Conference in 2024, the E3 Peer Learning Platform brings together 16 higher education institutions across 12 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, with a structured 18-month cycle from 2024 to 2026.

Designed as an intentional peer learning community, E3 provides institutions with the framework, tools, and evidence base to move gender equality from policy statement to measurable change.

E3 sits at the heart of both the WBG Gender Strategy 2024–2030 and the Jobs agenda and is built on a simple but powerful premise: Institutions that have committed to gender-smart practices can learn more from each other than from any single external source.

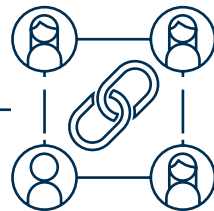


THE FOUR PILLARS



COMMIT

Member institutions pledge to implement at least two concrete gender-smart actions, ranging from tracking gender-disaggregated data and adopting gender-responsive policies to establishing dedicated career support programs for women students.



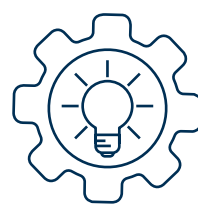
CONNECT

Small-group peer learning sessions facilitate collaborative problem-solving and shared experience across institutions, moving beyond networking to genuine cross-institutional learning.



LEARN

Interactive webinars address core themes at the intersection of gender and employability. To date, 319 participants have engaged across five sessions featuring technical specialists and E3 participants as speakers.



CREATE

Design-thinking sessions translate institutional commitments into implementable, context-specific solutions, moving participants from intent to action and from action to measurable results.

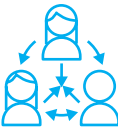
KEY LESSONS AND BEST PRACTICES

These practices offer a roadmap for higher education institutions to turn gender equity commitments from intention into impact.



BUILD ON DATA AND EVIDENCE

- **Collect and disaggregate** data on enrollment, retention, and employment outcomes by gender.
- **Use data to drive decisions** on planning and resource allocation.
- **Track graduate outcomes** and use gender-disaggregated employment data to identify gaps and strengthen internal practices and employer partnerships.
- **Make data visible** internally and externally to build accountability and drive change.



EMBED GENDER AND INCLUSION IN STRATEGY AND LEAD FROM THE TOP

- **Demonstrate visible commitment from leadership** — the most important driver of lasting change.
- **Embed gender in institutional strategy**, with dedicated resources, measurable commitments, and public reporting on outcomes.
- **Build accountability structures** by assigning clear ownership and integrating gender metrics into performance reviews.



CREATE AN ECOSYSTEM AND STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

- **Embed measurable gender inclusion commitments in employer and industry partnerships** and co-design internships, pipelines, and training programs to expand women's pathways to employment.
- **Engage alumni** as mentors, role models, and advocates for students and graduates.
- **Connect with peer institutions and industry partners** to accelerate progress.
- **Support student-led initiatives** and create structures for student and alumni voices to shape institutional practices.

RESULTS: FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION



32

Gender-Smart Commitments



24

Gender-smart activities under implementation (Year 1)



319

Webinar Participants



89%

Increase in knowledge



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INSTITUTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Across E3's 16 member institutions, commitments have translated into concrete action.

Aliat Universidades, Mexico Hosts gender-centered job fairs and employer breakfasts to build equality into hiring collaborations.	Ashesi University, Ghana Established an Accessibility Center to serve students with disabilities, with training on disability mainstreaming and accommodation management.
Botho University, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, and Online Used gender-disaggregated tracer studies and KPIs to influence institutional decision-making, while offering women in STEM and refugee scholarships to drive educational equity.	Batterjee Medical College, Saudi Arabia Formalizing a gender equality and inclusion strategy focused on leadership commitment, resource allocation, and tracking graduate outcomes.
Cogna Educação, Brazil Enhanced hiring and training programs to advance disability inclusion within existing gender and employability initiatives.	Design and Technology Institute, Ghana Developing gender-responsive policies and engaging employers and alumni to align curricula with labor market needs.
Kumasi Technical University, Ghana Runs alumni mentoring programs, offers STEM scholarships for women, and supports the Women's Commission of Students. Their Women in Engineering Team has won an annual competition three years running.	Nile University of Nigeria, Nigeria Supports women-led initiatives, including the Women in Tech Club and Her Confidence Initiative, which organize career fairs and employer connections.
Özyeğin University, Türkiye Used gender assessments to design a STEM career program that bridges women students with civil society and private sector opportunities.	Riara University, Kenya Made gender a strategic objective, including the implementation of gender-responsive policies, and runs the Herizons program to increase the visibility and connections of women students in STEM.
Ser Educacional, Brazil Formalized policies and launched communications initiatives to bring gender practices to life across the institution	Universidad Científica del Sur, Peru Disaggregates graduate employment data by gender to identify support gaps and pilot initiatives that highlight women's career pathways.
Universidad Santo Tomás, Chile Reviewed policies through a gender lens, resulting in inclusive language, improved work-life balance provisions, gender parity in committees, and disaggregated data practices.	University of Petra, Jordan Used gender assessments to develop responsive policies and equitable staffing and HR processes.
Universidad Insurgentes, Mexico Integrates gender into employer partnerships and offers micro-credentials that prepare students for future-of-work skills, including in women-dominated fields.	Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, Ecuador Built internal data infrastructure to monitor gender-focused indicators and support evidence-based institutional decisions.