



East and
Southern
Africa
Region



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

LEADERSHIP STATUS OF FEMALE VICE CHANCELLORS, DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLORS, REGISTRARS IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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About UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

- In May 2023, UN Women East and Southern Africa signed an MOU with the Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa.
- The objectives of the partnership are as follows;
 - To share analysis and information for identifying complementary programs to promote gender equality in Universities in East and Southern Africa.
 - Identifying policy approaches in areas of gender equality and empowerment to promote gender and equality policies in higher education institutions in East and Southern Africa.
 - To eliminate violence against women and female students in higher education institutions in East and Southern Africa.
 - To encourage FAWoVC to be an effective voice nationally, regionally and internationally in higher education institutions by hosting symposium, redesigning leadership modules, mentorship and training session for female leaders and upcoming leaders.

- ❑ What is the Leadership Status of Female Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors and Registrars in African Universities?
- ❑ In Africa, women have faced numerous historical obstacles and biases that hinder their access to education and professional opportunities.
- ❑ Underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions still exists due to gender biases, stereotypes, and cultural norms
- ❑ This poses a significant challenge that hinders their ability to assume critical decision-making roles.
- ❑ Other factors such as;
 - ❑ work-life balance,
 - ❑ access to funding and resources,
 - ❑ unconscious recruitment biases, and promotion processes
 - ❑ contribute to heightened gender disparities in university leadership.

- We opine that;
 - Understanding female leadership status in Africa's academia is essential
 - There is need to delve into African academic institutions and initiatives to comprehensively understand the current landscape and ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and female representation in university academic leadership.

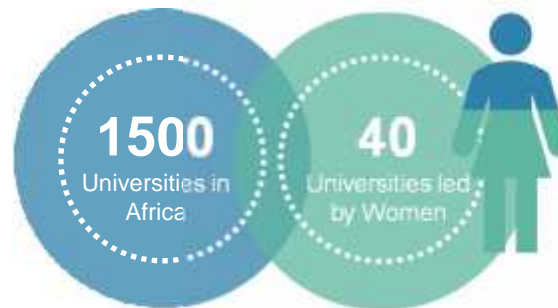
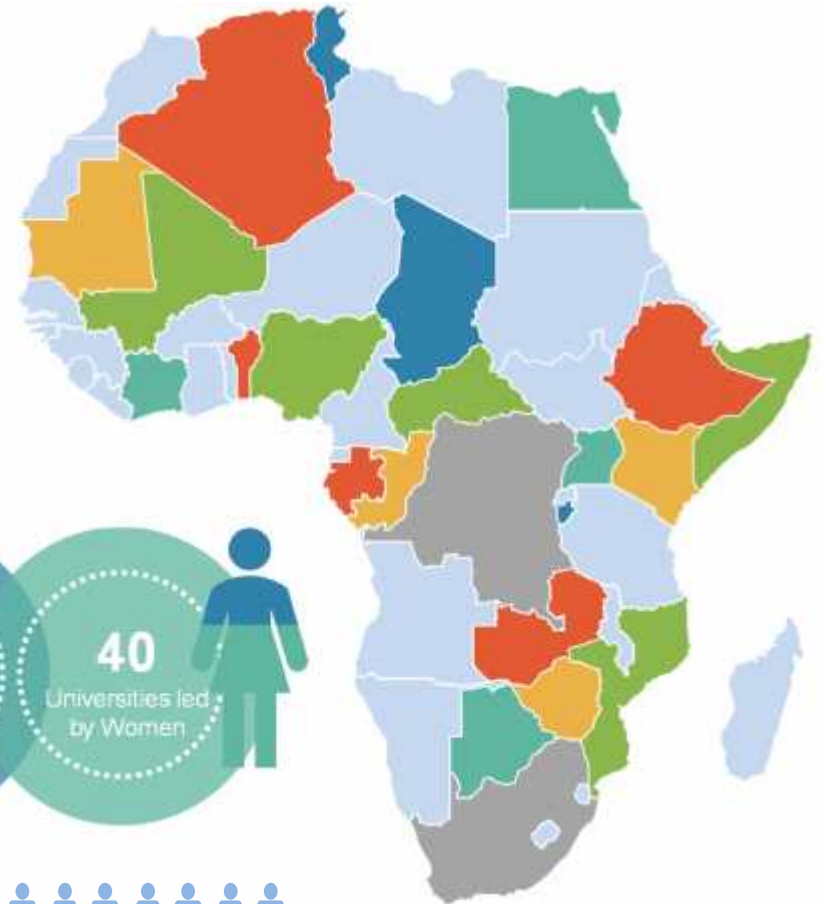
Data on women leadership in African Universities



The Foresight Africa: Top priorities for the continent in 2022 report published by US-based Brookings Institution, a non-profit organisation devoted to independent research and policy solutions refers.



The report indicated that, across Sub-Saharan Africa, women constitute only 24% of academic staff and 2.5% of vice-chancellors.



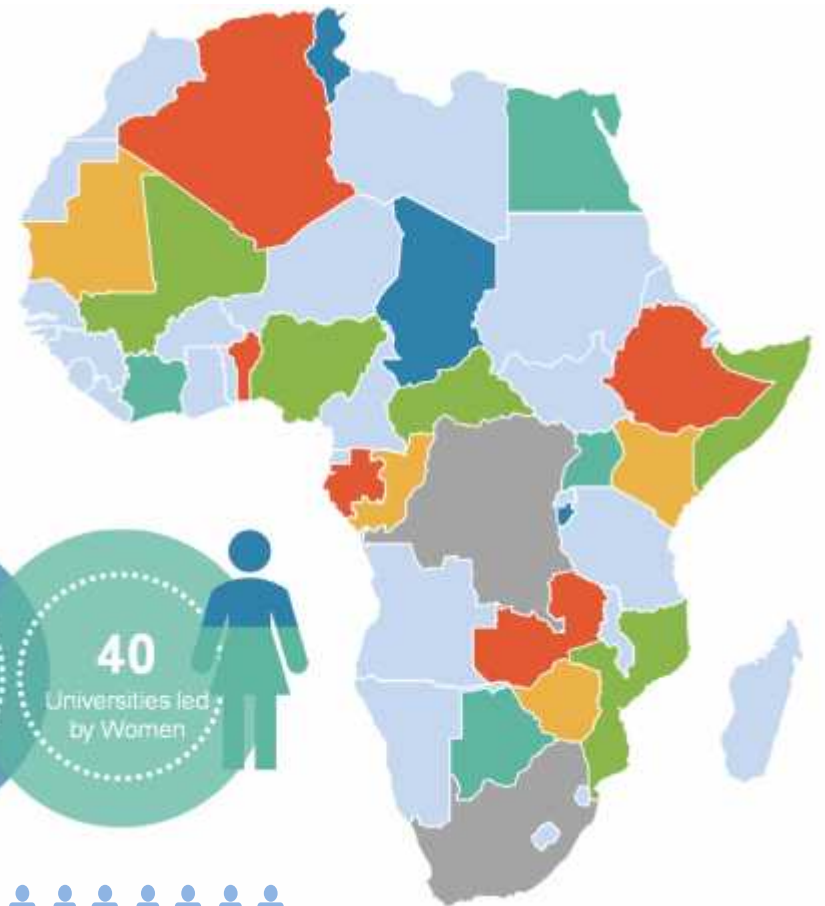
Data on women leadership in African Universities



For example, as of 2022, at the national level, only six out of the 26 higher education institutions in South Africa are led by women and, in Ghana, only eight percent of professors from public universities are women.



JKUAT Study:
Out of 200 top global universities, only 34 were led by female Vice-Chancellors.



uniRank study- 21.25% (N=17) of the university chancellors, 14.12% (N=12) of the vice-chancellors, and 25.97% (N=20) of the registrars are female.

Serial	Country	Number of universities	Chancellor		Vice chancellor		Registrar	
			Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Algeria	3	3	0	3	0	3	0
2	Botswana	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
3	Egypt	20	20	0	20	0	18	2
4	Ethiopia	3	3	0	3	0	3	0
5	Ghana	5	4	1	3	2	4	1
6	Kenya	6	4	2	5	1	5	1
7	Libya	3	3	0	3	0	3	0
8	Mauritius	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
9	Morocco	8	8	0	8	0	8	0
10	Namibia	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
11	Nigeria	15	15	0	11	4	11	4
12	Rwanda	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
13	Senegal	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
14	South Africa	20	8	12	16	4	12	8
15	Sudan	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
16	Tanzania	2	2	0	2	0	2	0
17	Tunisia	2	2	0	2	0	2	0
18	Uganda	2	2	0	2	0	1	1
19	Zambia	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
20	Zimbabwe	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Total		97	80	17	85	12	77	20

Challenges facing female leaders in the academia in Africa

Most of these challenges can be attributed to cultural, societal, individual, and institutional factors.

- ❑ Gender-based biases and stereotypes
- ❑ Lack of mentorship opportunities and role models
- ❑ Limited access to resources and funding,
- ❑ Implicit biases in recruitment and promotion processes
- ❑ Lack of institutional support .
- ❑ Lack of succession planning and support networks
- ❑ Gender pay gap, limited visibility, and representation of women in decision-making bodies



Mitigation of challenges facing female leaders in African Universities

- ❑ Promoting gender equality policies.
 - ❑ Academic institutions and universities should develop and implement gender inclusivity policies that address the underrepresentation of women in key leadership positions.
 - ❑ Developing leadership and mentorship programs.
 - ❑ Establishing leadership development programs
 - ❑ Provides them with the needed skills, knowledge, and networks for career advancement
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Mitigation of challenges facing female leaders in African Universities

- ❑ Family-friendly policies such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave programs, and supportive childcare mechanisms should be implemented to alleviate the work-life balance challenges that women in academia face.
- ❑ Universities should further strengthen institutional support by allocating resources that foster leadership development.
- ❑ Strategies to collect continual research and data on gender representation in African academic institutions should be considered and implemented.

Role of the Forum for African Women Vice Chancellors (FAWoVC)

FAWoVC was first launched on August 24, 2016, during the women leadership meeting on Higher Education for economic empowerment in Nairobi, Kenya. Recently, MoU was signed between UN women and FAWoVC in Kampala-Uganda.

