Challenges of integrating gender-sensitive approach in research and teaching

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Challenges and limitations of gender-sensitive approach in research and teaching

**STEP 1: Mapping of existing researches and curricula from a gender perspective**

- Elaboration of a common guide for mapping of the existing research projects and curricula using a gender perspective in the two selected departments (6 institutions/12 departments)
- STEM disciplines: Life sciences, Engineering, Computer science, Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Agronomy, Biology and Medicine
- SSH disciplines: Sociology, Political Sciences, Management, Linguistics
- Reports gathered → GARCIA working paper n. 7.
STEP 1: Mapping of existing researches and curricula

**Mapping criteria:**

- qualitative and quantitative analysis of research projects and curricula at two test departments during the year 2013, including also the analysis of the gender structure of the project teams, lecturers and students, if available.
- focus on objectives, tasks, methodology, theoretical background and expected results.
- comparative perspective between STEM and SSH fields
STEP 1: Mapping of existing researches and curricula

Mapping criteria:

- both presence and absence of gender perspective in research and curricula contents, focusing not only on inclusion, but also on the exclusion of particular content – the so-called “hidden curriculum”

A student guidebook mentions gender stereotypes in order to invite girls to enroll the Computer Science courses. Indeed, when the guidebook provides information about the skills and the competences required, it deconstructs, with a smart language, the two main stereotypes about Information engineering and Computer Sciences scholars: firstly, that it is only for geeks and, secondly, the that it is only for boys. Notably, this is the only section where the text addresses both genders in a direct and informal way (“Dear boys and girls”), while in the rest of the document the gender used to refer to scholars and teachers is always (supposedly neutral) male.

from STEM test institution, Italy
**STEP 2:** Comparative analysis of the results

**Challenges:**

- Lack of data on research projects
- Gender as an “isolated topic”
- Dominance of heteronormative approach
- Lack of trans disciplinary dialog
- Overcoming human-non/human dichotomy
STEP 3: Toolkit on implementing gender in research and curricula (GARCIA working paper n. 6)
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**Generic recommendations on:**

- Introducing gender in project/teaching teams
- Introducing gender in **content** of research/teaching:
  - Research problem & questions
  - Gender-sensitive methodology
  - Results & users/beneficiaries

→ allows tailor-made approach
Process:
- Preliminary gathering w/ SSH
- Pilot workshop: other comparative SSH (1f, 2m, 25%) and STEM (1f, 6m, 50%)
- SSH workshop (4f, 1m, 12,5%)
- STEM workshop (2f, 0%)
**STEP 4:** Training courses addressed to researchers from two test departments

**Structure:**

- Workshop format (instead of “preaching and teaching”)
- PRESENTATIONS: posing questions from the Toolkit
- ACTIVITIES: self-reflection on own projects/experience
- → discussions!
- “insider” participant from GARCIA team
STEP 4: Training courses for researchers from two test dept.

**Unexpected positive nonchallenges:**

- Effectiveness of institutional resistance
- Making parallels between gendered and other social inequalities
- Benefits of mixed-disciplinary workshops

**Challenges:**

- Institutional resistance
- Lack of interest
- Taking status-quo for granted
- How to present applicability
STEP 5 and counting: Dissemination & Impact

**Toolkit:**
- Disseminated to all higher education and research institutions in Slovenia
- Promoted by Women’s Lobby of Slovenia
- Incorporated into database GEAR created by the European Institute of Gender Equality

**Workshop:**
- Invitation to hold the workshop at Goldsmiths, University of London, in congruence with Athena SWAN requirements – February 2017.
- Integration into the GAP.

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