

DHG World Café session

Gender Equality in Higher Education: Maximising Impacts

Today's session

- Five minutes – quick overview of British Council report findings and recommendations
- 25 minutes – opportunity to share practice on advancing gender equality objectives


Key findings – The opportunity

- Higher education benefits women as individuals and in society
- Higher education institutions are important sites where gender equality can be promoted or challenged
- A range of international and national legal, regulatory and policy frameworks exist around women's equality, and apply to higher education institutions and systems

"Higher education, once the privilege of the elite, is increasingly within reach of the majority — including women and girls — in all countries. Education at all levels, but higher education especially, gives women options, empowers them to be independent thinkers and agents of change."

Michele Bachelet, Executive Director UN Women, addressing the 5th Global Colloquium of University Presidents, Pennsylvania, April 2011

Key findings - challenges

- Higher education can **perpetuate gender inequalities**
 - **Intersectionality** is important
 - **Enrolment and progression** vary considerably
 - **Women** are consistently and significantly **under-represented in positions of power and leadership** globally
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- There is significant and persistent **gender disparity in subject selection**
 - **STEM subjects have global and persistent issues of under-representation**
 - Gender studies (or women's studies) can be an important tool for gender equality

Key findings – challenges (2)

- **Teaching and learning environments can reinforce gender inequality**, with gender-responsive pedagogy a potential response. The shift to online teaching has differential impacts on men and women – both positive and negative.
- **Curriculum content is gendered** and often not gender-sensitive
- **Men as a group remain advantaged at every stage of their academic careers** – this is influenced by attitudes, norms and constructions of leadership, as well as recruitment, selection and promotion practices
- A **lifecycle approach** looking beyond tertiary education can be successful
- **Sexual and gender-based violence** exist within higher education but data is lacking – risks are increased for students compared to the wider population and for international students

Recommendations in brief (1)

1. Prioritise gender mainstreaming – gender audits, gender analysis, explicit gender objectives
2. Develop gender expertise
3. Ensure an intersectional approach
4. Put a greater focus on violence against women
5. Address women's under-representation in higher education leadership
6. Tackle subject segregation, especially in STEM



Recommendations in brief (2)

7. Take a gendered approach to online learning and collaboration
8. Strengthen organisational leadership and commitment to address gender equality in strategy, policy, quality assurance and delivery
9. Recognise and promote gender studies and women's higher education institutions
10. Take a lifecycle approach
11. Assert the centrality of equality and inclusion to the definition of quality and excellence in higher education
12. Act at scale



How can international collaboration within tertiary education contribute to advancing gender equality?

- What are your priority areas of focus for collaboration on gender equality?
- What steps are you already taking or planning to take to address gender equality objectives through tertiary education partnerships?
- What successes and challenges have you encountered?
 - How receptive are key actors to a focus on advancing gender equality?
- How can the benefits of collaboration in this area be aggregated and amplified across agencies?

