

33. Gender and Education

Network Objective

Previous research and critical inquiries on gender have demonstrated the complexity of gender relations in the society and in various educational settings in particular. Our understandings of gender issues have changed and we have become aware of educational challenges related to gender, such as different achievements of girls and boys at school, gender biased and stereotypical choices of school subjects and professions. Moreover, as a result of bigger enrolment of women in the field of education in all its segments scholars have begun to talk about the feminisation of education. In addition, research on gender performances and interests in both masculinities and femininities proliferate, to name just a few topics. Gender and education is now well-established agenda considered also by policy makers.

We believe it is time gender and education became an autonomous network within EERA. Moreover, the importance of gender as a topic of research in the scope of education sciences domain needs to be thus recognized. Knowledge produced by continuous, high class research on gender issues is needed also for successful evidence based educational policy making.

The main objective of the Network is to strengthen the collaboration and enhance sharing of the research experience across different disciplines in order to improve the quality of the research and to acquire a transnational, more holistic approach and comprehensive view on gender and gender equality in education within Europe and globally.

Main Research Focus

The research areas of the Network:

- Theoretical and methodological aspects of the research on gender in education (critical inquiry of the theoretical approaches and research methodologies in order to develop innovative theoretical foundations and research methodologies in the field)
- gender equality in education and society (gender equality in society as the basis of gender equality in education; education and raising awareness of gender equality within society)
- gender sensitivity of the national curriculum, textbooks and teaching practice (representation and stereotypical portrayal of men and women, academic and professional expectations related to gender, gender differences in learning achievements, gendered school subjects etc.)
- teacher education and professional development for gender sensitive teaching (research, policy and practice)
- school as a gender sensitive community (extra-curricular activities within schools on gender equality, collaboration of schools with parents and community on the implementation of gender equality at schools)
- gendered choices in high education, university study fields and professions (“male” and “female” schools, study fields and professions, how to overcome their gender based division...)
- Issues beyond gender binary (problematizing gender binary in education and critical perspectives on individual and cultural dimensions of prejudices and discrimination of LGBT persons in education)
- national and EU policies on gender equality in education (policy documents on gender equality in education, implementation of policy measures on gender equality in education, research as an analytical base for evidence-based policy on gender equality in education....).

Relations to other Networks

Reviewing the goals, research areas, annual reports and abstracts of the ECER conference network sessions shows that gender as a topic is scattered over several existing networks and subsumed under their themes and thus covered partially. Since gender issues are discussed within different thematic contexts they remained isolated from each other. The new gender network will provide a common platform that will enable a holistic approach and a more comprehensive coverage of gender issues. The sessions of GEN Network will offer a forum for meeting researchers focussing on gender from different

disciplines. GEN will also be active in seeking cooperation and organising joint sessions together with other, already active Networks such as Network 4 Inclusive education, Network 27 Didactics – Teaching and Learning and Network 7. Social Justice and Intercultural Education. GEN has already contacted Network 4 Inclusive Education Network and Network 27 Didactics-Teaching and Learning and has planned a session in ECER 2017 Copenhagen where researchers interested in gender issues will have a possibility to meet and discuss future collaboration.

Additionally, only several national associations from EERA have either a special interest group (e.g. Finland) or network on gender and education issues (e.g. German, Italy, GEA from the UK). Regional educational associations, NERA and BERA, also have specialized gender and education networks. Other national associations from EERA cover gender equality in education within networks on broader themes (e.g. SERA network on Poverty and Education) or through conferences (thematic gender conferences or as an aspect of broader conference theme, e. g. conference on Educational Inequality and Justice). Gender issues are also thematized in non-European countries, e.g. American educational research association has a special interest group Queer Studies.

In contrast to the mentioned countries EERA national associations from Eastern European countries do not have networks or sections on gender and education issues.