

GENDER WIRE

HIGHLIGHTS

“Feminism isn’t about making women stronger. Women are already strong. It’s about changing the way the world perceives that strength.”

G.D. Anderson

UNESCO at the United Nations General Assembly

- Launch of the report of the **Broadband Commission Working Group on Gender, “Cyber Violence against Women And Girls: A Worldwide Wake-Up Call”**, 24 September 2015, was chaired by the heads of UN Women and UNDP in New York. On this occasion, S. Gulser Corat, DIR/ODG/GE, speaking on behalf of the Director-General, stressed the amount of cyber related violence faced by women, such as *“trolling, hate speech, hacking, surveillance, harassment, spamming and malicious sharing.”* She reminded the audience that *“73% of women have already been exposed to, or have experienced, some form of online violence which exists in many forms, including online harassment, public shaming, sexual assaults and suicides”*. (read the full report [here](#))
- On 26 September 2015, the Director-General participated in the **interactive dialogue on “Inequalities, Empowering Women and Leaving No One Behind”** as part of the Post-2015 Summit, during which many countries recognized gender inequalities as extremely prevalent and persistent.
- On 27 September 2015^h, the Director-General attended the opening ceremony of the **Global Leader’s Meeting on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**. 86 leaders made commitments to achieve gender equality by 2030, including H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China, who co-chaired the event.

UNESCO elsewhere

- **The World Assembly for Women** was hosted by the Government of Japan, on 28-29 August 2015 in Tokyo, Japan. Prime Minister Abe reaffirmed his Government’s commitment to gender equality and women’s economic leadership. The Director-General spoke at a high-level session on girls’ education and noted that it is important to give girls second chances to get back to school and stressed the need for safe school environments.



© MOFA Cabinet Public Relations Office – UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova with Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe at the World Assembly for Women, Tokyo, August 28th

- **The International Seminar on Girls and Women’s Education** in Beijing, China was led by the President of UNESCO’s General Conference President, Mr Hao Ping on 4 September 2015. Along with UNESCO’s Special Envoy for Girls’ Education, Dr Peng Liyuan, the Director-General argued for gender sensitive training and curricula, as well as for female teachers who can act as powerful role models.
- **Women’s Forum**, 14 October 2015, Deauville, France. During one of the plenary sessions, the Director General discussed the relevance of focusing on quality education, cultural diversity and science to achieve sustainable development. The forum gathered 1300 participants from 600 organizations and 70 countries.

New partnerships

- UNESCO and the **Women Leadership Academy** signed a **Letter of Cooperation** during the International Symposium on Women's Leadership in the Digital Era on 17 October 2015 in Beijing, China. This partnership will aim to support women's leadership programmes, in China and in South-East Asia. Saniye Gülser Corat, DIR/ODG/GE, was appointed as one of 18 members of the Academic Committee of WLA.



Signing ceremony with Honorary President of WLA, Ms Chen Zhili and DIR/ODG/GE, Ms Saniye Gülser Corat, Beijing, 17 October

Priority Gender Equality at the UNESCO Executive Board 197th session

- Member States reiterated their commitment to Priority Gender Equality during the general policy debates. Many Member States shared their concern regarding school-related gender-based violence and emphasized UNESCO's critical role in this area. Member States also expressed their full support for gender mainstreaming in sectors' performance indicators and expected results along with baseline data and benchmarks. They also stressed the need for proactive and targeted measures in favor of gender parity in the Secretariat.

UNESCO's Gender Equality Champions

Congratulations to Anthea Brooks (SC), Ernesto Fernandez-Polcuch (Montevideo Office) and Martin Schaaper (UNESCO Institute of Statistics in Montreal, UIS) for organizing the first meeting of the STEM and Gender Advancement (SAGA) Advisory Committee on 1-2 September 2015 in the UIS offices in Montreal, Canada.



© UNESCO/ A. Brooks SAGA Advisory Committee during their first meeting, Montreal, September 1st-2nd 2015

SAGA is an excellent example of Headquarters - Field Office - Institute collaboration. Its goal is to reduce the gender gap in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields in all countries at all levels of education and research, by developing better indicators to support evidence-based policy-making and to improve data collection.

The main objectives of the first Advisory Committee meeting were to identify relevant methodological approaches to (i)

survey Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy instruments that address or impact gender equality; and to (ii) integrate gender in STEM indicators.

Let's mainstream!

The aim of this section is to help colleagues to mainstream gender equality considerations into their workplans and to design gender-specific initiatives. Please pay attention even if the workplan highlighted is from another sector, as methodologies are the same.

Today, focus on **Social and Human Sciences** and with activity n°2652, which aims to support **social inclusion** and promote **human rights** in Guatemala, with a focus on the most disadvantaged, such as indigenous women and persons with disabilities.

Why is there a need to integrate gender equality considerations? After an extremely violent 36 year-long civil war that ended in 1996, Guatemala still struggles to reduce violence and poverty. During the civil war, women and girls, especially from indigenous populations, were particularly targeted. Today, they still face many forms of violence: Guatemala ranks (i) **third** in the world for **femicide**; (ii) **first** in Latin America for **teenage pregnancy** (according to the OHCHR, many girls are raped by family members, which often results in them dropping out of school). The UN estimates that **two women are killed every day** and that **98%** of the cases of violent murders of women never make it to court. Domestic violence is also prevalent. Many international organizations and NGOs affirm that indigenous women in Guatemala have to face **triple discrimination** due to their ethnicity, their social status and their gender.

How is the project addressing this need? Since women, especially indigenous women, are often left out in state policies, this project's main focus is precisely to include those women's needs in the national policies for persons with disabilities, and to develop a gender equality perspective through the participation of **women's organizations** (state and civil). A Special Committee has been created to ensure coordination with state institutions, including the National Council for the Attention of Persons with Disabilities (CONADI).

Expected result so far: The Special Committee will (i) meet regularly with CONADI and other state institutions (expects to have 80% of them involved) to improve their work at the local level (which is critical to guarantee that women's needs are taken into account); (ii) work with women's organizations (expects that 15% of stakeholders are women's organizations); (iii) advocate for politicians to take ownership of the project and ensure its sustainability.

GEM level: 2, gender responsive. To read the whole workplan, please click [here](#).

A new step towards gender equality

In October 2015, the French Secretary of State for women's rights, Pascale Boistard, announced that fighting against sexist and degrading representations of women in advertisement will be a priority. She will soon launch a dialogue phase with advertising agencies to agree on a precise definition of sexism and to avoid any sort of gray area, while respecting the creative dimensions of advertising. Currently, the Superior Council for Audiovisual can only act on ads diffused on television or on the radio, but not on those displayed in the streets or public transportation.



Pascale Boistard. Credits: French government

Did you know?!?

✚ **High heels** were originally worn by **men** as a sign of **high social status**, since only people who didn't have to work could wear such impractical shoes. The trend was born among **European aristocrats** in the 1600s. As a symbol of **power**, the fashion was later imitated by women, and when heels became more associated with women, men stopped wearing them.

✚ According to a new study published by the International Labor Organization (ILO), if you work in a company, your **boss** is more likely to be a woman than a man in **only three countries** in the world: Jamaica, Colombia and Saint Lucia.

Gender Equality

Tools

Assessing women's and men's different needs and aspirations vs. fighting gender stereotypes: contradiction?

Some colleagues shared the difficulty they faced trying to reconcile these two objectives because they seem contradictory. They are actually **complementary**:

◆ there is a need to **acknowledge women and men's respective needs, interests, obstacles**, etc. because in most fields and contexts, they are still often different. Projects should take these differences into account to be **inclusive**. If no such effort is made, the **dominant point of view** will be the only one reflected and the project will have **limited impact**.

◆ there is also a need to **challenge stereotypes, traditional gender roles and norms** because they only **reinforce those differences** and **perpetuate gender inequalities**. Gender equality doesn't mean that women and men should be the same: **differences that aren't socially constructed aren't problematic**, as long as they are not **hierarchized**. But being a man or a woman should not make any difference when it comes to **access** to fundamental rights, **opportunities**, or the ability for everyone to **decide** for oneself.

Gender Wire's movie selection



If *Fatima* (Philippe Faucon, France) touches so many people, it's because it puts a secondary character under the spotlight. Inspired by Fatima Elayoubi's autobiography, *Prière à La Lune*, the film tells the story of a Moroccan-born woman who arrived in France at age 30. A single mother of two adolescent girls, Fatima works long hours as a housekeeper to support them. The evenings mark the beginning of a new day, at home, with her daughters. The film focuses on these truly liberating moments

during which the three characters manage to extract themselves from their social status, through writing or conversation. *Fatima* is about giving characters their full humanity and complexity back, when they are not bound by any perceived identity gender, ethnicity or religion. ■

■ *Serment*, Hana grew up in remote where women often live under men's avoid this, Hana chooses to comply with an allows women to live as men, on condition their femininity and remain virgin. *Sworn Albania/Italy*) follows Hana's journey which takes her to Italy.

based on their class, In "Vierge sous Albanian mountains, guardianship. To old tradition that that they renounce to *Virgin* (Laura Bisपुरi, towards freedom,

