

## Table 10

Creating Equity and Fairness: Gender

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**At the beginning of each sessions, the following questions have been raised:**

**Equity, fairness and gender: 1. how do we understand them; 2. how can we use them** as strategic and agenda-building terms, used to improve innovation and excellence at universities; as concepts enabling for social change and wellbeing, serving to uphold human rights, academic freedom, and critical thinking in our university communities. **3. How do we do it?**

**GENERAL ISSUES that emerged:**

- (more or less) progressive movements and trends for the empowerment of women and girls
- intersections between gender and international relations
- gender and violence (especially towards women)
- Indigenous people and minority groups (intersections of gender and identity)
- Equality / equity: are they the same or not?

**World café Creating Equity and Fairness: Gender – session 1 –**

Present: two students (Edinburgh Univ. and Univ. of Bologna) and a scholar (Univ. of Greenland)

### **DEBATE**

Need to focus on policies against gender violence; particularly, on young *men* committing violence against women – Need to make them “heal” in order for them not to feel like attacking women anymore. Education activities need to be performed which have young men as their targets. Does that suffice? No. We educate the new generations, but it is adult/old men who perform forms of violence and abuse. So, actions need to be taken on the younger generations, through educations programs, but older ones must be the focus of attention as well.

Policy in Unibo: particularly committed to fight violence against women.

In general: Intertwinement between different categories and features. E.g. Be an indigenous woman in Greenland is different from being a white woman. We need to reflect on which values (local, national, shared, ...) we are referring to whenever we talk about values. The same holds for identity: what does it exactly amount to? How do we define the different categories, and how are they related?

E.g. “Romas”: they are indigenous, but tend to be left outside, to live apart from the rest of the local communities. Denmark: they tend to sexualize people from Greenland, where there are 56.000 of them. A few decades ago, chemicals were deliberately introduced in water to reduce fertility of indigenous people. The indigenous try to be very active in media, denouncing violence and repression, fight for rights, dignity,

against violence wrt to indigenous people. Fight for rights of indigenous people – More efforts should be devoted to try to push forward agendas in favour of indigenous people.

Scotland: very conservative attitude in the end. Very international environment that still stirs lot of ambivalent reaction within society. 1) Frequent “reactionary” attitudes within the University; as a matter of fact, conservative or reactionary people are fewer, but they are louder. 2) Scottish society per se is very conservative. An important (negative) role is also played by the part one has in the social hierarchy. Usually, the lower, the more conservative with respect to the dichotomy man-woman. Young people tend to discuss such a dichotomy, but they find a still hostile environment. Forcing categories on others is very risky.

University forces people to question the way they think. Universities make people reflect on categories and how they are used, and also lived. The university context differs from the standard social one: more respect is shown for the way in which people identify themselves; Universities are much more sensitive to gender issues than external societies.

Financial insecurities: one of the biggest issues to increase women inclusion in academic contexts. Also, in institutional big contexts (UN) the pyramid of force relations/hierarchies are still consolidated.

A very important need is to keep on listening to the students. Overall, we need to be unafraid of change / many universities are still afraid of change (es. Consumption of alcohol within universities – es- during introductory week for new students).

We cannot wait for future generations to change matters. It is this generation which needs to be responsible of significant changes.

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## World cafe – session 2 –

Rector of Tallin Univ: Vice-Chancellor of a Univ in Sweden (very North); Vice-Rector Univ. of Campinas; Vice-Chancellor – Ukraine

### DEBATE

How do we get our education more open and inclusive? How do we get more women in technology/STEM/ecc.? Es. AI? How do we need to structure the education programs, the contexts, the frame, ecc. / Need to elaborate projects on STEM / when to focus on that? How does the enrolment in a given disciplinary program later affects the salary one gets in the job market.

We need to keep in mind, and communicate, that gender equality drives economic prosperity!

From Ukraine: need to bring women and kids *back* to the country – People need to go back to rebuild the country.

Ukraine: do we pick somebody because she is good at the job, or just because we have to recruit a woman?

Sweden: recruitment processes without knowing whether the person is a man or a woman – e.g. in an orchestra – Gender-blind selections

Brasil: need to work with the young girls, with the younger generations – non all women are interested and willing to fight for their rights and place in the job market. Some say that it's too hard, too time-consuming, too unlikely to succeed, etc. In Campinas a program is being planned to empower the indigenous, the black people, the mulattos, especially the girls. Furthermore, motivational meetings are organized, to push girls

into having more trust in themselves. Talks are delivered by successful senior women to motivate the younger ones. Need to motivate and pass on successful experiences.

Latin America: much focus on the promotion of higher education

Tallin: we need to search for good practices to promote gender equality. Frequent lack of gender balance in degree programs. In general, in Eastern Europe young generations are open to gender issues and interested in them; much harder to raise the discussion with elder generations.

Unibo has a plan to improve women's condition –the “gender equality plan” (which is compulsory at the European level).

Need to promote a balance between job and personal life, in order for careers to be sustainable.

Need to start from legal changes, to then get to cultural and social changes.

STEM: - use of media & joint promotion by Universities and firms/companies.

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### **World cafe – session 3 –**

Two students (from Madrid, Complutense, and Unibo, both representative of students in Una Europa) and Rector of a Univ. mid-south Sweden

#### **DEBATE**

Students in Una Europa report that situations in countries represented in the alliance are more or less the same. Issues are to be considered concerning gender, “races”, minorities, equity, financial matters. Within societies, attitudes and positions with respect to such issues are very different according to age and social classes. Students basically share the same concerns in all the members of the alliance.

It is to be recalled that when talking of gender, we are not referring just to the categories of woman/man. Nowadays, there is the need to embrace a much wider discourse on “intersectionality”, and the need to have also the other and more diverse representatives.

Importance of education and culture: the sooner we educate, the better. Education against violence is powerful; it is equally powerful to be inspired by a woman who made it, i.e. a powerful woman.

When reflecting on education, we have to pay attention also to stereotypes and body language.

Sweden: fewer and fewer young men enter the university. A shift has occurred which is believed to be related to the kind of teaching: a more innovative, interactive way of teaching (e.g. reflecting on problems and possible solutions; critical thinking, ...) has determined also a shift in the fact that it is more beneficial to women than to men. With this kind of teaching, women tend to get better grades, and hence to be then more successful in entering universities.

We need to promote inclusivity more than empowering.