BRITISH COUNCIL

Research

Gender equality in higher education: maximising impacts

Report by Helen Mott
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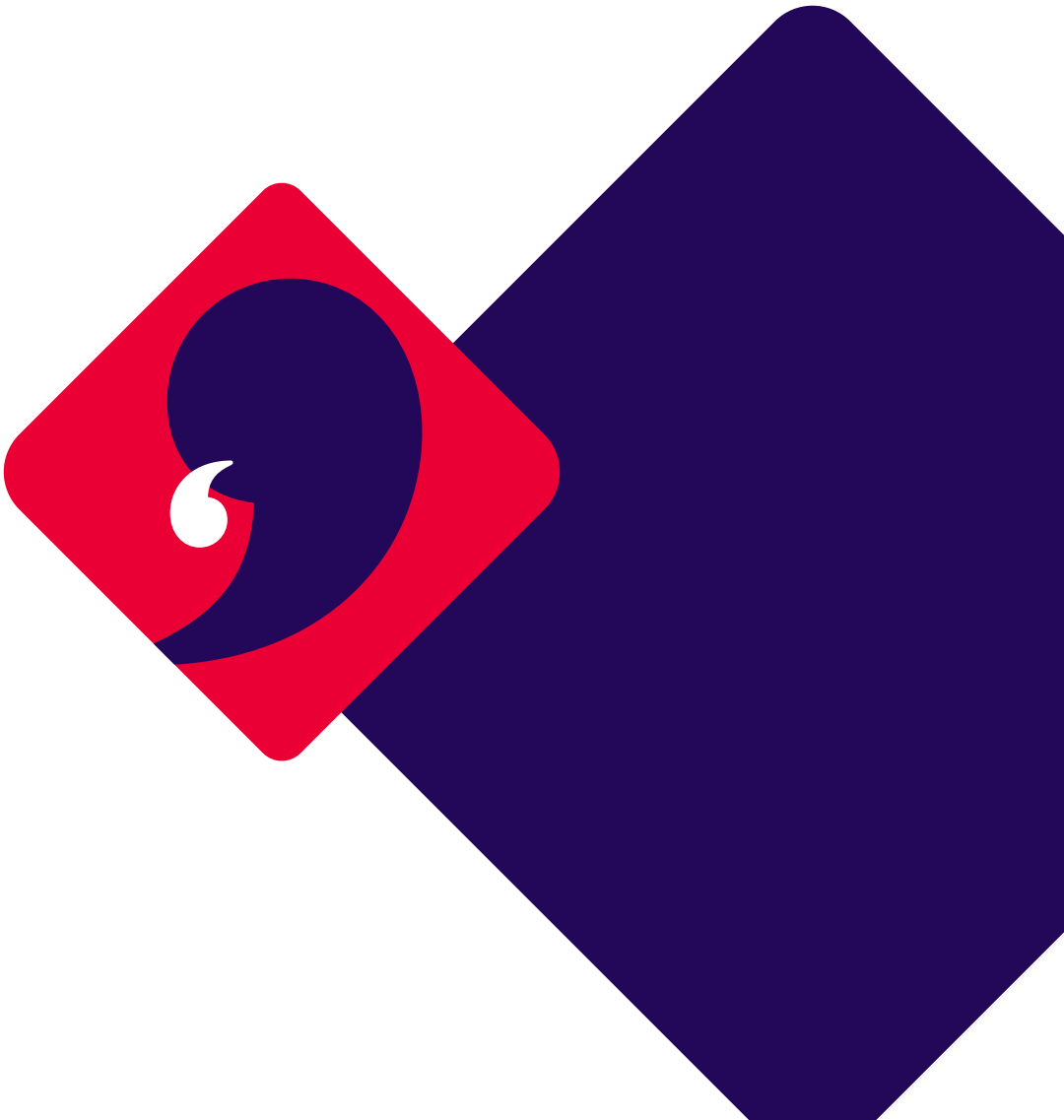

Part of the
Going Global Partnerships Programme

Contents

Foreword

There is global consensus on the importance of addressing gender inequalities, expressed in the inclusion of a standalone goal on gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important to note that these goals are universal and relevant to every country, community, sector and area of the economy and, likewise, all areas of the work of the British Council and our partners globally.

Gender equality issues impact and are reflected in higher education systems worldwide – with unequal access to higher education in many countries, fewer resources and opportunities available to women, the existence of violence against women affecting students and staff, and sustained under-representation of women in leadership positions in higher education institutions. Despite women succeeding academically, it is more challenging for women to succeed in their future careers both within and outside academia following their studies.

There is a critical need to address gender inequalities in higher education – requiring concerted efforts from a range of different institutions and partners, including governments, oversight and funding bodies, academics and civil society organisations as well as higher education institutions themselves. As reflected in this report, progress has been made towards gender equality in many countries and there are some excellent examples of policy and practice to draw on. However, much more still needs to be done and the British Council is committed to supporting this process.

The British Council has put an increasing emphasis on gender equality over the past five years and this is further reflected in Strategy 2025. In our higher education work, we develop partnerships and connections between governments, institutions, policymakers, academics, researchers and students around the world. This creates many opportunities to enable dialogue and learning between the UK and the rest of the world on how values of equality can be put into practice.

This report acts as a resource to help us make the most of these opportunities. It provides extensive evidence and analysis of the issues in the sector and a rich collection of case studies from both within and outside the British Council, as well as resources that set out practical ways in which we can strengthen our work.

As well as improving our own understanding of gender equality issues, how they are manifested in the higher education sector and how we can integrate gender equality considerations systematically into our work, we would like to call on our partners globally to work with us on this agenda. By sharing expertise, experience, models and successes and by developing innovative approaches, we can together make an important contribution to addressing challenges of gender inequality both in the UK and around the world.

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Director of Education

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Executive summary and recommendations

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is central to the work of the British Council as a cultural relations organisation that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion as core values. The British Council shares with others – in the higher education (HE) sector and in the development and women's sectors – the desire to bring an intentional focus to how HE systems and practices can be improved through attention to gender equality outcomes. This can equally well be expressed as the desire to address gender inequalities and advance the equality and empowerment of women and girls through the vehicle of HE systems, programmes and practices.

This report provides an in-depth analysis of how gender inequality is reflected, reinforced and challenged in HE worldwide. It examines relevant legal and policy frameworks and statistical data, as well as summarising academic research on the extent and consequences of gender inequalities in HE and the evidence for effective practice from research and programme implementation.

For the first time, research and best practice from around the world that addresses the multiple manifestations of gender inequality in HE, together with tools and practices to promote equality and empowerment, are collated into one reference document. The report then examines the challenges and opportunities for gender equality in HE framed by the five core outcome areas of the British Council's global theory of change for women and girls' empowerment. A compendium of global resources and data sources, illustrated by 17 in-depth case studies and with suggestions for evaluating and monitoring progress, is provided. Recommendations are grouped into 12 thematic areas.

Analysis of gender equality and inequalities in HE

Higher education benefits women as individuals and in society

Individuals benefit directly and significantly through investment in tertiary education where the rates of return (profitability for individuals) are generally higher for women than for men, globally across low-income and high-income countries. Engagement in HE is a route to economic independence for women, which is a marker and facilitator of gender equality, disrupting cycles of gender disadvantage. HE also brings a range of social benefits, including indirect and non-financial benefits, to women and is associated with better individual and family health.

Higher education institutions are important for gender equality

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are the incubators for the thought leaders and social leaders of the future. The creation of HEIs and systems where norms for gender equality are practised and modelled, and where the voices and ideas of women are valued and raised up, are some of the most powerful tools available to society for accelerating progress towards the equality and empowerment of women and girls everywhere. When harmful, rigid social gender norms are challenged, and gender equality is promoted, the full realisation of equal rights for people of all genders and gender identities becomes achievable.

Higher education can perpetuate gender inequalities

Despite HE systems being a driver for the promotion of equality and empowerment, the evidence shows that they also reproduce discrimination against women, often 'by default rather than design'. Action is required within HEIs to transform discriminatory gender norms – such as unequal domestic burdens falling upon women and bias in assessment, recruitment and promotion – as well as to address the practical barriers in the here and now that disproportionately affect women because of their place in society. Effective policies to address structural barriers (e.g. maternity, paternity, flexible working) are not in place for HEIs or research bodies in many parts of the world.

Intersectionality

Sex/gender discrimination and inequality do not affect all women in HE equally, with data showing that various characteristics – including, for example, socio-economic background, ethnicity and disability – intersect with and compound women's disadvantage. Research on gender identities, and non-binary and transgender experiences is lacking, compounded by a lack of clarity in data collection on whether sex, gender identity or both are being analysed.

Legal and policy frameworks

There is a range of binding and indicative international and national legal, regulatory and policy frameworks which set out the obligations upon nations, public bodies and HEIs for taking positive steps to promote women's equality, and to tackle discrimination and disadvantage. These are described and signposted in the report.

Approach to the evidence

The report provides summaries of numerous rigorous and up-to-date research studies that demonstrate significant bias and discrimination against women in HE – against a backdrop where narratives of scientific, scholarly or professional objectivity have clouded the willingness of individuals and institutions to acknowledge and therefore address the systemic discrimination for which they hold responsibility.

In each thematic section of Section 1 of the report, research findings are discussed together with sources for evidence-led approaches to preventing and counteracting bias. In turn, the report addresses the gendered aspects of enrolment in HE; progression to research; research and innovation; subject selection; curriculum content; teaching and learning environments; student assessment; and recruitment, promotion, pay, 'service' work and leadership among academic research and teaching staff. Examples from research and programmes in the regions and nations of the world are threaded through the text.

Enrolment and progression

Concerted global action on equity in education provision has contributed to the fact that more women than men now complete HE in most countries (52 per cent vs 48 per cent), despite one in four people globally agreeing that university education is more important for a boy than a girl. Women's higher completion rates do not translate into personal advantage for those women over comparable men, or for women in general, globally.

There is substantial variability in participation and completion rates, and their association with other markers of inequality, across different regions and countries, showing that gender norms that suppress or accelerate gender equality are not fixed and can be shifted. One global pattern – women's significant under-progression into research roles – is particularly variable by country and region as well as discipline, which can be traced to the effects of social and educational policies. Women are consistently and significantly under-represented in positions of power and leadership in HE globally, regardless of whether their national context sees more women overall filling the less prestigious roles in HE.

Research, innovation and women in STEM

The field of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) is critical for innovation, for addressing environmental and health concerns, and for economic advancement.

It receives a significant degree of attention in the context of HE, and it is also the field with the most global and persistent issues of under-representation and marginalisation of women and where the systematic under-valuing of women's work has been demonstrated in a host of rigorous research studies.

Efforts to address this imbalance and improve the quality of STEM subjects and outputs through the engagement and retention of greater numbers of diverse women are described, including through the adoption of action plans and frameworks designed by research councils and HE advisory bodies.

Subject selection and gender as a subject

There is significant and persistent gender disparity in a range of subject fields chosen for study at HE level. Some but not all of this disparity sets in during formative years of primary and secondary education, where a combination of gender stereotypes, gendered curricula and role models, and other barriers to equal engagement are apparent. Addressing the issue requires action across the educational lifecycle.

In the meantime it is important that HE initiatives to support access to HE are not skewed to subjects where male students predominate, without targeted action to support women. As a subject in its own right, gender studies (or women's studies) is an important tool for legitimising and embedding the enhancement of social understanding of gender inequality, while also producing empowered graduates with the motivation and the skills to work towards a more gender-equal society. In-house expertise on gender (academics working in gender studies) will also assist HEIs to develop good policy and practice.

Curriculum content

There is considerable evidence that curriculum content often constructs men and boys as the default subject, and the default holder of knowledge. The consequences of leaving sex/gender and women/girls out of the curriculum are many. They include inappropriate and sometimes literally dangerous over-generalisation from men's experience and/or physiology to women, and the misrepresentation of women's experiences and needs as being deviant from what has been constructed as 'normal' based on men's lives. Gender stereotypes based on sexism can be employed to account for sex and gender differences, where education about discrimination and disadvantage would have provided a more accurate picture.

Without practical engagement with sex/gender issues within the curriculum, issues of particular concern to women are unacknowledged. A number of toolkits and resources are available to assist with ensuring gender-sensitive curriculum content.

Teaching and learning environments

NGOs and others working to improve girls' access to education have paid considerable attention to teaching and learning environments that are physically appropriate for, and welcoming to, girls in primary and secondary education. There is far less evidence of action to improve the teaching and learning environment for girls and women in HE settings, despite strong evidence for the benefits of gender-responsive pedagogy and for the detriments suffered by female students due to unequal treatment and to their heightened risk of experiencing violence.

While there is little evidence that gender bias towards students is prevalent at tertiary level in student assessments, the evidence is considerable that bias and inequality are commonplace in the classroom and in the curriculum. Selection processes for educational opportunities such as scholarships need to be gender-responsive.

In addition to the need to create gender-responsive pedagogy for the benefit of their own students, HEIs are also responsible for programmes that provide training and accreditation for teachers at primary and secondary level, and the British Council supports a number of such courses. Ensuring that gender sensitivity is embedded in teachers' future practice will have impact at scale. The report reflects upon the considerable short-term and medium-term benefits of single-sex (women's) universities for both students and women academics, noting that of the *Times Higher Education (THE)* top 100 universities for gender equality, two are women's universities.

There is a scarcity of data about gender differences in the uptake or effectiveness of online learning, although the merits of online learning for increasing access for disadvantaged groups, including women, are significant. Generally, there is little evidence of any universal or stable gender differences in the effectiveness of online learning environments. Rather, social and educational interactions taking place online are likely to reflect the existing gender norms that are present in more traditional learning environments and in society.

Online abuse of women is a significant problem in HE as in wider society. However, if adequate policy, safeguarding and monitoring provisions are put in place by the responsible institutions, then the 'fingerprint' left by those who use online platforms to abuse or harass may give their victims better evidence with which to take forward complaints or demands for accountability.

Academic careers

Men as a group remain advantaged at every stage of their academic careers. While women tend to outnumber men at entry into HE, as they progress through the ranks of academia the senior positions are very disproportionately held by men. Men receive more opportunities and higher discretionary payments, and are consistently rated by students more highly than women who teach – which holds true in experiments where the gender of the instructor is artificially manipulated. There is a 'presumption of incompetence' held by students towards academic teachers who are women or members of other minority groups.

Concerningly, research on leadership in HE not only finds discriminatory and exclusionary practices in recruitment, selection and promotion practices, but also that many women report finding the idea of leadership unattractive and difficult to navigate culturally. Leadership and mentoring programmes for women in HE are important for women who are breaking the mould and helping to change social norms. Women in academia can be subjected to higher expectations that they provide nurture and service to others as a part of their academic role than their male colleagues. Men are also more inclined to cite other men in journal articles and they have been found to cite their own research 70 per cent more often than women. Men are awarded prizes, especially prestigious prizes, at considerably higher rates than would be expected. Research identifies a number of ways in which gender bias operates when it comes to determining scientific excellence. There is good evidence that interventions to address bias in the recruitment and promotion processes can be successful.

Compounded disadvantage and discrimination

While to be Black and female is to represent the global majority, in many nations these characteristics incur significant social disadvantage, together as well as separately. Putting effort into expanding social or cultural ideas about academic excellence to include privileged white women without representing women in all their diversity is likely to create disadvantage for marginalised women.

Research in HE has revealed profound intersectional disadvantage for Black and Latinx women as well as disabled women. Research candidates presumed to be men have been rated as less likeable, but more competent and hireable, than those presumed to be women. This is compounded by ethnicity. South Africa is one of the few countries to set targets by gender and ethnicity for research fellowships.

There are specific challenges for transgender men and women in HE, with transphobia and ignorance affecting career prospects as well as personal well-being. There is far too little data on gender identity and expression as well as on sexuality in HE, but what there is points towards trans students feeling more unsafe, experiencing more bullying and harassment, and feeling more excluded from the curriculum than other students.

The relationship of poverty and economic exclusion to opportunities in HE is a main focus for governments and institutions. Data shows strong gendered patterns with the poorest female students less likely to access HE than the poorest male students. Initiatives to widen participation of the poorest should always have a gender focus.

Lifecycle approach

A holistic understanding of every individual's journey towards and through HE from childhood to adulthood is required. The success of programmes that seek to empower girls to remain in secondary education is amplified by considering their entry into HE, and the pipeline of different genders into non-traditional subject areas in HE is strengthened by early intervention to address the norms, stereotypes and family cultures that constrain their engagement. HE programmes that stand alone are likely to have less impact than those that are developed and executed in dialogue with programmes in the same locations which are focused on culture, society and primary or secondary education.

Gendered violence and harm

Sexual and gender-based violence persist in all societies, both causing and resulting from gender inequality. The occurrence of violence against women (VAW) in HEIs reflects and supports gender inequality in the immediate HE context but also more widely in society. Sexual harassment and violence are prevalent in HE and form a core concern for many women managing their decisions to enter, remain or progress in HE environments as teachers, researchers or learners. HEIs are high-risk environments for VAW, with HE students being more at risk than those in the general population, and international students being an even more vulnerable group within the student population, subject as they are to a host of both specific and universal risks. The heightened risks for victimisation are accompanied by heightened risks of severe subsequent distress and trauma.

The level of data collection, analysis and prevention undertaken by HEIs and those responsible for supporting internationalisation in HE is not commensurate with the prevalence and harm caused by gendered violence in HEIs. This is despite the fact that HEIs are well placed to conduct research and are also ideal hubs for transformative prevention work which would considerably further progress towards gender equality and empowerment.

Analysis of programmes and theory of change

In the second part of the report, the British Council's theory of change for women and girls' empowerment is used to examine the challenges and possibilities for working in HE towards the five core outcome areas of:

1. increased awareness and agency
2. fairer access to resources and opportunities
3. dialogue, collaboration and collective action
4. supporting legal and policy environment
5. changes in attitudes, beliefs, practices and discriminatory social norms.

The importance of collecting and analysing gender-related data at every stage of the project cycle is emphasised.

'Fairer access to resources and opportunities' is the gender equality outcome area that receives by far the most attention in HE programmes and projects. While creating additional and specific opportunities for women's participation is important and laudable, it is also important to focus on addressing and removing the barriers that are standing in the way and which otherwise remain at the conclusion of activities that only raise participation temporarily.

This is achieved through policy actions at the country and institutional level, as well as through developing curricular and extra-curricular programming that helps learners to understand and challenge harmful gender-related social norms and practices. It is important to work with both women and men on social norms, and to create learning conditions in which the prospect of backlash is minimised. Introducing a commitment to include gender awareness and sensitivity in pedagogy and curricula as a matter of policy for quality assurance, including in teacher training curricula, has the potential to enhance the reach of gender equality work in HE exponentially.

The increasing marketisation of HE in some regions and nations has increased the number of stakeholders involved in HE activity and policy, and means that priorities between stakeholders are not always aligned towards gender equality and inclusion, reducing the potential for collective action. This needs to be addressed through bringing in specific requirements on policy and practice for gender equality as standard, across the full range of activities related to HE.

Resources and examples to assist with gender mainstreaming

There are many sources of guidance and support that have been produced by a range of contributors to assist with different aspects of gender mainstreaming in HE. This report creates, for the first time, a compendium of such resources and toolkits, for use by practitioners, programme designers and policymakers in HE. The resources are presented thematically to correspond with gender-focused activities across the five portfolio intervention areas in the British Council's HE and science strategy:

1. policy and systems development
2. institutional partnerships
3. professional development
4. student mobility
5. insight, analysis and advocacy.

To aid reflection, relevant international case study examples are highlighted, and suggestions are included for what monitoring and evaluation practices could look like in each of the intervention areas.

Case studies

An analysis of 17 case studies of British Council and wider HE projects and programmes brings to life some of the main challenges discussed throughout the report. The case studies range from policy approaches to partnership projects and actions undertaken by a range of institutions and agencies operating in the HE sector globally. Examples of good practice as well as reflections on what could have been done differently for improved gender equality impact are included.

Recommendations

The report concludes by making a set of recommendations in 12 core thematic areas, for the reduction of gender inequalities and the improvement of outcomes for women and girls worldwide through HE.

1. Prioritise gender mainstreaming
Progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a core ambition, but it is not achieved without intentional focus. Gender audits of current and planned projects should be conducted systematically and standard documentation should invite discussion of the ways in which sex and gender analysis is (or is not) relevant to, and reflected in, the work at hand. Sufficient resource allocation for the work of gender specialists should be factored into planning. Parties should take up, and build on, training in gender equality. Management reviews should include competence and operational success in gender mainstreaming. Externally commissioned work must include gendered analysis conducted by demonstrably competent analysts. Gender equality objectives and outcomes need to be explicit and not assumed, at every stage of project cycles and their associated documentation. The default indicators in monitoring and evaluation plans should be refined and replaced as necessary, to enable analysis of the gender inequalities and progress towards equality that cannot be captured by simply 'counting' participation, access or completion rates by sex/gender. Layers of disadvantage, including intersecting inequalities, should be identified. Materials demonstrating institutional commitment to gender equality should be developed and promoted in communications.

2. Develop gender expertise
Gender equality is currently not comprehensively mainstreamed (as discussed above) and neither is expertise on gender inequality regularly sought out where it is needed. International NGOs focusing on gender and education tend not to work in HE spaces. Leaders in HE and in Research and Innovation organisations worldwide have come to state the importance of integrating gender equality considerations into their work, creating a demand for country, regional and global gender specialists who have a specific focus on HE.

3. Ensure an intersectional approach
Good practice is not currently widespread, with the majority of initiatives taking 'women' as the only category of analysis. Ensure that interventions are inclusive of minoritised women, disabled women and other disadvantaged groups, and consider whether programmes could produce more impact by being targeted at specific groups of women and girls. The different experiences of women and girls with different intersecting identities need to be theorised, monitored and evaluated.

4. Put a greater focus on violence against women
VAW in HE has been identified as an urgent global predicament. It is a risk, concern and critical challenge for all those involved in HE who need to take a step up for accountability and safeguarding. Urgent action is required to work with specialists to develop evidence-based policy and assurance frameworks, particularly in transnational HE contexts where students appear to be at even greater risk than home students. Guidance should be provided to students and staff. Data collection on VAW prevalence and institutional response should be mandated. Prevention of VAW in HEIs should be a priority area for investment in best practice.

5. Address women's under-representation in HE leadership
Across the board, women in HE who are equally as talented as men are deprived of equivalent opportunities to rise to better-rewarded positions of influence and leadership. Women leaders when in place are also notably effective champions of further actions to address other forms of gender inequalities in HE. Commit to long-term action to address the leaky pipeline, glass ceiling, sticky floor and other known patterns of impediment to women's equal leadership in HE, for which there are established good practice models that can be adapted for cultural context as required. Practices and policies for recruitment and promotion, as well as other institutional norms, can conflate good leadership with masculinity, whereas excellence in inclusive leadership should be advanced and rewarded.

6. Tackle subject segregation, particularly in STEM
STEM remains a priority focus area globally for HEIs, at the same time as being a male-dominated field. When taking action to increase the numbers of women in STEM, make use of country and regional differences to address cultural gendered assumptions, and be inclusive of women in all their diversity. Ensure that other, less male-dominated subject areas within or outside the STEM tradition (e.g. climate geography, nursing studies) are not overlooked.

7. Take a gendered approach to online learning and collaboration
Ensure that online projects are designed for equality of access and outcomes, being alert to the unintended consequences of algorithms. Account for benefits and disbenefits to women when deciding on modes of learning and collaboration. Maintain opportunities, such as for early-career researchers, by generating the means for them to collaborate online with experts around the world. The engagement of HE projects with women in local communities should be protected and enhanced through online activities which can be recorded and published to increase their visibility. E-learning projects and modules that address gender inequality in HE, including sexual harassment and violence, should be developed and widely disseminated.

8. Strengthen organisational leadership and commitment to address gender equality in strategy, policy, quality assurance and delivery
The evidence from HE initiatives and similar research on gender equality more broadly is clear that the buy-in and commitment of senior organisational leadership is critical to the advancement of gender equality. Decisive ongoing actions to address gender inequalities are needed. These actions need to be accompanied by consistent and strong messages about the importance of the agenda to promote gender equality, even and perhaps especially where other parties or partners seem uninterested. Men in managerial positions have an important role to play in taking a lead on gender equality. In place of the 'institutional betrayal' so often experienced by women when discrimination and discriminatory violence go unchecked, leaders should model 'institutional courage' in the face of gender inequality. It should be clear that overtly discriminatory acts such as restricting women's access to HE, restricting access to education about gender, and other discriminatory actions and omissions are incompatible with core institutional values. Positive action should be taken to communicate this unequivocally to partners, associates and stakeholders working in global HE. 'Leadership for gender equality' training must be considered for managers and specific gender competencies included in management training and frameworks.

9. Recognise and promote gender studies and women's HEIs
Strategically support and champion programmes and modules that involve gender studies. HEIs that are for women can be models for woman-friendly STEM learning, research and leadership, and as such should be supported and learned from.

10. Take a lifecycle approach
Recognise the linkages between primary, secondary and higher education and employment to build pathways and opportunities for women and girls, particularly underfunded and under-represented groups. HE programmes benefit from being linked with other programmes that are focused on other areas, such as primary or secondary education, active citizenship and social norms for gender equality in the community. HE programmes should seek synergy with activities in other programme areas to complement and enhance each other. The impact of gender-transformative interventions is felt over the long term, requiring a long-term approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation. Indicators should go wider than measuring individual success to include multiplier effects such as evidence of participants' ongoing influence in their communities as ambassadors for gender equality.

11. Assert the centrality of equality and inclusion to the definition of quality and excellence in HE
Practices that reinforce social inequalities or that only work well for one half of the population cannot be represented as high quality. Yet research shows that quality and excellence as defined and measured in HE are currently reflective of gender inequalities and often perpetuate them. Definitions of quality and excellence in curriculum content, pedagogy, programming, candidate selection and policy must be underpinned by gender equality standards. Ensure that curricula – including teacher training curricula – are gender sensitive and gender transformative.

12. Act at scale
Impressive individual programmes in HE make profound positive changes in the lives of women, while every woman empowered goes on to be a role model and empower others. Advocacy for gender-responsive pedagogy and practice in national-level HE plans and frameworks should be prioritised, to greatly enhance the multiplier effects of interventions for gender equality. Frameworks and partnership programmes that have significant or global reach should incorporate specific gender equality plans, policies and monitoring systems to enable transparency and efficacy.

Section 1

1.1 Introduction

In higher education (HE), the British Council creates educational opportunities and supports improvements to HE worldwide, with a focus on the shared global challenges of quality, inclusion and internationalisation. This is achieved through engaging policymakers, education leaders, academics, researchers and students in international dialogue, partnerships, mobility and exchange.

HE is recognised as an important mechanism for maintaining enduring relationships between people of the UK and other countries, and HE is also a core export for the UK. Ambitious targets have been set by governments, regions and HE bodies to embed international experience and mobility into HE systems and the student experience. Through the British Council's programmes and activities, the breadth and diversity of the UK's education offer is championed and supported, cementing its position as a trusted partner for countries and individuals around the world.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is central to the work of the British Council as a cultural relations organisation that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion as core values. The British Council has made a commitment to improving the life chances of women and girls in its Corporate Plan and to ensuring that women and girls participate in, and benefit from, decision making and social change.

As recognised in numerous national and international frameworks, including most recently the Sustainable Development Goals (all goals, especially for our purposes SDG 4 and SDG 5) and the UK's International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014, reducing inequality between men and women is a fundamental ambition for all societies. It needs to be purposefully integrated into plans and strategies at every stage of a project or programme and at every institutional level.

Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls has an essential part to play in any mission to reduce human suffering, vulnerability and poverty, and create positive social change through enhancing prosperity, growth and development, security and stability. It is not possible to do this work well without intentionally planning to advance gender equality and empowerment. Unequal treatment based on gender expression and gender identity, particularly trans and non-binary identities, often overlaps and intersects with sex-based discrimination (see the glossary for more on sex and gender).

There is enormous potential for the British Council to be a world leader in integrating gender equality considerations at every level in its HE work. Already, the British Council has been making a weighty positive contribution through its range of gender-sensitive and gender-transformative projects and programmes. The ambition is for every one of its projects and programmes to mainstream gender equality and empowerment, proficiently, and recognising the intersection with other characteristics including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability.

It is likely that there will be significant changes to the international HE agenda, in the short and longer term, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic which emerged as this report was being written. Careful analysis of the potential gendered impact of these changes is required.

A move towards virtual, online exchanges across geographical boundaries, whether those are local or international, may disadvantage those with the most limited personal access to IT, who are more likely to be women (Plan International, 2018). Online abuse, which is highly gendered and particularly marked against minoritised women (Amnesty International, 2017), will undoubtedly increase.

At the same time, internationalisation and learning opportunities that involve less travel and fewer face-to-face meetings may benefit those constrained by family and caring responsibilities, enabling greater equality of access, and will reduce the chances of exposure to physical manifestations of sexual harassment and violence which are known risks for female international students.

This report was commissioned by the British Council to signal its intent to level up every aspect of its work in HE for the advancement of gender equality. It is a unique reference document that brings together for the first time the wealth of research, knowledge and evidence-based practice on gender equality and inequalities that are specific to HE systems and institutions around the world. It contains:

- data about gender and HE
- analysis of past and present approaches and methods for advancing gender equality in HE around the world and using HE as a vehicle for the advancement of gender equality
- resources and guidance for British Council staff and partners on mainstreaming gender equality.

The report encourages the reader to consider gender equality issues in HE through two main documents:

- the British Council's theory of change framework for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls
- the British Council's HE and science strategy.

These frameworks are used to synthesise and integrate opportunities for the promotion of gender equality in HE globally.

1.2 How to use this document

This report was commissioned with the primary but not sole aim of assisting the British Council, and British Council staff, to reflect on how its current and future work programmes in HE contribute to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Some sections of this report will be of wider interest and use, to scholars and practitioners in HE, to gender equality specialists, and to representatives of government and civil society organisations with an interest in HE and in gender equality.

Where information is presented about specific countries and regions in the text of the report, this is recorded in the Index.

- Information and statistics about gender inequality in HE, which will be of interest to all, are recorded in Sections 1.3 and 1.4 of the report. There are specific statistics and examples from countries and regions around the world throughout the text, which can be searched for.
- Section 2.1 will be of interest primarily to British Council staff who work in HE and who want to reflect on how their current and future work programmes align with the five outcome areas identified in the institutional theory of change for women and girls' empowerment.
- Section 2.2 will be of interest primarily to British Council staff who work in HE and who want to reflect on how to apply gender equality considerations to the activities, outputs and outcomes in each of the five strategic portfolio areas for HE and science.
- A selection of case studies looking at the work of the British Council and others in HE globally is presented in Section 2.3, providing food for thought and accessible inspiration for effective ways to address gender inequalities in HE.
- Section 2.4 follows the British Council's five portfolio intervention areas for HE and science (policy and systems development, institutional partnerships, professional development, student mobility, and insight, analysis and advocacy) and sets out a table of up-to-date resources aligned to each intervention area. The resources include datasets for country-specific statistics on HE. While the tables are aligned to the British Council's own strategic priorities, the resources will be of use to HEIs, international civil society organisations and others working in the field of HE and HE policy. Suggestions for the relevant case studies of interest, as well as suggestions for developing indicators, and resources to assist with project and programme planning, are provided.
- Concluding remarks and recommendations for the work of the British Council in addressing gender inequality in HE are presented in Section 2.5.

1.3 What is the role of higher education in transforming society in relation to women's equality and empowerment?

Higher education is an ideal vehicle for perpetuating – and for challenging – gender inequalities in the realms of policy, individual power, social norms and attitudes, fairer access to resources and dialogue, and building capacity for collective action. Putting resources into promoting gender equality in HE worldwide is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do.

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

Figure 1: Promoting gender equality in higher education

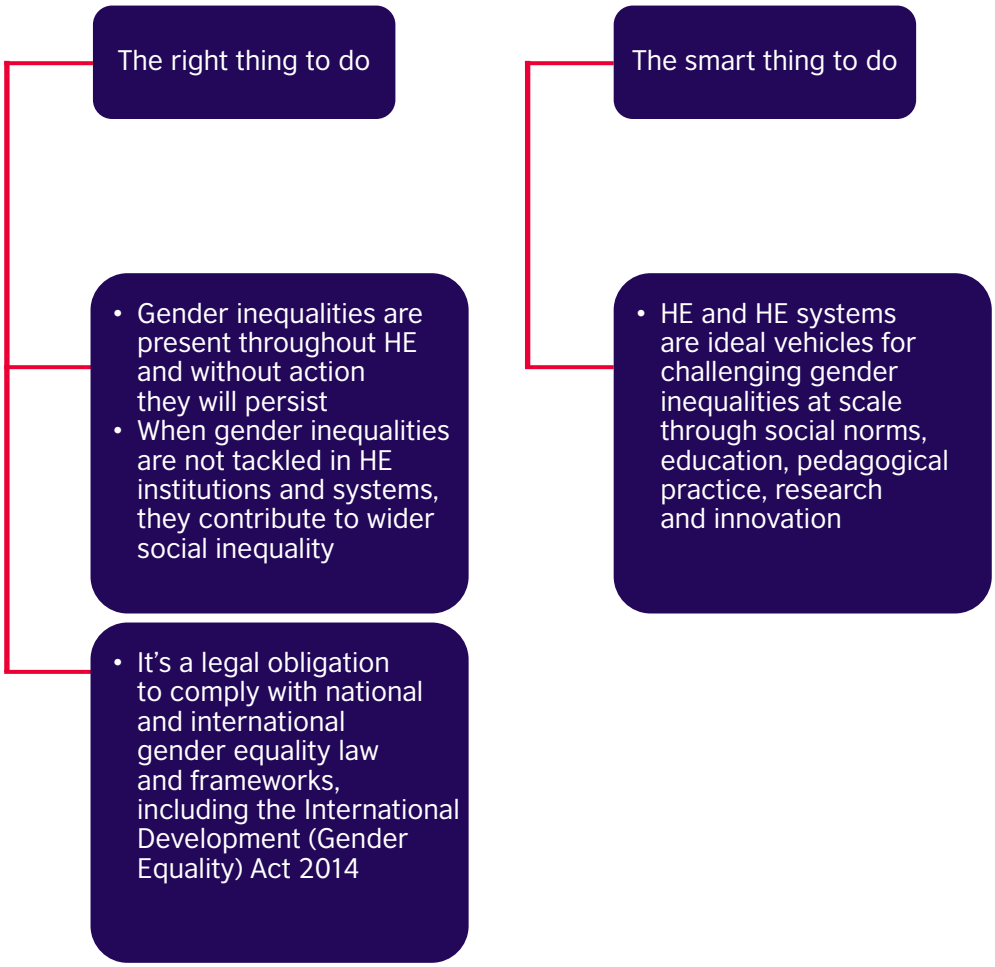


Figure 2: Average returns to schooling by level

	Total			Male			Female		
Region	**Primary**	**Second-ary**	**Tertiary**	**Primary**	**Second-ary**	**Tertiary**	**Primary**	**Second-ary**	**Tertiary**
High income	4.9	6.6	11.1	3.3	7.5	10.7	7.2	5.2	12.3
East Asia	13.6	5.3	14.8	12.6	5.8	15.0	9.5	6.4	15.8
Europe/ Central Asia	13.9	4.7	10.3	12.1	4.2	9.8	11.9	6.4	12.2
Latin America	7.8	5.4	15.9	7.9	5.3	15.7	8.7	6.5	17.4
Middle East/ North Africa	16.0	4.5	10.5	12.7	4.3	10.2	21.4	7.4	13.5
South Asia	6.0	5.0	17.3	4.7	3.9	16.6	4.8	6.2	23.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	14.4	10.6	21.0	12.5	10.1	21.0	17.5	12.7	21.3
All economies	11.5	6.8	14.6	10.1	6.7	14.4	13.2	8.2	16.1

1.3.1 Benefits to individuals

Individuals benefit directly and significantly from investment in their tertiary education (OECD, 2008). The internal rates of return (profitability for individuals) of tertiary education are high, and generally higher for women than for men. This is the case globally, with the average labour market returns for tertiary education now being higher than any other stage of education, estimated in 2014 at 16.8 per cent for women and 15.2 per cent for men. This enhanced benefit of HE for women applies across low-income and high-income economies (World Bank, 2014) with few exceptions (See figure 2).

Enhanced earning potential for women does not only bring material benefits, but also economic independence. Economic independence gives women the power to make independent financial decisions for themselves and their families, which is a marker of gender equality (Muth, 2018). Economic independence is also a lifeline for women who would otherwise be forced by dependency to endure violence in the family home.[1] The promotion of women's economic independence is a state obligation under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Women.[2]

Individuals also benefit in indirect and non-monetary ways. The following benefits to individuals have been identified in the literature (OECD, 2007/2008):

- better individual and family health through indirect effects such as income; direct effects such as changes in individual competencies, risk-management and self-efficacy, including control of fertility; intergenerational effects of educated parents on the health and cognitive development of their children
- improved investment awareness giving higher return on financial assets
- non-market job satisfactions such as better working conditions
- greater amenities in urban life such as mobility into areas with a low crime rate
- enjoyment of the pursuit of study.

1. See, for example, Scaricabarozzi (2017) *Women's Economic Independence, A Way Out of Violence*.
2. Beijing Declaration, Paragraph 26. See www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm

For women in particular, participation in HE also supports increased awareness of their legal rights (e.g. Malik & Courtney, 2011), supporting progress towards gender equality because women's rights under law (formal equality) can often be in advance of women's experience of discriminatory custom and practice.

As the next section of this report will show in detail, when gender equality is promoted within HEIs, both women and men benefit from the freedom to fulfil their potential. Women are protected from gender-based harassment, abuse and violence, as well as from the discrimination that stands in the way of equal access to opportunities and recognition. When a work–life balance is enabled in the organisation, distribution and planning of work, both men and women benefit and will thrive (EIGE, 2016). The 'leaky pipeline' of talented women who will build up expertise often over many years is fixed by paying attention to the barriers and inequalities that stand in their way, and when the full potential of their talents is achieved, then the institutions who have successfully attracted and retained those women benefit from their excellence in studying and producing knowledge, teaching and research.

1.3.2 Social benefits

Higher education produces health effects which benefit the state as well as the individual, including reduced infant mortality, increased longevity and improved public health. For women and girls in particular, increased exposure to education is associated with enhanced control over fertility, which produces lower (healthier) fertility rates.

Education to HE level is associated with increased participation in community affairs, democratic processes and engagement in voluntary work as well as reduced participation in violent crime and indirect environmental benefits.[3] In the **UK**, HE graduates are more likely to hold egalitarian attitudes to gender equality as well as to be anti-racist (Bynner & Egerton, 2001). More broadly, a more highly educated population contributes to the improvement of civic institutions and to political stability.

The social health and civic benefits of engagement in HE are additional to, and contribute to, the wider economic benefits which are well documented (e.g. Holland et al., 2013; Valero & Van Reenen, 2019). As a rule, women's participation in HE is associated with a decreased gap between the sexes in labour force participation (UNESCO, 2013). Economies benefit from the increased productivity and efficacy delivered as a result of the application of knowledge developed in HEIs among men and women. At the same time, creativity and innovation are stifled when members of workforces (such as science researchers) are homogeneous, resembling each other in social class, background and gender.[4] Elizabeth Pollitzer has curated a highly detailed reference list for why gender matters in research and innovation (Pollitzer, n.d.).

HE lays the foundations for the development of skills which are likely to go on being enhanced, notably skills in computing, organising and teaching. In the UK, research has shown that female graduates in particular continue through their career trajectory to gain skills and confidence in their social performance at a rate higher than those who have not experienced HE.[5] In 2004, the combined social rates of return to HE were calculated at 17.8 per cent in the **OECD** area, 24.3 per cent in **Africa**, 23.2 per cent in **Asia** and 26.1 per cent in **Latin America**, representing a return on investment considerably higher than returns on capital or private investments.[6]

3. OECD (2008), *ibid*.
4. See, for example, Handley et al. (2015) and Criado Perez (2019).
5. Bynner & Egerton (2001), *ibid*.
6. McMahon (2004) cited in OECD (2008), *ibid*.

The education of girls and women on an equal footing with boys and men is substantively empowering, but it is also powerfully symbolic. As Rab (2010) noted in her study of female university professors in Pakistan, 11 out of 15 of the women were brought up by mothers who themselves had no formal education beyond the primary level, for whom the education of their daughters in particular was very important. Rab speculates that the act of insisting on their daughters' education was an act of challenge to the cycle of gender disadvantage and the value system of patriarchal society that was their own experience.

In relation to research, the Global Research Council (GRC, 2016) has stated:

- an increase in the diversity of research teams correlates positively with research quality, as more diverse teams are more creative and produce a greater diversity of ideas
- increased diversity can correlate positively with higher performance
- the ability to attract the best talent into the research workforce in future will be hindered if it is perceived not to be fair.

As the next section of this report will show in detail, embedding a strong focus on gender equality in HE is not only required in law (and increasingly required by research-funding bodies in order for departments and institutions to be able to access funding) but improves the quality of teaching and learning, research design and implementation in addition to contributing to healthier and more cohesive institutions (EIGE, 2016).

Most importantly, our HEIs are the incubators for the thought leaders and social leaders of the future. The creation of HE institutions and systems where norms for gender equality are practised and modelled, and where the voices and ideas of women are valued and raised up, is one of the most powerful tools available to society for accelerating progress towards the equality and empowerment of women and girls everywhere. When harmful, rigid social gender norms are challenged, and gender equality is promoted, the full realisation of equal rights for people of all genders and gender identities becomes achievable.

Staff capacity for critical thinking on what it means to do gender mainstreaming in terms of design, content and measurement of outcomes – so not only 'equality monitoring' that focuses on numbers of girls/boys or women/men – is generally limited. If the British Council wants to prioritise outcomes on women and girls' empowerment, staff need to be able to think more comprehensively about what promoting transformative outcomes means in specific programmes – whether they target or mainstream women and girls. Additionally, it will be important for staff to develop a greater understanding of how changes in gender relations can be manifested, as well as the range of possible outcomes that benefit women and girls that can be achieved to reduce the tendency to count numbers of participants by sex as the only measure of success.'

Women and Girls: Making a Lasting Difference (British Council & ODI, 2017)

> **[F]or many women, entry into higher education can be a means of mitigating gender oppression, enabling social mobility, financial independence, professional identity development and entry into the labour market. However, this is accompanied by contradictions and tensions as women experience a range of discriminatory practices, gendered processes and exclusions within higher education itself.**
>
> **Morley et al. (2006)**

1.4 How is gender inequality reflected, reinforced and challenged in HE worldwide?

The provision of HE is a vehicle for individual and social good. It can also be a significant driver for the promotion of equality and empowerment of women and girls. However, gender inequalities can also be reproduced within HE systems. Some of the ways in which gender inequalities are expressed and challenged within HE systems are set out in Section 1 of this report, together with illustrative data.

As Morley et al. (2006) discuss in their detailed report on gender inequality in HE within five Commonwealth countries, gender discrimination that occurs in HE is not always conscious. Sometimes it can occur 'by default rather than design'. In other words, discriminatory practices in institutions that are impeding women's achievements can arise through a failure to notice and rectify or compensate for discriminatory practices in the wider society.

For example, unfair and disproportionate expectations and demands that are made of women (such as responsibility for childcare, elder care and housework within the traditional home) will mean that women have less time to dedicate to rest or to academic work outside of the working day.

A positive, *gender-transformative* approach to this issue for women working in HE would include action to change social norms and promote fairer distribution of household labour. This transformative approach would be undertaken in addition to *gender-sensitive* actions such as introducing flexible working policies. However, a *discriminatory* approach would be one where those taking hiring and promotion decisions about female academics allowed their prejudices (for example, that women in general are better suited to childcare than to academic work) to direct how they treat women compared to men. Such action, whether based on conscious or subconscious discrimination, would result in fewer women than men progressing through mentorship, patronage, appointment and promotion in academic life.

1.4.1 Data and measurability

Gender inequalities in HE are not always directly measurable. Routinely, numbers of women or men participating in or benefiting from programmes are used or relied upon to indicate the extent to which an activity reflects gender equality. But in a context which is 'gender-blind' and simply counting equal numbers of men and women as an indicator of equality, the qualitative experience of those men and women may have been very different. After all, women and girls are not a numerical minority in society but minoritised through their experience of discrimination. The barriers experienced and overcome by women in programmes and activities in HE will have been different, as may the levels of interest, enjoyment or satisfaction experienced. Compounded disadvantage (such as being both a woman and a disabled person) may be critical to understanding an individual's gendered experience. For individuals who are transgender, or whose identities do not correspond with binary gender categories, data collection methods may not capture this information at all – and analysis of their specific experiences in HE is rare. A recent review for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)[7] pointed out the importance of being clear about distinguishing between sex and gender identity in order to improve outputs.

Some of these challenges can be overcome by more sophisticated quantitative data collection methods such as ensuring that data can be analysed for sex/gender in tandem with other characteristics such as ethnicity or age. In many country contexts, data that goes beyond counting sex/gender is not routinely collected, but this should not be a barrier to introducing more detailed indicators at project level.

Data comprising participation rates, completion rates, leadership statistics and pay differentials is informative to the extent that it can indicate the existence of inequalities between men and women, but it does not reveal the (often multiple) roots of those inequalities.

This report looks not only at how gender inequality is reflected and reinforced in HE, but also at how gender inequality can be challenged. As set out in the British Council's theory of change for gender equality and empowerment (described later in this report), central to long-term progress is changes in the attitudes, beliefs, practices and discriminatory social norms that are supportive of gender inequality. Research and evidence that investigates and monitors changes in these factors and their indicators within HE settings and systems is invaluable.

7. Moody & Aldercotte (2019) p. 55. See www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-020920-EDI-EvidenceReviewInternational.pdf

The publication *Times Higher Education* (THE) calculates world university rankings. These are not without controversy but do provide access to some global comparative data. In April 2020 *THE* published their list of the top 100 universities for gender equality. In recognition of the UN's SDG 5, the ranking was developed to reflect the fact that 'gender equality is one of the key challenges facing society today', and that 'we cannot hope to develop the world sustainably if the needs of over half our population are not addressed'. This ranking focuses on universities' research on the study of gender, their policies on gender equality and their commitment to recruiting and promoting women as students and staff.

The ranking, which covers 547 universities from 81 countries, provides a useful set of metrics for the participating individual institutions; however, it fails to measure policy or action addressing sexual harassment or VAW, which is a central concern in universities worldwide (see Section 1.4.12). One metric (15.4 per cent of the overall score) counts the proportion of female students who are first generation, which rightly goes beyond sex to consider its intersection with family educational background. One measure (1.95 per cent) is given for the existence of a policy of non-discrimination against transgender people, which rightly goes beyond sex to gender identity. However, universities conducting their own assessments should ensure that data collection can be disaggregated across a fuller range of characteristics that intersect with sex to compound or ameliorate disadvantage, including for example ethnicity and disability.

While the top rankings are dominated by universities in **Europe/UK**, **North America** and **Australasia**, the top 100 list features universities in **Brazil** (7 and 69), **Pakistan** (15), **Indonesia** (19, 57 and 73), the **Russian Federation** (36), **South Korea** (50), **Chile** (58 and 63), **Malaysia** (59, 74 and 92), **Iran** (69), **Mexico** (69), **South Africa** (75) and **Ecuador** (76).

Most university rankings and other performance measures still fail to value equality as an indicator of quality.

Figure 3: Top ten global universities, the gender equality ranking 2020

1	La Trobe University, **Australia**
2	Western Sydney University, **Australia**
3	Trinity College Dublin, **Ireland**
4	University of Bologna, **Italy**
5	University of Worcester, **UK**
6	Charles Stuart University, **Australia**
7	Federal University of Sao Paolo, **Brazil**
8	University of East London, **UK**
9	University of Auckland, **New Zealand**
10	York University, **Canada**

1.4.2 Legal and policy frameworks

International frameworks for gender equality that have been adopted by almost all countries and which are relevant to HE include the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In 2011 the UK Government Equalities Office (GEO) published a policy paper (GEO, 2011) summarising CEDAW's comprehensive framework for tackling gender inequality. The obligations and requirements upon states – and their ministries – are a good point for reflection for all those working in HE, including those who are UK-based. CEDAW articles summarised by the GEO which are particularly pertinent to the work of HE actors include:

- Article 2 – pursue by all appropriate means a policy of eliminating discrimination against women
- Article 3 – take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development and advancement of women
- Article 4 – adopt temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality for women until the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved
- Article 5 – take appropriate measures to eliminate stereotyping, prejudices and discriminatory cultural practices
- Article 8 – ensure that women are allowed to participate in the work of international organisations
- Article 10 – ensure that women have equal rights with men in education, and eliminate stereotypes of the role of women and men through revising educational materials and teaching methods
- Article 11 – ensure that women have the same opportunities as men in employment, promotion, training, equal remuneration, social security and safe working conditions with protections for pregnancy, maternity and marital status
- Article 14 – eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas for equal participation including in education.

The UN's SDGs, particularly SDG 4 and SDG 5, are globally recognised calls to action for gender equality and for education. UNESCO states:

> *Through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, SDG4 aims to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and SDG 5 to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.' The Education 2030 agenda recognizes that gender equality requires an approach that 'ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education.'*[8]

The SDGs require that data should be disaggregated by sex.[9]

In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 has specific provisions for HEIs who must not (directly or indirectly) discriminate against, harass or victimise prospective or current students in addition to the responsibilities under the act held by HEIs as employers, bodies that carry out public functions and service providers. Positive action provisions of the act allow for proportionate action to remedy the disadvantage faced by students because of their protected characteristics (e.g. sex). The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that HEIs must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who have particular characteristics and those who do not.

The UK's International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014 directs the State to have due regard to reducing gender inequality when funding programmes that constitute development assistance to countries outside the UK.

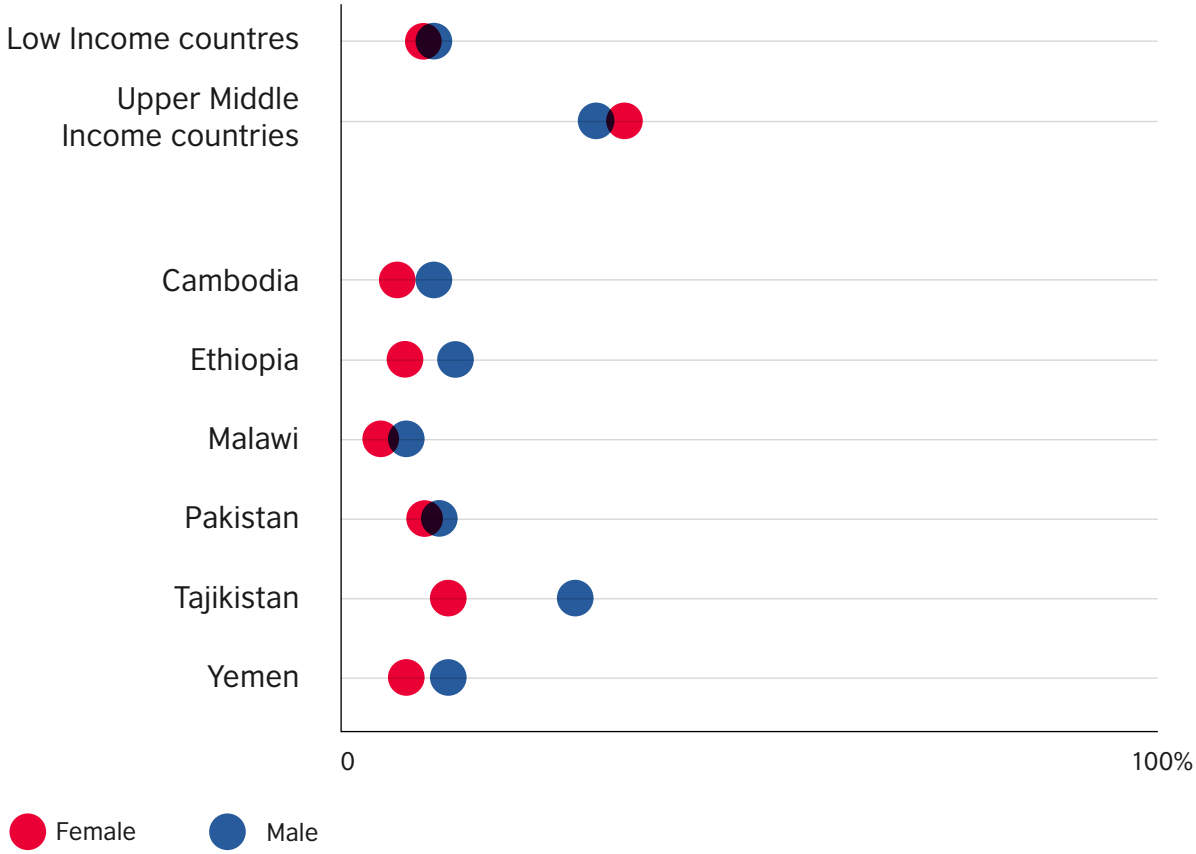
Beyond the UK, there is a range of national and regional instruments to address gender inequality and the database Legislation Online provides a searchable selection of international and national treaties, laws and commitments to gender equality.

In Europe, gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research is one of the five priorities identified as critical for inducing lasting step-changes in Europe's research performance and effectiveness, 'to end the waste of talent which we cannot afford and to diversify views and approaches in research and foster excellence' (European Commission, 2012).[10]

Further sections of this report will discuss policies and frameworks developed by countries and sector bodies including research institutes (and see case studies 2, on national policies, and 7, on the Athena Swan framework in the UK).

8. UNESCO (2019). See en.unesco.org/themes/education-and-gender-equality (accessed 2 July 2020).
9. UN (2019) *Data disaggregation and the global indicator framework*. See unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/sdg-inter-workshop-jan-2019/Session%202.a_UNSD%20IAEG.pdf
10. See p. 4.

Figure 4: Percentage of people aged 25–35 who have completed at least two years of tertiary education (by gender)[11]



https://www.education-inequalities.org/indicators/comp_ higher#?sort=disparity&dimension=sex&group=all&age_group=comp_ higher_2yrs_2529&countries=al higher#?sort=disparity&dimension=sex&group=all&age_group=comp_higher_2yrs_2529&countries=all

1.4.3 Enrolment in HE

Concerted global action on equity in education provision, including at primary and secondary level, has contributed to the current picture recorded in UNESCO's eAtlas on Gender Equality in Education:[12] globally, more women than men now complete HE in most countries (52 per cent vs 48 per cent). However, in low-income countries which have the lowest enrolment figures, men still outnumber women. Access to HE is limited in most countries to a relatively small number of people and remains heavily influenced by economic background as well as by gender and race/ethnicity particularly in lower-income countries (Schendel & McCowan, 2016).

While the completion of HE boosts the life chances of individuals, and the benefits for individual women are – as we have seen – arguably higher than they are for men, this does not mean that completion of HE acts as an absolute leveller between men and women. Thus, the higher completion rates for women globally do not translate into personal advantage for those women over comparable men, or for women in general, globally. Gender inequality persists during and after undertaking HE, so advantages to women are always relative.

11. UNESCO data on educational inequalities taken from www.education-inequalities.org/indicators/comp_higher#?sort=disparity&dimension=sex&group=all&age_group=comp_higher_2yrs_2529&countries=all
12. Retrieved from tellmaps.com/uis/gender/#!/tellmap/-1195952519 (no longer available).

Different vectors of gender inequality have an effect upon the ways in which individuals and groups of women may benefit from completing HE. For example, in the countries of **Algeria**, **Egypt**, **Jordan** and **Tunisia**, rapidly rising female educational attainment has not translated into higher rates of participation in the labour market for women. Rather, graduate women's unemployment rate has risen.

This phenomenon, which has become known as the MENA paradox, is the result of a number of factors, including the contraction in public sector employment opportunities for graduates – while private sector employment remains inaccessible or undesirable for women who have family commitments because of fewer benefits and longer hours (Assaad et al., 2018). In **Iran**, by 2012 the number of women entering HE had overtaken men at more than 60 per cent,[13] but legislation was introduced to cap the numbers of women admitted to HE and more men than women now enrol in HE. Women are also banned from enrolling in various university courses in a number of Iranian universities.[14]

Should the lower uptake of HE opportunities by men, predominantly in higher-income countries, be an area for intervention? There is no evidence that men are being directly discriminated against in favour of women in terms of access to places. On average, women's examination scores are higher[15] and in higher-income countries they apply in greater numbers for places (but not across all subject areas, as discussed later in this report).

As the Global Partnership for Education has noted, girls' successes in education do not come at the expense of boys.[16] More than one in four World Values Survey respondents agreed that 'a university education is more important for a boy than a girl', ranging from two per cent in Sweden who agreed, to 59 per cent in Haiti, with men on average ten per cent more likely than women to agree with the statement (UNESCO, 2019). Factors that can hold men back, such as stereotypes of active masculinity being less compatible with traditional classroom learning environments than stereotypes of attentive femininity, are transmitted in family cultures as well as in wider society, including among teachers. These can influence expectations and performance.

Factors such as a wider diversity of appealing or relatively well-paid non-graduate job opportunities being available for young men in some societies may also influence these patterns.[17] For example, in the **Asia and Pacific** region, young men from seaside fishing communities are more likely to leave school to take up work in fishing, while young women without that option remain in education. Nursing education is an investment for families because of the demand from high-income countries for nurses. Nursing is still seen as a predominantly female role and so more women are supported to enrol in nursing HE programmes (Ramachandran, 2010).

Educational marginalisation of both men and women is affected by poverty and socio-economic disadvantage, ethnic minority or caste status, migrant status, disability and other characteristics which may be more or less compounded by intersection with gender. However, given that current data suggests that men in general are not being disadvantaged compared to women, by women's higher uptake of HE opportunities, there may not be a compelling case for dedicated and specific action designed to drive up men's relative enrolment in HE in higher-income countries.

Nevertheless, all activities that are gender transformative are designed to act upon the inequitable differences in the lives and social treatment of women and men – and in an educational context these activities would include analysing teaching and learning content and delivery to ensure it is inclusive of all genders as well as acting upon binary and constricting gender stereotypes of both masculinity and femininity. For example, dress codes in HEIs that specify different requirements for men and women reinforce stereotypes and may create practical difficulties for some trans people (Pugh, 2016). As gender sensitivity becomes embedded in global concepts of quality in HE delivery, so all gender disparities – not simply those that clearly disadvantage women and girls – should be diminished.

13. BBC news report (22 September 2012). See www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19665615
14. UNESCO data on educational inequalities (June 2020). Retrieved from www.tellmaps.com/uis/gender/#!/tellmap/79054752/2 (no longer available).
15. For example, UNESCO data on educational inequalities (April 2020). See www.education-inequalities.org/share/g0c9i
16. GPE (2017) *Guidance for Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans,* p. xv. See https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/library/why-are-boys-under-performing-in-education-gender-analysis-of-four-asia-pacific-countries and www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2018-02-gpe-guidance-gender-responsive-esp.pdf
17. See, for example, UNGEI (2012) and HEPI (2016). www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Boys-to-Men.pdf

The intersection of gender with other characteristics of disadvantage or privilege can sometimes be seen to have an impact when we go beyond the headline data. For example, in **India** undergraduate women are 49 per cent of the total. This percentage remains stable across most categories, but at the most prestigious 'institutes of national importance' the proportion of women enrolled drops to below 30 per cent. Morley and Lugg (2009) observed in their study of universities in **Ghana** and **Tanzania** that under-representation of women students was greatest among the students from the most deprived backgrounds.

There are quite clear-cut exceptions to the general patterns observed in gender disparities, at institutional as well as national and regional levels. These exceptions show that gender norms are variable and can be shifted, whether those norms are operating at the social, institutional or individual level, and whether they act to suppress progress towards gender equality, or accelerate it. Even small 'nudges' can have significant effects: female students' probability of majoring in the male-dominated field of economics was increased by around six percentage points, by providing information about careers and sending an encouraging email remarking on their ability (Li, 2018).

Japan: despite its high GDP, there are significantly fewer female graduates than in comparable high-income countries, with women making up only 45 per cent of entrants to undergraduate degree courses, and only 31 per cent of PhD graduates compared with the OECD average of 47 per cent. This disparity is also reflected in university teaching staff (23 per cent, half the OECD average) (OECD, 2019). Commentators have noted that factors playing a part in this picture include examples of active discrimination such as artificially boosting the entrance scores of male medical school applicants (Shirakawa, 2019) – a practice now proscribed by the Education Ministry – as well as the long working hours culture for professionals, deemed incompatible with family commitments which have been regarded as the domain of women. Strongly stratified gender roles affect the aspirations of women as well as the climate surrounding them within HEIs which can be experienced as hostile (Rich, 2019).

1.4.4 Progression to research

UNESCO data shows that despite improved access, women are less likely to progress beyond master's level graduation or into research fields.[18]

- 54 per cent of PhD graduates are male.
- 71 per cent of university researchers are male.

There is wide regional variation: **Central Asia**, **Latin America** and the **Caribbean** have the highest share of female researchers at 49 per cent and 46 per cent, compared with an average of 23 per cent in Southern Asia. Within regions there is also significant variation in the participation of female researchers as a percentage of total researchers by country:

- the **Americas**: **Venezuela** 61 per cent; **Peru** 29 per cent
- **Europe**: **North Macedonia** 53 per cent; **Germany** 28 per cent
- **Africa**: **Tunisia** 56 per cent; **Chad** three per cent
- **Asia** and the **Pacific**: **Myanmar** 76 per cent; **Jordan** 20 per cent; **Japan** 17 per cent.[19]

In the states of the former **Soviet Union**, the percentage of women researchers is generally relatively high, and stable.[20] A report on gender balance in scientific research (Genova et al., 2014) explained that:

> *Countries which experienced egalitarian policies during the communist period stand out for both higher levels of participation, and lower levels of occupational segregation. However, egalitarian policies with their generous provisions targeting mothers (e.g. long maternity benefits) did not challenge gender roles. New and more transformative policies are being adopted, but still today there is resistance to see parental responsibility as a shared task, and also to accept that leadership in science does not imply 'giving up' motherhood.*[21]

Iceland is a country that is consistently recognised as the closest to achieving gender equality, and it has a long history of egalitarian policies, including labour market policies and investment in social infrastructure, that are also gender transformative.[22] The percentage of female researchers in Iceland is 46 per cent.

Gender stereotypes appear to confer disadvantage to women and advantage to men, in systems where individuals whose sex is known to the reviewers are ranked. In a study conducted in **Sweden**, applications for postdoctoral fellowships in medicine were independently rated by the researchers, using objective scales for scientific productivity. Male applicants submitting their CVs were given far higher scores by independent review panels than female applicants with objectively equal scientific productivity. In fact the most productive group of female applicants was the only group of women judged to be as competent as the least productive group of male applicants. Female applicants would have had to have been 2.5 times more productive than male applicants to be rated equally. Women were also rated lower on all the other evaluation parameters (quality of proposed methodology and relevance of research proposal). That year, four women and 16 men were awarded postdoctoral fellowships (Wennerås & Wold, 1997).

In the field of engineering and technology, no country has more women than men engaged in research other than **Myanmar**, where women make up 76 per cent, reflecting the dominance of women across the board in research.

18. UNESCO data on educational inequalities (April 2020). Retrieved from tellmaps.com/uis/gender/#!/tellmap/79054752 (no longer available).
19. UNESCO data on science, technology and innovation, August 2020 % Female researchers (all subjects). See data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=64 See also UNESCO Women in Science Fact Sheet (June 2019): uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs55-women-in-science-2019-en.pdf
20. UNESCO (2021) One in three researchers is a woman. 11 February. See en.unesco.org/news/one-three-researchers-woman
21. Genova et al. (2014) *Achieving Balance at the Top of Scientific Research*, p. 75. https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/genis-lab_achieving_gender_balance_top_scientific_research_guidelines.pdf
22. Government of Iceland statement (December 2019). See www.government.is/diplomatic-missions/embassy-article/2019/12/18/Iceland-remains-the-top-country-on-the-World-Economic-Forums-index-for-gender-parity/

Myanmar: Why are gender distributions in HE enrolment and progression so different in Myanmar from other countries? A report by Chinlone (2018) points to the generalised shortage of human resources in the academic sector – between 1989 and 2004 the number of HEIs increased from 32 to 154, with student numbers increasing from 120,000 to 890,000. Distance learning (more accessible to women with caring responsibilities) has a long and important tradition in the country. Research is a part of the role of teaching staff, and staff begin teaching as soon as they graduate. Traditions of rote-learning, and of research funding that is not distributed on merit, hamper innovation and incentives to engage in research. Teaching staff are very stretched, and are also expected to perform administrative and management roles as well as research roles while academic salaries are very low. Teaching is one of the few professions available to women in Myanmar (Thien, 2015), and the low pay and high challenge make it less attractive to men who have more options.

Few countries have seen significant changes in the proportion of women researchers in engineering and technology, with numbers remaining relatively stable in UNESCO's five years of data collection from 2012 to 2017. Exceptions include **Oman**, increasing from one per cent in 2012 to 20 per cent in 2017, while women researchers in humanities doubled from 20 per cent to 41 per cent, reflecting a steep general increase in all opportunities for women to enter research, as national policies, strategies and laws have enabled women's participation in the rapidly growing economy.[23] **Egypt** saw an increase from 19 per cent in 2013 to 30 per cent in 2017, which may reflect the unusually marked increase (trebling) of research roles for qualified applicants in the sector in Egypt during that time. Within **Europe**, few figures are available, but the percentage of female engineering and technology researchers in the **Netherlands** only increased from 13 per cent in 2012 to 15 per cent in 2016.[24]

There is evidence to suggest that the gender bias in favour of men in academic research is particularly acute for the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths). Additionally, men are reluctant to accept evidence of gender bias in STEM, particularly those working in HEIs. There is a tendency for people working in STEM to see 'doing science' as an objective business: in the same way the deep hierarchies of caste in the practice of science in **India** are resisted (Thomas, 2020). As Handley et al. (2015) point out, broadening women's participation in STEM requires a widespread willingness – especially by men – to acknowledge that this bias exists before transformation is possible. In countries where women have relative financial security and relative choice to pursue research work, enthusiasm for the subject may not be enough to make up for daily exposure to a heavily male-dominated working environment in which the odds are against women to succeed on equal merit, and male colleagues are unwilling to acknowledge the disadvantage experienced by their female colleagues.

1.4.5 Research and innovation

Research and innovation are critical to economic strategies and to quality in HE. In the context of international partnership programmes, there is a focus on research and innovation in HE which contributes to development. For example, the winner of the Newton Prize for **India** in 2017 was a project between institutions in the **UK** and India to create more efficient solar energy.[25]

Gender issues are not always visible in the plans or other documentation for these research and innovation programmes. However, gender issues are always present: at institutional and policy levels as well as the more obvious levels of external impact (for example, solar power that heats water reduces the labour drain on women who are expected to collect firewood) and reach (for example, how many women took part in the programme as researchers). Research is highly likely to have impact that affects men and women differently, because of the very different daily lives and experiences and treatment of men and women in society. Analysis by sex and gender is relevant to, and benefits, research and innovation in most contexts, as described through 21 case studies in a publication by the Gendered Innovations Expert Group (European Commission, 2013). The case studies show how a gendered analysis can be applied in a range of contexts and disciplines through science communications, engineering, technology, environmental science, food and nutrition, health and medicine, and transport.

23. See, for example, Oman's Vision 2040: www.2040.om/Oman2040-En.pdf and Al Hasani (2015) *Women's Employment in Oman:* espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ_380891/n41269583-_PhD_-finalthesis.pdf
24. UNESCO data on science, research and innovation, April 2020 female researchers as a % of total researchers (FTE): data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=61
25. Advancing the Efficiency and the Production Potential of Excitonic Solar Cells (APEX). See gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=EP%2FM023532%2F1

Representation is important. Women should benefit, in at least equal numbers with men, from programmes that build the capacity of individual students, researchers and other professionals working in HE. It is important that all learners should see the diverse faces and stories of women in their study materials and in conferences, showcases and other platforms for leadership in research and innovation. However, counting the numbers of women engaged or represented is a basic marker of gender sensitivity, not an adequate indicator of gender equality or parity.

Gender issues in research and innovation include structural barriers and biases that impede women researchers' progress, including the unequal distribution of responsibilities and freedoms outside of the workplace that impact upon progress in the workplace. In research teams, gender stereotypes and biases contribute to different treatment of women, and to different chances of recognition or funding, as described elsewhere in this report (Section 1.4.9.2. For example, in **EU** countries in 2014, women employed in research and development earned 17 per cent less than their male colleagues, and this pay gap widened with age. In 2017, women constituted only 27 per cent of board members of research organisations in the EU.[26] Few funding bodies worldwide make any reference to maternity, paternity or flexible working policies within their terms and conditions of grants and fellowships (Metcalfe & Day, 2019), but they could usefully do this rather than assume that country or research institution policies are adequate. Sexual harassment and other forms of GBV impact significantly on women in HE and on the choices they make about the work they do, an issue that all research funders should be accounting for.

Four consequences of failing to act on gender inequality in research[27]

1. Danger of flawed research or diminished relevance of results.
2. Missing innovation and market opportunities.
3. Unfulfilled use of human capital (women scientists) in a competitive global research and innovation economy.
4. Increased societal distrust of, and reduced support for, science and its institutions.

No programme concerned with gender equality can succeed in its aims – whether those aims are to contribute to the advancement of women's equal rights and empowerment, or simply to ensure basic equality of opportunity for women – without embedding strategies to counteract the disadvantaged position of women, as a group, in research environments. A programme where female participants are at higher risk than male participants of being subjected to exploitation or sexual violence needs to include resources to mitigate those risks for individuals, and to build capacity for prevention and response at the organisational and institutional levels (see Section 1.4.12). A programme bringing women to work in fields where the contributions of women are objectively known to be undervalued (e.g. STEM: see Section 1.4.9.2) needs to include work with stakeholders to explore and address these biases. This active plan to counteract known biases and features of sex discrimination should also be an integral part of any quality assurance programme. Definitions of what constitutes 'research excellence' should consider the extent to which 'excellence has become defined with reference to the perspectives, research interests and standards of a small number of international journals, which tend to be abstract, theoretical or universalist. This reduces the scope for diversity' (ICAI, 2019). As UKRI has stated:

> *Gender sensitivity enhances the societal relevance of the produced knowledge, technologies and innovations, and contributes to the creation of outputs, goods and services better suited to potential markets and beneficiaries.*
> UKRI, page accessed June 2020, no longer active

26. She Figures 2018 (2019) European Commission, p. 6 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9540ffa1-4478-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
27. Report on enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in R&I. European Commission, 2012a, p.15 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/dff78961-40a9-41cd-940a-a4a5afa8ed5f

UKRI has provided some resources (e.g. guidance and a checklist) for incorporating gender equality into international development research and innovation, but as yet these are not detailed and do not address issues of gender based violence. Further resources developed by other bodies are referenced in Section 2 of this report. The **UK**'s flagship Athena Swan charter (case study 7) is awarded to departments and institutions to recognise work undertaken to address gender inequality. In **India**, the British Council is currently partnering with the Department of Science and Technology, government of India, to introduce a gender equality framework in HE, science and technology institutions, drawing upon good practice in the UK. This pilot project aims to enlist institutions of science, technology and HE to adopt a Charter for Gender Equality in STEM, customised to the requirements of the Indian context, with a focus on bringing about transformational change. Currently in the inception phase, the project aims to create a new ecosystem that will be based on building competencies of institutions and provide them with continuing mentoring support to achieve transformation. This will entail examining the full life cycle in the profession of women in STEM at various levels in the institution, including:

- progression into academia and research
- preparation for the workplace and future of work
- employment opportunities and crafting a life in science
- work environment and support systems
- building competencies for life-long learning.

Progression through career and professional opportunities: The Newton Fund

In 2019 the Independent Commission for Aid Impact published a performance review of The Newton Fund, managed by the UK government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The programme operates on matched funding with partner countries, and is fully funded from the UK end via official development assistance (ODA). The programme promotes research and innovation partnerships.

The review found that the aims of development impact, including capacity building, were not being adequately met due in part to a focus on grants and fellowships for individuals where more attention should be paid to institutions and organisations. The review also recommended that the Newton Fund should ensure it meaningfully considers options for reducing gender inequality, and reports against its progress, as required in law by the International Development Act. Opportunities for building institutional and organisational capacity could be taken through strengthening the gender inclusivity of partner institutions and organisations.

Such opportunities should begin to be identified in Newton projects with the new mandatory 'gender statement' requirement that has been incorporated into joint UKRI–British Council Newton Fund calls under the Newton Fund Impact Scheme since 2019. In April 2020, the British Council also introduced mandatory gender statements for other Newton funding calls, including the Institutional Links Programme, the Researcher Links Programme and the Newton Bhabha PhD placement programme.

The European Commission's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation builds on its previous work on mainstreaming gender and is widely recognised as world leading for its gender analysis. Every applicant for project funding is asked to explain how sex and gender analysis is (or is not) relevant to the concepts and objectives of the proposed research. It is important to note that the development of a 'gender action plan' – describing how gender is relevant to, and addressed in, research – is a skilled process that may benefit from expert input. The process will certainly be helped by making use of the specific resources developed in recent years, a number of which are signposted in Section 2 of this report. A staff working document from the European Commission (2005) found that only 15–25 per cent of gender action plans for research that were analysed were good or excellent. The participation of women ('counting women') made up the majority of planned actions and targets, and deeper gender analysis was rarer. The same report made the point that evaluators need to be trained in gender analysis in order to be able to evaluate plans competently.

Another highly successful intervention as part of the European Commission's framework programme was the introduction of targets of 40 per cent of 'each under-represented sex' (allowing for a time or context where women are over-represented) in scholarships, advisory groups, assessment panels and monitoring panels. These targets have had a positive impact (Marchetti & Raudma, 2010).

The **Japan** Science and Technology Agency (JST) has inaugurated the Brilliant Female Researcher awards, recognising outstanding women in the field of research and also recognising institutions that support gender equality in research. The JST also has a government-set target to increase the proportion of women in managerial and board roles.

In **Canada**, an interactive e-learning programme for researchers significantly improved their ability to integrate considerations of sex and gender into the design, methods and analysis plans of research proposals and publications (Tannenbaum & van Hoof, 2018).

The Global Research Council (GRC) brings together the heads of science and engineering research-funding agencies from around the world. As Morley (2014) points out, it is a contradiction that HE is routinely positioned as being concerned with innovation and hypermodernisation, while it is underpinned by the 'archaism of male-dominated leadership'. A survey by the GRC (2016) found that:

- governing bodies and senior management of funding bodies are predominantly male, with the exception of **Africa**, where governing boards have a majority of women
- well-developed research systems, such as in **Europe**, **North America**, **Japan** and **Australia**, are more likely to have a long-term focus on gender equality and to have developed comprehensive policies and targeted provision for female researchers. GRC participants in these regions are more likely to have very clear policy statements on gender or to have published gender equality plans. They regularly collect and publish detailed data on success rates by gender
- **Europe** and **South Africa** have programmes that are sensitive to characteristics that intersect with gender, such as disability and ethnicity
- in countries with less well-developed research systems there is a focus on attracting more people into research, including women
- in **Latin America**, and to an extent in the **Asia-Pacific region**, research participants expressed concern over the gender pay gap and societal influence on equality. Extensions of fellowships for maternity leave are policy in **Argentina**, **Mexico** and **Brazil**, while in Brazil there are also adoption clauses for single males and same-sex couples
- in **Mexico**, the government's cross-cutting strategy on gender equality has been translated into a specific gender-responsive programme for science, technology and innovation, requiring that gender should be addressed in research and innovation funding proposals
- the AWARD programme is a pan **Sub-Saharan Africa** programme targeted solely at funding female researchers in agriculture and promoting gender-responsive agricultural research. The scheme includes research skills capacity building, mentoring, and career and leadership development. There is a project under way to collect baseline data on gender responsiveness in African research institutions.

In 2016 the GRC endorsed a Statement of Principles and Actions Promoting the Equality and Status of Women in Research (GRC, 2016) (available in several languages). The actions, which are applicable to any research programming or funding body, can be summarised as:

1. engage in national discussions of policy frameworks
2. collect and make available data for comparative analysis
3. incorporate the evaluation of progress towards gender-based goals
4. shift focus from researcher 'track record' to 'research opportunity' to acknowledge how productivity varies according to the opportunities and breaks in careers
5. provide training on policy, including unconscious bias training
6. explore pathways for women to succeed and rise in leadership
7. consider dedicated programmes to encourage gender equality
8. promote policies and practices supportive of caregivers
9. carry out periodic review
10. recognise and encourage the advantages of considering the gender dimension in research.

Individuals and institutions from around the world can join the Gender Summit collaboration, sharing ways to improve gender equality in research and innovation. Examples of actions to promote gender equality in research are listed in a recent publication by the GRC (2019). Case studies are described from **Brazil, Japan, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, China, Peru, Chile, India, Spain, Norway, Sri Lanka, Zambia, Australia, South Africa, the UK, France, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, South Korea, Switzerland, Senegal, the USA, Ireland** and **Oman**.

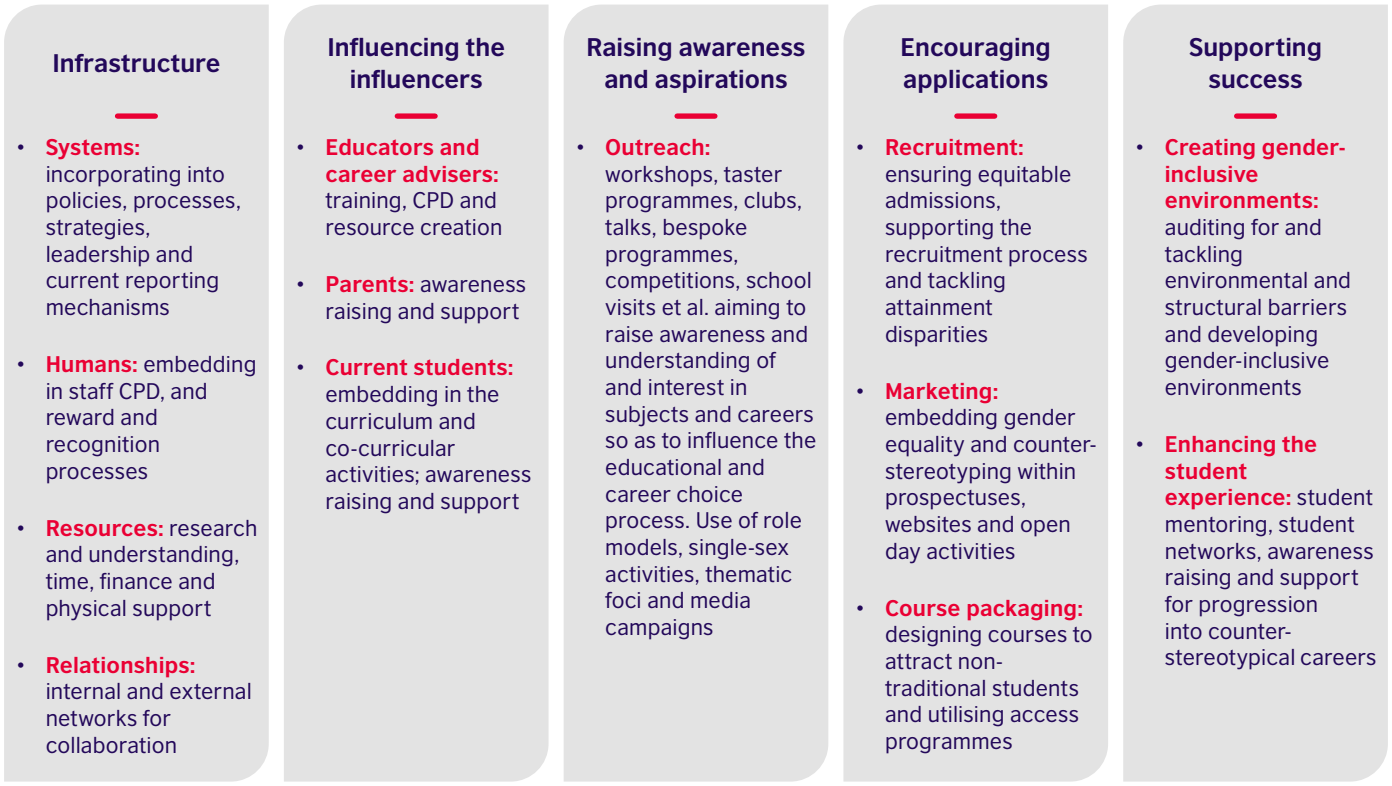
1.4.6 Subject selection

There is significant and persistent gender disparity in the subject fields chosen for study at HE level. Research suggests that some (but by no means all) of this disparity sets in during the formative years of primary and secondary education, where a combination of gender stereotypes, gendered curricula and role models, and other barriers to equal engagement are apparent. For this reason it is important that initiatives to tackle inequalities in subject choice are implemented in early years and primary/secondary schooling, and a number of university programmes include such initiatives as a part of their work towards gender equality. This work in HE complements projects such as the British Council's EDGE programme which has so far reached 17,000 girls and their families and 1,600 peer leaders in **India**, **Bangladesh** and **Nepal**, developing the skills and confidence of girls in English and digital education.

It is also important that efforts to assist prospective students with the cost of undertaking HE are not skewed towards subjects where male students predominate: for this reason the SPHEIR (Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform)-funded Lending for Education in **Africa** Partnership (LEAP) has begun a new partnership to support nursing education, which in **Kenya** is a subject chosen overwhelmingly by female students.

- In **South Africa**, visits from academic staff, particularly female academic staff, to local high schools in order to encourage female students to apply to the Engineering Faculty have made a significant difference to women students' career choices. A personal call from a female academic following up after Open Day was also influential (Shackleton et al., 2006). Care must be taken that when outreach is conducted by women academics, it should be recognised and rewarded.
- In **Brazil**, a British Council project to increase the representation of diverse women in STEM is also working to train school teachers (case study 15).
- An Erasmus+ project in the **UK**, **Poland**, **Cyprus** and **Sweden** partnered universities with NGOs and secondary schools to increase girls' interest and engagement in STEM subjects (case study 17).
- In **Scotland**, five approaches to tackling student gender participation imbalances were mapped and evaluated for Advance HE (Hanesworth, 2016). The Scottish Funding Council requires HEIs to identify subject areas with significant gender imbalances in their outcome agreements, and to set out their plans for improvement (SFC, 2016).

Figure 5: Approaches to tackling student gender imbalances



Source: Hanesworth (2016) for Advance HE

Currently, worldwide, more women than men study in the fields of education, humanities and arts, social sciences, business and law, and health and welfare. Men are over-represented in the fields of information and communication technologies, engineering, manufacturing and construction, and agriculture.

Enterprise and entrepreneurship education (EEE) has been identified as an important element to introduce into HE to foster innovation and encourage graduates to start their own businesses. Entrepreneurship is highly gendered, with women being far less likely to set up and run new businesses than men, and with investors (venture capitalists) and their networks being extremely male-dominated. The creative industries (e.g. advertising, film) are also highly gendered, with industry leadership dominated by men. The British Council's Creative Spark programme in wider Europe set out a five-year initiative to support international university and institutional partnerships to develop enterprise skills and creative economy. Research has identified a degree of 'gender-blindness' in the creative industries sector in the programme countries, and in the Creative Spark programme (case study 6) the British Council has recognised this gap and introduced a proactive approach to address gender inequalities.

The STEM subject area is often prioritised in global HE initiatives because it is seen by policymakers as driving the potential for economic growth through innovation and enterprise. It is also the field in which there is the greatest gender disparity, particularly outside of medicine and other life sciences. Gender disparities in women graduating in STEM go on to contribute to gender disparities in income, entrepreneurship and role models for future generations. Because women's life experiences are often still quite different from men's in a number of ways, these disparities in STEM will also affect the extent to which technological innovations are well suited to women and their lives (Criado Perez, 2019). The recent *Global Education and Monitoring Report on Gender* (UNESCO, 2020) identified the balanced representation of girls and women in STEM as one of six main priorities for the international community.

- The SAGA project (STEM and Gender Advancement) led by UNESCO created a searchable database of policies and instruments focused on gender equality in science, technology and innovation. The database is searchable by country, region and gender objectives (such as career progression, social norms, HE), and it is also searchable by institution: ministries and government institutions, universities or research institutions, and international organisations (SAGA, n.d.).

- The Gambia's *Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016–2030* includes a commitment to provide scholarships to women and girls enrolled in science and mathematics subjects in HE and tertiary education.[28]
- In Mexico, the National Council for Science and Technology has a programme of postgraduate scholarships for Indigenous women.[29]

Despite high numbers of women completing HE in Europe and North America, they make up only one in five of engineering graduates. Huyer (2015) reported that in some cases, engineering as a discipline has been losing ground to other sciences, such as agricultural sciences, among women.

Some countries buck the gender trend in engineering, including Cyprus, which recorded 50 per cent of female graduates. Proportions are also higher in Denmark (38 per cent) and the Russian Federation (36 per cent). In Sub-Saharan Africa, percentages are on the increase, although they remain below 20 per cent with the exceptions of Liberia and Mozambique (Huyer, 2015).

Oman's female engineering graduates were recorded at 53 per cent, which helps to explain the accelerated rate at which women are also entering research in that field. In Oman, women's entry into certain fields of study is influenced by their aptitude for study, including passing English examinations, and they are less likely to drop out of studies than men.[30] Many female engineering students are sponsored by the Ministry of Education and there are multifaceted strategies for the empowerment of women engineers (National University of Oman, 2019).

In Pakistan, girls and their educators reported concerns about STEM career tracks being unreliable or unprofitable as well as unattractively competitive, and girls perceived themselves as less naturally gifted than boys at STEM subjects. STEM subjects were not seen as a good fit with gender obligations to serve the family (Hollows et al., 2017). In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has issued a directive to ensure reserved places for female applicants to Indian institutes of technology. A ministry representative explained that male students can take advantage of rigorous coaching in far-flung areas which female students would not be able to attend.[31]

Figure 6: Women in Science at the WOW Festival, Rio de Janeiro

Source: British Council in Brazil

28. Ministries of Basic and Secondary Education and Higher Education Research Science and Technology (2017) *Education Sector Strategic Plan*. See www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2018-09-the-gambia-essp-2016-30.pdf See result area 7.3, p. 141. Accessed 6 July 2020.
29. Gobierno do Mexico CONACYT (2019). See www.conacyt.gob.mx/index.php/becas-y-posgrados/becas-nacionales/programa-de-fortalecimiento-academico-para-indigenas Accessed 6 July 2020.
30. See, for example, Sipes (2014) Women Adjust to University Life in Oman: www.al-fanarmedia.org/2014/05/women-adjust-university-life-oman/
31. *Economic Times of India*, 3 February 2018.

Why are young women increasingly taking up STEM subjects at tertiary level in some countries, but not in the more apparently 'gender-equal' countries? A recent research paper (Stoet & Geary, 2018) conducted an analysis of international adolescent achievement in science, mathematics and reading, and found that girls performed similarly to or better than boys in two out of every three countries. This means that it is not a lack of ability that holds girls back from progressing into STEM fields. In almost every country, more girls had the capability to study STEM at tertiary level than had enrolled to do so. In almost every country, girls had superior achievements in reading.

The data analysis suggested that it is life quality pressures that drive women's engagement with STEM subjects in less gender-equal countries, but that with an abundance of choice and lower economic risk in more gender-equal countries (such as **Finland, Norway** and **Sweden**), girls and women gravitate towards the subjects that they excel more in and say they enjoy more. Gender-sensitive pedagogy clearly has an important role in increasing girls' enjoyment of STEM subjects at primary and secondary level, especially in countries where enjoyment is a significant criterion that determines choice of future study path. Gender-sensitive pedagogy has an equally important role to play in increasing boys' enjoyment of, and interest in, non-traditional subjects which are also so often overlooked in the context of HE and development. After all, as the authors of a meta-analysis of gender and science research noted:

> *Equal attention should be given to both girls' and boys' choices. Working towards a more mixed composition of all study fields should not mean an alignment to the male model.*
> European Commission (2012b)[32]

Huyer (2015) also documented a worrying decrease in the proportion of women graduating in the field of computer science globally since 2000. The most recent data from 2017[33] shows that few countries approach parity, although there are some countries where female graduates outnumber male graduates: **Oman** (76 per cent), **Myanmar** (67 per cent), **Tunisia** (56 per cent) and **Qatar** (53 per cent). The worst performing European country is **Belgium**, where by 2016 men still made up over 90 per cent of computer science graduates. In the **UK** the rate for women graduates was stable at just under 20 per cent between 2012 and 2016.

There are strong gender stereotypes at play in some cultures which associate computer science with masculinity. A study conducted in the **USA** found that gender stereotypes communicated in a secondary school computer science classroom caused girls to express significantly less interest in the subject than where stereotypes were not present (Master, Cheryan & Meltzoff, 2016). Wide disparities between countries within regions, and showing trends in both positive and negative directions, demonstrate the importance of creating and maintaining incentives to make computer science a desirable field of study for women.

Job advertisements making use of social media may fall victim to algorithms that discriminate by gender. A field test in the **USA** found that a 'gender-neutral' Facebook advertisement for STEM careers was delivered to and seen by more men than women (Lambrecht & Tucker, 2018). This finding also has implications for HEIs and partner institutions who use social media to recruit students.

It is likely to be a valuable experience for staff and students from countries where STEM subjects are dominated by men, to be exposed through placements to university departments where women comprise half, or more, of students and researchers. Such exposure is likely to be a powerful counter to ingrained stereotypes about subject 'suitability' by gender, as well as potentially offering insights into what cultures supportive of women in STEM might look like.

32. *Meta-Analysis of Gender and Science Research: Synthesis Report*, p. 17.
33. UNESCO data on education, April 2020. See data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=61#

Why study about gender in higher education? Because it is clear that only through a democratic inclusive curriculum, one that responds to the needs and values of societies, one that includes more than excludes, may we be confident that we produce open-minded individuals, able to cope with the diversities around them, to accept, and celebrate differences. Curriculum deals with the actual content of education, with the methodologies and processes through which learning takes place. It deals with facts but, more importantly, with the culture and values of society. It should consequently deal with gender.

Laura Grünberg (2011)[34]

1.4.6.1 Gender studies and women's studies

Particularly in the latter quarter of the 20th century, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the humanities specifically dedicated to the analysis of gender (often described as gender studies or women's studies programmes or modules) grew in HEIs worldwide. These programmes have been seen as an important tool for legitimising and embedding the enhancement of social understanding of gender inequality. They have also produced graduates with the motivation and the skills to work towards a more gender-equal society and are described by women students as empowering (e.g. Morley et al., 2006).

For these reasons among others, there was worldwide concern among academics and among politicians when the government of **Hungary** introduced a ban on gender studies courses in 2018.[35] In 2020, the government of **Romania** passed a new law, L87/2020, banning all discussion about and around 'gender identity' in academic and educational settings, defined as any opinion or theory where gender represents a separate concept from biological sex.[36] By contrast, the Equality Law 3/2007 of **Spain** requires governments to foster education on equality between women and men in HE curricula, and the creation of specific postgraduate studies on equality between women and men.[37]

The analysis of the multiple and significant differences in the lives of men and women, and across gender variation, is not mainstreamed into university teaching, learning or administration in most institutions or in most academic disciplines. While this remains the case, university departments hosting specialist insight can be invaluable partners advising on wider programmes. Expertise among those working in gender studies and women's studies units can be engaged, to facilitate 'a learning environment that is conducive to gender justice'.[38] International research networks for gender studies, as well as for analysing sex/gender within disciplinary fields, can be built and supported, as recommended in the report into the British Council's work with women and girls published in 2017 (British Council & ODI, 2017).

In-house expertise on gender equality is a good indicator of how well HEIs will be able to develop good policies and practices for mainstreaming gender equality. The presence of a unit or department of gender studies or of women's studies is one indication that an HEI has in-house expertise. Others include the number of publications on gender equality produced by staff within an institution, and the proportion of papers on gender equality in top journals by staff within an institution. Both these metrics are used in the *THE* World Ranking for Gender Equality (Methodology: *THE*, 2020).

- **Italy**: The University of Milan already had an interdepartmental Centre for Women and Gender Differences, which had been created in 1995 as one of the very first centres in Italy on gender equality and gender studies. As part of its action plan tailored to the legislation for reform of Italian universities in 2010, the university created a new interdepartmental Centre for Coordinated Research on Gender and Equality in Research and Science, bringing in departments from the science faculties which had been identified as priorities for intervention. The new centre created a more explicit focus on gender in science, was a base for producing more tailored and effective communications, added to the sustainability of the action plan, and provided a base from which to contribute to the field of responsible research and innovation.
- **China**: In 2015 across China, more than 100 colleges and universities were offering over 440 courses on women's studies and gender equality. The state has included gender equality in the national philosophy and social science plans to support research.[39]
- **Romania**: A similar centre, with an associated network of women, research group on gender studies and communication team, as created at Alexandria Ioan Cuza University in the years before the ban on 'gender identity' theory (above) was introduced.[40]

34. In Grunberg (ed.) *From Gender Studies to* Gender IN Studies (2011), p. 8 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000211180/PDF/211180eng.pdf.multi
35. See *Inside Higher Ed* (17 October 2018): www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2018/10/17/hungary-officially-ends-gender-studies-programs
36. Reported in *The New York Times* (18 June 2020): www.nytimes.com/aponline/2020/06/18/world/europe/ap-eu-romania-gender-studies-ban.html
37. Article 25, p. 13 in English translation.
38. University of Kabul (2010), *ibid*., p. 19.
39. See the Chinese government's *White Paper on Gender Equality and Women's Development in China:* english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2015/09/22/content_281475195668448.htm
40. Reported in EC & Italian government (2015) STAGES project guidelines, pp. 3–6 and 15–19.

The existence of academic journals specialising in analysis of gender issues (e.g. the *Journal of Gender Based Violence*, the *Journal of Gender and Development*, the *Journal of Politics and Gender*) should not mean that issues disproportionately affecting half the population should only be discussed or analysed in specialist publications. After all, the persistence of gender inequality arises in part from a widespread failure to engage with and understand the centrality of sex/gender-based discrimination to the lives of many women and girls (and the centrality of sex/gender-based privilege to the lives of many men and boys). Yet the recent example below of what happened to a research project on a core public policy area for women and girls[41] – sexual harassment in public spaces – shows how ingrained the practice is of marginalising forms of knowledge that matter more for women than for men.

Figure 7: Twitter conversation about research on street harassment

Source: Reproduced with permission from the authors

41. See, for example, www.stopstreetharassment.org/about/what-is-street-harassment/why-stopping-street-harassment-matters/

> **When … someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing.**
>
> **Adrienne** Rich[42]

> **Given that males have traditionally taught science to males, and in many countries, in single sex settings, pedagogy and textbooks have emerged that may in effect act as "chill factors" or exclusionary mechanisms for women.**
>
> **Helsinki Group National Policies Report, cited in Marchetti & Raudma** (2010)[43]

1.4.7 Curriculum content

Closely related to the issue of gendered subject choice is the issue of gendered curriculum content.

The exclusion or invisibility of girls and women as human subjects within textbooks and curricula, as well as in all other media, has been extensively documented.[44] By default, characters in stories and other texts, whether animals or humans, have characteristically been assumed or described as male. Human bodies are depicted in anatomical science books as male, with female bodies deviating from the male standard.[45] These practices are ingrained so that it seems 'normal' for humans to be over-represented by male people, as though men constitute far more than 50 per cent of the species. Similarly, curricula and textbooks in many countries worldwide either ignore sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression or treat those outside of traditional binary heterosexual stereotypes as deviant (UNESCO, 2020).

- The Freie Universität Berlin in **Germany** has published a toolkit for gender and diversity in teaching, which includes questions and reflections on the use of images in teaching (Freie Universität Berlin, 2018).
- The Middle East Technical University in Ankara, **Turkey** offered a specific course on gender and technology for master's and PhD students in technological sciences (EGERA, 2017).
- With the Ministry of Education of **Malaysia**, IBE-UNESCO (2017) has published a resource pack for gender-responsive STEM education, including checklists for the process of designing and developing a gender-sensitive STEM curriculum[46] and guidance for developing gender-sensitive teaching resources and textbooks.[47]

42. From *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979–1985.*
43. Page 129.
44. For example, Criado Perez (2019), *ibid*. pp. 11–12, 18.
45. Standring (2004), cited in European Commission (2013), p. 126.
46. See Module 2, Activity 5, pp. 84–87.
47. See Module 5, pp. 204–235.

Cultural assumptions that men are by default knowledge producers and innovators are reproduced, and strengthened, when stories that are told about the history of knowledge provide examples of men but not of women. In the past (and still, in the present) women have had less access to academic work than men because of different caring responsibilities. Also in common with all those from lower-income backgrounds or otherwise discriminated against, women have had less access to academic work because of denial of equal opportunities. This means that (often wealthy) men in most societies were able to produce more knowledge, and be more often named as the producers of knowledge, than women.

However, even in the less distant past those women who did make significant contributions to knowledge were 'left out' of the history books through discrimination and discriminatory social norms, as in the case of physicist Katherine Johnson in the USA (newscientist.com) and physicist Jocelyn Bell Burnell in the UK (scientificwomen.net). In the 1700s, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was the first to introduce smallpox inoculation to Britain and Western Europe, having observed the procedure in **Turkey**. She was met with considerable resistance and her story has largely been forgotten. Edward Jenner is widely celebrated as the creator of the vaccine decades later (time.com).

- At a Life Science Career Day in a STEM institution in **Switzerland**, the audience of the event was gender-balanced. The plenary speaker at the opening session, chaired by a man, was also a man. He illustrated his talk with cartoons depicting 18 men and not a single woman. He also presented slides with statements all written in the masculine gender. This sent a strong message that careers in the life sciences were associated with masculinity and maleness (Trbovc & Hofman, 2015).[48]
- Male Engineering Faculty lecturers in **South Africa** only referred to 'he' in examples (Shackleton et al., 2006).
- A **European** research project to improve gender sensitivity in research and teaching found resistance and reluctance to engage with the research, with a number of course leaders in the natural sciences choosing not to respond to requests to share the extent of gender content in their curriculum.[49]
- A study of seven modern undergraduate biology textbooks in the **USA** found that for every woman scientist mentioned, men were highlighted seven times. Black women were not represented a single time in any of the works analysed (Wood et al., 2020).

The consequences of leaving sex/gender out of the curriculum are many. They include inappropriate and sometimes literally dangerous over-generalisation from men's experience and/or physiology to women, and the misrepresentation of women's experiences and needs as being deviant from what has been constructed as 'normal' based on men's lives. Gender stereotypes based on sexism can be employed to account for sex and gender differences, where education about discrimination and disadvantage would have provided a more accurate picture.

Practical engagement with sex/gender issues within the curriculum can help to ensure that issues of particular concern to women are acknowledged and addressed: for example, architecture students can learn to consider women's safety and security issues in the design of public spaces (case study 9). Equally, architects educated in gender equality might design kitchens – spaces that were historically designated as being literally fit for the woman of the household – to be spacious enough for more than one householder to work together in the kitchen (Morley et al., 2006).

1.4.7.1 Gender mainstreaming as key to quality, standardisation and internationalisation

The internationalisation of HE requires ongoing standardisation and quality assurance across nations and regions, increasing the compatibility of their HE systems. In **Europe**, in 1999 this process began with the 'Bologna Declaration'[50] by ministers of **EU** countries and has now expanded to apply across 48 countries in what is known as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The Erasmus+ programme enables the international mobility of HE students and staff from participating countries, allowing them to study, teach, train or be trained, or to run collaborative strategic partnerships. The British Council was a managing partner for the UK while it was in the EU.

48. Page 38 of the GARCIA toolkit for integrating gender sensitivity into research and teaching. https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/garcia_toolkit_gender_research_teaching.pdf
49. Page 39 of the GARCIA toolkit, Trbovc & Hofman (2015), *ibid*.
50. See ehea.info/

Mainstreaming gender into teaching improves the quality of instruction and the social relevance of the resulting knowledge, technology and innovations. The gender perspective facilitates an in-depth understanding of the needs, behaviour and attitudes of the whole population … Teaching with a gender perspective also stimulates students' critical thinking capacity, providing them with new tools to identify social stereotypes, norms and roles related to gender. They thus learn to … develop skills that will enable them to avoid gender blindness in their future careers.

AQU (2019), p. 14

The Erasmus+ programme relies on and feeds in to the Bologna Process. It is notable that at an early conference to review progress towards internationalisation and standardisation of undergraduate and master's education across Europe (the Bologna Process), it was deemed necessary to 'reaffirm the importance of the social dimension of the Bologna Process', stating:

> *The need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level.*[51]

In 2015 the Yerevan Communique[52] set out the refreshed common goals and vision of the EHEA, 'where higher education is contributing effectively to build inclusive societies … We will support HEIs in enhancing their efforts to promote… gender equality'. The commitment to making the HE systems more inclusive includes a specific aim to improve gender balance at the same time as widening opportunities for access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The architects and custodians of the Bologna Process and other similar projects have signalled that gender equality should be mainstreamed as a part of the internationalisation, standardisation and quality assurance process. The move towards flexible and blended learning (learning that can take place over varying periods of time, through digital as well as face-to-face methods) is one step that addresses the practical needs of many women and others who have been disadvantaged by their circumstances. Strategic progress towards gender equality is addressed by integrating gender and gender equality into the curriculum. To that end, a number of helpful resources have been developed which enable those overseeing course content to ensure that gender is mainstreamed.

51. Communique of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, EHEA (2003). See enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/BerlinCommunique1.pdf
52. Yerevan Communique, EHEA (2015). ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/70/7/YerevanCommuniqueFinal_613707.pdf

- The Gender Curricula site is available in English and in German. It presents a searchable database of 55 academic degree subjects, with regularly updated information about mainstreaming gender into each of the subject areas as well as a list of gender experts in each subject area. An accompanying book chapter (Kortendiek, 2011)[53] describes the steps for developing a gender-balanced curriculum, with examples relating to gender-related teaching objectives and specific gender-related content.
- In 2019 an English language version of the General Framework for Incorporating the Gender Perspective in Higher Education was published (AQU Catalunya, 2019). This comprehensive publication was first published in Catalan (AQU Catalunya, 2018). It provides instruction on a framework, with indicators and standards, to mainstream gender throughout any degree programme, with notes on general and subject-specific learning outcomes for students.

These resources, which were developed in European contexts to assist with gender mainstreaming in the Bologna internationalisation process, are also deeply relevant and useful for quality assurance in internationalisation across the world.

A report of an **EU**-funded project on good practice for gender mainstreaming in curricula (EGERA, 2017) identified three broad 'success factors' for integrating gender into the curriculum, based on feedback from course co-ordinators and students. They were:

1. **organisation:** it is helpful to integrate courses that explore gendered dimensions of the subject into the core degree curriculum
2. **legitimacy:** gender experts should be involved in course design and delivery
3. **course content and accessibility:** a diversity of teaching approaches is desirable. Encouraging reflexivity in students improves their critical skills as well as their future social outlook. Offering an interdisciplinary or even interuniversity course provides for further diversity in analysis and critical thought.

1.4.8 Teaching and learning environments

The physical and environmental constraints operating to restrict the freedom of girls to access or thrive in primary and secondary education have been well documented and have been the focus of a number of successful interventions worldwide. These constraints do not disappear at the point of transition to HE, although the provision of basic facilities such as private toilets is normally more reliable than in primary or secondary educational environments. Physical environment constraints that affect participation and/or achievement include:[54]

- lack of private space for menstruating girls and women
- lack of single-sex toilet facilities
- lack of safe transportation to the educational setting
- lack of educational institutions close to home, in contexts where travel far from home is not possible or permitted.

Borker (2019) used big data and algorithms to demonstrate that an unsafe public sphere inflicts serious educational and economic consequences on women. In Delhi, **India**, female students were willing to trade a place at a top university for one nine ranks lower, in order to travel by a safer route that offered a three per cent decrease in the risk of rape. Men would only trade down by one rank for the same degree of added safety. Women were spending 16 times as much money per year for added travel safety as men (amounting to almost double the average tuition fee), and would travel 40 minutes more daily for a safer route, compared to men's willingness to travel four minutes more.

In reviewing the literature for this report, no examples could be found of purposeful long-term action taken by institutions in response to gender-sensitive concerns about physical access or transportation for educational purposes. Many university students' unions in **Australia** and the **UK** run 'safety buses' at night. A number of cities worldwide (rather than HEIs) have women-only buses, train carriages or taxis, or have introduced heightened accountability measures such as CCTV or reporting apps, phone lines or hubs. A recent collection of articles (Ceccato, 2017) acknowledged that such methods to change the 'criminogenic conditions of places' may be effective (to meet women's practical needs). Such interventions might include education of architects, engineers and city planners in principles of crime prevention through

53. Pages 208–228.
54. Kellum, J (2018) *Inclusive, Quality Education: An Annotated Bibliography.* Plan International. https://plan-international.org/publications/inclusive-quality-education-annotated-bibliography

environment design. Ultimately, education to change social norms supportive of violence against women (VAW) is required in the long term.

- Case study 9 describes a method of teaching architecture students about gender equality and women's safety by conducting a socio-spatial analysis of their campus (Keddy, 2015).

Morley et al. (2006) refer to the 'hidden curriculum' in which male students dominate classroom time and space. In their study of gender in HE across five Commonwealth countries, they found that male students and staff often underestimated both the ability and the achievements of female students. Indeed, there is a growing dataset that demonstrates the strength of this phenomenon in HE teaching and learning environments across the world, as well as the direct effect upon further opportunities. For example:

- male biology students in the **USA** showed consistent bias in overestimating the performance and knowledge of their male peers but not their female peers (Grunspan et al., 2016)
- both female and male Science Faculty in the **USA** were asked to rate an application from a student for a laboratory manager position. The same application materials were randomly assigned either a male or female name. The 'male' participant was rated (by both men and women) as significantly more competent and hireable than the (identical) 'female' participant; the 'male' was offered a higher starting salary and more mentoring opportunities (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012)
- male Engineering Faculty students in **South Africa** would laugh if female students asked a question in lectures (Shackleton et al., 2006)
- male students in **Afghanistan** would exit the classroom first, before female students. So female students were not able to see the teacher immediately after class because by the time they came out of the class, the teacher would already be gone. Bias and favouritism towards male students prevented female students from having equal opportunities to access scholarships or to attend special classes such as management, computer or internet courses (Kabul University, 2010)
- male students in male-dominated subject areas were more likely to endorse sexist ideas and stereotypes in a study conducted in the **USA** (Banchefsky & Park, 2018).

The UNESCO guide for teacher education (2015) lists the following teacher behaviours which discriminate in favour of male students:

- calling on male students more frequently
- waiting longer for males to respond to questions
- giving male students more eye contact following questions
- remembering the names of male students
- using these names when calling on male students
- attributing male students' comments in class discussion
- interrupting female students before the end of their response
- asking males more questions that call for 'higher-order' critical thinking as opposed to 'lower-order' recounting of facts.

A recent report from a **UK** parliamentary body (APPG on Diversity & Inclusion in STEM, 2020) found that school science teachers are ill prepared to tackle inequity in the classroom and ill equipped to know how to support students to find a connection with STEM subjects. However, gender was not an explicit focus of the Erasmus+ project with the British Council and the British Science Association to 'Make Science Real in Schools' and which reported its recommendations in 2017, without addressing gender or wider diversity and inclusion themes (MARCH, 2017).

Research from the **USA** has found that, in biology classes using small-group teaching, the more women who were participating in the groups, the higher the performance for everyone (Sullivan et al., 2018).

The physical look and feel of a classroom can send powerful signals about belonging. Simply removing stereotypically 'masculine' objects from a computer science classroom can be enough to boost female undergraduates' interest in computer science to the level of their male peers (Cheryan et al., 2009).

Improving the teaching and learning environment for girls and women should form part and parcel of any HE programme that seeks to deliver gender-equitable outcomes, including but not limited to the range of professional teacher training courses that are supported by the British Council. The importance of addressing gender inequalities in teaching, learning and in the HE internationalisation agenda can be lost: a number of sector documents make reference to 'inclusion' or to the need to eliminate discrimination and barriers to participation and success – but only in passing, for example the recent guide to the Advance HE framework for internationalising higher education (Ryan, 2020).

Learning about, and transforming, gender bias in the pedagogical environment can be achieved on the ground through research and making use of the range of resources that have been published in the field – a number of which are documented in Section 2 of this report. The evidence for the benefits of gender-responsive pedagogy is strong (e.g. Wanjama & Njuguna, 2015). Specific and localised experiences can be sought out using project-specific workshops – such as those that have been undertaken as a part of the TESCEA project (case study 1). These workshops also function to raise awareness among all participants.

Research in schools has also suggested that democratically elected student councils are a powerful way of increasing the ability of female and male students to voice their needs and concerns, to increase their interventions around discriminatory social norms and to develop increased leadership skills (Mnubi, 2017). Support for gender-sensitive student councils in HE is likely to confer similar benefits.

Bias as well as practical constraints can play a part in the denial of equal opportunities to women students beyond the core curriculum, for enrichment of their studies. Opportunities such as scholarships, laboratory work and shadowing or summer internships may be less available to women. The British Council and ODI review[55] found that in some countries, affirmative action practices to support young women facing challenges obtaining the same educational experience as men were not consistently applied. The review also found that some of the British Council's scholarship programmes did not have a gender-responsive selection process.

Africa: PedaL

The Partnership for Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (PedaL) is a part of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)-funded SPHEIR programme managed by the British Council with PwC and Universities UK International (UUKi).

It is a formal partnership of eight institutions that aims to embed and catalyse systemic change in teaching and learning in African universities, through training a network of academics. The training package includes a module on gender, and seven of the project's 15 e-cases feature a focus on gender and marginalised groups. The project uses revised course outlines and reflective logs, as well as focus group discussions, to capture changes in teaching practice among those trained under PedaL. It has reported the following examples of strategies that have been used by faculty to integrate gender in course delivery:

- inserting gender into the course curriculum to allow discussion of gender issues
- making reference to gender issues in analysis, and teaching students how to undertake gender-based analysis
- providing references from both male and female authors
- ensuring a gender balance in students' responses to questions in class
- appreciating the difficulties faced by student mothers in class attendance due to pregnancy or childcare issues
- respecting everyone's opinion and ideas irrespective of gender
- ensuring that there is a female class representative as opposed to having males only
- ensuring balanced gender representation in materials used, class activities and role sharing
- using gender-sensitive language (e.g. 'he/she') and examples
- ensuring gender parity in groups
- appointing both male and female students to be group discussion leaders and to present findings to the rest of the class.

PedaL also counts a number of female faculty among its core team, and the project has developed their leadership skills and visibility since it began.

55. *Women and Girls: Making a Lasting Difference* (2017), p. 74. See www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_impact_report_web.pdf

1.4.8.1 Student assessment

Unconscious bias based on a range of characteristics may affect teachers' evaluations and assessment of students in HE, but there is very little evidence that gender bias is prevalent towards students at tertiary level, while teacher grading bias in favour of female students has been recorded at school level in **Europe** (Bygren, 2019). In any case, it makes sound sense to aim for so-called 'blind' assessment to be implemented as far as possible, with the names of students removed from their submitted work before assessment.

Another consideration for those designing evaluation and assessment systems in HE is whether certain examination methods produce better or poorer results, on average, by student gender. Salehi et al. (2019) observe that:

- male science students perform relatively better at multiple-choice exam questions than female students, compared to performance with short-answer questions that engage critical thinking skills[56]
- stereotype threat (heightened awareness that those of one's group are not thought to be 'good' at a subject) can cause female students to underperform – this can be addressed by providing positive messages before an assessment
- high-stakes exams in STEM subjects (where poor performance might mean being excluded from a course) create test anxiety which in turn affects the exam performance of female students more than male students, in contrast to laboratory or non-exam assessments.

Just as female students may be on average more anxious about their performance, the relative confidence of male students can extend to advantage after initial assessment. Male HE students appear to be more likely to respond to poorer grades by demanding a grade change – reflecting their higher confidence and entitlement – resulting in more male students receiving favourable grade changes (Li & Zafar, 2020).

1.4.8.2 Women's universities

Sex segregation in HE spaces, like single-sex schooling, has been seen as a method of liberating girls and women from both the physical dangers inherent in mixed-sex environments, and the stereotypes of male dominance in education and leadership. Of course, the act of sex segregation in itself is likely to reinforce rigid and binary ideas about the fundamental nature of sex and gender difference – ideas which have more, or less, traction in diverse cultures of the world. Keeping women segregated from men for women's own safety is not a desirable long-term aim, since it contributes nothing to transforming inequality between the sexes and, in particular, it contributes nothing towards addressing the factors that lead men to believe they have the right to assault women. However, in the shorter term, single-sex environments do by their nature reduce the opportunity for VAW, especially in the absence of appropriate holistic prevention strategies. In the shorter term, women-only learning environments also reduce men's cultural dominance in the classroom as teachers or fellow students.

- Of **India**'s 993 universities, 16 are exclusively for women.[57]
- Since 1998 **Pakistan** has created 29 universities and colleges for women.[58]
- In 2020, of the *THE* Top 100 universities for gender equality, two – in **Pakistan** and **South Korea** – are women's universities.

Faculty in women's HEIs are more likely across the board to be women, including in traditionally more masculine subject areas. Women usually occupy the majority of leadership roles in women's HEIs.

Does research suggest that single-sex HE environments can be helpful for women's aspirations and achievements? A study conducted in the **USA** (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004) investigated the gender stereotypic beliefs of women HE students in single-sex and co-educational learning environments. It found that:

- when women have recently seen representations of high-profile women leaders, they are more likely to automatically (unconsciously) associate women with leadership qualities
- when women are in everyday social contexts that expose them to women leaders (i.e. a year in a single-sex HEI), they are less likely to express automatic (unconscious) stereotypical beliefs about women as a group
- taking part in maths and science courses where men dominate as teachers and students (in co-educational settings) strengthens women's existing automatic (unconscious) gender stereotypes
- taking part in maths and science courses with only women as students and mostly women as teachers (i.e. the teaching and learning environment in single-sex settings) reduces automatic gender stereotypes.

56. Stanger-Hall (2017), cited in Salehi et al., *ibid.*
57. *All India Survey of Higher Education 2018–19*, p. i.
58. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Women%27s_universities_and_colleges_in_Pakistan (accessed 4 June 2020).

A three-year study of female academics in both mixed-sex and women-only universities in **Pakistan** concluded that Pakistan's single-sex institutions were overwhelmingly positive for women, both as academics and students.[59]

A study in the **USA** of female science and engineering PhD students found that they were more likely to complete their degrees in departments with higher percentages of female faculty, and more likely to complete their degrees when working with female advisers rather than male advisers. Gender balance had no effect for male PhD students (Main, 2018).

These findings are in line with research from the USA reporting that success is enhanced among Black women in STEM undergraduate programmes who are in a learning environment – historically Black HEIs – encountering other women who look like them, fostering a congruous personal 'STEM identity' (Jackson, 2013). These studies underline the importance of attracting and retaining diverse women into teaching roles in subjects where they are historically under-represented.

1.4.8.3 Online learning environments

Worldwide, women undertake more domestic and household labour than men, spending longer on those tasks. In some cultures there are longstanding expectations that women in households will shoulder all cooking, cleaning and caring responsibilities. One task for making gender relations more equitable is to encourage men and women to look at the fairness of the unequal distribution of domestic labour.

Meanwhile, the demands of those extra responsibilities carried by women can interfere with the freedom to spend additional time travelling to and from physical learning spaces, and can also result in falling behind in studies or stepping back from educational opportunities. Women may also be more likely to fear violence or lack of suitable toilet facilities when they travel.

Opportunities for online or blended learning study programmes can therefore be helpful for women in particular, but need to be designed and monitored with a gendered analysis and taking account of the ways in which co-construction, active student participation and shared learning can still be integrated as important elements of any pedagogy that seeks to be transformative (Koseuglu et al., 2020).

- In the least developed countries, only 19 per cent of individuals had internet access in 2019.
- Broken down by gender, 24 per cent of men but only 14 per cent of women had internet access.
- Regionally, the internet gender gap is largest in **Africa**. Between 2013 and 2019, the gender gap grew in **Africa**, the **Arab States**, **Asia** and the **Pacific** because of a rapid growth in male internet users compared to female internet users.
- Mobile phones are the most frequently used means of accessing the internet, and in 58 countries more men than women own a mobile phone.[60]

The fact that women are less likely than men to own or have access to technology – other than in high-income egalitarian countries – requires programmes to factor in access to technological tools.

Data on gender differences in uptake or effectiveness of online learning is in short supply. Overwhelmingly, most research into online learning reviewed for this report failed to investigate, account for or even mention gender or sex, or to recommend that gendered analysis be undertaken (e.g. in the **UK**, the Education Endowment Foundation's guidance on using digital technology to improve learning). Generally, there is little evidence of any universal or stable sex/gender differences in the effectiveness of online learning environments. Rather, social and educational interactions taking place online are likely to reflect the existing gender norms that are present in more traditional learning environments and in society (Gunn et al., 2003). For example, male students may express more confidence in using technology (e.g. Yau & Cheng, 2012) but this may not be related to ability. Nevertheless there are some courses which are particularly popular with women and which they tend to be more likely to complete, although the reasons for this remain unclear. An example is the Web Design short programme module hosted by Kiron in Jordan and Lebanon for the SPHEIR PADILEIA programme.[61]

59. See www.timeshighereducation.com/news/pakistans-women-only-universities-are-progressive-spaces and www2.le.ac.uk/offices/press/press-releases/2016/october/uk-pakistan-university-project-provides-boost-for-womens-empowerment
60. International Telecommunications Union, *Measuring Digital Development Facts and Figures 2019*. See www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2019.pdf
61. SPHEIR mid-year report, PADILEIA programme May – November 2019.

- **Nigeria**: the Knowledge for Health project ran nine online learning courses for medical laboratory scientists between 2011 and 2015. Although the professional and regulatory bodies had concerns that women would be less likely to access online courses, women in fact earned 52 per cent of the online course certificates awarded.[62]
- **Romania**: cultural norms about males being more comfortable with technology than females and possessing more computer-related skills were expected to produce differences in use of a virtual campus environment, but no differences were found (Ciuclea & Ternauciuc, 2019).
- A global study of online STEM massive open online courses (MOOCs) found that while females were less likely than males to enrol in STEM courses, they were equally likely to complete them (Jiang et al., 2018).

Jordan and Lebanon: online course completion rates

The PADILEIA project (Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access) is part of the FCDO's SPHEIR initiative. It provides educational opportunities for displaced Syrian students in **Lebanon** and **Jordan**, as well as disadvantaged Jordanian and Lebanese students.

By focusing on the barriers to completion for female students on the programme, the completion rate for female students studying courses with PADILEIA partner Kiron improved from 38 per cent to 49 per cent between May and September 2018. The project held focus groups with students using Kiron's online platform and identified factors such as role models to build confidence, word-of-mouth recruitment and referrals, and explicit gender sensitivity measures in classroom management and student support team behaviours that supported female students to feel at ease with learning on the platform. Future online courses across PADILEIA's study pathways will allow for analysis of student satisfaction by gender, which will increase the gender sensitivity of the courses.

The project has also responded to the Covid-19 pandemic by exploring how to shift safeguarding work online, and how to best advise students on staying safe during lockdown.

Figure 8: Graduating from the PADILEIA project

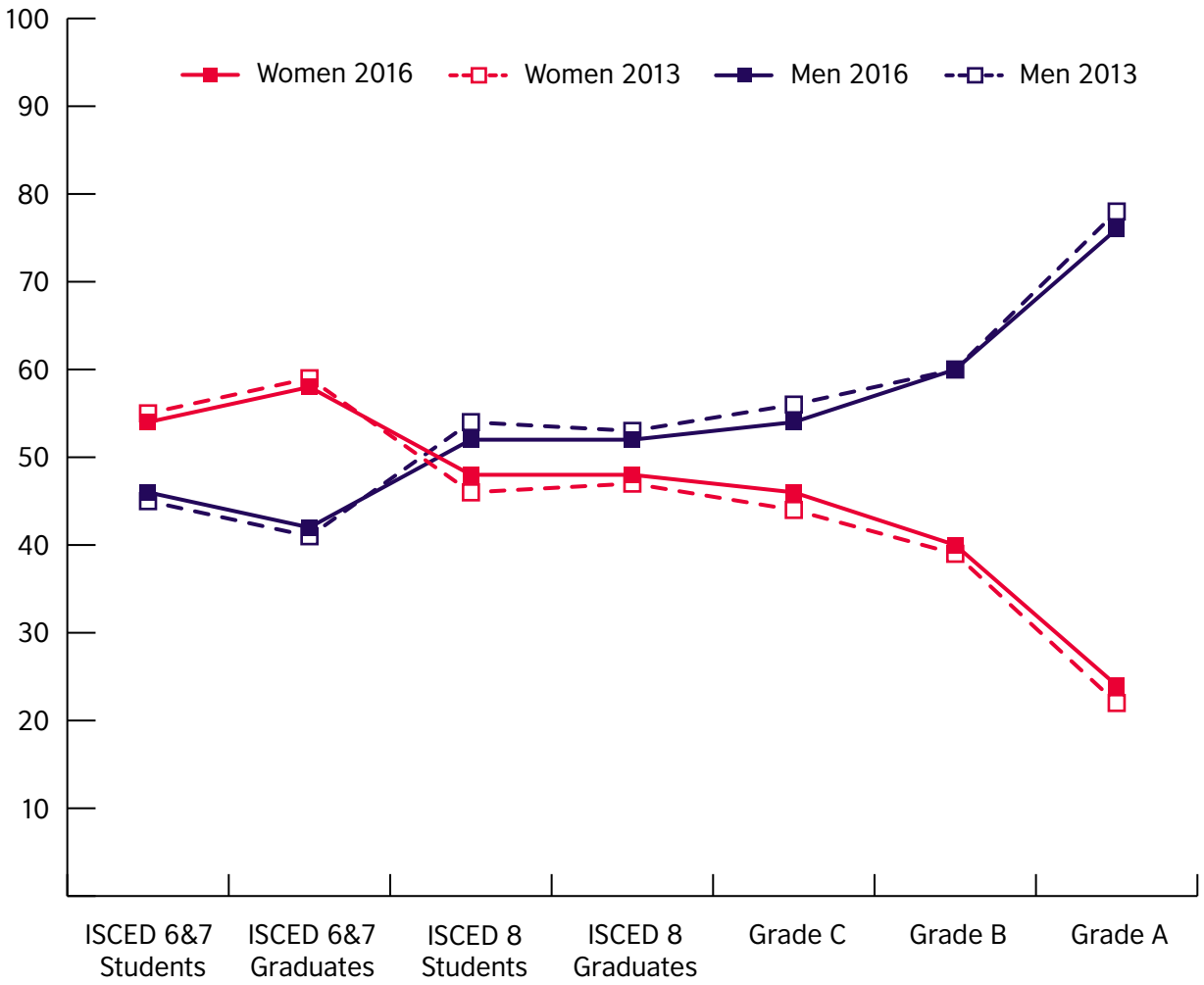
Source: SPHIER programme with American University of Beirut, CCECS

62. Amy Lee (2016) reporting for Medium.com. See medium.com/the-exchange-k4health/online-learning-are-there-really-differences-between-men-and-women-77d71a78b461

The sexual harassment of women via social media is a significant problem in HE as in wider society. Women are disproportionately targeted online, and the accounts of women scholars reflect this (Veletsianos et al., 2018). Academic women who 'put their head above the parapet' to engage in public discourses concerning their research specialties can end up self-censoring and removing themselves from online spaces,[63] in the face of unmanageable torrents of abuse which are far more numerous and persistent than those experienced by men in the public eye. The abuse directed at women of colour in the Global North is yet more considerable.[64]

Whatever coping strategies women use, they take a toll and require labour that men in similar positions do not face. As far as learning platforms go, the recent swift adoption of online learning platforms in UK HEIs in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed that students and their teachers are not safe from harassment or abuse on the platforms they use for education.[65] However, if adequate policy, safeguarding and monitoring provisions are put in place by the responsible institutions, then the 'fingerprint' left by those who use online platforms to abuse or harass may give their victims better evidence with which to take forward complaints or demands for accountability.

Figure 9: Typical academic career



Proportion (%) of men and women in a typical academic career, students and academic staff, EU-28, 2013–16[66]

63. Veletsianos et al. (2018), *ibid*.
64. See a recent review for DFID on the digital harassment of women leaders: Stevens & Fraser (2018): www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1631/q-210-digital-harassment-of-women-leaders-evidence-review.pdf
65. Article in the UK *Guardian*: www.theguardian.com/education/2020/apr/22/students-zoombomb-online-lectures-with-extreme-pornography
66. From *She Figures* (2018), p. 116, data from Eurostat.

1.4.9 Academic research and teaching staff

1.4.9.1 Recruitment

Section 1.4.4 provided some data on gender differences on entry into research roles. Proportions of women academic teaching staff tend globally to follow similar patterns to those described in Section 1.4.4. The data from **Europe** in Figure 9 is quite representative: while women tend to outnumber men at entry into HE, as they progress through the ranks of academia the senior positions are very disproportionately held by men – a pattern that is not showing any great change over time and that is even more distinct in the STEM fields (She Figures, 2018).

- A study in **Afghanistan** (University of Kabul, 2010) pointed to nepotism, favouritism, lack of transparency and accountability disadvantaging female staff in the recruitment process.
- A study in the **USA** of 624 academic letters of recommendation found significant differences by the gender of the person being recommended, showing that the letter-writers adhered to gender norms. Men were described using more 'agentic' terms (e.g. ambitious, self-confident) and women using more 'communal' terms (e.g. affectionate, kind). The more communal terms that were used in the letters, the less 'hireable' candidates were seen to be by assessors (Madera et al., 2009).

There is good evidence that interventions to address bias in the recruitment process can be successful. A research study from the **USA** found that university science departments where a 'gender bias habit-breaking intervention' lasting 2.5 hours had been delivered to faculty, the proportion of women hired increased by 18 percentage points compared to no increase in departments who did not receive the training intervention (Devine et al., 2017).

- In **India**, the ratio of male to female teaching staff is 58 per cent to 42 per cent. However, this varies widely by region, for example in Bihar male teachers outnumber women by 4:1 at 79 per cent to 21 per cent. Female teachers are heavily concentrated in the lowest ranks.[67]

1.4.9.2 Promotion and the distribution of opportunity

Even in countries where women outnumber men in academic roles, men outnumber women in the senior positions. A recent review of women in academia (Catalyst, 2020) found:

- women in **Australia** held over 50 per cent of faculty positions below lecturer but under 35 per cent of positions above senior lecturer
- women in **India** held over 40 per cent of lower-level faculty positions but under 30 per cent of professorial and equivalent positions
- women in the **USA** held half of all tenure-track academic positions but only 40 per cent of tenured positions, while Black and Latina women each held five per cent of lowest-ranking 'instructor' positions but 1.6 per cent and 2.1 per cent, respectively, of professorial positions. The gender pay gap across all academic positions was 13 per cent
- research in **South Africa** found that in 2001, 48 per cent of lecturers or those holding lower academic and administrative ranks were women while only ten per cent of professors were women.[68]

Data on 'discretionary allowances' awarded on top of salary, for market reasons or on the basis of 'distinction' or additional responsibilities, are not routinely published, but a study in an Australian university (Currie & Hill, 2013) found an overall difference of almost $2,000 per year in favour of men. There was a difference of $8,744 per year in favour of men in one faculty.

In research for the British Council on women and HE leadership globally, Morley (2014) described how women would frequently be tasked with 'inward-looking' teaching and student support, while their male counterparts were encouraged to be more external-facing, focusing on international networks and research, and given opportunities for taking study leave and international travel.

- In their study of an Engineering Faculty in **South Africa**, Shackleton et al. (2006) were told that all the men in one department had enjoyed repeated job grade increases, while the one woman in the department stayed at the same grade despite never being given any negative feedback about her performance.
- In **Afghanistan**, some female staff reported that some of the male students did not respect them and were verbally abusive towards them. Non-teaching female staff also felt that they were not listened to by the management of the university, reporting that male members of staff did not respect them or behave appropriately towards them (University of Kabul, 2010).

67. *All India Survey on Higher Education 2018–19*, p. 20.
68. Cooper & Subotsky (2001), cited in Shackleton et al. (2006), *ibid.*

Women are less likely to be promoted to senior academic positions than men, despite outnumbering men in some fields.

- Men on promotion committees have been found to discriminate against women candidates: a study of 35,000 candidates in **Spain** found that, for every male member of a promotions committee of seven, a woman candidate was 14 per cent less likely to be promoted to professor than a male candidate. A larger proportion of female evaluators increased the chances of success of female applicants to full professor positions (Zinovyeva & Bagues, 2010).

Student evaluations are frequently used as a measure of teaching quality for academic staff. Yet there is compelling evidence from multiple research studies that there is a sizeable and systematic bias against teachers who are women. This bias will affect external assessment from administrators, but can also have a negative impact on self-confidence and self-belief.

- In a quasi-experimental dataset of almost 20,000 student evaluations of university faculty in **the Netherlands**, women received systematically lower teaching evaluations than their male colleagues, and these differences could not be explained by any objective difference in teaching quality. This pattern of lower evaluations was twice as strong for evaluations given by male students as by female students, although on average both male and female students showed this bias. The bias was driven by negative evaluation of junior female teaching staff, and was not demonstrated for more senior instructors. The bias was substantially larger for courses with mathematics content. Even the learning materials (textbooks and so on, consistent across all tutors) were rated less positively by male students when their instructor was a woman, compared to when their instructor was a man (Mengel et al., 2018).
- Data from an experimental study of online learning, where students were told that the instructor (who they interacted with in text alone) was either a man or a woman, showed that students evaluated the 'man' significantly better than the 'woman', regardless of the actual gender of the instructor.[69]
- Research points towards a cultural 'presumption of incompetence' by students when being taught by more junior academic staff who are women, or from minority groups. The higher rate at which women instructors are challenged in class would seem to bear this out (Lazos, 2012).

Prestigious prizes in recognition of intellectual excellence are given more to men than to women. For example in 2018 Donna Strickland became only the third recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physics in its more than 100-year history.[70] A study of prizes in biomedicine reported in *Nature* (Ma et al., 2019) showed that in the last decade women, who constitute 50 per cent of students and 38 per cent of PhD enrolments, won 27 per cent of prizes. Women only received 17.4 per cent of the most prestigious prizes. For the highest value awards, only 14.6 per cent of recipients were women, and overall women received just over 60 per cent of the prize money that men received on average.

Excellence is also measured by citations in high-impact academic journals, a factor which is also influenced by gender norms. Studies across different fields have repeatedly found that the voices and words of men are picked up, amplified and repeated more than the voices and words of women. For example, in journalism male political reporters were found to 'retweet' the words of other men three times more than they did their female colleagues (Usher et al., 2018). In academic publishing, a rigorous study analysed more than 149,700 papers published between 1950 and 2015 in five high-impact astronomy journals. Controlling for all other identifiable variables, the study predicted that male authors should receive four per cent fewer citations than female authors in matched journal articles. In fact, papers written by women received over ten per cent fewer citations than those written by men (Caplar et al., 2017). A recent study of top neuroscience journals found that the citation practices of men lead to the over-citation of other men, and the under-citation of women authors (Dworkin et al., 2020). A similar study of political science journals found under-citation – by male and mixed gender authors – of work by women, even in journals that publish mostly female authors (Dion et al., 2018). This has led one journal – *International Studies Review* – to monitor the gender citation gap and ask authors to explain it.[71] Men have been found to cite their own research 70 per cent more than women (King et al., 2017).

69. MacNell et al. (2015) cited in Mengel et al. (2018).
70. Reported by the Society of Women Engineers, 9 April 2019. See alltogether.swe.org/2019/04/women-in-engineering-a-review-of-the-2018-literature/
71. Reported in Inside Higher Ed: www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/08/16/new-research-shows-extent-gender-gap-citations

> **Gender Bias can occur (1) in the characterisation of scientific excellence, (2) in the criteria used to assess it, (3) in the choice of the explicit and implicit indicators for scientific excellence, (4) in the way the criteria are applied to men and women, (5) in the failure to integrate women in scientific networks, and (6) in the procedures through which criteria are applied to people.**
>
> ***Gender and Excellence in the Making*, cited in Marchetti & Raudma** (2010)[73]

There is also evidence of bias in reviewing journal articles for publication: for example in 2001 the journal *Behavioral Ecology* began to mask the sex of authors sending in articles for consideration. In the four years that followed, there was a 7.9 per cent increase in the proportion of papers published with a female first author, while there was no significant increase among similar journals that did not adopt a gender-blind reviewing policy (Budden et al., 2008). In 2020, a group of over 100 UK academics sent a letter[72] to UKRI saying that many of their doctoral training partnerships and centres for doctoral training were 'scoring and ranking candidates on the basis of a narrow set of criteria rooted in biased views of "excellence"'. The letter pointed out that access to opportunity, often enabled by financial privilege or lack of caring responsibilities (e.g. being able to live or afford rent in Oxford, Cambridge or London, or being able to undertake unpaid research internships), was being used as a scoring criterion rather than ability or potential.

- **Pakistan**: the British Council in Pakistan monitors the number of research publications authored by female researchers from their joint research partnerships: between 2014 and 2018 over 2,000 research publications resulted from the research partnerships, of which half were by women.
- **Romania**: the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University created a number of practices to increase women researchers' visibility, voice and recognition, which engaged large numbers of people and were very positively received. These included an annual public event – Women Researchers Day – to celebrate women in science, an annual excellence award for women researchers, a series of documentary films on women in science, and a documentary exhibition – A Place of Women in Science.[74]
- **Ireland**: Before 2016, while female STEM graduates were approximately 50 per cent, women made up only 25 per cent of candidates for the Starting Investigator Research Grant programme for early-career researchers. This meant that despite similar success rates by gender, women's under-representation at the start of the process led to gender imbalance at the end of the process. When the number of male candidates per institution was capped at 50 per cent, institutions nominated equal numbers of male and female researchers and the success rates for men and women were similar. An information campaign addressed misperceptions about the fairness of this process.[75]

Gender stereotyping and flawed systems for assessing excellence which discriminate against women are not the only barriers to their progression, or to their equal participation in opportunities such as international travel fellowships. Efforts at 'gender mainstreaming' can be undermined by sexist practices such as sexual harassment (Morley, 2010).

72. Reported in Research Professional News, 23 June 2020: docs.google.com/document/d/1EInAKFI7px2DxYv-sAZxVOyTjkm-AE29CzFFnjxw6hg (accessed 30 June).
73. Footnote 182, p. 119.
74. Reported in EC & Italian government (2015) *STAGES project guidelines*, pp. 17–18.
75. Global Research Council (2019), p. 35.

> **Using age bars on fellowships for example is likely to prevent more women than men from making applications because women are more likely to have had career breaks and therefore their chronological age is older than their 'academic' age. Institutionalised sexism does not necessarily mean that individuals are biased or discriminatory, but the outcome of the systems they operate may well be systematically biased.**
>
> European Commission (2012a), p. 20

In most countries around the world, the shouldering of responsibility for providing or outsourcing caring work such as childcare still tends to 'default' to women in households. A Japanese academic explained in 2013 that almost 50 per cent of female university teachers in **Japan** did not marry – and that 62 per cent of male university teachers had spouses who were housewives (Morley, 2014). Carers' leave, such as maternity or paternity leave, is less often fully taken up by men than by women, and sometimes the 'leave period' is preceded or followed by a time of enforced overwork. Morley (2014) gives an example of a **Hong Kong** academic who was asked to pack all her lecturing commitments in to the period before taking maternity leave. There is of course only a finite number of hours in a working day.

An article in an HE trade news outlet reflected on how the gendered caring default played out during the global Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 when, around the world, usual childcare and schooling provision – as well as outsourced domestic cleaning labour – was suspended. Academic journal editors began to notice a pattern: men submitting more articles and women submitting fewer.[76]

The fact of women's greater average contribution to domestic labour and greater average time taken from work for parental leave means that fellowships and prizes that discriminate by age are likely to also discriminate by sex.

- In **China**, the upper age limit for women to apply to its Young Scientists Funds was raised in 2011–12. Encouraged by these policies, women's application rates for research funding have increased year on year, with female applicants exceeding male applicants at 51 per cent for the first time in 2018.[77]
- In **New Zealand**, there is a health research-funding stream (Explorer Grants) where the 'track record' of the team is not assessed and the reviewers do not know the personal characteristics of the applicants. This approach resulted in a 16 per cent increase in the number of female applicants over two years, resulting in parity (50 per cent) in 2018.[78]
- In **Senegal**, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation has created a special fund to boost recruitment, retention and promotion of women teacher-researchers at universities in Senegal.[79]

76. Inside Higher Ed, 21 April 2020. See www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/21/early-journal-submission-data-suggest-covid-19-tanking-womens-research-productivity and see also this article from the History of Science Society, 7 August 2020: hssonline.org/isis-submissions-and-gender/
77. Global Research Council (2019), p. 22.
78. Global Research Council (2019), p. 22.
79. Global Research Council (2019), *ibid*., p. 33.

It is important to note the findings from a meta-analysis of the literature on gender and science: that while 'many young women end up believing that science is incompatible with family life', in fact there is no clear evidence that women without children have better career prospects than their other female colleagues, and there is no significant impact of marriage or children upon women's scientific productivity or academic performance (European Commission, 2012b).[80]

1.4.9.3 Pay

Where women are represented in higher academic positions, they are paid less, especially at the higher ranks. In **Canada**, male professors earn five per cent more than female professors on average,[81] while in the **USA** male professors earn over ten per cent more (AAUP, 2020). Recent figures are difficult to obtain for most countries.

UK: Funding and pay transparency

In the UK, all large organisations (including universities and research institutions) are required by law (HM Government, 2017) to publish gender pay gap data.[82] This law was enacted in response to sustained campaigning by women's organisations who recognised that transparency in the award of discriminatory pay by gender, which is illegal but culturally persistent, will drive remedial action.

Every one of 228 reporting universities in the UK had a gender pay gap in favour of men (THES, 2019) with 192 institutions managing to reduce their mean average hourly pay gap since reporting was introduced. The mean hourly wage for all women HEI staff is 15.9 per cent lower than for men. The worst-performing university had a gap of 44.8 per cent while the best performing university had a gap of 2.1 per cent.

For academic staff, analysis of 2015–16 data showed that most of the pay gap is found at the highest pay levels: senior management (6.3 per cent), senior heads (7.0 per cent) and professors (6.4 per cent). Women outnumber men at the lower pay band levels, and men outnumber women at the higher levels (UCU, 2017).

Since 2012, UKRI has analysed and published applications for funding and fellowships, together with success rates, by gender. The data reveals that, broadly, the number of women applying to research councils reflects the number of women working in the relevant disciplines. For example, in 2015–16 women were 17 per cent of staff working in engineering and physical sciences, made 15.5 per cent of research grant applications and received 15.9 per cent of awards. Women were 47 per cent of staff working in economic and social research, made 44.3 per cent of applications and were awarded 47.2 per cent of grants.

80. European Commission (2012b) *Meta-Analysis of Gender and Science Research*, p. 18.
81. Catalyst (2020), *ibid. Quick Take: Women in Academia* (23 January 2020).
82. Although this requirement was suspended in response to the Covid-19 pandemic for 2019–20.

1.4.9.4 'Service' and pastoral work

Research in HE has widely documented the additional burden falling on women in academia, especially in teaching roles, related to the cultural expectation that women are suited to nurturing or servicing others. This phenomenon appears particularly acute in fields where women are numerically under-represented. Research in **South Africa** identified a particular burden of 'care work' upon Black African women academics (Magoqwana, Maqabuka & Tshoaedi, 2019). Even in the awarding of prizes, women are more likely to win low-prestige, low-income prizes that recognise their service (advocacy, teaching, public service) than prizes for research: in 2008–17 women working in biomedical sciences won 50 per cent of 'service' prizes but 27 per cent of research prizes that bring in more money, get more public attention and are more likely to promote career development (Ma et al., 2019).

Research with faculty women working in STEM in the **USA** (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2018) showed that they reported being more stressed and isolated, and less happy at work, than men in their departments – and this was associated with their perception of being expected to conduct more 'service work' than men (e.g. academic reviews of programmes; governance; internal committee membership, sometimes referred to as 'institutional housekeeping' or 'academic housework'). Job dissatisfaction contributes to the 'leaky pipeline' effect seen in STEM where not only are there fewer women entering the field but they leave in greater numbers than men.[83]

Job dissatisfaction also appears more prevalent for women when they are in a minority, particularly where women make up less than 25 per cent of faculty (Griffith & Dasgupta, 2018). In contrast, while there are challenges for men in female-dominated fields, they benefit through association of their masculinity with assumed leadership qualities and an assumed special dedication to pursuing their work as a career (Simpson, 2004).

Students also perceive and expect female professors to be more nurturing than male professors and react more negatively when their demands are not met by female professors. A recent study in the **USA** found that female professors reported receiving more requests than male professors for standard work demands, special favours and friendship behaviours. An experiment found that students, especially those who were 'academically entitled', had stronger expectations that a female professor should meet their special favour requests than a male professor. This increased the likelihood that they would make such requests and behave negatively if the requests were denied (El-Alayli, Hansen-Brown & Ceynar, 2018).

Ironically, women in traditionally male-dominated fields are also often disproportionately called upon to devote time to committees and initiatives related to improving diversity. This adds to the service-workload and consequently reduces the time they have available for research which is crucial to advancement.

Interventions to address the disparity in service workload include restructuring promotion criteria to more fully recognise and value excellence in leadership and citizenship, alongside teaching and research as developed by the University of Bristol in the **UK** (case study 8).

1.4.9.5 Leadership

Globally, women are under-represented in positions of power and leadership across all occupations, whether or not those occupations are themselves male-dominated, such as politics, or female-dominated, such as primary school teaching.

- In **Egypt**, although women constitute more than a third of the scientific community, they occupy only two per cent of senior research positions.[84]
- In the **UK** in 2017–18, 48 per cent of full-time academic staff were female. However, only 26 per cent of professors were female and only 36 per cent of other senior academic post-holders were female.[85] In 2018–19, women remained under-represented on university governing bodies.[86]
- In **Saudi Arabia** in 2017, 18 per cent of university deans were women, but only one woman held the most senior role of director in all 34 universities (Alsubaie & Jones, 2017).
- In **Ethiopia** between 2013 and 2019 the proportion of women vice-presidents of universities increased from zero per cent to 16 per cent, supported by government action.[87]
- In 2018 in the **Pacific Rim** region, women held 37 per cent of academic staff positions but 21 per cent of executive positions (APRU, 2019). The lowest representation of women in management was found in **Japan**, **China** and **Hong Kong**, **Switzerland**, and **Singapore**.

83. See, for example, Huyer (2015), *ibid.*
84. *Equality and Status of Women in Research* (Metcalfe & Day, 2016) p. 23.
85. HESA (Higher Education Statistics Authority): www.hesa.ac.uk/news/24-01-2019/sb253-higher-education-staff-statistics
86. HESA (Higher Education Statistics Authority): www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/working-in-he
87. Reported in University World News, 12 December 2019. See www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20191209065455348

Figure 10: Participants in a Gender Champions workshop hosted by Ethiopian Academy of Sciences in Ethiopia in February 2020 as part of INASP's Sida-funded Global Platforms for Equitable Knowledge Ecosystems programme'

In 2013 on the eve of International Women's Day, the British Council Going Global conference launched a Manifesto for Change for women in HE leadership (British Council, 2013) which called for a number of actions, including:

- accountability and a new world ranking for institutions based on gender equality
- transparency about women's representation
- development and commitment to invest in women to bring female talent up the ranks
- data and research into the enablers of and impediments to the promotion of women.

As described in Section 1.4.6.1, *THE* has now developed a World Ranking for Gender Equality. Around the world, some countries are adopting reporting requirements and targets for women's representation (see case study 2 for some examples). Some recent research and initiatives are set out below and in case studies 2, 7, 8, 12, 13 and 15.

In academia and research, as in all walks of life, the concept of leadership has a long history of being gendered. Concerningly, research on leadership in HE not only finds discriminatory and exclusionary practices in recruitment, selection and promotion processes but also that numerous women find the idea of leadership unattractive. For example, a study of women's leadership in HE in **South Asia** found that leadership was associated with masculinity, and was frequently perceived and experienced by women in HE as very difficult to navigate in the face of the cultural expectation of women being led by men. Women were therefore strategically resisting entry into leadership, while at the same time not being identified or prepared for leadership (Morley & Crossouard, 2016). Research in **China** has reported similar findings (Zhao & Jones, 2017). Research in **Malaysia** has explored the impact of patriarchal social structure reinforced by religious discourses on the professional engagement of Muslim women academics (Shah, 2018). A **European** research project into leadership in scientific research similarly found that there was a persistent idea that women who became leaders were somehow 'non-women' or 'aggressive people', demonstrating the need to make the organisational environment more friendly to all genders and more open to diverse leadership styles (Genova et al., 2014).

In global research for the British Council, Morley (2014) found that women in HE often perceived leadership as a 'loss': unsuccessful applications resulted in a loss of status and self-esteem, while successful applications resulted in loss of independence, research time, health and well-being.

- **UK**: Advance HE is the UK's national body for supporting transformative leadership and management, teaching and learning, equality, diversity and inclusion, and effective governance in HE. Aurora is Advance HE's leadership development initiative for women and those who identify as a woman. Participants explore four core areas associated with leadership success: Identity, Impact and Voice; Power and Politics; Core Leadership Skills; and Adaptive Leadership Skills. Learning from role models, and developing networks, is an important element of the programme.
- **Turkey**: repeated messaging from the president of the Council of HE that the numbers of women leaders should be increased was cited as positive. A dedicated Ministry for Women, Family and Community Development in **Malaysia**, together with equality law and targets, was identified as a driver for change. Many international research participants echoed the importance of a women-friendly political context in addition to recognition, affirmation and support in professional development (Morley, 2014).

1.4.10 Compounded disadvantage and discrimination

Some institutions have been slow to understand the importance of paying attention to the range of characteristics that intersect with sex and gender. As the GRC's Gender Working Group has said:

'Many funders are developing wider diversity goals that go beyond gender to include intersectionality (the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage) or target other groups – such as indigenous groups, under-represented ethnicities and those who may have been disadvantaged socially, economically or for health reasons.'[88]

Women have too often been 'constructed as a unified analytical category'.[89] A recent study conducted in the **USA** (Eaton et al., 2020) examined the ratings given for competence, hireability and likeability for identical CVs submitted to science professors for a postdoctoral research position where the presumed gender and ethnicity of the candidate were manipulated using their stated names. Physics professors rated the candidates who were 'men' as more competent and more hireable than the identical 'women' candidates. They rated 'Asian' and 'White' candidates as more competent and more hireable than 'Black' and 'Latinx' candidates. Biology professors rated 'Asian' candidates as more competent and hireable than 'Black' candidates, and as more hireable than 'Latinx' candidates. Across all departments, 'women' were rated as more likeable, but not more hireable, than 'men'. In physics, 'Black women' and 'Latinx women and men' were rated the lowest in hireability compared to all others.

While to be Black and to be female is to represent the global majority, in many nations these characteristics incur significant social disadvantage, together as well as separately. They also present multiple challenges for Black women's own development of identity (as an academic, an intellectual, a scientist for example) because of imposed definitions of race and gender stereotypes that are at odds with – or 'interfere' with – the stereotypical representations of academics, intellectuals or scientists (Ireland et al., 2018). For this reason promoting female role models who are white may have no particular impact on the subject choices of Black girls or young women in the absence of Black, female role models (Stearns et al., 2016). Putting effort into stretching or expanding cultural ideas about leadership or STEM success to include white women but not Black women creates disadvantage for Black women and girls.

The disadvantage faced by Black women in UK academia is more complicated than an 'additive' disadvantage or 'double penalty' incurred by being both Black and female, as the data shows. In the **UK**, latest statistics on ethnicity show that people of Black ethnicity make up an extremely small proportion of the total academic workforce, at just under two per cent. Of the 535 senior academic officials in UK universities, not one (zero) is recorded as Black (15 are recorded as Asian and five as Mixed).[90] Only 140 professors identified as Black (representing fewer than one per cent of the 20,000 professors in the UK), and previous research

88. GRC (2019), p. 3
89. Morley (2010), *ibid*. p. 533.
90. Higher Education Statistics Authority. See www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb256/figure-6 (updated January 2020).

(Rollock, 2019) identified only 25 Black female professors (of African, Caribbean or other Black heritage) employed in the UK. The barriers encountered by these women have included cultures of racial stereotyping and microaggressions, excessive workloads, opaque and unfair promotion practices and a lack of solidarity or support from white female colleagues.

- Nationally, **South Africa** has been at the forefront of action to tackle intersecting inequalities, and since 2013 the distribution of National Research Foundation bursaries and fellowships has been subject to ministerial guidelines which set targets intended to bring about a more representative scientific workforce: 80 per cent Black people (African, coloured and Indian/Asian), 55 per cent women, and four per cent disabled people. In 2017 of all PhD graduates, 65 per cent were black and 43 per cent were women.[91]

Disabled women report being channelled into traditional female fields or into disability-related fields, and away from male-dominated professions, being less likely than disabled men to complete higher levels of education (Junia & Josephine, 2018). In the **UK**, disabled academics have reported having access to considerably less support than disabled students. Women described leaving more male-dominated disciplines such as engineering or physics for more feminised fields, to avoid having 'double the trouble' of being a woman and disabled.[92] Olkin (2011) lists a range of added challenges and constraints upon disabled women in HE: from logistical challenges at work and conferences through the added financial and budgetary constraints in addition to the interpersonal, social, attitudinal and perceptual prejudices.[93]

There are specific challenges for transgender men and women in academia. As Hanna (2016) points out, for transgender men and women who may have published or be making applications under more than one name over time, the difficulties of applying to academic positions begin before even submitting any applications. Transphobia and ignorance from colleagues may be widespread and affect career prospects as well as personal well-being. At the same time, trans individuals in HE report being expected to undertake unfair and burdensome equality work that should be the responsibility of their institutions, such as policy development and training (Mckendry & Lawrence, 2020).

A recent report by several **UK**-based science bodies (IOP, RAS & RSC, 2019) found that 28 per cent of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender+ (LGBT+) respondents had at some point considered leaving their workplace because of the climate or discrimination towards them. Women reported a less comfortable climate than men, and more offensive or harassing behaviour.

Research on pay and promotion for trans academics is lacking, as it is for LGB academics, but generic research from the **USA** into working conditions and pay (with a small sample size of 64) found that average earnings for female-to-male transgender workers increased slightly following their gender transitions, while average earnings for male-to-female transgender workers fell by nearly one-third, saying:

> *This finding is consistent with qualitative evidence that for many male-to-female workers, becoming a woman often brings a loss of authority, harassment, and termination, but that for many female-to-male workers, becoming a man often brings an increase in respect and authority.*
> Schilt & Wiswall (2008)

In the **USA**, data shows that two out of five trans women left school early or were expelled because of gender-based mistreatment, and of those trans women who did make it to HEIs, one in four experienced assault and two in five had to leave college because of mistreatment (Restar & Operario, 2019). Research in the **UK** (NUS, 2014) found that trans students were significantly less likely to feel completely safe on campus (21 per cent) than heterosexual (43 per cent) or LGB students (37 per cent). Trans students also reported high levels of bullying or harassment on their campus. Trans students and LGB students tended to disagree that they saw their experiences and history reflected in their curriculum. The term 'trans' in the NUS research included those identifying as non-binary.

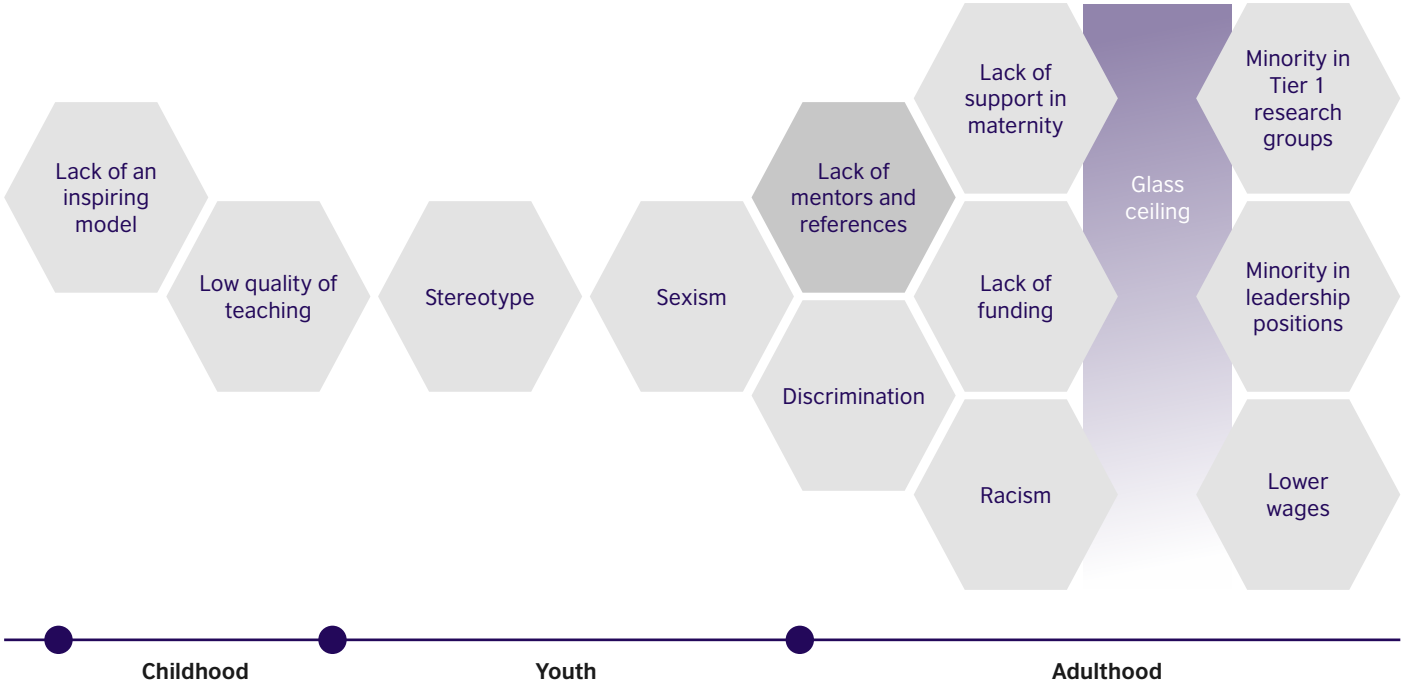
91. GRC (2019), *ibid*., p. 19.
92. *Science Magazine*, 15 May 2017. See www.sciencemag.org/careers/2017/05/survey-highlights-challenges-disabled-academics-face-and-what-can-be-done-address-them (accessed 9 July 2020).
93. In JL Martin (ed.) *Women as Leaders in Education, Volume 1*. Praeger.

The intersection of socio-economic status with gender has always been evident in education studies. While there is little research into class, gender and careers in HE, there is compelling data on HE enrolment (e.g. Ilie & Rose, 2016[94]) showing that, 'as poorer people start to have the opportunity to access higher education, they are likely to be disproportionately male'. In most but not all lower-income countries the poorest males are significantly more likely than the poorest females to access HE, with the richest males up to ten times more likely to attend than the poorest females. Initiatives to widen participation of the poorest should always have a gender focus.

Data collection methods, and qualitative research methods, which do not allow for exploring the intersections of sex and gender with other characteristics linked to discrimination and disadvantage, obscure the intersectional experiences faced by women in all their diversity.

1.4.11 The importance of the lifecycle approach

Figure 11: Timeline of women in science - the glass ceiling and main challenges



Timeline of women in science, from British Council Brazil (2019) stakeholder presentation

94. See Figure 4.

During the interviews conducted as research for this report, a number of people made the same point about taking a 'lifecycle' approach towards the men and women engaged in HE programmes. There are parallels between a holistic understanding of gender equality and empowerment (for example, considering the range of 'strategic' and 'practical' gender needs to be met for women in HE) and a holistic understanding of every individual's journey towards and through HE from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood, including potentially marriage and/or parenthood. The success of programmes that seek to empower girls to remain in secondary education is amplified by considering how to enable their entry into HE. The pipeline of women into STEM subject areas in HE is strengthened by ensuring early intervention to address the norms, stereotypes and family cultures affecting the behaviour and identity development of men and women that prevent girls from engaging in STEM subject areas at secondary level. Therefore, HE programmes that stand alone are likely to have less impact than programmes that are developed and executed in dialogue with programmes in the same locations which are focused on culture, society and primary or secondary education.

- The LEAP project, part of the FCDO's SPHEIR initiative, is a non-profit social lending fund that provides student financing to otherwise un(der) funded talented youth across **Sub-Saharan Africa**. The FCDO also supports a range of projects that are focused on girls' education, supporting hundreds of thousands of girls in primary and secondary school. Efforts are now being made to create links between the initiatives, to benefit and amplify the work being done in each area and to bring focus to the critical transition for girls between secondary school and HEIs.
- The PADILEIA project, also part of the SPHEIR initiative, prepares Syrian refugee and disadvantaged students in **Jordan** and **Lebanon** for HE by providing foundation certificate courses. Students report a range of benefits, from improved English language and computing skills to learning how to deliver presentations and apply successfully for university scholarships. The project team aims to further strengthen the emphasis on the transition between secondary and tertiary education, which might include ICT and other skills training, career advice and counselling services.[95]
- Engaging girls and women in STEM subjects is a priority for the **UK**. This is reflected in the number of government departments and agencies promoting International Women in Engineering Day.[96] The UK has a number of standalone initiatives for engaging girls and young women in STEM subjects and the country has seen steady progress in the number of female students taking A-levels in STEM subjects, attributed to 'decades-long efforts'.[97] There is still a long way to go. Yet at the level of educational policy for schools it is still the case that reports which aim to drive up student engagement – such as the recent guidance reports from the Educational Endowment Foundation on improving mathematics (2017) and science (2018) – are silent on sex or gender differences in engagement or strategies to ameliorate these differences. This is a strong indication that gendered analysis still remains outside the mainstream, which in turn mitigates against the long-term mainstreaming of successful interventions.

95. SPHEIR MEL mid-year report 2019, p .20.
96. For example, on Twitter:
    - twitter.com/spacegovuk/status/1275353972270923776?s=20
    - twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1275353217933639681?s=20
    - twitter.com/HighwaysCareers/status/1275451258015412231?s=20
    - twitter.com/transportgovuk/status/1276173549401788417?s=20
    - twitter.com/GEOgovuk/status/1276435855910068224?s=20
97. The *Guardian*, 15 August 2019. See www.theguardian.com/education/2019/aug/15/female-students-outnumber-males-in-a-level-science-entries

1.4.12 Gendered violence and harm

A number of universities and HE projects worldwide have developed analytical tools and templates for addressing gender inequality in HE (see Section 2). Many of these focus on comparative quantitative data by sex (representation, pay gaps, citation practices) that is collected by institutions or available by conducting desk research. It is notable that few of these make reference at all to the experience of sexual harassment and other forms of VAW – and to the perpetration of violence by men – despite its known prevalence and its known impact on women students and staff in HEIs as a sector, worldwide.

Meanwhile, reports that review best practice to address 'bullying and harassment' in HE do mention sexual violence and harassment, but by bracketing it with bullying some of the very specific features of GBV can be elided. The added difficulty in collecting data on GBV (e.g. additional concerns that arise regarding confidentiality and trauma, the need for specialist advice on data collection methodology, concerns about institutional reputation) may be a factor, but this should not stand in the way of integrating GBV prevention and response into all projects that claim gender sensitivity.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) takes a number of forms and persists in all societies. It is of deep relevance to this report on gender and HE because it is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality, and its occurrence in HEIs reflects and supports gender inequality in the immediate HE context but also more widely in society. VAWG is underpinned by widely held and deep-rooted prejudicial attitudes to women and girls. The elimination of VAWG and associated harmful practices is an important target of SDG 5, and central to all international commitments to gender equality. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls cannot be achieved without ending VAWG. Therefore, to meet goals for equity and inclusion, VAWG and its prevention must be considered.

The wider term 'gender-based violence' (see Acronyms and glossary) encompasses forms of (usually sexual) violence that is perpetrated against women, sexual minorities and those with gender non-conforming identities. Where survey data is collected on gender identity, information from transgender women and men, as well as those identifying as non-binary or other, is usually pooled to assist with statistical reliability (see the prevalence box below). Data from a large-scale study in the **USA** (AAU, 2020) shows that students who do not identify as a man or woman – but choose another category, including transgender – are at a similar or slightly higher risk of sexual misconduct such as harassing behaviour, intimate partner violence and stalking than those who identify as women. The same students are at almost the same high risk of sexual assault as those who identify as women. An earlier large-scale study, also in the **USA** (Coulter et al., 2017), reported a one-year probability of being a victim of sexual assault at 57.7 per cent for Black transgender students, 14.2 per cent for white transgender students, 7.7 per cent for heterosexual non-trans women (increasing to 8.5 per cent if lesbian and 15.9 per cent if bisexual) and a rate of 2.9 per cent for non-trans men (increasing to 9.4 per cent if gay).

Sexual harassment and violence are prevalent in HE and form a core concern for many women managing their decisions to enter, remain or progress in HE environments as teachers, researchers or learners. Yet while significant attention has been paid to addressing the risks of VAWG for girls in primary and secondary education, there is far less evidence of VAW being integrated into programmes in HE managed by national and international bodies globally. In the UK, it is through the lens of recent 'safeguarding' scandals, including at the charity Oxfam,[98] that awareness rapidly grew of the need to safeguard vulnerable people – including all women and girls – from sexual exploitation and abuse at all times.

Globally, since the #MeToo movement[99] revealed the power of speaking out and the power of new social media platforms to share and amplify experiences of sexual harassment in institutions, there is a new, permanent visibility to women's experience of VAW in HEIs. This visibility will inevitably lead to increased accountability but also to reputational damage for organisations who are slow to act.

98. See the report by the Charity Commission for England and Wales (2019): assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807943/Inquiry_Report_summary_findings_and_conclusions_Oxfam.pdf
99. Founded by Tarana Burke in 2006. See metoomvmt.org/about/

UK: Making Tertiary Education Safe to Learn – a Code of Practice

Safe to Learn was an important agenda for the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which has now merged into the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. In November 2019, DFID hosted a three-day workshop with support from the NGO Restless Development. Participants included representatives from organisations involved in delivering HE programmes (such as the British Council, which manages the SPHEIR programme), university students and youth delegations from the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Over the three days a Safeguarding Code of Practice for HE was drawn up, aligned to DFID's *Safeguarding Guidance* (2020), setting out expectations for universities and NGOs involved in HE programmes. Plans are under way for its adoption and implementation across DFID grantees, organisations active in HE, and donors.

The safety of those involved in research – whether as researchers, participants or other stakeholders – is currently also primarily addressed through more broad guidance on safeguarding such as the *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research* published by the UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR, 2020). This guidance is designed to aid stakeholders in anticipating, mitigating and addressing potential harms. It poses important questions for a range of stakeholders from funders through to HEI leaders, administrators, researchers and participants. However, a number of the questions (e.g. 'what support mechanisms are in place?' or 'what risk assessments do we carry out for research sites?') require a level of knowledge about the aetiology, practice and experience of sexual violence and harassment that is unlikely to be widely held by those who need to answer them.

Policies that require partners to provide information about their risk management frameworks and evidence of how they mitigate and address risks of exploitation, abuse or harm[100] can only be effective when both the provider and the evaluator have an accurate and proportionate appreciation of the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment. However, such prevalence data (which is entirely different from data of reported cases – the vast majority of victims never make a report to authorities) is very rarely collected.

Most of this section will examine the issue of GBV experienced within the context of HEIs, or as a topic for education within HEIs. However, in broader terms there is some evidence that exposure to HE (being educated at tertiary level) is transformative in itself, in that it at least indirectly reduces violence in general terms and in the ongoing longer term. In a **UK** study, graduate men were found to be less likely to experience accidents or assaults than non-graduates, an effect also related to the social classification of their current occupation. The same study found a possible protective effect for prevention of domestic violence: graduate women were at lower risk of assault from their relationship partners at the point of separation (Bynner & Egerton, 2001), although this effect was also strongly related to childhood poverty (risk factor) and to academic ability at age 11 (protective factor). Dalal (2008)[101] also reported women graduates in **Kenya** to be at lower risk of domestic violence.

Broadly speaking, financial independence which is boosted by educational qualifications gives women more control over their lives and makes it less likely that assaulting them would go unpunished. However, in most cultures globally there are harmful but normative social attitudes about masculinity and gender roles, which contribute to a constraining sense of masculine identity (described by Promundo Global (2017) as 'the Man Box'). This identity can be perceived to be threatened when women's independence is increased, and a response to that threat may be to attempt to exert control or dominance through GBV. For this reason, harmful

100. For example, UKRI safeguarding policy (2020). See www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-050920-PreventingHarmSafeguardingInResearchAndInnovationPolicy.pdf
101. Cited in Oketch et al. (2014), *ibid*.

> **Cultures of sexual harassment function in myriad ways to undermine and destabilise women and keep them in positions of fear and powerlessness. Sexual harassment, like other forms of gender violence, is an attack on the mind as well as the body. Widening participation strategies need to incorporate an understanding of access to what?**
>
> Morley (2011), **p. 108**

social attitudes about gender – particularly those held by men – need to be addressed at the same time that women's agency and fair access to opportunities are being strengthened. In the absence of such transformative efforts, a backlash effect may be observed. While Dalal's work found that women graduates in Kenya were on average at lower risk of domestic violence, if their level of education or occupational status was higher than that of their partner's, that risk was increased.

- **Afghanistan**: a study of three universities found that male staff and students were less likely than the women to believe that GBV was prevalent. Accounts of VAW against female staff and students included sexual harassment from both staff and students, sexual assault, demands and threats, and domestic homicide. However, openly discussing or reporting these matters was not possible for fear of dishonouring women and their families. Victim-blaming attitudes (which could be addressed through education) exist in campus communities. In one university, 69 per cent of male respondents claimed that what and how women wore their clothes had an impact on GBV. Fifty-six per cent of women shared this view (University of Kabul, 2010).
- **Western Africa**: **Nigeria** and **Ghana**: In 2019 the BBC documentary *Africa Eye: Sex for Grades* revealed how powerful male academics in two HEIs (the universities of Lagos and Ghana) were sexually harassing their female students. Undercover journalists recorded the men propositioning and grooming young women in violation of university policy. In one case, this included propositioning a student who the professor thought was aged 17 and therefore also below the legal age of consent.
- **Northern Nigeria**: Of 300 female students surveyed, 23 per cent experienced physical violence, 22 per cent sexual violence and 51 per cent emotional violence (Iliyasu et al., 2011).
- **Ghana** and **Tanzania**: Sexual harassment was reported by female staff and students. The most common form of sexual harassment cited was 'sex for grades', demanded by some male lecturers and at the same time invoked to diminish and undermine women's educational success (Morley, 2011).
- **Zimbabwe**: 66 per cent of randomly selected female HE students in one institution (zero per cent of male students) said that they had been made to submit to sexual advances by a lecturer. Most students also indicated that there was more sexual harassment among students themselves than between students and lecturers (Shumba & Masiki Matina, 2010).

- **UK**: Four in ten survey respondents who were current students had experienced sexualised behaviour from staff, and fewer than one in ten who had experienced staff sexual misconduct reported this to their institution (1752 Group & NUS, 2018).
- **Egypt**: 100 per cent of randomly sampled female students experienced sexual harassment, 34 per cent of whom were exposed to inappropriate touching. Thirty-eight per cent of male students admitted to perpetrating sexual harassment (Desouky & Marawan, 2013).
- **Lebanon**: 5–28 per cent of female students in Lebanese universities reported sexual harassment by their professors (U-Harass, n.d).
- **Korea**: 51 per cent of nursing students experienced sexual harassment (Kim et al., 2017).
- **China**: 14 per cent of 2,060 students surveyed reported being a victim of sexual violence in the past year, with male victimisation rates approaching the level of female victimisation rates. Twenty-six per cent of male students and 16 per cent of female students reported being perpetrators themselves, with 3.5 per cent of male students saying they had raped someone in the last year (Wang et al., 2015).

There are wide variations in degrees of cultural and institutional openness about sexual harassment and VAW in HE. The forms in which it commonly presents also vary with cultural norms.

Violence-free campuses at Cairo University

In 2014 Cairo University was the first in the **MENA** region to set up a dedicated Anti-VAW Unit to address the problem of sexual harassment (see case study 5). Managers and volunteers designed awareness-raising campaigns around significant dates in the international calendar (International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence) to amplify their messages.

HEIs have a crucial role to play in the elimination of VAWG because they are high-risk environments – with international students being particularly vulnerable – and because they are ideal hubs for transformative prevention work.

1.4.12.1 HEIs are high-risk environments for VAW

HEIs are high-risk environments for VAW (UN Women, 2018). There are many reasons for this.

- Statistically, while all women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, assault and harassment, these are perpetrated even more against young women – in the age range of the typical university student – than against women in other age brackets. So an environment with a high proportion of young women is one where we would expect to see higher than average incidence of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and one which will draw or attract perpetrators.
- Women in the average undergraduate age bracket are also higher risk for domestic abuse and forced marriage.
- Young men, including those in the age range of the typical university student, are the largest perpetrator group of sexual violence and assault.
- Entry into university often represents a literal or symbolic move away from home and family who may (although not always by any means) have represented 'capable guardianship' in criminological terms against a range of factors for victimisation and/or perpetration. In some cultures secondary schools and most homes can be restrictive and highly regulated when it comes to relations between the sexes, with girls and boys socialised differently and separately until they enter HEIs (Dranzoa, 2018, commenting on African HEIs).
- Researchers and other HEI staff are often studying and working in environments which meet several criteria for heightened institutional risk of sexual harassment, including inequitable and hierarchical interpersonal relationships, horizontal and vertical male dominance, working in isolated spaces, employment precarity or dependency on patronage, and blurred work–life boundaries
- Historically, universities worldwide have been slow to act on reports of VAW, resisting their responsibility to invite, investigate and rectify reports. Some HEIs have also protected high-status perpetrators who brought in research funding. Leadership cultures of defensive reputational risk management action in response to reports of VAW have been widespread. All these factors have contributed to sustaining cultures of impunity for perpetrators, in place of cultures of accountability which would inhibit perpetration.

Prevalence data – and data gaps – on VAW in higher education

There is a serious data gap, worldwide: various small-scale self-selection questionnaires have built up a picture, but more robust, publicly available large-scale survey data using population sampling tends to come from the Global North, particularly in North America and Australia. Representative sampling is, nevertheless, still open to self-selection bias and completion bias that may affect data reliability.

A recent review suggested that exposure to sexual harassment in HE is highest for female students at lower levels of education, with the median exposure for female heterosexual students being 49 per cent (median 15 per cent for heterosexual male students) (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020). Research into the experience of international students is critically lacking (Postel, 2017). A study funded by the European Commission published in 2012 (Feltes et al., 2012) found high prevalence across universities in **England, Germany, Italy, Poland** and **Spain**. Between 29.9 and 47.3 per cent of women students reported experiencing sexual violence during their HEI studies, while 47–68 per cent were sexually harassed and 41–58 per cent were stalked.

In the **USA** (AAU, 2020), 25.9 per cent of women undergraduates, and 9.7 per cent of women professional or graduate students, reported experiencing non-consensual sexual contact by force or by inability to consent since enrolment (this compares with 6.8 per cent/2.5 per cent of men and 22.8 per cent/14.5 per cent of TGQN students, i.e. transgender or genderqueer women or men, or non-binary/other gender). The sexual harassment of graduate and professional women was most likely to be perpetrated by a faculty member or instructor.

This survey did not investigate international student status, but a previous study (Kimble, Flack & Burbridge, 2013) found that American female undergraduates were at significantly increased risk for sexual assault when studying abroad, particularly in countries with a different first language. 38.1 per cent reported some type of unwanted sexual experience while abroad. Six per cent reported attempted sexual assault and 4.6 per cent reported completed sexual assault. Non-consensual sexual contact was primarily carried out by non-student local residents; the remainder was carried out by fellow students from the study abroad programme or students who were resident of the country. *Per semester, the risk of experiencing a completed sexual assault while abroad was 4.13 per cent, which is a significant five-fold increase on the semester risk while studying at home (0.83 per cent).* While most regions were associated with increased risk, Africa and the **Americas** posed the greatest increased risk.

In **Australia** (AHRC, 2017), 32 per cent of women students reported being sexually harassed at university during one year (2016). Rates were higher for LGBT students, younger students, those with a disability and those who were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. In this survey, across all genders, international students studying in Australia were slightly less likely (22 per cent) than home students (27 per cent) to report experiencing sexual harassment in that year. However, research by Forbes-Mewett and McCulloch (2015) found that international students (from primarily non-English-speaking backgrounds) who travelled to study in the **USA** and Australia were being exploited for transactional sex (including by lecturers and supervisors and by landlords, and fathers in homestay families), as well as being particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment and interpersonal violence.

1.4.12.2 Particular vulnerability of international students

Data suggests that students and staff at HEIs are generally most at risk from the actions of other members of their university communities. But with international travel, although there needs to be much more research undertaken, the signs from research suggest there may be increased risk from people outside the immediate university community. This is a point that needs to be addressed in risk management practice. This risk, while often undeclared, is nevertheless and increasingly likely to be considered by prospective students. The recent report *Your Higher Education Spotlight on Asia* (QS, 2019) revealed that 40 per cent of prospective international students from the Asian region believe that safety is one of the most important aspects of a study destination.

The travelling undergraduates from the **USA** in the study by Kimble, Flack & Burbridge (2013) were most at risk of sexual violence from non-student members of local populations, who perpetrated 89 per cent of the unwanted sexual experiences while studying abroad.

Factors identified by Kimble et al. that might place female students studying abroad at increased risk are expanded here into the following summary:

- being separated from mutually vigilant friendship groups
- lack of familiarity with local culture/social norms/ legislative frameworks
- legal/increased access to alcohol/increased alcohol drinking rate
- being targeted by perpetrators who see students as vulnerable and less likely to go to (foreign) authorities if they are sexually assaulted (but it should be noted that travelling students' language fluency appeared to play no role in risk)
- being targeted by perpetrators who see (American/Western) students as sexually available.

While some of these risk factors are culturally specific, others are universal. Being separated from family and friendship groups and other strong social networks is an issue that will affect almost every international student and professional. This is likely to have an impact on how the individual responds to and recovers from VAW. It is also the case that the temporary nature of transnational placements makes it less likely that those experiencing VAW will feel able to report into systems that often take months or years to produce investigations – a fact not lost on perpetrators who are skilled in identifying vulnerabilities that increase their sense of impunity. The authors of the US study also point out that for some American students overseas, there is likely to be less support from authorities than they might expect at home. This is also increasingly the case for international students from the **UK**, as UK universities improve their institutional approaches at home. The lack of support from networks and institutions contributes to heightened persistent life stress. In turn, this creates an increased risk, compared with non-international students, of severe subsequent and continuing distress such as PTSD.

Other additional factors contributing to increased risk of VAW for international students versus home students have been identified by Forbes-Mewett and McCulloch (2015), who researched international students, primarily from non-English-speaking backgrounds, studying in the **USA** and **Australia** and found that they were a high-risk group. These factors include:

- reduced scrutiny from family or friends of male students from the same home country who may go on to perpetrate
- misguided trust in individuals from the same home country
- pressure to succeed increasing vulnerability to *quid pro quo* (sex for grades) harassment from teachers
- secondary visa status of female students being dependent on male partners who may be(come) violent
- secondary visa status of male partners who seek to reassert power through violence
- financial insecurity of many international students.

For international students who travel to study in the UK, there will be a similar but not identical range of risk factors which may include cultural influences affecting ability or willingness to make a disclosure. For example, students already struggling with cultural scripts of personal shame may also be unfamiliar with the relatively recent shift among UK institutions, who now acknowledge the extent to which sexual violence against students is a systemic issue more than a private, interpersonal one.

> **Strategic gender needs are those needs which are formulated from the analysis of women's subordination to men, and deriving out of this the strategic gender interest identified for an alternative, more equal and satisfactory organization of society than that which exists at present, in terms of both the structure and nature of relationships between men and women. … In contrast, practical gender needs are those needs which are formulated from the concrete conditions women experience, in their engendered position within the sexual division of labor, and deriving out of this their practical gender interests for human survival.**
>
> **Moser (1989), citing Molyneux (1984)**

Many students will seek paid work or work experience where there may be risks of sexual exploitation. For example, research for the British Council in **Pakistan** (Capstick, 2015) found that 51 per cent of female students from Pakistan studying in the UK had taken work or completed work experience that was not a part of their course, and half of these had applied for the work independently rather than through their university or family contacts. However, risks or experiences of sexual harassment or exploitation were not explored in this research as they were not identified by students when they were asked to share a list of priorities.

Additional risk of VAW cannot be a price to be paid for the undoubted wider benefits of international HE in the UK, including its contribution to gender equality (see, for example, interviews in the report by BIS, 2013). The additional risks must be researched and mitigated.

This report has discussed VAW in relation to student mobility, but it has not addressed in detail VAW in relation to the mobility of academic teaching and research staff. This appears to be a field in which little to no research evidence is currently available.

1.4.12.2 HEIs are ideal hubs for transformative prevention work

Examples of interventions that aim to meet the practical needs of women based on their gender roles and position in society include providing childcare and transport facilities that recognise the multiple responsibilities of women entering employment, or providing 'attack alarms' in case of anticipated attempted sexual assault. These practical interventions can go some way to compensate for the different, unequal conditions of women's lives, but they are not 'gender transformative'. Transformative interventions are those that meet the strategic needs of women and men, to progress towards a more equal society in which men's violence towards women and girls no longer arises from, and feeds into, gender inequality.

HEIs are ideal sites for the promotion of change to harmful social norms which underpin VAW. They are in many ways 'total institutions'[102] in that groups of people work, socialise and even live together in their relatively enclosed groupings. Many of the normative conditions which can make HEIs dangerous for students are also conditions under which the formation of positive new ideas, cultures and norms

102. Goffman, E (1961) *Asylums*.

Machismo and violence against women in Latin America in HE

The Latin American region reports the largest number of feminicides worldwide. An article by scholars based in **Mexico** and **Brazil** on women's issues in Latin American HE (Maldonado-Maldonado & Acosta, 2018) reports that women living in these countries are subjected to the culture of machismo, experiencing physical and psychological violence, discrimination, lack of equal opportunities, and limited recognition for their work, abilities and capacities. While access to HE for women in itself is not a significant issue, there are several primary areas of concern:

- disparities between men and women in promotion and leadership
- sexual harassment of female students
- sexual harassment of female faculty
- the second highest rate of teen pregnancies in the world.

Some promising recent developments have included universities in **Mexico** working on formal mechanisms for reporting and investigating the sexual harassment of students, as well as enhanced maternity leave and paternity leave provisions for staff at a national university in **Argentina**.

See www.girlsglobe.org/2018/04/09/barriers-to-education-equality-latin-america/

can be achieved. Efforts to control VAW using paternalistic methods, such as curfews for female students in India, will not change underlying discriminatory norms (UGC, 2013).

But it is possible for campus universities in particular to ensure blanket coverage of communications in residences, teaching environments and leisure spaces that promote messages about gender equality and reporting of VAW, which will inhibit perpetration. It is possible for entire HEIs to require every student to undertake education on human rights (as is proposed by the president of the University of Cairo in **Egypt**) or specific training for the prevention of VAW (as is happening at the University of Cork and University College Dublin in **Ireland**). Such activities will foster cultures of cohesion, equality and leadership against violence, and the formation of gender-equal attitudes that should endure beyond graduation.

However, such activities remain the exception rather than the rule. A report from the World Health Organization published in 2014 found few countries had invested in sexual violence prevention programmes in schools and colleges. There is no legislation outside the **USA** that mandates such programmes in HEIs, and global progress is slow despite the unequivocal evidence that universities are hotspots for VAW.

- In the **UK**, significant resources have been put into addressing sexual violence and harassment in HEIs since the publication of the report *Changing the Culture* (UUK, 2016) that documented the extent of the problem and made recommendations for change. In 2020 the Office for Students, which is the regulator for HE in the UK, published a draft *Statement of Expectations* (OfS, 2020) for consultation, setting out requirements for HEIs to communicate and embed a series of commitments for an adequate and effective approach to sexual harassment and misconduct. However, these requirements can only be binding upon UK-based HEIs, and it is not clear what accountability exists for the protection of UK students while studying or on placement abroad. Neither is it clear how agencies might be expected to risk-assess HEIs or placement organisations in the absence of specific training to do so, and in the absence of obligations upon HEIs or other organisations to make centralised reports about concerns raised. While Universities UK, the association for UK universities, has produced a number of resources tackling sexual violence and harassment as well as other forms of harassment, its international arm – UUKi – has not produced research or guidance on the specific issues for international students, neither has the UK's union for students, the NUS. Sexual harassment or violence have not featured as research areas in the research or reports published by the Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA, n.d.). UUKi does publish on its website a helpful general guide on navigating university life in the UK which includes relevant sections on relationships (including abusive relationships) and on sexual health (Student Minds, 2018).
- In **Australia**, the HE regulator has published a *Guidance Note on Wellbeing and Safety* (TEQSA, 2018) identifying risks of sexual assault and sexual harassment, including risks to quality, and setting out expectations on HEIs.

Section 2

The British Council is in the position to be an influential driver for progress towards gender equality in HE globally, through its relationships and partnerships with individual institutions and through its overarching work on policy and systems change.

This section of the report builds upon the context of the research and examples presented in Section 1 and begins by setting out how some of the British Council's current programmes in HE align with its theory of change for women and girls' empowerment, and how future programmes might do so. The following sections then address the British Council's theory of change for HE and science, setting out how a 'gender lens' can be applied to the actions, outputs and outcomes of the British Council's work in this area. Seventeen case studies that describe how gender equality concerns have been successfully addressed – or in some cases less successfully addressed – in HE projects worldwide are provided for inspiration and reflection. Comprehensive resources to assist with gender mainstreaming are signposted. Finally, the report concludes with recommendations for maximising the impact of work to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in HE.

2.1 How does the British Council's work in HE align with its theory of change for women and girls' empowerment?

The British Council has a strong focus on gender equality. This focus is a response to the worldwide persistent inequalities between the sexes, which are expressed and reproduced at the level of individual relationships, within families and social groups, in institutions and structures, and which affect the rights, capabilities, opportunities and well-being of all. Further information about the British Council's holistic and systemic approach to empowering women and girls is available online and in the British Council *Guide to Addressing Gender Equality*.

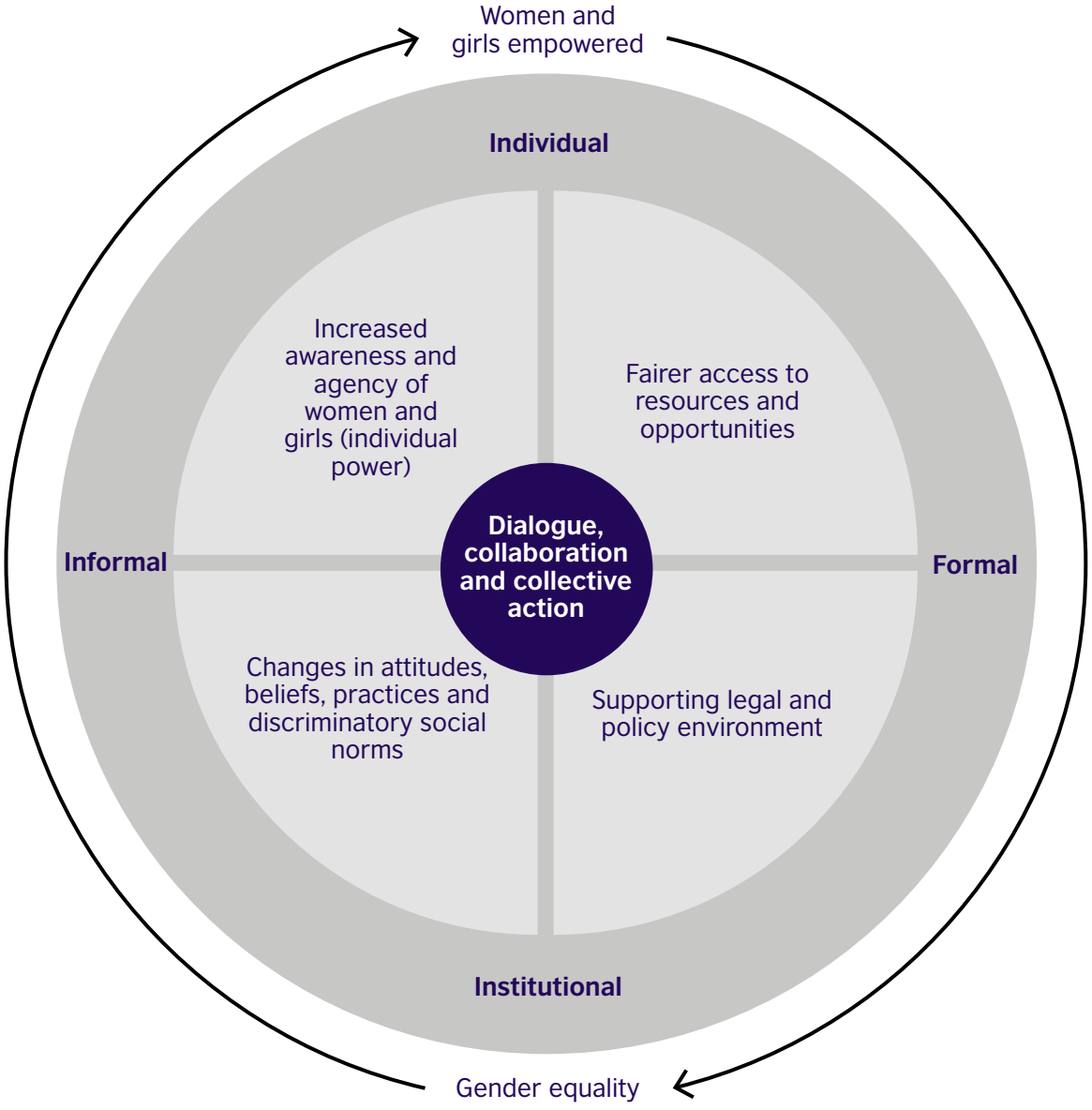
There are five inter-related positive outcomes that frame the impacts that the British Council wants its programmes to achieve, so as to promote women and girls' equality and empowerment, reproduced in the theory of change diagram below. They are:

1. increased awareness and agency of individual women and girls (individual power)
2. fairer access to resources and opportunities
3. dialogue, collaboration and collective action
4. a supporting legal and policy environment
5. changes in attitudes, beliefs, practices and discriminatory social norms.

What are the challenges and possibilities for working towards these outcomes, in the context of the work of the British Council in HE? This section of the report aims to assist the thinking of British Council staff and partners. It takes each of the five outcomes in turn and briefly presents challenges and opportunities.

The successful implementation of actions taken in any given project to respond to the opportunities identified will always depend on project leaders undertaking a contextual gender analysis as a part of the project cycle, from the design stage. An important resource throughout, for British Council staff, is the British Council's *Guide to Addressing Gender Equality*, which includes detailed information, resources and activities. Pivotal human resources for British Council staff are the British Council's global gender advisers, who can share their expertise in gender issues and assist with the provision and analysis of contextual data on gender issues in regional and country contexts, as well as signposting to local NGOs and experts. At all times and stages, the 'how' – that is, how the proposed activities should be delivered – should be explored and workshopped with partners on the ground.

Figure 12: The British Council's theory of change for women and girls' empowerment



2.1.1 Data collection

First, there is one clear message which applies across all the themes below: that it is necessary to collect data by sex/gender. Gender inequality is evident in all the areas of HE in which the British Council participates. The opportunity to address gender inequality, and promote the equality and empowerment of women and girls, is therefore also presented for all the areas of HE in which the British Council participates. The opportunity for positive intervention needs to be evidence-based, and the positive outcomes should be recorded. Therefore at every stage of the project cycle, the British Council and partners will benefit from using the *Guide to Addressing Gender Equality*, and related toolkits for HE that are identified in Part 2.4 of this report, to set out and monitor the gendered dimensions and impact of their work.

2.1.2 Increased awareness and agency of individual women and girls (individual power)

2.1.2.1 Challenges within HE

Gender equality in HE is challenged by systems and practices that reduce the self-confidence and agency of women and girls, including:

- discrimination and bias in teaching and evaluation
- unsafe environments and experience of violence
- lack of individual and institutional accountability for discrimination and GBV
- practices that disadvantage those with primary caring or domestic responsibilities.

2.1.2.2 Opportunities afforded by HE programmes and partnerships

The evidence shows that taking part in HE is associated with increased agency and awareness, as reported for example by participants in the British Council in India's STEM scholarships to the UK (case study 11). This potential is magnified when specific curricular and extra-curricular content is introduced. Higher-level qualifications increase the likelihood of entering and remaining in the paid workforce, giving women financial security and autonomy. Programmes could continue to embrace the opportunity to support women into HE, particularly by using tailored approaches for women who have marginalised ethnic or social identities, disabled women and women with caring responsibilities who face additional structural, identity-based and social barriers to engagement in HE. Programmes could similarly embrace the opportunity to support women's retention and progression in HE, including into leadership positions. Programmes could build in the development and delivery of gender-sensitive and gender-transformative curriculum content and extra-curricular activity, including in the crucial areas of VAW prevention and awareness raising, clubs and societies, and work with schools using women role models.

2.1.3 Fairer access to resources and opportunities

2.1.3.1 Challenges within HE

Throughout their educational lifecycle, women and girls face additional barriers to accessing HE, progression and completion, as well as barriers to making the most of the opportunities in HE systems and programmes. Some barriers are social and rooted in stereotypes, which include gender-biased evaluations of students, teachers and leaders. Other barriers are structural and practical. Access to resources and opportunities for women in HE can, for example, be dependent on family support for fees or childcare (practical), according to assumptions about gender roles (social). Experience and fear of sexual violence and misconduct are barriers to fair access but are rarely measured. Data on participation and on outcomes is not always sex-disaggregated, making it impossible to assess, monitor and evaluate for gender equality. While creating additional and specific opportunities for women's participation is important and laudable, it is also important to focus on addressing and removing the barriers that are standing in their way.

2.1.3.2 Opportunities afforded by HE programmes and partnerships

The evidence shows that taking part in HE creates individual and social returns for women that are greater than for men, often opening doors to professional careers and to security and autonomy. Opening up fields of study and research to the most talented, regardless of sex/gender, increases quality. Targeted interventions towards levelling the playing field for women have delivered results. Addressing the risks of, and institutional response to, GBV needs to be explicit and integral to every HE programme, with every partner and agent playing an active role in safeguarding, risk assessment, prevention and monitoring. Targets for access and participation by sex/gender are the most common gender indicators that are set for projects and programmes in HE. Where there is gender disparity in access and participation by country, region or subject field, evidence-led targeted interventions could be proposed and implemented, such as women's leadership programmes. Accountability and transparency for gender-sensitive recruitment, retention and promotion practices within and beyond programmes could be prioritised, rewarded and modelled. There is also much opportunity for demonstrating commitment to the principles of gender equality by consistently ensuring that women's voices and leadership are equally present in the teams, events and delegations managed by the British Council.

2.1.4 Dialogue, collaboration and collective action

2.1.4.1 Challenges within HE

Management of HEIs and of the research and teaching groupings within HEIs is very often numerically dominated by men, and longstanding cultures that are exclusionary or disagreeable for women (whether or not that is intentional) can be hard to change, especially in the absence of focused oversight. Soft power, exemplified in the British Council's approach, is built and maintained through dialogue and collaboration. When dialogue and collaboration are fostered among individuals and institutions in HE, there is a clear risk that the groups of people who are being identified through networks and brought together may not be diverse. Indeed, in recent years research agencies and other actors in HE have recognised the need to address residual and continuing bias in who is selected to participate in teams and collaborations. The increasing marketisation of HE in some regions and nations has increased the number of stakeholders involved in HE activity and policy, and means that priorities between stakeholders are not always aligned towards gender equality and inclusion, reducing the potential for collective action.

2.1.4.2 Opportunities afforded by HE programmes and partnerships

Learning in HEIs is a dialogic, collaborative process associated with increased civic awareness and engagement. Research is also a fundamentally collaborative process. With the growth in inexpensive, reliable IT-based platforms for collaboration, fresh opportunities are presented to recruit, engage and support women, including those marginalised by socio-economic status or by geographical remoteness. HEIs provide curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for collective working, mobility and internationalisation. Mentoring, including for women's leadership, and groupwork, including for research or gender activism (whether within institutions, or across institutional or national boundaries), can create new collaborations and bonds. Research shows that there are gender differences within and between nations, regions, university departments and subject areas, and those interested in promoting gender equality in HE have much to learn from each other. In some areas there are significant resources and expertise which could be mobilised and shared across boundaries – for example, the work on women in STEM in the **USA** and **UK**, on women and research in **Europe** and on women's leadership in **Pakistan**.

There is much scope for increasing the currently limited number of the British Council's international collaborations that have a gender-transformative approach, such as the Cairo University Anti-VAW project (case study 5). There is also much scope for widening the engagement of civil society organisations – such as local women's groups – in HE projects, as well as engaging women from the worlds of politics, business and research in the arena of gender equality in HE. Dialogue and collaboration with local and national women's anti-violence organisations to strengthen policy, prevention and response to VAW in HE settings is urgently needed. There are good examples from the UK of how this can succeed, although sustainability will be an issue without policy change at the highest levels.

The impact of gender norms throughout the educational lifecycle, culminating in the disparities seen in subject entry and progression in HE, can only be adequately addressed through joined-up action that engages consistently with girls, boys and teachers in schools, through tertiary education, and throughout the different life stages of women and men working in HEIs. Teacher training in HEIs, to promote gender-transformative pedagogy and gender-sensitive curricula, is one important focus where the links between school and HE are obvious. But programmes in HE would benefit from better links with civil society organisations already working to address gender inequalities in primary and secondary education, and with arts- and society-focused projects that address gender inequality. In some countries the British Council will itself have separate teams and projects in primary education, in culture and society, and in HE, who share or should share joint goals for gender equality and whose work and resources could be mutually reinforcing.

2.1.5 Supporting legal and policy environment

2.1.5.1 Challenges within HE

There is considerable discrepancy across the HE sector internationally when it comes to laws and policies that support and shape gender-transformative action, despite most countries having the principle of gender equality enshrined in their laws. Some ministries for education and higher education have high-level or more detailed commitments to gender equality in HE which may then be supported by resources and strategies, while others as yet do not. However, the focus on parity in teaching and learning standards, using an interpretation of quality and excellence that excludes gender equality and inclusion, is a significant barrier to progress.

Progress towards gender equality is not swift, and it is not linear. As this report has shown, in recent years a number of states have enacted laws and policies to restrict women's access to HE and to restrict the subjects that women might study. These laws and policies also serve to restrict the teaching of some subjects (such as gender studies) that have a role in promoting gender equality by examining assumptions about men's and women's aptitudes and roles.

One of the main drivers for widening access and participation in HE is the benefits this brings to the wider economy through increased productivity. Therefore, where equality of access has been achieved to HE, or to subjects within HE, attention also needs to be focused on the next step: entry into the labour market and retention in the labour market. Policy and practices which mitigate against women's full and equal participation in the labour market, including in enterprise, need to be addressed to maximise the benefits of their full and equal participation in HE.

Accountability is not strong: regarding internationalisation, frameworks such as Erasmus+ espouse the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity, but fall short of applying a holistic gender lens. Consequently, for example, they do not require agencies (and therefore participating institutions) to adopt policy, action or monitoring to address one of the most significant features of gender inequality in HE: the threat and reality of sexual harassment and VAW.

Oversight is also not strong: even in countries such as the UK where data collection is sound in some areas, such as pay equality, there are no statutory requirements to collect and report data on sexual violence or to commit proportionate resources to prevention and culture change. Most countries and most international frameworks do not mandate (or use) an intersectional approach to the reporting of data, which inhibits planning, monitoring and evaluation of effective interventions.

2.1.5.2 Opportunities afforded by HE programmes and partnerships

All HEIs are governed by national legislative frameworks which are in turn informed by international legislation and policy for gender equality. There is also a considerable body of research, and evidence from case studies, to inform effective policymaking and the creation of effective frameworks (such as the Athena Swan framework: case study 7). The groundwork is laid, therefore, for developing, improving and promoting sound and holistic legal and policy frameworks to address all aspects of gender inequality in HE, for ministries and regulatory bodies as well as for agencies who deliver programmes and partnerships in HE. Without paying attention to the development of such frameworks, at national and regional levels, a significant opportunity to be gender transformative at scale in HE is lost.

Conversely, a sustained focus on gender equality will meet the British Council's ambitions to influence the improvement and internationalisation of HE systems around the world. A formal statement of expectations on gender equality in teaching and learning may be of consequence for national or regional bodies who seek to restrict women's access to HE, or who seek to restrict access to education about gender and gender discrimination.

The British Council supports the professional development and training of thousands of individuals, including teachers, through its work in HE around the world. Introducing a commitment to include gender awareness and sensitivity in pedagogy and curricula as a matter of policy for quality assurance would increase the reach of this work exponentially.

For programme frameworks and delivery, bias and the potential for bias can be addressed by:

- standardised (not one-off) strategies for awareness-raising
- embedding transparency and accountability in processes
- embedding gender equality as a fundamental and necessary element of quality and excellence.

Policy can identify and mitigate structural barriers to women's access and full participation, including post-qualification. Agencies and partner institutions who participate in programmes across HE could be required to demonstrate their commitment to implementing gender-transformative policy and governance, including specific policy protocols such as flexible working, parental leave, and violence prevention and response. Bringing in specific requirements on policy and practice for gender equality would demonstrate the British Council's commitment and leadership in the area, while raising the bar across the extensive range of HEIs involved in British Council projects.

2.1.6 Changes in attitudes, beliefs, practices and discriminatory social norms

2.1.6.1 Challenges within HE

Research shows that gender stereotypes and biases that deter boys and girls from enjoying and succeeding at subjects which have not been normative for their gender begin to exert an influence early in the educational lifecycle, as well as persisting throughout the HE experience. Stereotypes and biases are present in pedagogy, curriculum materials, learning environments and evaluations. Research is clear that gender stereotypes confer disadvantage to women and advantage to men in HE, but a refusal to believe such discrimination exists is entrenched and hinders good-faith positive action.

The historic dominance of men in certain fields (e.g. a number of STEM fields) as well as in HE management has two main effects. The first is that the status quo is perpetuated by reinforcing existing stereotypes of men as leaders and as 'naturally' suited to this work. The second is that 'groupthink' and 'the way that things have always been done' make it difficult to find traction for a focus on issues that are critical for gender equality in HE.

The most easily measured outcomes of relevance to gender equality are those that involve 'counting' men's and women's participation. While equality of representation is an important aim, in itself it is not gender transformative and it is therefore not sustainable without the more difficult work to transform attitudes, beliefs, practices and norms.

Any work that is targeted at supporting and empowering women risks being seen as unfair or discriminatory towards men and risks a 'backlash effect' of hostility or negativity. Backlash can be anticipated and addressed through careful communication as well as dedicated work with men and women to raise awareness and confront discriminatory attitudes.

2.1.6.2 Opportunities afforded by HE programmes and partnerships

Research shows that while harmful gender norms can be challenging to shift, they can be shifted. HEIs which are centres for learning and innovation are ideal institutions in which to focus activities to challenge and change discriminatory attitudes and norms through policies, pedagogy and training with both men and women. This kind of project, which would involve working with gender experts as well as building local links, could form a more significant part of the British Council's portfolio in HE. It would also assist with the wider project to ensure the entry and retention of graduates into the active labour market. The Active Citizens programme has been delivered in HEIs[103] and this approach could be consolidated more intentionally. HEIs are also often strongly rooted within their wider local communities of political life, businesses, primary and secondary educational establishments, which affords opportunities to grow 'lifecycle' approaches to tacking harmful gender norms, working across HE, education and society.

Harmful gender norms are not stable across all countries, cultures, institutions or HE subject areas, a fact that provides opportunities to exchange knowledge and insights and demonstrate policies and practices that have been successful between different partner institutions and countries. The British Council as an expert in cultural relations is ideally suited to produce regionally focused materials that highlight, showcase and model how HE governance, subject and leadership cultures can look when they are gender equal.

There is a clear opportunity to make the British Council's portfolio of programmes in HE gender transformative as a matter of course.

103. For example in partnership with the Ministry of HE in Afghanistan: www.britishcouncil.af/active-citizens-universities and see case study 4.

2.2 Applying a gender lens to the HE and science theory of change

The British Council seeks to promote *connections, understanding and trust* through its work in education. The strategic ambition for HE is to develop stronger, more inclusive and internationally connected HE systems which support economic and social growth in the UK and globally, with the UK seen as a trusted partner and provider of HE.

To achieve the desired impact, the British Council has identified a range of activities and outputs across five portfolio intervention areas. Those intervention areas are:

1. policy and systems development
2. institutional partnerships
3. professional development
4. student mobility
5. insight, analysis and advocacy.

In this section, a gender lens is applied to the generic activities and outputs in each of the intervention areas, helping to show how the theory of change for HE and science can be gender responsive and produce gender-transformative outcomes. Examples and resources to help shape these activities follow in a later section.

2.2.1 Policy and systems development

Activities

The activities in this area include policy dialogue and conferences, high-level delegation visits, technical assistance and consultancy. With a gender lens, activities should include:

- improving HE policy, legislation and systems to deliver on advancing gender equality and eliminating discrimination
- promoting high-profile women leaders, speakers, discussants and women delegates
- promoting gender-sensitive communication content
- carer-friendly and safe conference arrangements
- the integration of gender analysis, policies and action plans for gender equality into the agenda for all activities.

Outputs

The UK policies and practices that are engaged with, in international dialogue, should be strong on gender: best practice in gender-transformative policies and practices will be shared and widely taken up. All agreements (e.g. system alignment agreements) and policies will contain standards for gender equality and empowerment. Improvements and changes which support quality, inclusion and internationalisation will be by definition inclusive of robust measures to address gender inequalities, including VAW.

2.2.2 Institutional partnerships

Activities

The activities in this area include support for partnerships enabling collaboration in teaching, transnational education, research and reciprocal mobility, as well as paid consultancy for UK HEIs. With a gender lens, activities should include:

- ensuring that accreditation practices include integration of minimum standards in gender-sensitive policy and practice
- introducing clarity and accountability for the introduction and audit of robust policies and measures addressing gender inequalities and VAW
- evaluation of research proposals for sex and gender analysis
- promoting partnerships and collaborations with a gender focus
- promoting gender-transformative pedagogy in teaching and teacher training
- promoting excellence in gender mainstreaming activities.

Outputs

Best practice in gender-transformative policies and practices will be shared and widely taken up. Partners will report that they understand the value placed by the UK on gender equality. All partnership agreements and policies will contain standards for gender equality and empowerment, with measurable progress. There will be an increase in partnerships and collaborations that have a gender focus. Teaching and research quality will be improved through gender sensitivity. Improved accountability on VAW will go hand in hand with decreased risk and incidence of VAW for women educators, students and researchers in institutional partnerships.

2.2.3 Professional development

Activities

The activities in this area include short-term work and research placements in another country, professional training, and platforms for science communications and outreach. With a gender lens, activities should include:

- ensuring that professional training such as teacher training includes competencies in gender
- building and supporting research networks on gender and gender equality
- promoting the representation of women and gender-sensitive content in communications
- capacity-building and leadership development for women.

Outputs

All data will be (at a minimum) disaggregated by sex, with appropriate targets, for example where subject fields are imbalanced. All placement and participation agreements will include information and accountability for VAW which will be specifically measured. Placement and participation agreements will be gender sensitive and family friendly. Gender-responsive pedagogy will be integral to professional training. The content and delivery of science communications will have improved gender balance including diverse women.

2.2.4 Student mobility

Activities

The activities in this area include study and work placements in another country, scholarships to the UK, the Study UK campaign, paid services to support HEI student recruitment, and alumni networks and support. With a gender lens, activities should include:

- creating and upholding minimum standards for gender-transformative and VAW prevention education in preparation for travel
- targeted recruitment to improve gender balance/increase women's participation
- women's alumni networks and support.

Outputs

All data will be (at a minimum) disaggregated by sex, with appropriate targets, for example where subject fields or country cohorts are imbalanced. All placement and participation agreements will include information and accountability for VAW which will be specifically measured. Placement and participation agreements will be gender sensitive and family friendly. Gender-transformative education will be integral to the offer.

2.2.5 Insight, analysis and advocacy

Activities

The activities in this area include research into priority themes, insight and analysis, and advocacy through meetings and events. With a gender lens:

- all research and analysis conducted, or commissioned through external agencies or partners, will require explicit gendered analysis
- those commissioned to conduct research and analysis will be able to demonstrate competence in gendered analysis
- global and local gender specialists will be engaged to advise throughout project cycles
- gender-balanced project teams will be recruited
- communications from country offices will showcase their approach to gender equality.

Outputs

Research and insight that works for women and girls, and supports their equality and empowerment, will be produced.

2.2.6 Outcomes

By undertaking these activities, governments, HEIs and all partners will understand the value placed by the UK on gender equality. Policy and system change will be gender sensitive, to the benefit of all genders. Women students, educators and researchers from the UK and other countries will be less at risk from violence, and there will be increased accountability. International students and alumni will be less likely to be perpetrators of sexual harassment, violence or discrimination. There will be increased gender sensitivity in research content and application, to the benefit of all genders. Better gender balance in fields of work and study will improve the quality of future research and its application. Progress will be achieved towards equality and empowerment of women students, educators, researchers, policymakers and leaders, as well as more broadly in society. Participants will be ambassadors for gender equality.

2.3 Case studies

This section of the report provides an illustrative selection of case studies looking at the work of the British Council and others (including individual HEIs, national governments and civil society organisations) in HE globally. Some give examples of how the objective to promote gender equality has been operationalised through specific, dedicated projects, while others show how considerations of gender (in)equality have been mainstreamed. There are reflections on gaps that have been identified in gender analysis and reflections on what could have been done better. The case studies cover a range of interventions from policies, systems and frameworks to action with individual students or teachers, providing food for thought and accessible inspiration for effective ways to address gender inequalities in HE.

2.3.1 Scope

The range of large-scale and individual programmes relating to HE, managed by teams and grantees in the British Council, is enormous. A recent semi-systematic analysis conducted by a team of researchers over a six-month period began with a longlist of 50 programmes/countries and looked in depth at 24 HE programmes, including multiple forms of documentation and interviews with over 20 individuals and teams as well as surveys with over 100 partners (IFF, 2019). That review did not bring to light a focus on gender other than to say that very few programmes expressed a rationale that included addressing inequalities.

The review produced seven thematic categories by which 'the vast majority of stated programme objectives' that they researched in HE could be categorised – and addressing inequalities of any form did not make the list. None of the objectives or outcomes summarised as case studies in the review included any focus on gender, nor was gender mentioned in any of the longer in-depth case studies.

The relatively small scale of this current scoping project on gender and HE has meant that it cannot begin to claim a systematic or similarly semi-systematic analysis of programmes, although the content of the 2019 review strongly indicated from the outset that programmes focusing on gender/an explicit gender focus within programmes would not be widespread. There is no single repository for documentation of programmes and partnerships in HE at the British Council, although internal reports, as well as the IFF report and conversations with colleagues, have been helpful for signposting. Limited information about programmes and partnerships is available online, and so looking for projects that have a gender focus – or examining the documentation of projects so as to examine the extent of gender focus – has not been a straightforward activity.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the lives, ways of working and day-to-day priorities of those working in HE within and outside of the British Council. This has brought additional challenges regarding the availability and capacity of project leads and other potential interlocutors to respond to requests for information and interviews. It has also resulted in an ethical research obligation not to be unduly persistent in the quest for information.

This is not a comprehensive review: there may be any number of current and recent high-quality gender-focused activities and outcomes that have not been recorded as case studies or highlighted within the text of this report. There is more work to do to showcase such initiatives online, and a move towards a more systematic global programme approach with an emphasis on programme documentation will enhance the capability of the British Council to enumerate and evaluate its work for gender impact in the future. The case studies presented here are exemplars, and they draw on activities and programmes that are led by a range of HE actors from individual HEIs to NGOs, sector bodies and government departments.

Case study 1: SPHEIR – TESCEA and gender-responsive pedagogy, a project led by INASP (UK) within the FCDO-funded SPHEIR programme managed by the British Council and partners[104]

Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania

The TESCEA project (Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa) is developing a scalable pedagogical model to help universities across East Africa to produce graduates with the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills they need to address real-world challenges. It works by helping university staff to align curricula with employer needs, rethink pedagogies to develop students' skills, and build stronger links between universities and employers. The partners in the project are committed to ensuring gender-responsive pedagogy in the course redesign process that underpins the TESCEA approach.

Gender has been a central consideration in the TESCEA project since it started, and the partnership agreed on a vision of gender at a meeting of all partners in April 2019. In workshops, the partners worked on a definition of gender-responsive pedagogy, as well as a teaching and learning approach that takes into account the various needs of men and women to enhance their individual learning, including opportunities for women to take the lead in group activities.

In addition to considering delivery (how content is delivered and by/to whom) course content will be redesigned to be more gender-inclusive through a well-planned process and strategy. Teachers, learners and the wider community-based advisory group will all benefit from taking up gender responsiveness as a core value. Indicators for meeting the vision of gender-responsive pedagogy are:

- all courses redesigned by TESCEA will have clear evidence of gender responsiveness
- implementers and the instructors will demonstrate evidence of being gender responsive
- university frameworks will be revised to support and enable gender responsiveness
- students on the selected courses will be more gender aware and responsive
- TESCEA will communicate clearly to its stakeholders and to employers its commitment to gender responsiveness.

Across TESCEA, three or four lecturers from each of the four partner universities were trained as gender multipliers in July 2019 using elements of INASP's *Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education Toolkit*. They are now running gender awareness sessions at their institutions, as well as acting as focal points for gender in their universities.

In TESCEA's course redesign workshops, faculty are supported to think through gender as it relates to their:

- teaching and learning methodologies and activities
- teaching and learning materials
- classroom interactions
- classroom management and set-up
- language
- learning spaces and campus life.

104. The other two SPHEIR consortium partners are PwC and UUKi.

An important area of focus has also been on students as future gender-responsive professionals and the link this creates to industry.

At the policy level, the recently established Institute of Development Studies at the University of Dodoma in **Tanzania** plans to set aside a budget for trained staff to train other faculty members in teaching for critical thinking, problem solving and gender-responsive pedagogy. At Gulu University, policies have been reviewed and updated in line with learning from TESCEA. This has included the launch of a gender policy and implementation manual, and the creation of a gender help desk following a TESCEA project discussion to share practice across the four participating universities. TESCEA continues to analyse university policies that have an impact on gender in more depth to consider how these affect gender responsiveness.

TESCEA's work to improve university engagement with employers and the wider community has also had a gender angle. The project is surveying companies engaged in the joint advisory groups (JAGs) established through the project at each of the four TESCEA university partners to enable this engagement, in order to capture the state of their gender policies and practice. Although the project may not have a direct influence on employers' policies, the focus on gender in the JAG meetings – including through the involvement of gender experts external to the university in several groups – ensures that the topic is firmly on the agenda. Additionally, a survey about gender-based barriers to employment is in progress at all four universities. This survey takes into consideration the various gendered aspects that university graduates encounter during the hiring process and in the workplace.

What could have been done differently?

Unlike some other projects, the mainstreaming of gender from the start of the TESCEA project and across the planning cycle is likely to contribute to the successful achievement of its aims. The project partners continue to review and learn from the gender mainstreaming activities.

For further information

See this blog by Mai Skovgaard of INASP on the SPHEIR website (November 2020), this blog for INASP by Aloysius Tenywa Malagala of Gulu University, Uganda (May 2019), and this blog for INASP by Jennifer Chapin (April 2019).

Figure 13: A gender exercise at Uganda Martyrs University during the second round of Course Redesign workshops in the TESCEA project

Source: Tabitha Buchner, INASP

Case study 2: National policy and strategy for gender equality in HE in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has been recognised for having an effective and politically influential gender unit, with a well-staffed gender directorate in the Ministry of Education, holding expertise in training and capacity building on gender mainstreaming, planning, monitoring and evaluation (UNGEI, 2017). The Ministry of Science and HE is headed by a woman, Professor Hirut Woldemariam, who came to the role having been vice-president of the University of Addis Ababa and having held a number of ministerial portfolios. She demonstrates visible leadership, and progress is positive with the adoption of new laws, policies, indicators and strategies within a framework of good governance, monitoring and gender expertise.

Data on gender and HE in Ethiopia shows much room for progress: the gender gap is marked, with only five per cent of women versus 11 per cent of men enrolling in HE (World Economic Forum, 2020). However, there is a tradition of women's political power that predated the European colonial era. The resurgence of women's political power in Ethiopia means that the country is now a high performer in league tables, ranked 16th in the world in 2020 with over 38 per cent of parliamentary seats held by women. In 2018 the country's Cabinet was fully gender balanced, and the first female president was appointed.

The country's Education Sector Development Programme V (2015) identifies gender as a cross-cutting issue and describes initiatives in universities to support female students' achievements, including with tutorials and high-level forums on women's education. It states that increased participation in HE by female students and greater involvement of female staff in teaching, research, leadership and management are core policy objectives. There are targets to increase the numbers of women who are students, teachers, researchers and leaders, as well as special emphasis on training and professional development for gender-responsive instruction. All relevant indicators are to be gender-disaggregated. Specific indicators include increasing female researchers' journal publications, and minimum participation of women in lower, middle and top leadership positions as well as university boards. Targets are accompanied by actions to address the range of barriers such as:

- providing special support to female students to qualify and succeed in HE at all levels
- developing summer and weekend outreach programmes to provide academic support to female students in secondary schools
- providing institutionalised and sustained academic, economic and psychosocial supports to enrolled female students
- implementing female scholarship schemes for postgraduate and doctorate programmes
- designing and implementing a female talent cultivation centre for assisting and inspiring females to participate and succeed in leadership and management at all levels.

Sexual harassment remains prevalent in Ethiopian universities (Mamaru et al., 2015; Bezabah, 2016). There is a national code of conduct aimed at preventing GBV in schools (2014), although this does not extend to universities, who develop their own codes, and there is a new Labour Proclamation (2019) outlawing the sexual harassment of workers and making employers vicariously liable.

A new Higher Education Proclamation (2019) dictated that every HEI should have a strategic plan agreed with the ministry to include social goals such as to increase the proportion of senior positions held by women, and assistance to disadvantaged student groups.

What could have been done differently?

Commentary in University World News (December 2019) suggested that the ministry should also focus on recognising or rewarding those HEIs that are responding positively to the task of promoting gender equality, and also suggested that research should be conducted into the experiences of women leaders in the sector so as to identify the most promising intervention strategies.

For further information

- Education Sector Development Programme V (2015): planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/ethiopia_esdp_v.pdf
- Higher Education Proclamation 2019: www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/109311/135557/F-1372321962/ETH109311.pdf
- Blog by INASP on supporting 'gender alliances' in HE and the role of political support: blog.inasp.info/joining-redress-university-gender-imbalances/

- Commentary by Professor Wondwosen Tamrat in University World News (2019): www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20191209065455348
- UNESCO's portal of education plans and policies: planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en

Other country examples

South Africa's *National Plan for Higher Education (2001)* states: 'Institutions will ... be expected to develop employment equity plans with clear targets for rectifying race and gender inequities. The Ministry will use planning and funding as the primary levers for ensuring that race and gender inequities are eradicated' (p. 47).

Afghanistan's *National Education Strategic Plan 2017–21* has equitable access as one of its three sector goals, defined as 'increased equitable and inclusive access to relevant, safe and quality learning opportunities for children, youth and adults in Afghanistan, especially women and girls'.

Spain's Equality Law 3/2007 requires central, regional and local governments to further teaching and research on the significance and scope of equality between women and men in HE, including by ensuring the subject is on the curriculum, can be studied at postgraduate level, and for the provision of specialist research in the field.

Uganda's *Gender in Education Sector Policy* (2016) and its *National Strategy for Girls' Education 2015–2019* (2013) stress the importance of developing and implementing a gender-responsive education and training curriculum for teacher educators, including gender responsiveness in performance review, but research suggests that implementation remains patchy.[105]

See also

The Universal Declaration of Balanced and Inclusive Education, led by the nations of the Global South, affirms the role of education in transforming societies to eradicate poverty, inequality and marginalisation. See educationrelief.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UDBIE-final-EN.pdf

105. UNESCO (2019), p. 32.

Case study 3: The London Statement: national governments, the British Council and global HE partners

UK/Global

The London Statement is a policy framework and statement of principles underpinning training for education agents and consultants, for the ethical recruitment of international students and the services provided to them. It is an example of a framework that does not specifically recognise or address the gender dimensions of international HE study.

In 2010, representatives from the governments of the UK, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the **USA** formed a Roundtable on the Integrity of International Education, mindful that with the proliferation of international educational opportunities, growing numbers of educational agents and consultants were entering the market to provide services to international students.

In 2012, the member countries signed up to a high-level statement of principles for recruiting and providing services to international students.

Principle 1 – Agents and consultants practise responsible business ethics.

Principle 2 – Agents and consultants provide current, accurate and honest information in an ethical manner.

Principle 3 – Agents and consultants develop transparent business relationships with students and providers through the use of written agreements.

Principle 4 – Agents and consultants protect the interests of minors.

Principle 5 – Agents and consultants provide current and up-to-date information that enables international students to make informed choices when selecting which agent or consultant to employ.

Principle 6 – Agents and consultants act professionally.

Principle 7 – Agents and consultants work with destination countries and providers to raise ethical standards and best practice.

The British Council offers a practical and professional online training programme (revised in 2019) for agents and counsellors in

agencies, colleges and schools to enable them to recommend the UK as a study destination to international students. The aim is also to improve the quality of agents and counsellors.[106] In other countries, similar training is offered (e.g. by EATC in **Australia** and ICEF in **Canada**. The British Council training provides facts and details about student life in the UK and compliance with relevant UK legislation such as data protection laws. The training also reflects the London Statement's framework and promotes understanding of professionalism and ethical behaviour, including, specifically, child safeguarding based on the British Council's child protection policy.

What could be done differently?

Rightly, there is an emphasis on business ethics and protecting the financial interests of students in the text of the London Statement and its supporting attachment. Financial propriety is also the main focus in the notes concerning the interests of minors (those aged under 18). While the new British Council training has an enhanced focus on child protection in the round, including the risks of harm and exploitation, the text of the London Statement could benefit from being refreshed to reflect increased awareness and concern about the potential for exploitation and abuse of children as well as of adult students in the international education sphere.

In the post-#MeToo world, and specifically following the significant awareness shift in the past decade that has brought to light the extent of sexual violence and harassment in HE – together with concerns about the use of student visas for trafficking, including sex trafficking (e.g. PIE, 2020) – it would benefit students if their agents and counsellors received specific training on identifying and reporting concerns as well as handling disclosures sensitively and appropriately. This training would ensure that the obligation to provide 'current, accurate and honest information' in an ethical manner (Principle 2) and the requirement to 'act in the best interests of the student at all times' (a factor under Principle 1) are fulfilled. There are baked-in disincentives for agents to raise concerns that may be brought to them regarding abuse or exploitation of students in HE by other parties, and this should be recognised in policy and training, particularly as agents may be the only trusted contact available to students in some circumstances.

The current requirements for agents and consultants to behave professionally, responsibly and ethically do not make specific reference to sexual exploitation and abuse, nor to an injunction on intimate or romantic relationships between students and all those engaged in recruiting or providing services to them. In safeguarding terms, contact with minors and with at-risk female students is far less regulated than in educational environments within the UK where disclosure and barring checks are undertaken and where legislation, as well as policy, is increasingly clear to proscribe exploitation and abuse. In the London Statement, and therefore in training rooted in its principles, there is the sense of an accountability gap when it comes to good practice in protecting students from the foreseeable harm of sexual harassment or violence, which is no less important than protecting them from financial abuse. Relatedly, it is not clear that employees of UK HEIs who enable the travel of UK students or professionals to other countries are trained to risk-assess or monitor/report incidence of VAW, or to support in the event of disclosure.

Applying a gender lens when developing policies and frameworks, and making gender dimensions explicit within those policies and frameworks, provides the basis for ensuring that appropriate and necessary gender-sensitive actions are taken.

For further information

- Text of the London Statement: www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/london_statement.pdf
- Attachment to the London Statement: see pp. 3–4 as published by New Zealand Education: enz.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/ENZ-Agents-London-Statement.pdf
- The British Council's page on training for agents and counsellors: www.britishcouncil.org/education/education-agents/training-agents
- British Council database of agents: agent-training.britishcouncil.org/GAL?_ga=2.188404776.1417379827.1598103046-392022332.1597914673
- PIE report on traffickers exploiting student visas (2020): thepienews.com/news/traffickers-exploiting-student-visas-at-global-level-reports-reveal/
- US government report on trafficking in persons (2019): www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf
- British Council Agent and Counsellor Training Suite: Frequently Asked Questions: www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/faq-agent-counsellor-training.pdf

106. See www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/faq-agent-counsellor-training.pdf

Case study 4: Gender-sensitive pedagogy through British Council Active Citizens, facilitated by Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND) and YMCA

Nigeria

Through DFID's Voices for Change programme, Active Citizens training was incorporated into training sessions for student volunteers at Lagos State Polytechnic in 2015. Active Citizens is a longstanding and highly successful social leadership programme created by the British Council, helping to empower people to take action on social issues and help to strengthen civil society. Gender equality issues have always been woven through the Active Citizens programme.

In focus group discussions, both male and female students at Lagos State Polytechnic shared how they felt that the gender-sensitive pedagogy in the Active Citizens training programme increased their knowledge about gender equality issues, and fuelled their activism to tackle gender stereotypes and promote women's leadership.

What could have been done differently?

An impact assessment reflected that gender indicators (for example, an increase in women's leadership in student activism, or an increase in women's employment through the creation of student-led programmes) had not been set or measured. It also showed that there was evidence that while the students were inspired to address practical gender needs, stereotypes about women's role in domestic life persisted.

Since this training was delivered in 2015, Active Citizens has been updated so that gender equality and empowerment themes are fully mainstreamed throughout the programme. The facilitator's handbook contains a chapter on gender equality and women's empowerment, demonstrating how to apply a gender lens throughout the learning journey and including gender-sensitive (and sex-disaggregated) monitoring and evaluation.

For further information

- See page 44 of the British Council's report *Women and Girls: Making a Lasting Difference (2017)*.
- The British Council's Active Citizens global toolkit for facilitators, updated in 2017 with gender mainstreamed throughout the programme and including a themed chapter on gender equality and women's empowerment: active-citizens.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/active_citizens_global_toolkit_2017-18.pdf

Case study 5: Violence Against Women and Girls Free Campuses – British Council and Cairo University supported by the EU

Egypt

This project is building the capacity of the first campus-based Anti-VAW Unit in the **MENA** region, established at Cairo University in 2014. Supported by a grant from the **EU** in 2018, academics from the unit together with gender experts from the British Council have taken part in two country visits to the **UK**, visiting centres of good practice for addressing VAW in universities, and have hosted an inward assessment visit from a UK-based expert in VAW prevention in universities.

During the visits, partners have learned from each other about policies and international legal frameworks, staffing structures, strategic planning, volunteer management, data collection, online reporting mechanisms, investigation procedures, and theories of change for prevention. The project has created links between UK universities and Cairo University, with hopes for collaborative working and possibilities for hosting Egyptian PhD or master's students in the UK in the future.

As a result of the project, the organisational structure of the unit at Cairo University has become more efficient, and a new case management system is being implemented. Violence prevention through attitude and behavioural change, using the bystander intervention framework developed in UK universities, has been adapted for the Egyptian context and training has been rolled out.

What could have been done differently?

The project is not yet complete. The opportunity to strengthen international research and collaboration networks through an international conference has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and alternative options for online collaboration are being explored.

For further information

Contact the Head of Society Programmes at the British Council Cairo Office, Egypt: yosr.gado@britishcouncil.org.eg

Figure 14 Cairo University lit up in orange as part of the 'Orange the World' activities during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, culminating each year in the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (#IDEVAW) on 25 November

Cairo University, Anti-VAW Unit

Case study 6: The Creative Sector and British Council Creative Spark

Wider Europe

Highlighting the value of gender mainstreaming in a project

The absence of a gender lens in the analysis and design of interventions to support the creative sector is a common issue. Through the Creative Spark programme, the British Council has recognised this gap and introduced a proactive approach to addressing gender inequalities.

The Creative Spark: Higher Education Enterprise Programme gives the next generation opportunities to develop their skills to compete in a global job market and to start their own businesses. This is achieved through partnerships between HE and creative institutions in the UK and overseas which develop entrepreneurship skills among students, graduates and young entrepreneurs. The programme funded 50 new international partnerships between the **UK** and **Armenia**, **Azerbaijan**, **Georgia**, **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyzstan**, **Ukraine** and **Uzbekistan**.

The programme includes a digital video pitch competition, producing 500 new business ideas, voted on by over 80,000 people, national policy forums and an annual conference. Partners include UNESCO and Santander Bank, and women make up 58 per cent of the programme's beneficiaries. Partnerships have specific reporting measures on steps taken to enable greater participation of women and/or disadvantaged individuals.

The Creative Spark programme works with the HE sector to support creative enterprise; therefore the gender equality issues in both HE and enterprise are relevant context. Gender disparities in enterprise has consistently been a focus for the UK government, and was highlighted as a priority area for the Government Equalities Office by the Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade, and Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss, in April 2020. In 2013, women in the UK were setting up and running new businesses at half the rate of men, with a commensurate loss to the economy (Women's Business Council, 2013). Venture capital investment teams and their networks are extremely male dominated, and they reproduce gender disparities by making the vast majority of investments, most of which are made through network contacts, to all-male entrepreneur teams (83 per cent in 2018). For every £1 of venture capital investment, one penny goes to female founders (British Business Bank, 2019).

There is also a body of UK-based literature describing gender inequalities in the creative industries (for example, a recent analysis of how women in the creative industries are portrayed differently – less professionally – in the media than men (Sleeman, 2019)). This is in addition to literature making recommendations for how gender inequalities might be addressed (e.g. making changes to strenuous working cultures, promoting female role models, building soft skills such as self-promotion, and addressing unsafe working environments (Hobson, 2019)).

In 2018, the UK-based global innovation foundation Nesta published a report examining how the creative industries are powering the UK's nations and regions, and recognising the productivity and contribution to growth of these industries. Gendered analysis is completely absent from this report (the words 'gender' or 'women' are completely absent too). The UK-based Centre for Entrepreneurs published a report in 2017 on the role of universities in supporting high-growth graduate start-ups. It contains only two paragraphs[107] that mention gender: noting that incubation could play a part in remedying the gender imbalance in graduate entrepreneurship, but without describing the gender imbalance or examining how or why incubation could address it.

Both these reports are referenced in IFF Research's Creative Spark report (2018), commissioned by the British Council. The core purpose of this research was to understand the range of models for how HEIs in the UK support enterprise and entrepreneurship education (EEE), not programme design. It does not contain a gender analysis nor discussion of gender, other than to mention that one funding competition, run by Imperial College London, is open to women only.[108] The report does, however, use gendered language to refer to engagement with 'successful businessmen'[109] as a benefit for students in another university funding competition model. There is no sex-disaggregated data provided, either of entrepreneurship in global/regional or national context, or of student participation in the EEE models. The report does include the views of women through numerous quotes.

107. Both mentions of gender are on p. 39.
108. Page 35.
109. Page 35.

In the first iteration of the programme design there was little evidence of gender analysis, although the theory of change included a series of planning assumptions, one of which stated the 'programme works in a way that promotes gender equality, women's economic empowerment and social inclusion'. Further iterations of the theory of change and evaluation frameworks have been strengthened to address gender issues more explicitly.

The report commissioned by the British Council (British Council & PPV Knowledge Networks, 2018) highlighted gender inequalities in the creative and cultural industries in four states of the Eastern Partnership Region of Europe (**Armenia**, **Azerbaijan**, **Georgia** and **Ukraine**). It identified a wide range of opportunities for the British Council and its partners to promote gender equality and empowerment in the creative industries in the region, a number of which are relevant to programming in the region. These include:

- awareness raising
- gender-sensitive training and confidence-building training
- role models
- quotas and incentives for funding
- expectations for gender equality policies
- prizes and competitions for women
- networks for women.

Of note, the educational systems were described as encouraging gender-biased thinking. Another important finding was that a third of creative industry professionals surveyed in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine agreed that 'innovative ideas are more easily supported when they are suggested by men'.[110]

The Creative Spark team has strengthened the gender aspects in the following ways.

- The outputs and outcomes in the theory of change now make reference to 'individuals, including women and disadvantaged individuals', and there is reference to a long-term impact of 'improved life prospects for the youth, including women and disadvantaged individuals, reducing the risk that they fall into violence'.
- Grant proposals – and partnerships in their reports – are required to identify activities, interventions and steps for enabling greater participation for women and disadvantaged groups.
- Courses are delivered online to enable access for women and other disadvantaged groups, and are advertised through channels and activities designed to target those groups.
- Gender-sensitive language is used during trainings.
- In the analytical framework some of the outputs now specifically make reference to 'women and disadvantaged individuals'. For example, one of the outputs measures the number of young people, including women and disadvantaged individuals, trained in enterprise skills through the end-of-year survey which collects information by sex of participating young person and by activity type. This enables the project to monitor and report on access and impact: in year one 58 per cent of all people involved in the project activities were women and 55 per cent of the 24,409 competition participants were women. Women reported more impact than men in the measures for increased self-confidence, increased leadership skills and improved entrepreneurial capacity.
- The programme launch activities addressed gender inequalities, including the London Creative Spark exhibition launched in January 2020.
- National 'roadmap' meetings for the creative sector which took part in each country explored issues of gender equality.
- The annual conference holds sessions on gender parity in the creative economy sector, with specific reference to Ukraine.
- Each partnership in Creative Spark has to complete mid-year and end-of-year reports (including the data related to gender equality identified in the Analytical Framework) and record specific measures taken to enable the greater participation of women and/or disadvantaged individuals in Creative Spark activities.
- Facebook Live sessions: women entrepreneurship is being highlighted throughout these series. Sixty-five per cent of speakers featured successful women role models to share their entrepreneurship journey.

Through these initiatives, the Creative Spark programme has shown how HE programmes can proactively address gender equality issues.

110. Page 46.

What could have been done differently?

There are undoubtedly opportunities to further strengthen the approach, e.g. strengthening gender analysis at the systemic level, including long-term improved life prospects for female youth who participate, and ensuring that sessions for the training of trainers in the partner institutions are using gender-sensitive curriculum content.

There is a body of research and policy in the field which fails the most basic tests of gender sensitivity, including some research commissioned directly by the British Council. This has functioned as a backdrop against which programmes are designed. Methods for ensuring gender analysis which might be part of a programme planning process include:

- making sure that all project templates and proformas explicitly invite discussion of the ways in which sex/gender analysis may be relevant to the project
- ensuring that external agencies or partners are competent to conduct gender analysis and understand gender analysis as a required element of every commissioned piece of work.

For further information

- Creative Spark Higher Education Enterprise Programme: www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe/what-we-do/international-partnerships/creative-spark-higher-education-enterprise-programme
- IFF Research report on the Creative Spark programme commissioned by the British Council (2018): www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/3667_bc_creative_enterprise_education_report_03_red2.pdf
- Nesta *Creative Nation* report (2018): media.nesta.org.uk/documents/creative_nation-2018.pdf
- Centre for Entrepreneurs report: *Putting the Uni in Unicorn* (2017): centreforentrepreneurs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CFE-University-Entrepreneurs-Report-WEB.pdf

Case study 7: Athena Swan process and framework

UK

An externally assured process and framework that provides external accreditation for successful work on gender issues to HE departments.

Originally developed to address the careers of women in STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine) fields in UK HEIs, the Athena Swan framework was founded in 2005 by the UK's Equality Challenge Unit, which later merged to become Advance HE, the charitable agency dedicated to the enhancement of teaching and learning, equality and diversity, and leadership and governance in HE. From the outset, Athena Swan was widely taken up in institutions across the UK. It was expanded in 2015 to recognise work undertaken in the arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law, in professional and support roles, and for trans staff and students.

Institutions who sign up to the Athena Swan Charter are eligible to apply for the Athena Swan award at levels of Bronze, Silver or Gold. The charter is based on ten core principles. Athena Swan institutions commit to adopting these principles within their policies, practices, action plans and culture.

1. We acknowledge that academia cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of all.
2. We commit to advancing gender equality in academia, in particular, addressing the loss of women across the career pipeline and the absence of women from senior academic, professional and support roles.
3. We commit to addressing unequal gender representation across academic disciplines and professional and support functions. In this we recognise disciplinary differences, including:
    a. the relative under-representation of women in senior roles in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law
    b. the particularly high loss rate of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine.
4. We commit to tackling the gender pay gap.

5. We commit to removing the obstacles faced by women, in particular, at major points of career development and progression, including the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career.
6. We commit to addressing the negative consequences of using short-term contracts for the retention and progression of staff in academia, particularly women.
7. We commit to tackling the discriminatory treatment often experienced by trans people.
8. We acknowledge that advancing gender equality demands commitment and action from all levels of the organisation and in particular active leadership from those in senior roles.
9. We commit to making and mainstreaming sustainable structural and cultural changes to advance gender equality, recognising that initiatives and actions that support individuals alone will not sufficiently advance equality.
10. All individuals have identities shaped by several different factors. We commit to considering the intersection of gender and other factors wherever possible.

Athena Swan membership is open to both HEIs and research institutes. It is now being adopted in **Ireland**, **Australia** and **Canada**.

An independent assessment found considerable evidence that staff career satisfaction, opportunities for training and development, knowledge of promotion processes, and fairness in the allocation of workload were improved by Athena Swan membership and award status. The data-collection processes enabled the identification of relevant challenges. Changes appeared to be sustainable. An impact evaluation of the charter found strong evidence that the process and methodologies had supported cultural and behavioural change as well as attitude change.

What could have been done differently?

The 2014 assessment found little evidence of positive impact on students in participating organisations, as opposed to staff. A review published in 2020 found that institutional culture should be better considered, including through culture surveys. The administrative burden of the application process for the award – falling particularly on women – was a serious concern. The steering group recommended a broadening of scope to reflect gender as a spectrum and that intersectionality should be addressed more fully.

For further information

- The independent assessment of the impact and benefit of the Athena Swan Charter, published in 2014: www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/advancing-womens-careers-stemm-evaluating-effectiveness-and-impact-athena-swan
- The report of the Athena Swan Charter Review Independent Steering Group, published in 2020: www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Future-of-Athena-SWAN_Report-1.pdf
- Resources for HEIs and research institutes are only provided for members of Advance HE (note: new resources will follow the review published in 2020): www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources/
- Examples of good practice initiatives, searchable by theme, are published by Advance HE, although fuller detail is only available to subscribing institutions: www.ecu.ac.uk/athena-swan-good-practice-initiatives/
- Contact the Athena Swan Charters Team at Athena.SWAN@Advance-HE.ac.uk

Case study 8: Institutional action to address the gender pay gap in academia

UK

In the UK, although it is against the law for employers to pay women less than men for work of equal value, the gender pay gap persists. It has narrowed over time to 8.9 per cent for full-time workers and 17.3 per cent for all workers (2019 data). But the pace of change is unacceptably slow. Legislation enacted in 2017 required all employers with 250 or more employees to publish and report specific figures about gender pay gaps. Enhanced scrutiny of the gender pay gap in academia as the result of the legislation and the publication of survey data has resulted in a number of UK HEIs taking focused action.

The University of Bristol has reached a collective agreement with its union branch including the following actions:

- training: all managers involved in shortlisting, recruitment and promotion panels are to attend training to tackle cultural biases and practices that disadvantage women, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of issues, including part-time and flexible working, and implicit bias
- training: manager training packages ensure that the default position in recruitment is for managers to support and enable part-time, job-share, job-split and flexible working requests
- targets: 100 per cent for gender-balanced recruitment panels and 85 per cent for gender-balanced shortlists; 33 per cent for women professors
- data collection: number of requests for flexible working, including approval rates and breakdown by gender. Part-time working by gender for each pathway and in each school
- redevelopment of criteria for promotion frameworks, to include fuller recognition for leadership and citizenship alongside teaching and research
- review and recommendations to improve the existing scheme for returning carers
- a bridging funding scheme for retaining research staff (more often women) between grants
- a pilot scheme for transferring research staff (more often women) into core funded pathways that offer more opportunities for promotion and progression
- advertising: all advertisements for vacancies will explicitly invite candidates to discuss opportunities for flexible working, job shares and job splits.

A critical part of the process, for sustainability, included the nomination of the women union members who had been instrumental in developing the agreement onto the university's academic career management board. Some of the outcomes of the agreement were written into the terms of reference of that board, meaning that reporting on progress happens at the regular board meetings and the issues remain on the agenda through continuing dialogue and accountability.

Another UK university, the University of Essex, found in 2016 that it had a pay gap at the professorial level. In addition to its ongoing strategic work, it took the decision to immediately close the pay gap by awarding an uplift to female professors' pay, bringing them to parity with the pay of male professors.

What could have been done differently?

The Bristol agreement shows many elements of good practice, from its co-creation between the HEI and union to the attention paid to multiple factors that affect progress towards pay equality. The importance of transparency and accountability in recruitment, management and promotion procedures, as well as practical action to address structural barriers, reflect what is known from the literature.

The agreement is specifically focused on women academic staff: given what is known about racial discrimination in academia and the particular challenges faced by Black women in academia, commitments to address the experience of Black women are notably absent. The agreement includes specific funding to faculties for female professors, but while it should result in accelerated progress towards pay equality, this will be incremental in contrast to the immediate reparative action taken by the University of Essex.

For further information

- University of Bristol and Bristol UCU collective agreement: cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.bristol.ac.uk/dist/4/295/files/2020/01/UoB-BUCU-Collective-Agreement-to-address-the-GPG.pdf
- University of Bristol Academic Promotion Procedure: www.bristol.ac.uk/hr/policies/promotion/
- University of Essex press release on closing the gender pay gap for female professors: www1.essex.ac.uk/news/event.aspx?e_id=10552

Case study 9: Teaching a spatial vocabulary of equality to architecture students

USA

Integrating gender into the curriculum

A research paper by Dr Karen Keddy of Ball State University describes some teaching of cultural and social issues to both undergraduate and postgraduate architecture students. Students were asked to work collaboratively to conduct a socio-spatial analysis of their campus in order to design a safe and secure built environment, learning about women's experiences of public spaces through reading lists and direct research.

Most students said they had not considered safety and security issues in their designs before, nor thought about them as social justice issues. Many male students had not realised that there was a difference between men and women in terms of perception of fear on campus. The assignment provided a space for learning and discussion about VAW in public spaces, as well as the transferability of the issues to other populations who are vulnerable to acts of violence or hate crimes.

What could have been done differently?

Keddy describes some of the disadvantages of this method. One challenge is that there is the potential for reinforcement of unhelpful stereotypes and paternalistic beliefs about women being weak or in need of protection, on learning for the first time about the realities of GBV. These interpretations should be anticipated and worked through.

For further information

See Keddy, K (2015) 'Safety is Just a Thing Men Take for Granted': Teaching a Spatial Vocabulary of Equality to Architecture Students. *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture and Social Justice* 37/1: pp. 39–53. Available online at: journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/download/2871/pdf_16

Case study 10: Research study on gender parity in higher education

India

The British Council is currently working with the government of Andhra Pradesh through Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalam Women's University on a research study on gender parity in HE. The research aims to:

- understand factors that influence enrolment and retention of women and girls in HE
- inform and, where possible, positively influence existing and future state policies for women
- strengthen research capacity and capability through international collaboration between Andhra Pradesh and UK universities
- develop a set of programme-based intervention strategies to bring gender parity and equal participation of women in education and work.

It is also anticipated that the research will feed into a larger research study on gender, HE and India's National Education Policy 2020.

What could have been done differently?

The project is in its early stages and will be evaluated against a range of criteria over time.

For further information

Please contact Deepa Sundara Rajan, lead on gender mainstreaming for the British Council in India: deepa.sundararajan@britishcouncil.org

Case study 11: Scholarships for Indian women to study master's programmes in STEM in the UK

India

As a part of the British Council in India's 70th anniversary, 100 Indian women and girls received scholarships to study a master's programme in STEM subjects at 43 UK institutions for the academic year 2018–19. The success of this programme led to a second cohort of women being supported with the scholarship in 2019–20, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 166. Ten per cent of the total value of the scholarship was contributed by UK HEIs.

Through this scholarship the British Council aimed to support SDGs 4 and 5 to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls, and to expand scholarship opportunities in HE. The women benefiting from the scholarships are likely to become leaders in their fields over the next 20 years and to become ambassadors for the educational relationship between the UK and India.

A tracer study of the beneficiaries in the first year indicated an extremely positive experience overall, with high average scores (all above 8/10) for:

- experience of being independent and self-reliant
- experience of safety
- social experience with other international and home students
- academic course
- pedagogy.

Over 90 per cent of the respondents in the follow-up survey said that the scholarship had helped improve their future education and employment prospects, and the great majority reported that they had been able to build strong personal and professional networks as a result of the experience. One-hundred per cent also reported feeling more confident to make decisions in their personal and professional life.

What could have been done differently?

Boarding, living and other on-campus expenses were not covered by the scholarship scheme, which effectively limited its availability to women from relatively wealthy backgrounds. That does not support the central promise of the SDGs, to 'leave no one behind' when implementing the agenda.

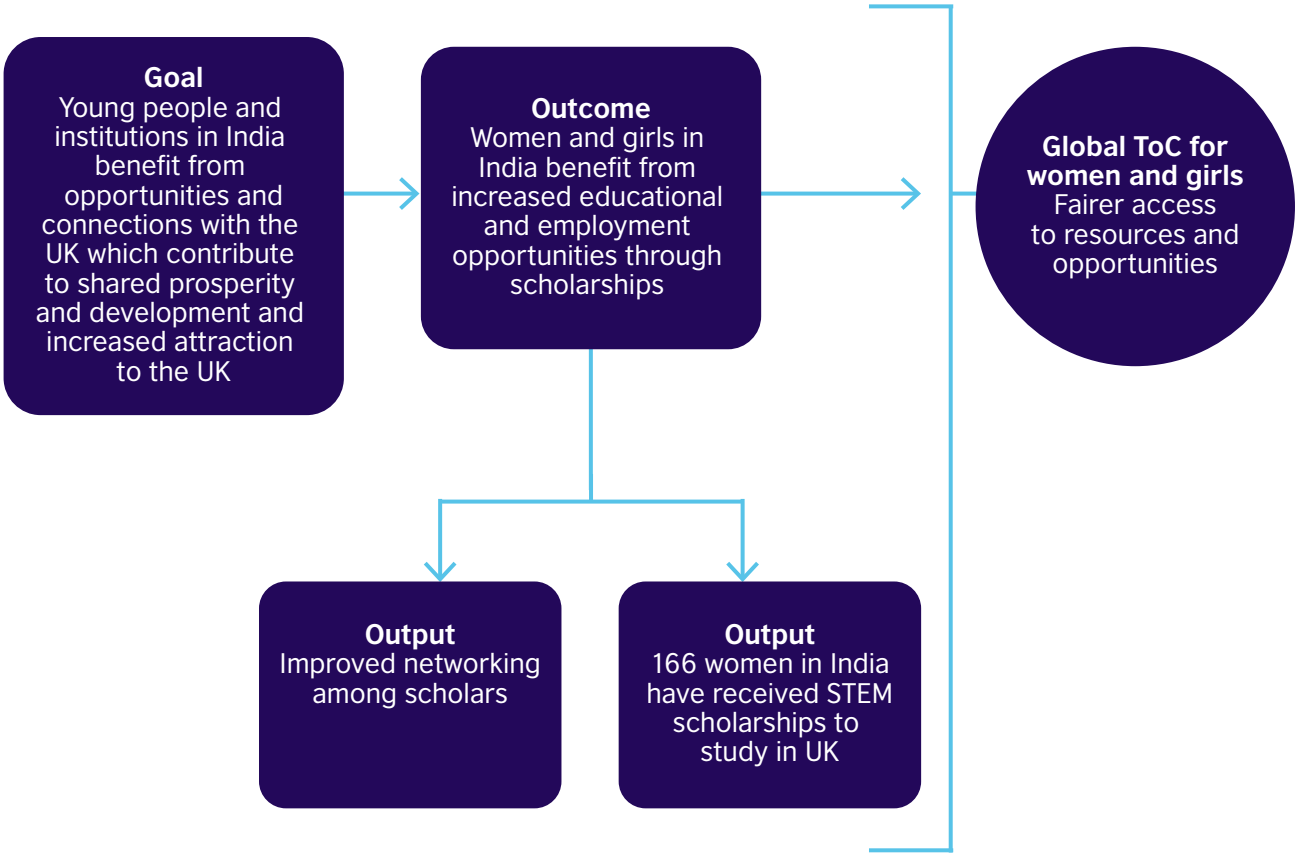
Although the average rating for 'safety' in the UK was 9 out of 10, the range of responses was from 6 to 10. No further information about safety was solicited, which is the current norm across international HE programmes. The pre-travel preparations for the students were primarily focused on logistics. All international HE programmes should include risk-assessments, preparation and follow-up addressing the known risks of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment.

While a programme of continuing engagement with the British Council on return from the UK was planned, the scholars may have also benefited from an alumni network enabling them to keep in touch with each other and support each other through their developing careers, and as alumni advocates, encouraging more women to further their education in STEM fields.

For further information

- Information about the 2018–19 programme and its participants: www.britishcouncil.in/programmes/inspired-by-india/british-council-70years-scholarships

Figure 15: Goals and outcomes for the project, including reference to the British Council's theory of change for women and girls' empowerment



Case study 12: Newton–Bhabha Women in Science workshops

India

Through the Newton–Bhabha Fund (managed by the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy), the British Council in partnership with the IISER (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) Pune, has delivered workshops for women scientists on opportunities for widening their participation in science and developing women's representation in science leadership.

The workshops, including inspirational addresses from senior women in the field, have provided access to training and professional development in science administration and management, science policy, and science journalism for over 300 women scientists. The workshops have helped alumni to secure new jobs and opportunities. Participants have created networks (e.g. a Science Policy Forum) through which they continue to share knowledge and experience.

What could have been done differently?

Reactions to the programme on social media were not always positive, with some commentators questioning why women were being targeted for training (i.e. a 'fix the women' approach) when the challenge is one of institutional and systemic discrimination. A clearer communications message about the role of the workshops in addressing those forms of discrimination would have helped to allay those concerns, supported by a theory of change and evaluation framework rooted in a needs analysis.

The perception that selecting only women for the workshops was somehow reinforcing gender binaries or stereotypes could also have been addressed with clearer communications, as it is undisputed that there are benefits which derive from initiatives that are specifically dedicated to women. This does not negate the need for other initiatives that are designed for mixed groups and for men as change-makers. The team identified the need for male champions to be more visible.

The content of the science policy workshop did not specifically address gender inequalities in the world of science policy, focusing on building skills for participatory and inclusive policymaking. Given the under-representation of women in science policy leadership, some content directly addressing this issue is likely to have been helpful.

One unanticipated challenge experienced by the team was a lack of uptake from women mid-level policymakers. The five-day format of the course was reported by some participants who did attend to be too lengthy and not suited to their professional responsibilities. Participants were not asked about potential issues with travel or about caring responsibilities.

Recognising the value of instructing men in gender-inclusive policymaking, in order to meet the target numbers this training was then opened to men as well as to women, resulting in a small number of men (12 per cent) taking part. However, the design of training content and delivery for mixed groups will be different from training designed for all-women, and so while this approach achieved full attendance on the training, in future an analysis of the barriers to women's uptake should be conducted so as to anticipate and address those barriers in advance. The cost of needs analysis surveys should be met by funders as an integral part of project funding.

The team also identified a need to build in more equitable recruitment methods to ensure benefit for the maximum number of participants, including women from a wider geographical area.

For further information

- See the British Council page on the Newton–Bhabha Fund: www.britishcouncil.in/programmes/higher-education/newton-fund
- See the British Council's descriptions of the science workshop programme: www.britishcouncil.org/education/he-science/newton-fund/success-stories/empowering-women-science-and-technology-india and www.britishcouncil.org/education/he-science/newton-fund/success-stories/diversifying-indias-workforce

See also INASP's page on Women in Science: Inspiring the Next Generation, which includes stories from women taking part in the online course on research writing in the sciences with AuthorAID: www.inasp.info/womeninscience

Case study 13: Leadership and governance for women in Pakistan universities

Pakistan

The British Council in Pakistan has regularly integrated gendered analysis into its work in HE. In Pakistan, women achieving seniority in HE tend to do so with significant support from family and other social networks. Other factors that have been found to contribute to their success are role models, mentoring, a supportive workplace environment, including male colleagues, and study abroad (Rab, 2010).

The British Council in Pakistan commissioned research in response to concerns about the under-representation of women in senior leadership positions in HE in **South Asia**, to inform high-level strategic policy dialogues. This research (Morley & Crossouard, 2015) led to a number of recommendations:

- gender to be mainstreamed into HE policy, with equality seen as a central constituent in quality
- policies and strategic action plans to be introduced, accompanied by resourcing and reporting, informed by accessible, regularly updated gender-disaggregated statistics
- policies on senior recruitment and selection to be reviewed to improve transparency and accountability
- investment in women's capacity building
- socio-cultural challenges to be addressed via the curriculum and professional development programmes, including making 'leadership' more attractive and hospitable to both women and men.

A national research study was conducted through the British Council in Pakistan on women's careers in HE in Pakistan, feeding into the development of a large-scale programme by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan to develop the academic community. The research found that interventions by the HEC have increased the number of young, PhD-qualified academic staff in public universities.

However, a lack of mentoring and professional development opportunities has hindered the development of this new academic intake, and there are significant recruitment and retention issues. Pronounced gender gaps were found to be evident in academic promotions at all stages of career progression, reflecting an urgent need for more tailored programming to support women in academia to reach their full potential.

The report (based on a multi-method approach taking account of literature, surveys and interviews) found that extensive traditional practices maintaining that men should occupy leadership roles, and the assumption that women lack decision-making skills, hold women back beyond the strong cultural assumption that domestic care and work is (only, ever, always) women's responsibility. Women were also concerned for their physical safety and security.

The results of the research indicated that support and mentoring programmes could be encouraged, including by giving formal recognition to the role of mentor in promotion criteria for senior academics. Research networks (including online presence and networks) and research centres could be developed, as these can build research capacity as well as confidence, collegiality and impact.

What could have been done differently?

This is a thorough and wide-ranging series of useful observations and recommendations. While safety and security were not a strong emerging theme in the research, there is an absence of practical recommendations to address the concerns expressed by some of the female participants, which could be an area that needs to be explored more.

For further information

- British Council in Pakistan report (2017): *Understanding Academic Careers – Developing Strategies for Gender Sensitive Academic Career Development for the Higher Education Commission:* www.britishcouncil.pk/sites/default/files/understanding_academic_careers-_british_council_2017_2.pdf
- Contact the British Council in Pakistan Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Unit: Maryam.rab@britishcouncil.org.uk

Case study 14: ACU gender grants

The Commonwealth

The tendency towards gender bias by individuals and institutions, that is demonstrated in data, can be mitigated by initiatives that focus on gender. Such initiatives can also encourage those who do the work of promoting gender equality in their institutions, and signal to them that their work is valued. Grants do not have to be for very large sums of money (smaller grants mean sums can be distributed to more recipients) to have significant positive impact.

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) has been working for more than 30 years to empower women in HE, supporting universities to promote gender equality and equity as an integral institutional goal. The ACU Gender Programme addresses gender issues such as championing women in leadership and combatting sexual violence on campus, in partnership with its member universities.

The ACU has an extremely popular annual programme of 'gender grants', which are awarded annually to ten member universities to support initiatives that will boost gender equity and equality. Since the grants were launched in 2016, 39 universities in 20 countries have benefited, and at least 600 beneficiaries have participated in workshops supported by the grants. The grants can be used for a diverse range of projects, workshops and other initiatives.

Grants in 2019 included:

- capacity building and mentoring for female scholars, e.g. Birla Institute of Technology, **India**, and Midlands State University, **Zimbabwe**
- responding to and preventing sexual harassment, e.g. training at City University London, UK and at Heriot-Watt University, **UK**, developing an anti-violence app at Kenyatta University, **Kenya**, and developing training videos for student orientation and staff induction at the University of Peradeniya, **Sri Lanka**
- gender sensitisation and mainstreaming in the curriculum and among administrative staff, e.g. the University of Ibadan, **Nigeria**
- participatory methods for policy development, e.g. the Universiti Sains **Malaysia**.

What could have been done differently?

The scheme is an effective model that emphasises institutional ownership and local leadership and solutions, and rewards an organic approach led by interested groups within member universities. Such interested groups, however, are not active in every university, and the grants programme only reaches ten universities per year. It is therefore important that the programme is seen as one element of the wider commitment and strategy to address gender inequalities among member institutions.

For further information

- ACU website on gender grants: www.acu.ac.uk/funding-opportunities/for-university-staff/gender-grants/
- Fearless Edinburgh multi-agency approach to tackle sexual violence: www.napier.ac.uk/about-us/news/fearless-edinburgh
- Kenyatta University mobile app to enhance sexual and gender-based violence reporting, awareness raising and access to support: www.ku.ac.ke/gender/44-news-events
- Gender Mainstreaming Office at the University of Ibadan, **Nigeria**: www.gmo.ui.edu.ng/

See also the introduction of awards and prizes for outstanding research projects and teaching practices that are gender responsive or gender transformative, such as the Gender Perspective Award run since 2015 by the University of Santiago de Compostela in **Spain**. Six prizes are awarded annually: three for teaching experiences and three for research projects. Despite the sums being small the award has many applicants every year. Award recipients present at conferences, and conduct workshops and courses to share their experiences and achievements.[111]

111. Information from EIGE: eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/legislative-policy-backgrounds/spain

Case study 15: Women In STEM: holistic gender mainstreaming

Brazil and the Americas

The British Council in the Americas has worked for a number of years on increasing the number and diversity of women in STEM research communities. Having identified the under-representation of Black women in science in Brazil, a Masters Scholarship Programme for Underrepresented Groups in Science was initiated, with support from the Newton Fund.

Over the years the Brazil office has built excellent relationships with a wide range of interested partners and agencies, including museums, universities in the region and in the UK, and the third sector UK-based organisation for women in science Portia. The office's commitment to work on gender equality across the board means it has good links with the gender equality movement more broadly, which has enabled it to build a strong platform for the work, including by showcasing at the Women of the World Festival in Rio de Janeiro.

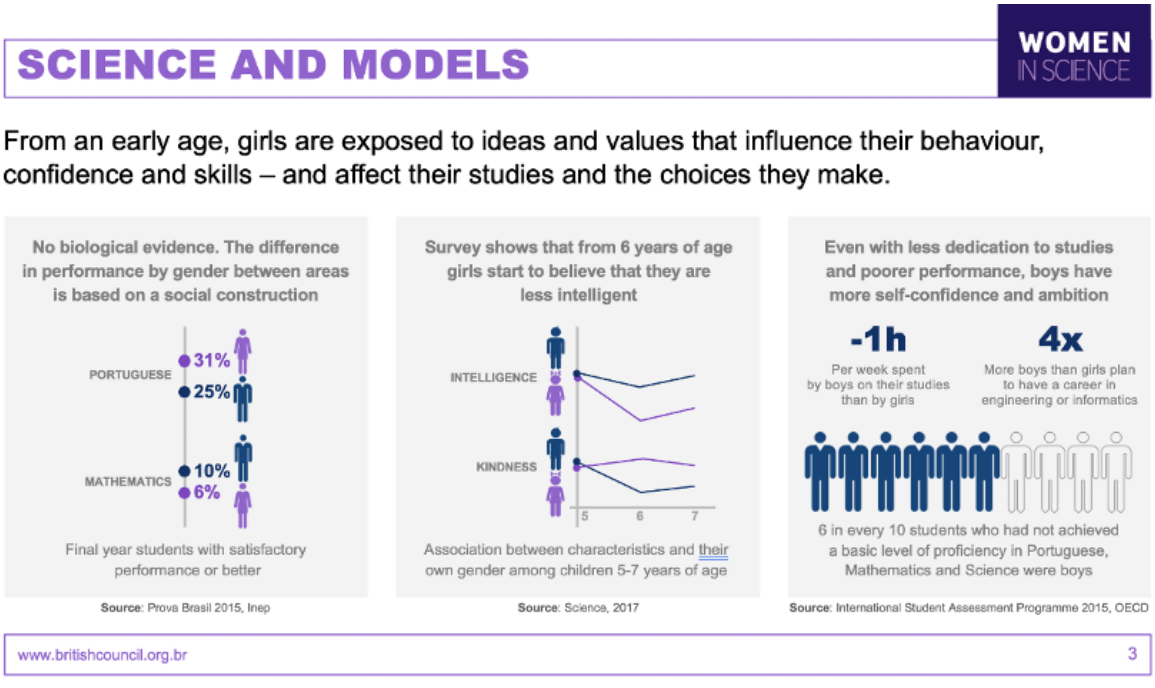
The most recent iteration of its programme is Women in Science – Science Communities (WIS), which developed from research that identified the need to take a lifecycle approach – from schools through college, university and career paths, all framed by social norms, attitudes and beliefs about gender. The benefits of taking a lifecycle approach include joining up with existing programmes (e.g. on coding for girls) in the region.

In Brazil the UK FCDO – who are also a partner in Brazil for the Newton Fund – and the BEIS Department have assisted with funding. The team will be consolidating the programme at the regional level by expanding the work to Peru and Mexico and potentially to other countries.

The British Council HE Team in the Americas has completed a systematic revision of each one of its HE programmes in order to embed gender mainstreaming indicators across them all, to meet at least a minimum requirement of gender sensitivity. Overarching indicators within the regional HE partnerships monitoring and evaluation plan explicitly include gender-disaggregated data, indicators for HEIs that include gender-sensitive actions and for partnerships that address gender equality.

At the same time, the team has looked internally at its own gender norms and practices, with each team member identifying objectives to create a more gender-equal workplace. The HE Team lead has identified direct dialogue with beneficiaries of gender-transformative projects, and space for reflection and discussion among the team members in dialogue with gender experts, as critical factors in the process of adopting a committed gender-sensitive approach. The team makes use of calendar opportunities such as International Women's Day to promote gender equality, for example with a celebration of women from the Americas who travelled to the UK for HE and research opportunities (British Council Americas, n.d.).

Figure 16: Slide from a stakeholder presentation, illustrating research into the social norms affecting study choices



The WIS programme is ambitious in seeking to reach beyond the immediate goals of increased participation and improved career paths for diverse women in STEM, to influencing national and institutional policies on science and diversity. Building and strengthening the networks of local civil society women's rights movements is also an explicit aim. The project has identified particular problems with limited career pathways for women in STEM, particularly at leadership and strategic levels, hampered by few role models or networks and unsupportive institutional structures. The programme, steered by an expert working group, includes the following multiple elements:

- a high-level Gender Summit
- policy dialogues and workshops
- development of evidence-based mentoring models
- delivery of capacity-building equality, diversity and inclusion training
- skills training and training for teachers of STEM subjects in schools.

The programme's engagement with culture and with communities beyond HEIs themselves is demonstrable, for example through the publication of the appealing *Women in Science* magazine (British Council Brazil, 2019).

What could have been done differently?

This iteration of the project is in its early stages but robust planning, including for a project lessons review process, will enable further reflection. Although Black women are especially under-represented in STEM, this is not particularly explicit in the project plan, reflecting sensitivities around race and gender in HE.

For the future, the intention is to consolidate the programme at the regional level and create spaces and ways to engage globally with other regions through stronger participation, involvement and facilitation from the global HE and Science Team, resulting in wider presence, visibility and influence on the science and diversity agenda.

For further information

- WIS programme (Mulheres na Ciencia): www.britishcouncil.org.br/mulheres-na-ciencia
- Portia: Women in Science based at Imperial College London: www.portiaweb.org.uk
- Outstanding Women: video webinar series with women from the Americas who have studied in the UK: americas.britishcouncil.org/programmes/outstanding-women

Case study 16: Scotland Pakistan Scholarships for Young Women and Girls

Pakistan

Daughters are less likely than sons to be sponsored by their families to attend university in Pakistan. Since 2013 more than 900 young women have benefited from the Scotland Pakistan Scholarships for Young Women and Girls. Funded by the Scottish government, these scholarships assist ambitious women from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue master's and bachelor's degrees at accredited universities in Pakistan, in fields that are of critical importance to the overall development of the country: education, sustainable energy, agriculture and food security, health sciences, and STEM.

For 2019–20 the scheme was advertised in high-circulation Urdu newspapers, and supported by communications with admissions offices and financial aid offices in accredited universities in Pakistan who shared information and put up posters advertising the opportunity. Advertisements were shared on university websites and social media sites, primarily Facebook.

Almost 9,000 applications were received for the master's degrees and close to 10,000 for the undergraduate stream which was new in 2019. After shortlisting, British Council staff interviewed over 300 applicants and 156 students were selected.

Monitoring and evaluation visits are carried out to all participating universities including engagement with the scholars, to monitor their welfare and reported achievements. After certification and graduation, all participants are invited to join the Scotland Pakistan Alumni Network, where they can share experiences, exchange knowledge and identify areas of professional collaboration.

What could have been done differently?

Since the scheme was first introduced, it has become more gender responsive. For example, 2019–20 was the first year in which responsibility for interviews was assigned to British Council staff rather than university staff. This increased the accountability of the British Council and mitigated the level of risk – always present in HE settings – of exploitation (see, for example, the section in this report on gendered violence and harm).

For further information

- See the website at: www.britishcouncil.pk/programmes/education/scholarships
- Impact video describing the direct benefits of the scheme: youtu.be/zOR8nzb8KRI

Case study 17: Girls into Global STEM

UK, Poland, Cyprus and Sweden

This Erasmus+ 'good practice example', co-ordinated by the University of Hull in the UK, involved universities and NGOs in four countries, each working with a partner secondary school. The objectives were to increase the interest and engagement of young Europeans, particularly girls, in STEM linked with wider awareness of global issues and enabled through digital skills. Teachers were supported to embed digital skills and global learning methodologies into their STEM teaching, referencing the British Council's Connecting Classrooms for Global Learning project with FCDO.

The project resulted in production of a toolkit which includes an online course (for in-service and pre-service teacher training) to build teachers' confidence and skills to increase girls' engagement in STEM subjects in secondary schools. The methodology includes the development of a series of Global STEM Challenges, each linked to one of the SDGs. These were shown through surveys and interviews to have inspired girls to find out more about how science and technology can address important global issues. The project also found that younger students enjoyed and benefited from receiving mentoring from older students. The participating HEIs and schools both felt that they had gained much from working together.

What could have been done differently?

The external evaluation report did not identify any areas for improvement.

For further information

- Erasmus+ programme report: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2016-1-UK01-KA201-024360
- Project website: www.gigsproject.eu/
- GIGS toolkit including e-books created by students, curriculum maps, classroom resources and training courses for in-service and pre-service training: www.gigstoolkit.com/
- Facilitators' handbook for teacher training: http://www.gigstoolkit.com/guide-for-course-facilitators.html
- Baseline and follow-up survey to assess interest and awareness in STEM, global issues and gender bias: http://www.gigstoolkit.com/gigs-surveys.html
- UK-based NGO Practical Action, who developed the core resources for the global STEM challenges: practicalaction.org/

2.4 Resources and examples to assist with gender mainstreaming

This section of the report will be helpful to those seeking ideas, examples, and up-to-date information

and guidance concerning the integration of gender equality and empowerment principles into all areas of work in HE. While it will be useful for anyone working in the HE and policy space, the format of the resource has been designed around the British Council's five portfolio intervention areas for HE and science.

Following a resource list of global HE data, five tables are presented, each covering one of the five portfolio intervention areas:

1. policy and systems development
2. institutional partnerships
3. professional development
4. student mobility
5. insight, analysis and advocacy.

Positive case study examples that illustrate the activities, outputs and outcomes for gender equality are listed, together with suggestions for how success can be measured ('What can monitoring look like?'). Also included are references to case studies which show how some opportunities to promote gender equality have been missed, and which include suggestions for improvements where relevant. Finally, each table has a section listing a wide range of resources, most of which are publicly available, that can help programme and project teams to research, design, monitor and evaluate for gender equality impact.

2.4.1 Country and regional data resources

Local data on gender inequalities always needs to be researched, mapped and discussed in workshops with participants and local women's organisations. It is of course essential to be responsive to local issues and needs when planning gender-responsive and gender-transformative actions. Often, data on gender and education can be predominantly focused on primary and secondary education. This can lead to an unhelpful focus on participation numbers (counting women and men) at the expense of indicators which are better placed to support action in HE towards gender equality and empowerment, e.g. subject selection, pedagogy, safety and career pathways. Limited global data is available of specific relevance to HE. Below are two major resources for up-to-date information on gender inequality in education, including HE.

- UNESCO e-atlas of gender inequality in education: www.tellmaps.com/uis/gender/ (no longer accessible) and also reproduced in tables in the GEM report: unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374514
- *World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2020:* www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf

2.4.2 Policy and systems development

Portfolio intervention area: policy and systems development
Focus: policymakers and HE leaders

Activities:

- **Policy dialogue and conferences**
- **High-level delegation visits**
- **Technical assistance**
- **Consultancy**

- Gender-focused activities
- Improving HE policy, legislation and systems to deliver on advancing gender equality and eliminating discrimination
- Promoting high-profile women leaders, speakers and discussants, women delegates and gender-sensitive communication content
- Carer-friendly and safe conference arrangements
- Gender analysis, policy and action plans on the agenda
- Gender-focused outputs and outcomes to incorporate into monitoring, evaluation and learning
- System and regulatory improvements that are explicitly designed to assure gender equality
- Governments and HEIs understand the value placed by the British Council and the UK on gender equality
- Women students and researchers from the UK and internationally are less at risk from VAW and there is improved accountability
- Improved gender sensitivity in research content
- Progress towards equality and empowerment of women students, researchers, policymakers and leaders

Case study examples

Case study 2: Ethiopia HE declaration and other country examples

Case study 3: The London Statement of Principles for recruiting and providing services to international students

Case study 5: Cairo University, improving sector practices on sexual harassment

Case study 7: The UK example of the Athena Swan process and framework for advancing gender equality in academia

Case study 10: Research to develop policy with the government of Andhra Pradesh in India

Case study 13: Research and strategies to inform gender-sensitive academic career development for the HE Commission, Pakistan

Case study 15: Women in Science policy dialogues and workshops in the Americas

What can monitoring look like?

- Definition and indicators for 'quality' include accessibility and equality for female students and researchers
- Definition and indicators for 'quality' include gender equality in all curricula
- Budgets include proportionate resources for gender mainstreaming actions
- Interviews with representatives of HEIs and governments show their understanding of the value placed by UK on gender equality
- Number of new policies and regulations that require transparent criteria and targets for female representation (in decision-making bodies, recruitment, promotion and evaluation committees, senior leadership and professorial roles) to be set, monitored and met
- Gender equality training and dissemination events are delivered

Resources

- British Council *Guide to Addressing Gender Equality* with *Annexes* (O'Flynn, 2018)
- EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality) *Toolkit for Gender Equality in Academia and Research*, including speaking notes to support advocacy for gender equality and guide to setting up and implementing a Gender Equality Plan (EIGE, 2016)
- *European Council Conclusions on Advancing Gender Equality in the European Research Area* (EC, 2015)
- *Guidance for Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans* (GPE, 2017) – while primarily concerned with primary and secondary education, helpful tools on gender analysis, institutional capacity, costing and budgeting
- SAGA (STEM and Gender Advancement) searchable international database of policies and instruments focused on gender equality in science, technology and innovation. Searchable by ministries, HEIs and other organisations (SAGA, n.d.)
- UNESCO's portal of education plans and policies (Planipolis, n.d.)
- Gender Curricula searchable database (in English and German) of guidance to bring gender mainstreaming for quality assurance across 55 academic degree subjects (Gender Curricula, n.d.)
- Framework with indicators, standards and guidance to incorporate gender into HE degree programmes (AQU Catalunya, 2019), also published in Catalan
- *Guidelines for Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science* (applicable across all fields in HE) (EC & Italian Government, 2015)
- Toolkit and templates for self-assessing institutional gender action plans in HE and research. Surveys, spreadsheets, guidance – in English, French, Lithuanian (Integer, n.d.)
- LIBRA activities to achieve gender equality in academia – Assess Gender Equality, Support Career Development, Tailor Gender Equality Plans, Improve Work–Life Balance in Academia, Recruit without Gender Bias, Integrate Sex and Gender Dimension in Research (LIBRA, n.d.)
- Manuals with guidelines on the integration of sex and gender analysis into research contents, recommendations for curricula development and indicators (GENDER-NET, 2016)
- Report on structural changes in research institutions (European Commission, 2012a), identifying good practice for structural change
- *Practical Guide to Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations* (Science Europe, 2017), including gender indicators and guidance on improving grant management practices
- *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Research and Innovation: UK Review* (Guyan & Douglas Oloyede, 2019) and International Review (Moody & Aldercotte, 2019), including work on gender and recommendations for what works; evaluation but minimal on VAW
- *Gender Issues in Recruitment, Appointment & Promotion Processes: recommendations for gender sensitive application of excellence criteria* (FESTA, 2015)
- *Global Research Council Statement of Principles and Actions Promoting the Equality and Status of Women in Research* (Global Research Council, 2016)
- Athena Swan good practice initiatives that have had real impact on gender equality in HEIs – searchable by theme (Advance HE, n.d.)
- *THE* Universities Global Impact Rankings for SDG 5 (but note omission of sexual harassment/VAW/GBV) (*THE, 2020*)
- *Guidance and standard questions on Enhanced Due Diligence: Safeguarding for External Partners* (DFID, 2020)
- *Code of Practice: Making Tertiary Education Safe to Learn* (FCDO, forthcoming)
- *Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research and Innovation Policy* (UKRI, 2020), but note this requires expertise from partners and funders to understand whether risk assessments and mitigations are adequate
- *Sector Guidance to Address Staff Sexual Misconduct in UK HE* (1752 Group & McAllister Olivarius, 2020) (UK)
- *Online Harassment and Hate Crime in HEIs* – report with recommendations (UK) (Phippen & Bond, 2020)
- Toolkit for a self-assessment framework to address sexual misconduct in UK universities (AVA, forthcoming)
- Guidance note on campus violence prevention and response (UN Women, 2019)
- *Saksham: Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programmes for Gender Sensitization on Campus* (UGC, 2013) (India)

2.4.3 Institutional partnerships

Portfolio intervention area: institutional partnerships
Focus: institutions

Activities:

- **Support for partnerships enabling collaboration in teaching/transnational education/research/reciprocal mobili**
- **Paid consultancy for UK HEIs**

- Gender-focused activities
- Integration of minimum standards on gender into accreditation processes
- Develop minimum standards on protection from and response to GBV, to include addressing data collection and monitoring, contracts, screening of students and staff, policies on supervision, disciplinary and investigation procedures, services and infrastructure
- Introduce clarity and accountability for introduction and audit of robust policies and measures addressing gender inequalities and VAW
- Evaluation of research proposals for sex and gender analysis
- Promotion of partnerships and collaborations with a gender focus
- Promoting gender-transformative pedagogy in teaching and teacher training
- Promoting excellence in gender mainstreaming activities
- Gender-focused outputs and outcomes to incorporate into monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Increase in partnerships and collaborations with a gender focus
- Increase in research outputs that have a gender focus
- Improved quality (gender sensitivity) in teaching and research
- Partners understand the value placed by UK on gender equality
- Women educators, students and researchers from the UK and internationally are less at risk from VAW and there is improved accountability
- Progress towards equality and empowerment of women, including as educators, students and researchers

Case study examples

Case study 1: TESCEA – partnership working on gender-responsive pedagogy

Case study 5: knowledge exchange between Cairo and UK universities on VAW in HE

Case study 6: opportunities for advancement of gender equality in Creative Spark partnerships

Case study 14: ACU 'gender grants' and prizes supporting international partnerships

Case study 15: Women in Science institutional partnerships in the Americas

Case study 16: Scotland–Pakistan scholarships in Pakistan universities

Case study 17: Girls into Global STEM promoting international and secondary HE partnerships

What can monitoring look like?

- All-women participation and minimum (stretch) participation by women at all levels (programme teams, management and beneficiaries) is an indicator but not on its own
- Number of gender-sensitive and gender-transformative procedures adopted and taken up in partner institutions
- Improved access to and take-up of flexible working, childcare, support and satisfactory disciplinary processes against violence, harassment and abuse
- For programme partners: checklist incorporating contract with students and disciplinary procedures; standards for hosting institutions on VAW prevention and response
- Improved satisfaction of women in teams via climate surveys or focus groups
- Number of partnerships and collaborations that have an explicit gender focus
- Number of research outputs that have an explicit gender focus
- Number of journal articles from partnership projects where authors/lead authors are women researchers
- Marketing materials representing women equally and in their diversity
- Targets of 40% of 'each under-represented sex' in scholarships, advisory groups, assessment panels and monitoring panels

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Resources

- *Code of Practice: Making Tertiary Education Safe to Learn* (FCDO, forthcoming)
- *UN Women Guidance Note on Campus Violence Prevention and Response* (UN Women, 2019)
- *Addressing Student Sexual Violence in HE* (Humphreys & Towl, 2020) (UK)
- *Strategy for addressing sexual and domestic violence in universities* (Fenton & Mott, 2015) (UK)
- *Measures to ensure safety and programmes for sensitisation* (UGC, 2013) (India)
- *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research*, including important questions for research funders, HEIs and others (UKCDR, 2020)
- Sex and gender analysis examples and case studies by the Gendered Innovations Expert Group (European Commission, 2013), including methodology and critical questions for rethinking research priorities, outcomes, concepts and theories, building teams and designing research
- Analysis and examples of approaches to tackling subject-level gender imbalances in tertiary education in Scotland (Hanesworth, 2016)
- Report on structural changes in research institutions (European Commission, 2012a), identifying problems and solutions: lack of transparency; biased institutional practices; unconscious bias in assessment; wasted opportunities; the gendered structuring of work life
- *Gender Issues in Recruitment, Appointment & Promotion Processes: recommendations for gender sensitive application of excellence criteria* (FESTA, 2015)
- Comprehensive guidance on data collection and indicator calculation for gender equality in science and research: Europe – *She Figures Handbook* (2019)

2.4.4 Professional development

Portfolio intervention area: professional development
Focus: educators and researchers

Activities:

- **Short-term work/research placements in another country**
- **Professional training**
- **Platforms for science comms and outreach**

- Gender-focused activities
- Professional training – including all primary, secondary and tertiary teacher training – includes competencies in gender
- Promoting the representation of women and gender-sensitive content in comms platforms
- Build and support research networks on gender and gender equality
- Capacity building and leadership development for women
- Introducing clarity and accountability for addressing VAW risk among women educators and researchers
- Address gendered barriers to participation opportunities
- Gender focused outputs and outcomes to incorporate into monitoring, evaluation and learning
- All data are sex-disaggregated with appropriate targets, for example where subject fields are imbalanced
- Placement and participation agreements include accountability for VAW and incidence is specifically measured
- Increased participation of women for whom barriers such as caring responsibilities have been identified
- Gender-responsive pedagogy is integral to professional training
- Improved gender balance in science communications content and delivery
- Partners understand the value placed by UK on gender equality
- Participants are ambassadors for gender equality
- Improved gender sensitivity in research content and application
- Less stratification by gender improves the quality of research and its application
- Women educators and researchers from the UK and internationally are less at risk from VAW and there is improved accountability
- Progress towards equality and empowerment of women teachers, students and researchers

Case study examples

Case study 1: TESCEA – training teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy

Case study 5: upskilling of HE staff at Cairo/UK universities on VAW prevention and response

Case study 9: integrating gender into the architecture curriculum

Case study 12: India – Newton-Bhabha Women in Science Workshops

Case study 13: Leadership and governance for women in Pakistan universities

Case study 14: ACU 'gender grants' and prizes supporting professional training and development

Case study 15: Women in Science capacity building and skills training in the Americas

Case study 17: Girls into Global STEM teacher training

What can monitoring look like?

- Record the active women members of alumni networks and ensure equal representation on network executive committees
- Gender audit of communications materials
- Record female participant numbers in ratio to existing country norms
- Teacher training: applicant feedback
- Teacher training: student focus group feedback
- Number of courses adapted for gender responsiveness and delivered
- Number of research networks supported
- Baseline and continuing data collection (surveys, not formal institutional reports) for incidence of sexual harassment or violence and satisfaction with institutional response
- Follow-up research with attendees of programmes and training to record positive outcomes such as enhanced career progression
- Comprehensive guidance on data collection and quantitative indicator calculation for gender equality in science and research: Europe – *She Figures Handbook* (2019)

Resources

- *Gender Responsive Pedagogy: a Teacher's Handbook* (FAWE, 2005) (designed for schools: Africa)
- *Teacher training: Commonwealth of Learning Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for Teachers and Teacher Educators* (Frei & Leowinata, 2014)
- Teacher training: Module 4 on pre-service and in-service teacher training and teacher standards, in supporting gender-sensitive STEM curricula and gender-responsive pedagogies (IBE-UNESCO & Malaysian MOE, 2017)
- Teacher training: STING toolkit for STEM teacher professional development to encourage girls (Europe) (Bronzwaer et al., 2017)
- Teacher training: Gender Equality in Stem open access online course for teachers of late primary and early secondary pupils (Scotland) (Openlearn, n.d.)
- *Gendered Research in Health: A Training Manual* (Khanna for SAHAJ & WOHTRAC, 2020) (India): a short course in 3 modules for graduates and mid-career professionals working in health
- The ALIGN guide on *Education and Gender Norm Change* (Marcus, 2018)
- UNESCO (2015) *Guide for Gender Equality in Teacher Education Policy and Practices*
- UK-based partners in Women in Science (Brazil): Portia network for Women in Science at Imperial College London who have also produced a wealth of resources: www.portiaweb.org.uk Resources include a workshop for early-career female researchers (Portia, 2015)
- Toolkit (running an introductory workshop) for Gender Mainstreaming in HE by INASP, lead partner in SPHEIR-funded TESCEA project (Gollifer & Gorman, 2018)
- Professor Virginia Valian's four online gender Tutorials for Change: Gender Schemas and Science Careers (presentations, transcripts, bibliography – USA-based and last updated in 2006): www.hunter.cuny.edu/gendertutorial/index.html
- Data, research and recommendations on women in HE leadership in South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) (Morley & Crossouard, 2015)
- TransEdu resources and information for supporting trans, non-binary & gender diverse applicants, students and staff in FE and HE (Scotland): www.trans.ac.uk/Home/tabid/6323/Default.aspx
- *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research,* including important questions for research funders, HEIs and others (UKCDR, 2020)
- *Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harm Implementation Quick Reference Handbook* (CHSAlliance, 2020) – handbook of resources including for developing policies and practices to prevent, and respond appropriately to, sexual misconduct

2.4.5 Student mobility

Portfolio intervention area: student mobility
Focus: students

Activities:

- **Study/work placements abroad**
- **Scholarships to UK**
- **Study UK campaign**
- **Paid services to support HEI student recruitment**
- **Alumni networks and support**

- Gender-focused activities
- Introducing minimum standards for gender-transformative and VAW prevention education and guidance (male and female students) in preparation to travel
- Introducing clarity and accountability for introduction and audit of robust policies and measures addressing gender inequalities and VAW in student experience and curriculum
- Targeted programmes and gender-sensitive recruitment to improve gender balance/ increase women's participation
- Creating women's alumni networks and support
- Gender-focused outputs and outcomes to incorporate into monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Improved gender representation in imbalanced fields
- Women students from the UK and internationally are less at risk from VAW and there is improved accountability
- UK and international students and alumni are less likely to be perpetrators of VAW
- Increased trust in the British Council's and UK/UK HEIs' leadership on gender equality in HE
- Better gender balance improves the quality of future research and its application
- Students and alumni are ambassadors for gender equality
- Progress is made towards gender equality and empowerment for women as students and workers and in society

Case study examples

Case study 3: The London Statement of Principles for recruiting and providing services to international students

Case study 11: Scholarships for Indian women to study STEM in the UK

Case study 16: Scotland–Pakistan scholarships building networks and promoting international connections

What can monitoring look like?

- Record and disaggregate sex/gender data for all initial applicants as well as successful applicants; monitor patterns of drop-out from point of inquiry and follow up with exit interviews
- Monitor retention and completion rates by sex/gender; qualitative feedback on student experience by sex/gender
- Record female participant numbers in ratio to existing country norms
- Record the active female members of alumni networks and ensure equal representation on network executive committees
- For programme management: audit contract with students and disciplinary procedures; standards for hosting institutions on VAW prevention and response
- Number of participants by sex/gender completing gender sensitive education; pre and post measures: attitudes and gender norms including backlash measures; increased agency; qualitative feedback on impact
- Establish baselines; surveys (not formal institutional reports) of all students on VAW incidence, response, reporting and impact; evidence of decisive action against perpetrators and institutional failures; projected social benefits. These measures go on to inform evaluation of VAW prevention activities
- Survey/interview research student participants on gendered aspects of their research
- Use alumni networks for medium- and longer-term follow-up and interviews; qualitative measures including activism for gender equality

Resources

- *Code of Practice: Making Tertiary Education Safe to Learn* (FCDO, forthcoming)
- Developing minimum standards on protection from and response to GBV will include addressing data collection and monitoring, contracts, screening of students and staff, policies on supervision, disciplinary and investigation procedures, services and infrastructure. Resources to assist with this: *UN Women Guidance Note on Campus Violence Prevention and Response* (UN Women, 2018); *Addressing Student Sexual Violence in HE* (Humphreys & Towl, 2020) (UK); *Toolkit for prevention programmes* (Fenton, Mott et al., 2014) (UK); *Measures to ensure safety and programmes for sensitisation* (UGC, 2013) (India). See also *Know Before You Go* (Student Minds, 2018) (UK)
- TransEdu resources and information for supporting trans, non-binary and gender diverse applicants, students and staff in FE and HE (Scotland): www.trans.ac.uk/Home/tabid/6323/Default.aspx

2.4.6 Insight, analysis and advocacy

Portfolio intervention area: insight, analysis and advocacy
Focus: policymakers, institutions, academics, researchers, wider sector

Activities:

- **Study/work placements abroad**
- **Research into priority themes**
- **Insight and analysis**
- **Advocacy through meetings and events**

- Gender-focused activities
- Insight, analysis and advocacy always include relevant gender themes and are conducted by parties competent in gender analysis
- Regional and local gender specialists are engaged to advise throughout project cycles
- Recruiting and showcasing project teams that are gender balanced
- Communications from country offices will showcase their approach to gender equality
- Gender-focused outputs and outcomes to incorporate into monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Research and insight products that are gender sensitive, enabling policy and programmes that work better for women and girls
- Research and insight products that enable gender-transformative policy and programmes to actively advance equality for women and girls
- Insight, analysis and advocacy influence gender-sensitive system change
- Partners understand the value placed by UK on gender equality

Case study examples

Case study 5: UK/British Council with the University of Cairo, providing insight on VAW prevention and response

Case study 6: Insight from British Council and PPV Knowledge Networks on gender inequalities in creative and cultural industries of Eastern Europe

Case study 7: Advance HE's sector leading Athena Swan process and framework for advancing gender equality in academia

Case study 10: British Council as a partner in research to inform and influence policy and practice for women in HE, with the Government of Andhra Pradesh in India

Case study 13: research on leadership and governance for women in Pakistan universities

Case study 15: Women in Science research-led programme in the Americas

What can monitoring look like?

- Increased agreement among women staff that there is top-level political and administrative support for gender equality [112]
- Regional and country targets for standalone events and products focused on gender equality
- Annual audit of research and insight outputs for gender focus
- External stakeholder interviews to assess understanding of British Council's leadership on and commitment to gender equality

112. Identified as a critical criterion for successful, lasting gender-aware changes (e.g. see Marchetti & Raudma, p. 142).

Resources

- UKRI/GCRF/Newton Fund *Things to Consider: incorporating gender equality into international development research and innovation* (UKRI, n.d.)
- UKRI/GCRF/Newton Fund *International Development (Gender Equality) Act: How to incorporate gender equality in research and innovation* (UKRI, n.d.)
- Gender advocacy: Module 10 in UNESCO (2015) *Guide for Gender Equality in Teacher Education Policy and Practices*
- *EIGE Toolkit for Gender Equality in Academia and Research,* including speaking notes to support advocacy for gender equality and guide to setting up and implementing a gender equality plan (EIGE, 2016)
- Vademecum on *Gender Equality in Horizon 2020 – practical guidance on implementation* (European Commission, 2014)
- SAGA (STEM and Gender Advancement) website and Gender Objectives List for Science, Technology and Innovation (UNESCO, 2016)
- And see resources itemised for policy and systems development

2.5 Concluding reflections and recommendations

The recommendations included in this report are aimed at the British Council. However, they also have relevance to other institutions, including government departments, regulatory and oversight bodies as well as HEIs and research bodies.

2.5.1 Prioritise gender mainstreaming

In the course of researching this report, it became clear that the British Council's core value of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is not always evident to staff or to external agencies commissioned to deliver research or programming for the British Council. This is then reflected in the lack of gender analysis in the work done by those staff or agencies. This report has also shown a lack of gender analysis in general in research commissioned by other bodies, including government departments, regarding education, research and innovation. Where gender is missing in analysis, we can be sure that action to address gender inequality is unlikely to follow. Opportunities are not being equally provided for women and girls where the barriers to their participation and achievement are not being acknowledged or addressed.

Returning to the British Council, there is considerable variability across programmes and regions, but also in analysis – for example, the IFF's British Council partnership model analysis of 2019 which took no account of gender in any of its analysis or recommendations[113] but could have been used as a building block to develop future activity. It is known that progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is not achieved without intentional focus. Yet that intentional focus is sometimes entirely missing from the picture. It cannot be assumed that activities to support or enhance 'people' in general will by default assist women – understood as a group or more accurately as belonging to a number of differently disadvantaged groups.

It is also not right to assume that every assuredly well-intentioned pattern of activity believed to be productive and positive could not actively harm women or the place of women. For example, high-level, high-profile events focusing on STEM in HE are likely to reproduce and reinforce the dominance of men in STEM and HE leadership, unless diverse women are proactively recruited to take part. The message that **paying no attention to gender reproduces the status quo of gender disadvantage** is not universally heard or acted upon.

For this reason it is important that quality and efficacy indicators in monitoring and evaluation frameworks are specific about sex/gender rather than positioning gender as a separate issue from quality or efficacy. Gender audits in teams and country offices – such as the brief on the British Council's female engagement footprint in women's and girls' education in Pakistan, compiled in 2018 – are not routinely conducted or disseminated. The move towards a more centralised approach to HE programmes and partnerships will help create the conditions in which targets for gender indicators – such as the number of partnership projects and outputs focused on addressing gender inequalities – can be increased.

Within the centralised framework, it is very important that regional- and country-level analysis is conducted so as to be clear about what the opportunities are for addressing gender inequalities, in each specific local context. It is also important to conduct local analysis of 'what works' within cultural contexts. For example, it is known that single-sex/gender environments and initiatives to promote gender equality work well in many training and education contexts, and are symbolically important. There are also benefits from working in mixed-sex/gender groups. In some cultural contexts, positive-action or single-sex initiatives can be resisted or interpreted as insulting by prospective participants and others (Moody & Aldercotte, 2019); therefore, skilfully designed communications and/or alternative methods may be indicated. When single-sex initiatives are delivered they should be tailored to women (including accessibility) and should include content of specific relevance to gender inequalities in the lives of those women.

- Ensure that gender equality objectives and outcomes, which relate to the British Council's theory of change for gender equality and empowerment, are explicit and not assumed, at every stage of project cycles and their associated documentation.
- Ensure that country and programme teams conduct in-depth local analysis (building on the analysis provided in this report and other sources) to ensure a good understanding of the specific country-level gender issues at play.
- Conduct gender audits of current and planned projects systematically across teams.

113. Gender is mentioned in the report once, together with all other forms of inequalities in HE, as a relatively uncommon rationale for some programmes (p. 29).

- Ensure that teams take up and build on training in gender equality.
- Incorporate the mainstreaming of gender equality into management reviews.
- Ensure that systems are designed to analyse the gender inequalities that cannot be captured by 'counting' participation, access or completion rates by sex/gender, refining and replacing default indicators in monitoring and evaluation plans that currently require information about relative numbers of male or female participants.
- Ensure there is curiosity about analysing and ameliorating 'hidden' gender inequalities, including sexual harassment and violence.
- Ensure that data collection enables the analysis of layers of disadvantage, including intersecting inequalities.
- Following the good practice of a growing number of research institutes worldwide, and the principles of gender mainstreaming more broadly, ensure that templates and proformas explicitly invite discussion of the ways in which sex and gender analysis is (or is not) relevant to, and reflected in, the work at hand. The discussion should apply an intersectional analysis. This needs to be embedded across the standard documentation for use by internal staff teams as they develop their programmes and activities.
- All research and analysis commissioned through external agencies or partners must require explicit gendered analysis (beyond 'counting women'), and those commissioned should be able to demonstrate competence in this area.
- Ensure sufficient resource is available from independent (local or international) gender specialists and the British Council's own dedicated international and regional gender specialists, to inform appropriate gender analysis of current and future activities as well as project monitoring and evaluation with costs factored into planning.
- Encourage each country office to support its HE team to develop and promote materials showcasing their approach to gender equality. This is a year-round commitment, but activities can be pinned to calendar events such as International Women's Day (8 March: see case study 15), 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (25 November – 10 December; see case study 5), International Day of Women and Girls in Science (11 February) and International Women in Engineering Day (23 June).

2.5.2 Develop gender expertise

Throughout this report, the success of many of the proposed solutions to gender inequalities in research and in the lives of women in HEIs has been predicated on the existence of a knowledge base about gender which, in reality, is not widespread in the general HE community. For example, the evaluation of research proposals designed to address gender inequality should be carried out by someone with expertise in the field. Likewise, the assessment of risk and of appropriate support for GBV in a situation needs to be carried out by someone who has good knowledge about the subject. Gender equality is currently not mainstreamed (as discussed above) and neither is expertise on gender inequality regularly sought out where it is needed.

There are significant consultancy opportunities that the British Council should consider, in supporting HEIs and policymakers to undertake actions to promote gender equality. The British Council has a number of gender experts in-house, supporting its internal work, and access to networks of gender consultants globally. International NGOs focusing on gender and education tend not to work in HE spaces. As more leaders in HE and in research and innovation organisations worldwide have come to state the importance of integrating gender equality considerations into their work, the British Council is potentially well placed to advise them on this work, sensitively integrating its cultural relations expertise at country and regional level with its gender expertise and its many years' experience in the HE field. As UK HEIs continue to invest in building satellite campuses around the world, consultancy that offers or harnesses culturally sensitive expertise on gender, including how to maximise the safety of women students and staff, would be a valuable service.

- Consider supporting or growing opportunities for UK and international experts to be able to market gender expertise in HE.

2.5.3 Ensure an intersectional approach

In reviewing the materials for this report it became clear that, while a wealth of resources and good practice for enhancing gender equality in HE is available, the vast majority of initiatives in this field have in the past taken 'women' as the only category of analysis. For example, the majority of accounts of initiatives on 'women in science' did not reflect on or target the great disparity by ethnicity of women who do currently succeed in maintaining science careers.

Most accounts of communications drives to promote images or stories of women in research do not mention whether care was taken to represent minoritised women or women with visible disabilities. Initiatives such as the British Council's Women in Science programme in **Brazil** (case study 15), which responds to the lack of Black women in science, is the exception more than the rule. Sometimes programmes and initiatives led by the British Council do not use gender-sensitive indicators, and sometimes data collection – and therefore monitoring and evaluation – is not disaggregated by sex of participant or beneficiary. It appears rare for intersectional analysis, which is critical for effective and inclusive interventions, to be enabled through data collection.

- Always consider whether programmes could have more impact by being targeted at specific groups of women and girls.
- Ensure that differential impacts on women and girls with intersecting identities are theorised, monitored and evaluated in the gender analysis process.

2.5.4 Put a greater focus on violence against women

UN Women and others have identified VAW in HE as an urgent global predicament. The British Council is exceptionally well placed both to influence others to take effective action and to advise and support them in doing so, in collaboration with local women's organisations around the world and to advance the promotion of gender equality in HE.

To meet the ambition for the **UK** to be seen as a trusted partner and provider of inclusive HE, a step up for accountability and safeguarding will be necessary not only from the British Council but also from partners such as Universities UK International, the Office for Students, HEIs, agents and government departments. Government departments and UK-based university regulators and societies are rightly determined to make the UK the top destination of choice for the international student community, and have the quality of the student experience as a core strategic focus. They therefore must be alive to the reputational risks and moral imperatives inherent in the current dearth of evidence-based policy and assurance frameworks to address sexual harassment and violence against students and staff in transnational HE contexts. Openly demonstrating that this problem is being addressed is an effective way to build trust, as the universities of Cambridge and Durham among others have demonstrated in the UK.

It is important to note that education and training for the prevention of VAW should not be frightening for women or hostile to men; the most successful prevention efforts are grounded in the principles of positivity, inclusion and empowerment, and include men and women.

The British Council takes a 'do no harm' approach (*Guide to Addressing Gender Equality*, 2018). This means there should be no unintended negative outcomes from the activities conducted in the pursuit of its aims and the promotion of its values. International student mobility is a core portfolio activity for the British Council and, at the same time, international students appear to be at even more risk of VAW than home students in many cases. They are also likely to be at increased risk for subsequent or continued distress such as PTSD. While research evidence is lacking on the risks to HE professionals who travel internationally, it is likely that they are also at increased risk.

Therefore, for all international students and others, whether travelling to or from the UK, it is important for the British Council and its partners to establish responses (including support to report, and independent specialist advocacy and counselling) that meet or surpass the standards set out in the guidance note issued by UN Women (2018), paying particular attention to the provision of essential services for survivors. Guidance for students should give specific advice about the risks of GBV. For example, the *Safety first* guidance (2013) produced by Education UK and managed by the British Council is currently largely 'gender blind'. The advice on laws in the UK does not cover VAW, and while hate crimes and racial discrimination and harassment are specifically addressed, VAW is not – although it is implicit in warnings about drink spiking and safety while outside the home. The advice on safety in the home is largely geared towards preventing burglary or fire.

Action is often driven by accountability, so there must be clear accountability and rigorously applied standards across all partner institutions, agents and consultants involved in student and professional mobility. International students may also pose an increased risk to fellow international students from the same home country, when abroad. There is an urgent imperative for the British Council and other parties to collect and analyse data on the incidence of unwanted sexual experiences of international students – whether they are studying abroad for the duration of their degree or on shorter exchange programmes.

Students who have experienced sexual harassment or violence during international study are highly unlikely to volunteer this information as 'feedback' unless specifically asked: it is time to do so in order to maximise effective prevention and response. Survey questions must be developed in consultation with gender equality specialists and with academics who are familiar with the psychological and methodological challenges in the field of sexual violence. Surveys must be accompanied by information about where to find specialist support.

- Ensure the integration of VAW as a risk, concern and critical challenge into all HE projects with appropriate planning, resourcing and specialist input. Work with partners to develop methodologies and implement research; develop guidelines and standards for country-level response, including media; and develop guidance for those at risk.
- Collect data, and require partners to collect data, on VAW prevalence and institutional response among internationally mobile students and professionals in all contexts.
- Use the power, platform and authority of the British Council to press for sustained action to address VAW in HE, from policy and practice at the highest levels to every programme on the ground.
- Enable, harness and showcase best practice on preventing VAW in UK HEIs, so that the UK becomes a 'safe to study' destination of choice.
- It was beyond the scope of this project to conduct in-depth analyses of the integration of VAW concerns in all the British Council's HE programmes, but there are concerns which merit urgent assessment by the British Council and their funders in light of a general vacuum of information in this area. UKRI's recent commentary on the Newton Fund sets out criteria for applicants to provide a Gender Equality Statement ensuring that they meet the requirements of the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014 following the ICAI review[114] in 2019. However, the specific and gendered contextual threat of sexual violence for women participants was not addressed by UKRI.

2.5.5 Address women's under-representation in HE leadership

Research shows two clear findings about leadership: that committed leadership is critical for supporting progress towards gender equality (see later Section 2.5.8); and that women are significantly under-represented in HE leadership worldwide. This under-representation is observed whether or not women hold the majority, or minority, of jobs in HE by country or by subject area. The most senior academic, research and governance roles are disproportionately held by men, and leadership remains culturally identified with masculinity. It is fundamentally unfair that women in HE who are equally as talented as men are deprived of equivalent opportunities to rise to better-rewarded positions of leadership and influence.

Furthermore, given that so many of the most successful and enduring programmes for gender equality in HE have been championed by women leaders, it is likely that a focus on achieving equality for diverse women in leadership roles will also boost the reach of efforts to address gender inequalities in other areas of HE. Leadership programmes alone cannot deliver everything needed to progress gender equality in HE settings, but evidence-based programmes to support women's leadership, adapted to meet cultural context, hold great promise as part of a portfolio of gender equality actions.

- Commit to long-term action to address the leaky pipeline, glass ceiling, sticky floor and other known patterns of impediment to women's equal leadership in HE.
- Take action to address practices and policies for recruitment and promotion, and other institutional norms, that conflate good leadership with masculinity. At the same time, advance and reward excellence in inclusive leadership.

114. *Recommendation 2 of the ICAI review: the Newton Fund should ensure it meaningfully considers options for reducing gender inequality and reports against its progress*

2.5.6 Tackle subject segregation, particularly in STEM

STEM remains a priority focus area globally for HEIs and at the same time is a male-dominated arena in HE and research.

- When setting and responding to priorities, ensure that other less male-dominated subject areas within or outside of the STEM tradition, with comparable benefits to societies and economies (e.g. climate geography, nursing studies), are not overlooked.
- Make use of the differences by country and region found in STEM subject areas between women and men (e.g. computer science: UK women 20 per cent; Omani women 76 per cent) to forge mutual learning partnerships or exchanges and placements to address cultural gendered assumptions.
- Ensure that interventions to increase the participation of women in STEM (e.g. events with STEM women as role models; in films or texts) represent women in all their diversity.

2.5.7 Take a gendered approach to online learning and collaboration

Online learning programmes and tools are a core feature of the British Council's work in education and are set to take an increasingly prominent role in HE, both as ICT continues to expand its global reach and in response to the global challenges of climate change and pandemic disease which mediate the usefulness of international exchanges and learning that require physical travel. There is surprisingly little research on gender differences or inequalities as they relate to online learning and collaboration in HE. More evidence of gender differences or similarities in the qualitative experience of different online or blended learning approaches would be welcome.

- Ensure that online learning projects are assessed and designed for equality of access and outcomes for women and men participants in terms of their content, delivery and assessment, being alert to the unintended consequences of algorithms for access. A handbook or toolkit for designing gender-responsive online learning projects would be a valuable resource for all partners.
- Ensure that the differential gender benefits of online learning or collaboration projects to women (alongside any disbenefits) are accounted for in decision-making processes where online and face-to-face learning or collaboration are both options for investment.
- Maintain opportunities for women researchers, such as those in the early phases of their careers, to work with and learn from experts around the world by generating the means to collaborate online.
- Protect and enhance projects' engagement with women in local communities, such as businesses and community organisations, by enabling online activities which can be recorded and published to increase their visibility.
- Make the most of the British Council's expertise and capability in e-learning to develop online guidance and e-learning programmes with gender content. This will assist project partners and applicants to strengthen their own work from proposal stage to implementation and evaluation.
- Make the most of the British Council's expertise and capability in e-learning to develop e-learning programmes and modules that address gender inequality in HEIs, including sexual harassment and violence.

2.5.8 Strengthen organisational leadership and commitment to address gender inequality in strategy, policy, quality assurance and delivery

The evidence from evaluations of HE initiatives (e.g. Athena Swan[115] and see EC, 2012) mirrors similar research in HE and on gender equality more broadly, as well as comments from interviewees in the research for this report: the buy-in and commitment of senior leadership is critical to the advancement of gender equality in institutions. Therefore, the British Council should ensure, in particular, that in its exchanges with ministers and with senior leaders in HEIs, messaging about the importance of the agenda to promote gender equality is consistent and strong.

The British Council is a trusted and respected partner worldwide: it could use its power to great effect. Sometimes and in some contexts it might feel easier to avoid having the conversation about gender equality, perhaps where donors or other partners appear not to have interest in the agenda, or where paying clients are perceived to be 'calling the shots'. But each conversation is an opportunity to emphasise the commitment of the British Council to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and to help shape norms towards the acceptance of gender equality as a fundamental goal that underpins the definition of 'quality' in all HE contexts. Men in leadership positions have an important role to play in taking a lead on gender equality.

115. Athena Swan evaluation, *ibid.*, Munir et al. (2014)

Discrimination and discriminatory violence, such as the sexual harassment and VAW that are widespread within the HE sector worldwide, are not only experienced as an injury to the self. Often these harms are compounded by the sense that institutions have 'turned a blind eye' or are otherwise seeking to avoid accountability for their role in preventing and responding to what has happened. The experience of this additional harm is known as 'institutional betrayal' (Freyd, 2008).[116] Its opposite, institutional courage, is 'an institution's commitment to seek the truth and engage in moral action'. The British Council has the opportunity to model institutional courage in the face of gender inequality, and to show that it encourages institutional courage in others.

- Ensure that partners in countries worldwide know that seeking to restrict women's access to HE, or seeking to restrict access to education about gender and gender discrimination, would not be compatible with the values of any institutions in the UK working in global HE.
- Ensure that organisational leaders are using every opportunity to proactively raise and include gender equality in strategy, policy, quality assurance and delivery.
- Include specific gender competencies in management training and frameworks.
- Consider investing in 'leadership for gender equality' training.

2.5.9 Recognise and promote gender studies and women's HEIs

Research shows that gender studies programmes, and HEIs that are for women, can significantly enhance the experience and outcomes of HE for women. They are fruitful centres for the development of knowledge and action to promote gender equality in wider society. They also provide supportive context for the development of expert knowledge communities and leadership opportunities.

- Strategically support and champion programmes and modules that involve gender studies.
- Strategically support, and make the most of connections with, HEIs that are for women which can be models for women-friendly STEM learning, research and leadership.

2.5.10 Take a lifecycle approach

Research shows the importance of taking a holistic lifecycle approach to the nature of women's engagement in HE. The success of programmes focused on secondary education is amplified when their transition to HE is also considered. The pathways for further study, employment opportunities and personal growth opportunities for girls and women are deeply connected to each other and to the wider gender equality agenda. If the opportunities are not there for the onward journey into HE, the appeal of completing even secondary education may not be clear to girls and their families. Action to tackle stereotypes and harmful gender norms in HE environments is bolstered by action in the wider society. Programmes that help to promote gender equality in wider society, such as the British Council's Active Citizens programme, can be delivered to HE students (as in Nigeria: case study 4). HE programmes benefit from dialogue with programmes that are focused on other areas such as primary or secondary education, or society, as the examples from LEAP, Women in Science (case study 15) and Girls into Global STEM (case study 17) have shown.

The impact of gender-transformative interventions is also felt over the long term – as well as communicated to others through the examples set, and conversations initiated, by programme beneficiaries. Long-term follow-up with participants and beneficiaries of British Council projects is currently rare. When taking a lifecycle approach, and when aiming to make a difference in the area of changes to social norms, only a long-term approach to monitoring and evaluation can bear fruit. This is recognised by the British Council – and the new global alumni strategy will assist with evaluation over the longer term: staying in touch with programme alumni over the longer term gives the British Council opportunities to measure and monitor many indicators, from retention and progression in HE or research roles to wider contributions to society, including as ambassadors for gender equality.

- Ensure that HE programmes actively seek synergy with extant programmes at other lifecycle points so that they complement and enhance one another.
- Ensure that the long-term impact of programmes for gender equality over the lifecycle, and in terms of attitudes supportive of gender equality, is captured, for example through the alumni strategy and by asking participants to identify multiplier effects such as their influence on others.

116. Cited along with the term 'institutional courage' at dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/institutionalbetrayal/

2.5.11 Assert the centrality of equality and inclusion to the definition of quality and excellence in HE

Funding and research bodies, policymakers and others working on global HE systems do not have a strong enough focus on gender and other equality issues. The concept of quality is absolutely central to the internationalisation agenda in HE. Methods and practices that reinforce social inequalities or that only work well for one half of the population cannot be considered to be delivering or representing quality: only gender-sensitive education systems in HE can be regarded as high quality, and only classroom environments and teaching practices that are free from sexism can be regarded as high quality. Yet there is a disconnect between these concepts of quality, evidenced by rankings that show the universities who are judged to do well for 'gender equality' are not the universities who are top rated according to generic standards. This reflects the fact that those generic standards are not gender sensitive.

In 2013 the British Council launched its *Manifesto for Change*, which called for gender equality to be understood as fundamental to quality.[117] It must be the mission of the British Council in its global work on HE to drive forward a system of standards and practices where gender equality is a necessary condition for quality. The British Council is involved at scale in the training of primary and secondary school teachers, and university teachers, both at policy level and on the ground, worldwide. Training for teachers to avoid sex discrimination and develop their own good practice for gender equality and empowerment should be a fundamental element of any scheme to drive up standards in pedagogy.

- Ensure that the British Council upholds and champions a definition of 'quality' and a definition of 'excellence' that are underpinned by gender equality standards, whether in curriculum content, pedagogy, programming, candidate selection or policy.
- Support the development and implementation of curricula – including teacher-training curricula – that are gender sensitive and gender transformative, at policy level and at programme level, and monitor as an indicator of success.
- Quantify and measure the British Council's influence towards other gender-sensitive and gender-transformative improvements to HE systems as a success indicator.

2.5.12 Act at scale

The British Council runs impressive individual programmes in HE that make profound positive change in the lives of women, for example the scholarship programmes for women in **India** and **Pakistan** (case studies 11 and 16) and the implementation of gender-responsive pedagogy in TESCEA (case study 1). Every woman empowered goes on to be a role model and empower others. Every revised university framework creates a more gender-sensitive experience for future generations of students. At the same time, if the concepts of scholarship programmes for women or gender-responsive pedagogy can be advocated for and incorporated into national HE plans and frameworks, the multiplier effect is greatly enhanced.

The British Council's strategic move towards global HE partnership programmes and to a global mobility framework also gives the British Council scope to introduce gender equality interventions at scale, albeit tailored to country and regional contexts. This is also an opportunity to develop and implement appropriate baseline and other measures to survey programme participants and gain valuable insights about gender equality and empowerment across large (multinational) participant populations, data which will be of use both internally and externally.

- Introduce a strategic priority to influence national HE plans for gender equality.
- Embed specific gender equality plans, policies and monitoring systems into the global mobility framework and global partnership programmes. This will enable transparency and enhance the quality and power of gender-sensitive data collection and monitoring practices.

117. Reported in the *Guardian*, 6 March 2013: www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2013/mar/06/gender-equality-universities-global-issue

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Acronyms and glossary

GBV: gender-based violence – see VAW.

Gender and sex: the boundaries between sex and gender are not always distinct. This report specifically focuses on the range of unequal treatment and life experience that occurs because of the perceived sex (most often male/female) and/or gender (most often man/woman, boy/girl) of individuals. 'Sex' is used where the main issues under discussion are concerned mostly with physiological or reproductive differences between men and women. 'Gender' is used where the focus is more upon roles and stereotypes (but see also 'gender equality'). 'Sex/gender' is used in discussion where both may be more or less equally at play.

Discrimination and unequal treatment based on sexual orientation (sexuality) and gender identity (trans or non-binary, gender non-conforming or 'cisgender' and other identities) are, with other forms of discrimination, subjects of analysis in their own right, as well as intersecting with sex and gender as discussed in this report. 'Gender' is used in this context to refer to socially imposed, hierarchical different roles and expectations associated with men/boys or with women/girls by others. 'Gender identity' is used to refer to the internal sense of gender which individuals may have regardless of their recorded sex at birth, and which is used as a basis for prejudice and discrimination when a person's identity and expression fall outside narrow socially defined norms for men and women, girls and boys. 'Gender expression' refers to a person's conscious behaviour (how they act) and presentation (how they look) which might align with or challenge social norms and stereotypes related to gender.

Gender equality: the widely used umbrella term referring to the desirable outcomes of equal treatment, opportunities and rights for males and females and for men/women and boys/girls, applied in practice to address both sex inequalities and gender inequalities. Gender inequality is the converse widely used umbrella term.

Gender-responsive pedagogy: teaching practices that take into account the gendered context of teaching and learning environments and bias in the curriculum, seeking to meet the needs of learners of different genders equally.

Gender-sensitive pedagogy: an umbrella term for pedagogical practices ranging from responsive to transformative.

Gender-transformative pedagogy: teaching practices that include awareness-raising activities concerning sex/gender inequalities and discrimination, and that encourage reflection and the motivation of learners to challenge harmful attitudes, norms and discriminatory practices.

HE: higher education

HEI: higher education institution (such as a university)

Intersectionality: the Global Research Council's definition is: 'the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage'. Intersectionality is a framework developed by K Crenshawe for understanding how there are unique and specific experiences of discrimination for people who have multiple characteristics of structural social disadvantage, such as Black women.

UKRI: UK Research and Innovation, the UK's independent research and innovation body, primarily funded by the UK government to create an enabling environment for research and innovation.

VAW: violence against women (see also VAWG, which stands for violence against women and girls). This is an umbrella term for the range of acts 'that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life' (UN). The term captures the close relationship of structural inequality with women's disproportionate experience of certain forms of violence.

Naming VAW as a social problem rooted in gender inequality is not to deny that men and boys can also be victims of sexual and domestic abuse, or that women and girls can be perpetrators. Strategies to prevent VAW are rooted in understanding its relationship to structural inequality but also would be expected to be inclusive of all forms of sexual and domestic violence.

The term 'gender-based violence' (GBV) is often used interchangeably with VAW, and is inclusive of violence against sexual minorities and those with gender non-conforming identities, forms of violence that are often related to adherence to rigid social norms about sex and gender.

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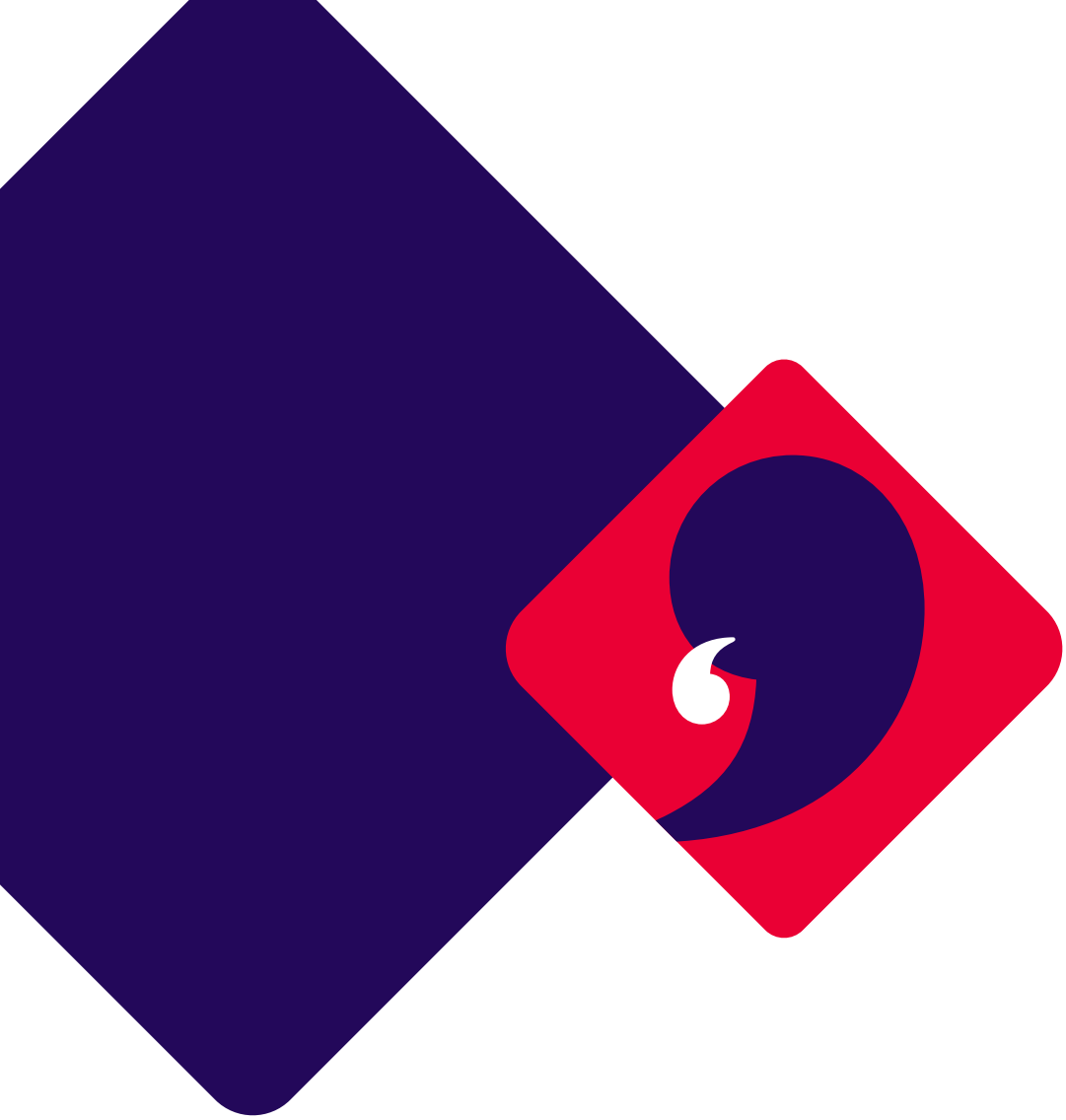

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