



Re-Engineering Gender Equality in Higher Education

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Abstract

Discussion of gender inequality in education is not new and has been on the research and political agenda of democratic countries for years, nonetheless equality is still achieved. In both formal and informal education, it is known that invisibilisation of women in official curricula, a gender stereotype in text book girls' achievements and boys' academic failures at school, difficulties for women teachers in accessing senior posts within school training in gender equality in education (co education) continues. There are also new emphases of gender issues emerging concerning violence in school, multiple inequalities or intercultural topics.

There are countries with a long history of gender or non sexist policies in education where the implementation of these strategies have been a bottom up process initiated by feminist movements such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the Scandinavian countries.

There are other countries where questions of gender equality are known mostly as directions from the EU such as Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Poland.

Also other countries outside Europe like Australia and Brazil are very much involved in developing programs for promoting gender equality and to empower women.

The level of higher education institutions can be significant sites for the reproduction of gender inequalities. Equally they have the potential to challenge them. The project identifies a range of good practices to promote gender equality including effective national implementation strategies for gender equality for example; in Uganda and Tanzania, international networks for example; the association of commonwealth universities program on women in management, organizational gender audits in Uganda, effective institutional responses to discrimination in South Africa and staff development program for women in South Africa and Uganda.

In all cases, gender equality initiatives have faced criticisms that either they are not needed or they do not work.