

Topic for discussion: A Gender Equality Index for Academic Institutions (chaired by Dr Lorenza Perini)

In the last years, our consortium as well as all the other consortia of the Sister Projects have been faced the problem of “monitoring, evaluating, measuring Gender Equality”.

The question is: what kinds of tools are necessary and suitable for reading and interpreting a reality as complex as the one of the academic institutions from a gender perspective?

How can each member of this “community” can recognize gender equality as a mainstreaming issue and most of all as a real “value” for the institution, giving their contribution in solving the problem of under-representation and discrimination of women?

As clearly pointed out (Bericat, 2012), the complexity of finding a way to address gender equality explains the wide variety of indicators created during the last 25 years.

All the “tools” proposed attempt to measure the same thing, gender (in)equality, but none of them define the concept they want to measure in the exact same way.

Indeed it is quite difficult to define, in a general way, what a TOOL is.

A tool can be almost everything, depending on the language of the specific discipline within which the semantic interpretation of this word is proposed.

And, moreover: are guidelines tools?

How a a system of indicators for measuring/evaluating and monitoring GE in a given institution can fit in this scenario?

Indubitably one of the most important thing to do to address the problem is to have knowledge form a gender point of view of the environment we want to “measure”. And this is possible only through a gender data collection (quantitative and qualitative) about different aspects of women’s careers in Academic Institutions. A data collection that must be regularly updated.

In our WP6 of GenderTime Project, the answers that we tried to give – or rather – the instruments that we tried to implement in order to make explicit the gender dimension as a specific category of analysis of the reality in Academia, have a broad context of reflection and study, far beyond the specific case of our institution, that is the University of Padua.

What we have developed is a system of indicators able to measure the Gender Equality in Academic Institutions (Badaloni and Perini, 2016).

Three are the questions concerning how to measure Gender Equality in Academia we offer to the discussion:

1. How to define a tool?

2. What type of indicators are the most suitable to measure Gender Equality in academia ? It is better to have broad indicators or extremely customized and specific indicators?
3. Are such tools useful in the mutual learning and sustainability perspective?

References

Badaloni S., Perini L. (Eds), *A model for building a Gender Equality Index for academic institutions*, ISBN 978-88-6938-098-3, Padova University Press, Padova, June 2016.
Bericat E., *The European Gender Equality Index: conceptual and analytical issues*, Soc. Indic. Res., n 108, 2012, pg 1-28.