

An Overview *of the Work of* **UNESCO Chairs** *on gender Equality*

Analysis of the Experiences,
Perspectives and Recommendations of
UNESCO Chairs on Gender Equality

2026

An Overview *of the Work of* **UNESCO Chairs** *on gender Equality*

Análisis de las experiencias, opiniones y
recomendaciones de las/los responsables
de las Cátedras UNESCO de Género

2026



Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura



Cátedra Regional
UNESCO Mujer,
Ciencia y Tecnología
en América Latina



FLACSO
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Área Género, Sociedad
y Políticas

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1. Study Context

In 2024, UNESCO's Division for Gender Equality commissioned the UNESCO Regional Chair on Women, Science and Technology, based at FLACSO Argentina and coordinator of the UNITWIN Network on Gender Equality, to lead a study aimed at identifying and analyzing the contributions made by UNESCO Chairs on Gender equality in support of the implementation of UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality.

The study, coordinated by Gloria Bonder (Coordinator of the Gender, Society and Public Policy Area at FLACSO Argentina), was conducted in 2024-2025. The research team also included María del Carmen Tamargo (Technical Team Member of the Gender, Society and Public Policy Area, FLACSO Argentina) and Sara Abad Regueira (Research Assistant).

2. Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of the study was to organize and analyze the research and activities carried out by UNESCO Chairs on Gender Equality worldwide between 2022 and 2024 contributing to the implementation of UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality Framework. The study sought to identify the Chairs' main contributions and recommendations for implementation, as well as to highlight gaps and thematic areas where data collection should be strengthened and where future work could be developed.

The study was therefore grounded in UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality (GPGE) Framework, which provides a comprehensive approach to advancing gender equality across all UNESCO's mandate and areas of expertise. The GPGE Framework ensures that the gender equality is embedded in UNESCO's Strategic Objectives as established in its main Strategic Documents- Medium Term Strategy (2022-2029) and consequent Programme and Budget Documents:

- **SO1.** Achieve gender equality in and through education.
- **SO2.** Empower women in science and technology for environmental action.
- **SO3.** Promote inclusion and combat gender-based violence.
- **SO4.** Bridge the digital gender divide.
- **Cross-Cutting Themes (CCT):** Women, Peace and Security; Crisis Preparedness and Emergency Response.

A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire distributed to the 43 UNESCO Chairs on Gender Equality worldwide. A total of 28 completed questionnaires were received.

In parallel, a documentary review was conducted through the websites of each Chair in order to identify relevant gender-related research outputs.

Participating UNESCO Chairs by Region



2. Summary of Key Findings

The following section presents a synthesis of the study’s main findings, systematizing the testimonies provided by UNESCO Chairs regarding the research lines and activities undertaken in relation to each Strategic Objective of the Global Priority Framework during the period under review (2022–2024), as well as the future actions proposed by the Chairs.

3.1 What the Chairs Are Doing

The analysis of survey responses indicates that all participating Chairs have conducted research on issues related to the Strategic Objectives of the Global Priority Framework. In addition, they have implemented training and educational activities, policy advocacy initiatives, awareness-raising actions, and communication and dissemination efforts.

These activities are complemented by collaborations

with civil society organizations and governments through advisory services, capacity-building initiatives, policy design and evaluation processes, among other actions.

When activities are disaggregated according to the Framework’s Strategic Objectives, a broad and diverse range of thematic areas emerges, reflecting the variety of research and interventions undertaken by the Chairs.

Strategic Objective 1: Achieve Gender Equality in and Through Education

Research conducted by the Chairs primarily focuses on analyzing conditions and strategies for expanding access to equitable, gender-responsive education and learning opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) for girls, adolescents and women.

A second major area of work seeks to deepen knowledge on how to increase teaching and learning opportunities that incorporate a gender perspective.

Strategic Objective 2: Empower Women in Science and Technology for Environmental Action

According to survey responses, the main research themes addressed by the Chairs include:

- Women's working conditions.
- Access to employment and economic, cultural and social rights.
- The promotion of women in decision-making positions.
- The resilience and contributions of women and girls to the sustainable management of natural resources.

Strategic Objective 3: Promote Inclusion and Combat Gender-Based Violence

Research priorities in this area include:

- Gender-based threats, violence, discrimination and stereotypes, including those occurring in digital environments.
- Studies on masculinities and gender relations.

Strategic Objective 4: Bridge the Digital Gender Divide

Research undertaken under this objective addresses:

- The development and implementation of ethical standards to address gender bias in digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) systems.
- The promotion of equitable and gender-responsive access to and use of information and knowledge in digital environments.

Given that AI remains a relatively new topic within gender studies and has thus far received limited attention from UNESCO Chairs (19% of mentions), the findings suggest the need to promote research that assesses current conditions and identifies effective strategies to support women's leadership in AI and the digital sphere.

Cross-Cutting Themes: Women, Peace and Security; Crisis Preparedness and Emergency Response

The collection, analysis and dissemination of information, knowledge and data constitute significant components of the work carried out by UNESCO Chairs.

Survey responses indicate substantial engagement in activities related to establishing, promoting and strengthening partnerships and networks, as well as providing technical assistance and policy advice.

Key actions include:

- Awareness-raising through advocacy campaigns and public debates.
- Collection and analysis of information, knowledge and data.
- Capacity-building and skills development.
- Provision of technical assistance and policy advice.
- Support for the development and revision of laws, policies and national strategies.
- Establishment, strengthening and promotion of partnerships and networks.

Other Emerging Themes

As illustrated in the following list, UNESCO Chairs also reported a range of additional topics that reflect the breadth and diversity of their research agendas and areas of interest.

This diversity is likely shaped by the political, socio-economic and cultural contexts of each country and region, as well as by the institutional conditions under which the Chairs operate.

The following themes were highlighted by the Chairs under the Cross-Cutting Themes component of the Global Priority Framework:

- Climate change, environmental crises, natural disasters and access to water addressed through a gender perspective.
- Research on environmental and social crises from the perspective of feminist political ecology.
- Publicly engaged research carried out in cooperation with civil society through partnerships with the European Union, the Council of Europe and United Nations agencies.

- Gender-sensitive research on housing, infrastructure and transportation.
- Gender and migration.
- Gender and Indigenous territories.
- Critical pro-feminist studies on men and masculinities.
- Feminist ethics of care.
- Sexual health and reproductive rights, including issues concerning men and masculinities.
- Women in leadership positions within higher education institutions.
- Development and dissemination of statistical packages, software and SPSS-related tools, as well as training on the importance and principles of using statistics and SPSS for empirical research.
- Promote interdisciplinary programmes linking STEM disciplines with other fields of knowledge.
- Expand teacher training programmes to strengthen educators' ability to identify gender bias in educational materials and reflect on their own biases.
- Implement gender-responsive recruitment policies within scientific research institutions.
- Encourage employers to assess candidates on the basis of demonstrated competencies rather than perceived potential.

Strategic Objective 2: Empower Women in Science and Technology for Environmental Action

- Promote women's participation at all levels of environmental action and decision-making.
- Recognize and value women's knowledge and experience in household water management.
- Strengthen women's knowledge and decision-making skills.
- Promote women's economic empowerment.
- Empower girls and young women in environmental management, science and technology.
- Reduce gender stereotypes in science, technology and innovation by promoting women's academic and professional careers in STEM.
- Strengthen support networks for women's empowerment.
- Develop mentoring programmes led by successful women in STEM fields.
- Improve databases by incorporating sex and gender-disaggregated data.

Strategic Objective 3: Promote Inclusion and Combat Gender-Based Violence

- Strengthen a critical mass of committed educators and students.
- Promote women's participation in decision-making and leadership positions.

3.2 Future Proposals Suggested by the Chairs

The UNESCO Chairs recommended continuing and strengthening work on a number of thematic priorities associated with each Strategic Objective of the Global Priority Gender Equality Framework.

Strategic Objective 1: Achieve Gender Equality in and Through Education

- Integrate economic measures to ensure access to quality education for girls in disadvantaged communities.
- Revise educational materials and curricula to ensure that they do not reinforce gender stereotypes.
- Implement early intervention and awareness-raising programmes on gender stereotypes targeting children and families.
- Encourage families to support girls' aspirations in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).
- Develop long-term support systems for girls pursuing STEM studies.
- Reform curricula to allow students to explore STEM subjects for longer periods before selecting a career path.

- Institutionalize spaces and mechanisms dedicated to gender equality.
- Encourage academic authorities to actively promote gender equality.
- Establish networks to strengthen local initiatives.
- Engage students in the prevention of gender-based violence.
- Identify and challenge the normalization of attitudes toward sexual harassment.
- Use data and surveys to raise awareness of gender-based violence.
- Adapt intervention strategies to specific academic and school contexts.
- Develop creative and artistic approaches, including in digital environments, to raise awareness about violence.
- Conduct research and interventions specifically focused on digital violence.
- Regulate artificial intelligence systems to prevent the expansion of gender inequalities.

Strategic Objective 4: Bridge the Digital Gender Divide

- Reduce gender stereotypes associated with STEM competencies.
- Improve access to technology and internet connectivity, particularly for disadvantaged communities.
- Reduce infrastructure costs through community-based initiatives such as public computer access centres.
- Design technical training programmes tailored to women's needs, taking into account their domestic and caregiving responsibilities.
- Assess the technological skills of women and girls participating in training programmes in order to adapt learning models and accelerate progress.
- Promote mentoring programmes led by successful women in STEM as role models for girls and women.

Cross-Cutting Theme: Women, Peace and Security; Crisis Preparedness and Emergency Response - Incorporate an intersectional gender approach into all initiatives and interventions.

Within this diverse range of themes, particular emphasis is placed on continued efforts to influence the design and formulation of public policies that promote gender equality, foster inclusive public debates incorporating the voices of marginalized groups, and advance work on masculinities.

In this context, initiatives related to health gain particular relevance, as do efforts aimed at promoting women's inclusion in labour markets and strengthening women's leadership and empowerment across different spheres of participation and decision-making.

References also emerge regarding climate disaster prevention and management from a gender perspective, including efforts to expand and strengthen equitable access to information, physical and mental health services, and essential resources during and after disasters. These efforts emphasize support mechanisms articulated through gender-responsive collaboration networks.

In addition, multiculturalism and intersectional gender approaches are consistently identified as key thematic areas for advancing gender equality.

Finally, the Chairs emphasize the importance of strengthening collaboration among themselves and enhancing their relationship with UNESCO Headquarters. Among their principal recommendations is the promotion of stronger institutional coordination to achieve deeper and more sustained engagement among UNESCO Chairs and between the Chairs and UNESCO, thereby reinforcing internal cooperation.

To this end, the Chairs propose:

- Sharing agendas and priorities.
- Promoting regional perspectives.
- Encouraging collaboration not only among Gender Equality Chairs but also with other UNESCO Chairs working on substantive issues such as artificial intelligence.
- Strengthening cooperation between UNESCO Chairs and governments.
- Creating opportunities for dialogue, exchange and joint knowledge production.

A particularly important issue raised concerns funding needs. Respondents emphasized the importance of increasing available resources in order to respond more effectively to the needs of UNESCO Chairs while taking into account regional and national contexts.

Specific suggestions include:

- Promoting and supporting comparative research projects involving two or more UNESCO Chairs.
- Creating seed funding mechanisms combined with mentoring support for pilot programmes and incubator initiatives aimed at scaling successful experiences.
- Establishing thematic working groups, centres or collaborative teams among UNESCO Chairs.
- Organizing in-person meetings to strengthen relationships and increase public impact, such as biennial UNESCO Chairs summits.
- Creating an open-access knowledge hub containing research, projects, policies and good practices developed by UNESCO Chairs.
- Publishing a periodic newsletter to disseminate ongoing work and developments across the network.
- Providing continuous UNESCO training opportunities for UNESCO Chairs.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The UNESCO Chairs that participated in the survey address the thematic areas encompassed by the Global Priority Gender Equality Framework. They have conducted research and implemented activities aligned with one or more of its Strategic Objectives.

Regional and local institutional contexts play a central role in shaping both the thematic priorities selected by the Chairs and the strategies they adopt to address the challenges identified.

This work is carried out through research projects that contribute theoretical perspectives and analytical insights, as well as through community-based action initiatives that directly support the implementation of the Global Priority Framework.

At the same time, some Chairs address issues that are highly relevant to advancing gender equality but are not explicitly included within the Framework, such as concerns related to infrastructure and housing, caregivers' mobility, and migration processes.

With regard to research agendas, numerous responses highlight the need to strengthen the production, systematization and analysis of sex- and gender-disaggregated data, as well as to promote the creation of databases that facilitate comparative and multi-level research.

Similarly, several Chairs emphasize the importance of adopting interdisciplinary approaches in research and underscore the value of intersectional analysis for deepening understanding of the relationships between gender and other forms of discrimination and oppression.

The findings also point to the importance of participatory and inclusive research methodologies. In addition, respondents stress the need to strengthen partnerships and collaborative processes involving governments, civil society organizations, international agencies, universities and other strategic actors at both local and regional levels.

Another key recommendation concerns the monitoring of progress within regional gender equality agendas as an input for the production and dissemination of regional reports, with some respondents suggesting publication on a semi-annual basis.

The Chairs also recommend contributing to the systematization of theoretical and practical knowledge on key issues in gender equality policy, generated both by UNESCO Chairs in each region and by other relevant actors, including social movements, feminist organizations and advocacy networks.

Regional Priorities

Among UNESCO Chairs located in Europe, priority issues tend to focus on the institutionalization and mainstreaming of gender equality approaches within public policies, particularly in the fields of education, urban planning, infrastructure and transportation.

Within education, priority topics include women's participation in public institutions and universities, as well as their involvement in artificial intelligence and STEAM disciplines. New migration dynamics and their gendered dimensions, together with the sexual and reproductive rights of girls and women, also emerge as significant areas of concern.

Among African Chairs, the dominant themes relate to the prevention and eradication of violence, particularly gender-based violence, as well as peacebuilding and justice.

More broadly, issues such as cultural diversity, interculturality, non-discrimination and women's empowerment aimed at enhancing participation in society and the economy while reducing inequalities are central components of many Chairs' agendas.

The priorities identified by Latin American Chairs combine concerns expressed by both European and African counterparts. Frequently mentioned issues include:

- The institutionalization of gender equality policies.
- Support for the design of gender equality plans and policies.
- Collaboration with local governments and civil society organizations in response to political processes characterized by authoritarian and anti-gender tendencies.
- The integration of intercultural and gender perspectives in addressing citizenship, non-discrimination and gender-based violence.

UNESCO Chairs in Asia emphasize research and action related to:

- Women's empowerment.
- Women's participation in productive and economic spheres.
- The achievement of gender equality between women and men.
- Climate-related disasters and biodiversity challenges.

Strategic Areas for Future Action

The analysis highlights several strategic areas in which UNESCO Chairs, working in a coordinated manner, can make significant contributions to advancing gender equality:

- Expanding access to quality education for girls in disadvantaged communities.

- Revising and developing educational materials and curricula that do not reproduce gender stereotypes.
- Promoting women's participation in all spheres of action, governance and decision-making.
- Urgently developing a specific agenda to address gender gaps in artificial intelligence, violence in digital environments, and women's participation in the development and use of AI for scientific and social purposes.
- Assessing the technological skills of women and girls participating in training programmes in order to adapt learning models and accelerate progress.
- Promoting mentoring programmes led by women role models in STEM to increase the visibility of successful career paths, challenge gender stereotypes, and strengthen the academic and professional participation of girls and women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Raising awareness and fostering public debate on gender-based violence, while actively engaging men and boys in prevention efforts.
- Developing creative and artistic strategies, including digital initiatives, to raise awareness of the manifestations, characteristics and consequences of violence.
- Adapting UNESCO strategies to the specific characteristics and diversity of regional and national sociopolitical contexts.
- Promoting and supporting the production and use of gender-responsive data and statistics for research, policymaking and educational programmes.
- Strengthening the creation and development of national and international support and cooperation networks.

OE 1. Achieve gender equality in and through education

Access to equitable and gender-responsive education and learning, including in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is widened

75%

Laws, policies & strategies for gender equality in and through education developed and implemented

56%

Gender-responsive teaching, content and learning opportunities are increased

78%

Gender gap in learning achievements and completion rates reduced

44%

0 20 40 60 80

OE 2. Empower women in science and technology for environmental action

Women's careers in decision-making positions advanced and role models promoted

66%

Gender transformative science, technology and innovation (STI) policies and Open Science policies enhance

28%

Women's and girls' resilience and action for sustainable management of natural resources reinforced

41%

Gender responsive water and ocean's management and governance promoted

22%

0 20 40 60 80

OE 3. Promote inclusion and combat gender-based violence

Gender-based threats, violence, discrimination and stereotypes tackled, including in the digital environment

78%

Learners and learning environments equipped to be safe and healthy

50%

Women's working conditions, employment opportunities and economic, cultural and social rights improved

72%

Gender equality promoted in and through the media and cultural sectors

56%

0 20 40 60 80

OE 4. Bridge the digital gender divide

Ethical standards addressing gender bias in digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) systems developed and implemented

37%

Equitable and gender responsive access to and use of information and knowledge fostered in the digital environment

37%

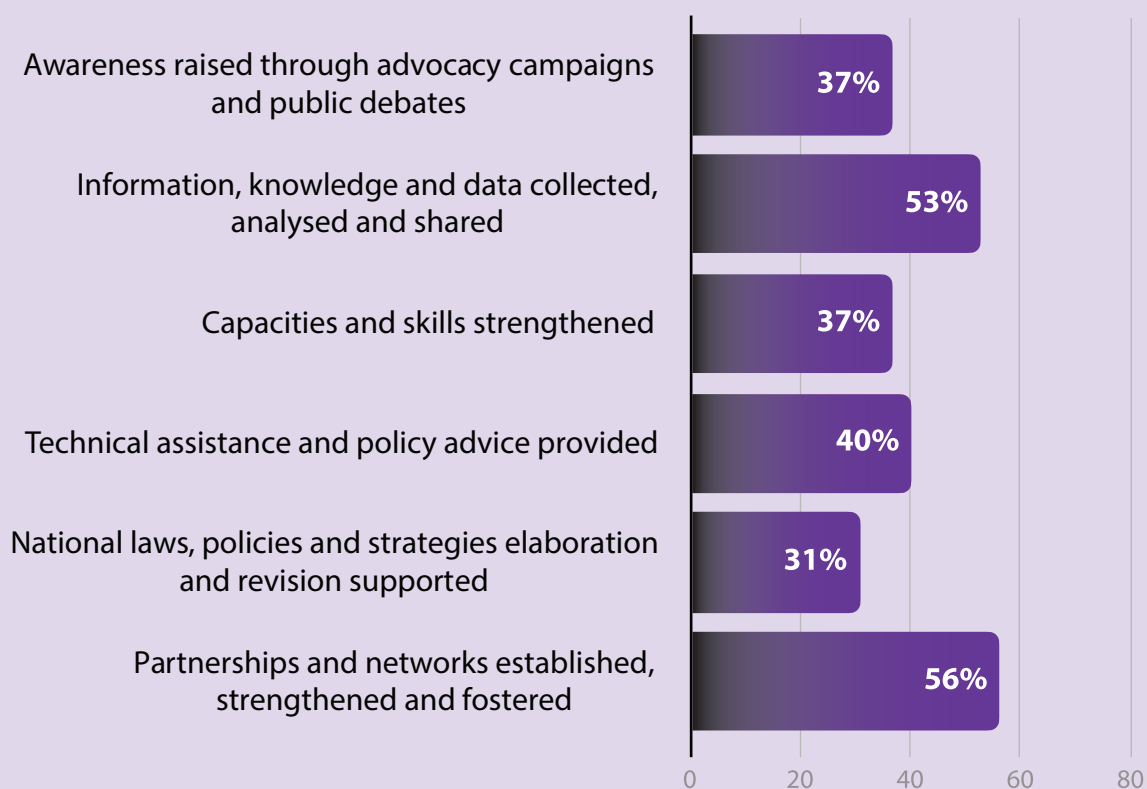
Women and girls empowered with digital skills and competencies

34%

Gender equality promoted in and through the media and cultural sectors

19%

0 20 40 60 80

Cross cutting theme. Women peace and security



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