



Strasbourg, 6 May 2022

GEC(2022)3

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION
(GEC)**

**STEM education as a stepping-stone towards gender transformative
climate change policies**

**Side-event at the 66th Commission on the Status of Women
(15 March 2022)**

Summary and Recommendations

The on-line side event was organised by the Council of Europe and Italy, co-sponsored by Austria, the United Kingdom and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It took place within the framework of Italy's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The event brought together high-level speakers involved on gender equality at national level - ministers from Italy, Austria and the United Kingdom, and an Italia MP, member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - and in education at international level (UNESCO). Their opening remarks provided a framework for the topic, mentioning:

- ✓ the need to address the under-representation of girls and women in STEM education and careers
- ✓ the role of educational systems in implementing sustainable institutional reforms that open-up STEM education, make it more attractive, interesting, diverse, and multidisciplinary
- ✓ the role of society in fighting gender stereotypes and supporting girls and women in freely choosing educational careers paths beyond the strictness of gender stereotypes
- ✓ the steppingstone role of STEM education for a broadening of job opportunities, interesting careers, and access to decision-making for all, no matter one's sex
- ✓ the need to have the voices of girls and women heard and reflected in all decision-making fora and levels: Girls and women are powerful agents of change.

These aspects were picked up in greater detail by the panel speakers, a diverse group of professionals from all over the world (Africa, Europe, United States of America) engaged in civil society organisations and foundations (UNGEI, WAAW Foundation, Women20 Italy), in academia (Universities of Swansea (UK), of Nairobi (Kenya), of Pennsylvania (USA) and, not least, within the European Commission (Director General for Research and Innovation). The speakers presented ways to engage directly with girls and young women to support them in their educational and career paths. They highlighted the importance of including a gender perspective in science, decision-making in climate change related policies and in academic studies. Speakers stressed the roles of data collection to monitor and assess the situation, of strategic funding for gender inclusive policies, and of knowledge support to include gender perspectives in research policies about climate change.

Recommendations

1. Start as early as possible within the educational system to raise awareness about the limits of gender-based stereotyping, and about the new opportunities created and freedoms won when gender stereotyping is gotten aside.
2. Address and counter gender-based stereotypes in education, cultural and social settings and raise awareness on their negative impacts for both girls and boys, women and men.
3. Build diversified skills and knowledge among girls and boys alike that open-up diverse educational and career paths.
4. Support, fund and develop mentoring, capacity building and training for women.
5. Promote gender balanced panel discussions, not only in terms of speakers, but also subjects and perspectives.
6. Highlight and value the skills women bring to the table in education, research and decision-making.
7. Promote among both girls and boys women role models who succeeded in diverse careers paths.
8. Through substantive incentives promote institutional reform that create gender equality and diversity perspectives.
9. Regularly monitor and assess the representation of girls and women in STEM education and careers based on gender disaggregated data.
10. Provide fact based, data driven analysis and policy recommendations aim to redress the underrepresentation of girls and women in STEM education and careers.

In summary, the event recommended these measures to promote gender transformative climate change policies through STEM education. It stressed the key role women's participation in legislative assemblies and climate-related decision-making has and the need to increase it, including through positive actions. Women's presence in research and employment in sectors related to climate change is crucial to break the cycle of male-domination, to bring in greater diversity of perspectives and solutions, and to promote a more gender-balanced outlook on science. The needs of our changing times and societies are diverse. The solutions needed to address climate change should be based on a broader pool of diverse and creative proposals.