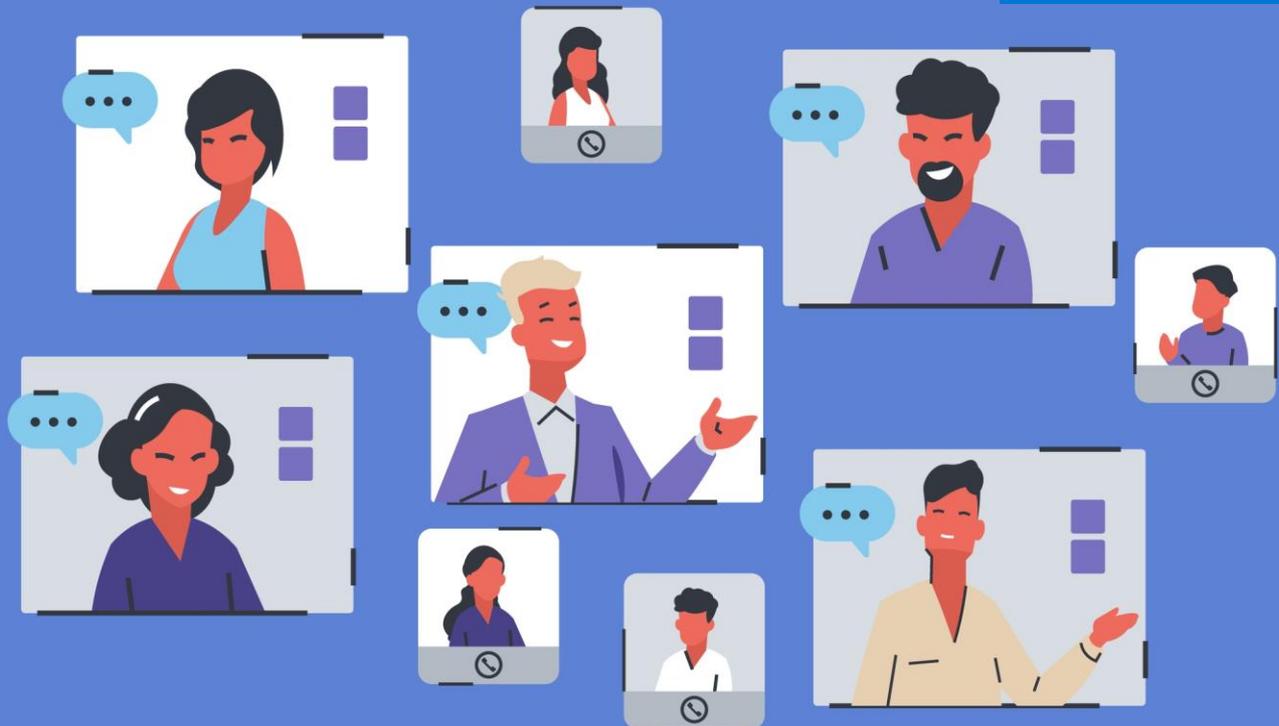


19 January 2023

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Date and time: Thursday, 19 January 2023, 14:00 – 15:00 (CET)**Format:** Zoom webinar. Prior registration is required:https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zlDHR_HHRhyQJ2Bm6vdzDQ**Target audience:** Policy makers, UNESCO Chairs, and higher education stakeholders**Languages:** English/French, with simultaneous interpretation

Background

For a long time, there were more men studying in higher education than women. Over the past decade, recent studies have shown a reversed trend. A [report](#) from Times Higher Education (THE) and the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) highlights how female students now outnumber male students globally, with 54% of students awarded a degree in 2019 being women.

Regardless of encouraging statistics on women's access to higher education, there are still many challenges to overcome, such as the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in higher education institutions (HEIs), and difficulties for women to succeed in their careers after graduation. Women also present a historic gap in STEM studies, with only 21% of engineering majors and 19% of computer science majors being women, while men are underrepresented in the humanities. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic raised new barriers, such as the increased time spent supporting with household chores and childcare at home for female students. On the other hand, progress toward gender parity has been uneven across regions and education levels. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where there

are four times more female students than males enrolled in higher education, other forms of gender disparities at the expense of women persist, such as gender-based violence.

A concerted effort from all higher education stakeholders is crucial to overcome those inequalities. Governments, HEIs, and international organizations can play a decisive role in the coming years by focusing on targeted actions, such as the revision of policy, the conduct of awareness campaigns, and the implementation of gender equality programs. UNESCO, for example, has put an increasing emphasis on gender equality over the past years. Guided by the [UNESCO Strategy for gender equality in and through education \(2019-2025\)](#), UNESCO focuses on a system-wide transformation to benefit all learners equally in three key areas: better data to inform action, better legal and policy frameworks to advance rights and better teaching and learning practices to empower.

Objectives and Agenda

This is the second round of UNESCO's Higher Education Conversations, now in the leadup to the entry into force of the [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education](#). This fifth conversation in the series aims to bring together policy makers and higher education stakeholders to improve the understanding of gender equality issues in higher education.

Key questions to be examined:

- How are gender equality issues manifested in higher education?
- How can higher education stakeholders integrate gender equality considerations systematically into their actions?
- What are the potentials and limits of distance learning for gender equality in higher education?
- What innovative approaches can be used to address gender inequalities in higher education?
- How can we improve women's access to academic research and leadership positions in academic institutions?
- How can we address the disengagement of men in higher education?
- What steps are required to help reduce the wage inequalities that disadvantage women after graduating?

Thursday, 19 January 2023	
14:00 – 14:05	Opening: Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
14:05 – 14:25	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victoria Galán, Head of Research and Analysis, UNESCO IESALC• Sanaa Al-Sarghali, UNESCO Chair on Human Rights, Democracy and Peace, An Najah National University, The State of Palestine• Aisha Khurram, UNHCR Student Delegate & Afghan Youth Representative to the UN for 2019 Moderator: José Luis Guzman, UNESCO Section of Higher Education.
14:25 – 14:55	Question and Answer session
14:55 – 15:00	Wrap up

For upcoming discussions, please visit: <https://en.unesco.org/news/higher-education-conversations>