

## The Gender Equality Unit as a Transformation Tool for Equity

Mtra. María Guadalupe del Socorro López Álvarez

Universidad Pedagógica Nacional del Estado de Chihuahua, UPNECH-Ciudad Juárez

Accepted 30th January 2018

### Abstract

This paper presents the experience and systematization derived from the responsibility as liaison team of the UIG within a first stage in the UPNECH-Campus Juárez. The mainstreaming and institutionalization are analyzed as social policy tools to move towards equity and gender substantive equality not only in a formal but cultural sense. It is part of the problem of the naturalization of sex as differentiated attributes of men and women and their current consequences, without considering the roles and stereotypes historically conditioned in thousands of years. The question is how gender education can respond to the UIG not only politically but culturally to achieve a social change capable of establishing a new culture oriented towards the integration of the feminine / masculine qualities, holistically conforming new identities, relationships and meanings in front of to the structural violence that is reproduced by the power relations in the educational system. The purpose is to reflect on the prospective scope that the UIG opens as a transformation tool for the achievement of equity as an alternative instance with guidelines for political and cultural application from an international to local level in education at the university level.

**Keywords:** Gender, Equity, Transversalization, Institutionalization

### Introduction

The objective of this paper is to share pedagogical reflections on the UIG planning process on the possible political implications for the incorporation of the gender perspective through the mainstreaming and institutionalization in our University through some actions undertaken in the Upnech-Juarez, incipiently recognizing the great educational challenges to be faced.

Since May 2017 we have the purpose of developing in the UPNECH the Gender Equality Unit (UIG) proposal, which derives from the national policy and the commitments signed by the Mexican State with international organizations to guide social policies that The level in each country must operate in all public institutions in order to achieve the conditions for universal and effective respect for Human Rights. This commitment is formalized in the Decree creating the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic on August 12, 2015, which establishes its foundation and organization. (PGR, Agreement A / 063/15). This same commitment is signed by the entities such as Chihuahua, following the guidelines for the incorporation of the gender perspective with the creation of the Gender Equality Unit since 2013, as a strategy to promote the development of women and men.

men of integral way, being indispensable to orient the education of sort in the same direction of change with a critical and enthusiastic participation of the community to transform to the androcentric and patriarchal social system. On March 7, 2017, Governor Javier Corral Jurado took the protest to the 22 heads of the Unit for Gender Equality in our entity. (Gov. Del Edo. Chih. 2017)

The antecedents that are recognized interdisciplinarily from the 70s of the last century to date are extensive, which allowed for academic and research progress highlighting studies on women, feminism, masculinities and diversity. However, the proposal for the political implementation of the gender mainstreaming since the Beijing Conference in 1995 is relatively recent, and even more recent is the design of protocols for the application of institutional regulations, which requires hard legislative work to harmonization within the framework of the rule of law for equality between men and women.

*In Mexico, although it has been possible to open academic spaces to develop gender studies in some state universities and also in some public universities, this does not mean that higher education institutions are incorporating the Gender Perspective in institutional terms and much less in a transversal manner. in the curricular, contents and didactic practices. (UIG, U. De Nuevo León, 2013)*

The complexity of human relations in the current social system remains subject to an order of patriarchal androcentric power and therefore it is necessary that gender education directly affects the field of values not only pragmatic but at the highest level Noetic to generate a change of consciousness in which it is possible to overcome all material, social and cultural differences that can resolve violence and all types of discrimination. This is perhaps the only way to achieve substantive equality to promote equity.

Some of the social and organizational changes of the institutions, particularly of the educational system, have occurred through political reforms and also through social movements, either through violent means or through negotiation, trying to find situations of stability in each country as has happened in the past with feminism.

However, social processes are accelerated and raise the urgency of finding answers from the structural to meet the needs of the excluded, marginalized and impoverished

sectors, which already represent an overwhelming majority as some researchers have estimated, Gisela Zarembler points out the problem.

*The social problems faced by women and men in the fields of the market, the family and state social protection have changed. Although rates of education and access to the labor market for women have risen, inequalities persist in the context of precarious working conditions and increased demands for reconciliation between the sphere of reproduction of life and that of women. production of the economic means for their maintenance. (Zarembler, 2007.13)*

We know that the population most affected by the lack of opportunities for their full development are children and young people. Within these sectors called vulnerable because of the instability and the amount of risks they face when they do not access social benefits with equity, the indicators continue to point out that the highest percentage is women.

The foregoing explains very broadly the reason why international organizations have been concerned with promoting proposals for countries to make commitments by signing agreements that can counteract the disparity gaps that historically placed women in situations of disadvantage and subordination. . Independently of these agreements but taking advantage of the momentum of their implementation, we propose that the important thing is to work with values of solidarity and nonviolence in each locality, working for equity within the institutions that offer direct services as a strategy to raise the quality of life of all people regardless of any difference.

We believe that gender education is part of the transformation that initially led to feminism and today covers various fields of knowledge whose axes of articulation are the processes for the construction of identity, social relations of power and cultural significance through the systems of communication codes that give a holistic meaning to life and to the human being to integrate the subjective and the objective with their projections in social life.

The culture of gender, therefore, must be the reason for a redefinition and a collective re-meaning as proposed by Cánovas, pointing out that:

*The constitutive elements of relationships based on cultural, social and symbolic differences of the sexes and as a primary form of power relations ... As multidimensional articulations manifested in very complex and apparently immovable processes (Cánovas C. 2012.24-25)*

The problems of discrimination and intolerance are stereotyped social and cultural aspects that separate the masculine and feminine part in people, assigning qualities for women and men without recognizing and often without accepting the diversity not only biological from sex, but above all by learning, from which the problems of homophobia and misogyny that can reach important scales

of structural violence are seldom questioned because they are considered something natural.

The purpose of a new institutional regulation that not only accepts but values ??differences, is to achieve the recognition of equality in a deep level of human dignity and a consistent treatment of fairness and cordiality to create as a tangible fact, the peace through nonviolence in all interpersonal relationships.

The initial work of the UIG includes a research process with two parallel purposes, on the one hand to carry out step by step a foundation through a theoretical-documental-experiential work, from an interdisciplinary perspective that analyzes the problem of mainstreaming and institutionalization as political proposal against violence that occurs directly and indirectly in institutions, through different forms of discrimination and exclusion, as everyday aspects of coexistence. The logic of hierarchization and competitiveness are expressed through power relations and structural-organizational and political functioning, are characteristics of Western society and therefore have a great influence on public instances of service through subjectivities and values ??of the people who really give meaning to human relationships and give life to institutions.

In the labor aspect, it is important to follow up on changes in legislation that limited the right of women to guarantee the care and performance of domestic and reproductive functions considered natural. The analysis of equality and equity that is interesting to develop, focuses mainly on cultural practices and educational processes validated by social morality and tend to reproduce values ??and stereotypes constantly with little reflection on the part of people regardless of age. , gender and socio-cultural condition.

On a concrete level, the guidelines of the state policy and the rectory of the UPNECH are considered important in order to monitor the process of incorporation of the gender perspective (IPG), in our community located in our particular case, in a border context, immersed in socio-cultural process of greater complexity that reaches international level.

### **Approach and Frames of Reference**

Globalization as a complex process of modernity has been analyzed at the beginning of the new millennium, by well-known authors and from different perspectives, not only from neoliberal politics whose interest is focused on the growing economic impulse of the transnationals to gain markets through of the development of technologies and the information media. Another aspect that is of our interest as Latin Americans derived from globalization that involves the increasing connectivity and the approach of very diverse aspects not only in the political but also social and cultural, as Tomlinson considers it:

*One of the most surprising aspects of the concept of globalization is the ease and profusion with which it generates all sorts of implications ... proximity would denote the increasing spatial proximity of the world: what Marx in the Grundrisse describes as relativization*

*of space for time and that David Harvey (1989) refers to as time-space compression ... at another level of analysis, connectivity is projected onto the concept of spatial proximity through the concept of prolongation of relations in space (Giddeens, 1990). (Tomlinson, 1999.3)*

Latin America territorially begins in this northern border of Mexico and today is recognized for its diversity and richness of human potential and diversity in all senses, social, ethnic and cultural, ideological, religious, economic and political among many other aspects that creates differences both objective and subjective with which identity is reconstructed. Connectivity is relative, not only because of the imposition of neoliberal hegemonic interests to which our countries have politically submitted, but also because of the recognition of having shared historical situations as peoples conquered and transformed into colonies with the latent desire for liberation. Many aspects of life bring us closer from the great distances that today seem to be shortened. The centers of power have a very identified political and economic project but the important thing is the human project that we can build for ourselves from our particular territorial and cultural condition without losing sight of the fact that its scope has potential for its national and international projection.

In this sense, all the differences have been used to emphasize that each human being and the regional groups to which they belong are important and subjects of right. Globalization has tended to have several effects in this sense, one of them tends to the homogenization of this sense, one of them tends to the homogenization of this sense through industrial standardization by the interests of the markets. This has great implications for the quality of life and the development of critical consciousness, since the neoliberal tendency in the ideological aspect tends to impose values of pragmatic and utilitarian interest while encouraging the exclusion and discrimination of millions of people. People stoking racism, sexism and cultural and ideological intolerance, which represents a risk as seen in civil wars and between countries and barriers within the localities. It is therefore necessary that education reactivate social participation with new inclusive projects oriented towards nonviolence and full respect for the dignity and fulfillment of Human Rights.

Something in common that unites humanity in this time of civilizational crisis is that great changes have taken place and the profound transformations that urgently demand our attention to create a new integrated society have accelerated even more. The culture and the educational project is looking for of a new paradigm as it is proposed by Paymal with Pedagogy 3000 (2017) that is already influencing in an important way influencing the perception of the dimensions of personal, social and community life. With this foundation we can guide our actions as UIG to achieve a global impact from our local contexts. Gender differences would no longer be a problem to face the common problems of poverty and insecurity with new human relationships and solidarity.

*Poverty in terms of measuring the HDI (Human Development Index), is not so much the result of a reduction in income, but something much more complex; and therefore the mere reduction of income poverty can not and should not be the ultimate motivation for a policy that aspires to the eradication*

*of poverty. According to data (2001 Report) of the World Bank, 2,800 million people today, almost half of the world population lives on less than two dollars a day and 1,200 million survive on less than a dollar a day. (Osset M.2001.158)*

The phenomenon of poverty and insecurity are serious global problems that directly affect the border areas as is the case of Ciudad Juarez, with a constant flow of migration aggravated by the policy of exclusion and persecution against undocumented persons who arrive daily from the United States and the interior of the country in search of a life project.

Some questions that we propose from gender education is: how does mainstreaming and institutionalization, as a State policy, have the power of deep sociocultural transformation to face and resolve violence as an alternative to achieve gender equity and equality within of the educational system in general and specifically in the institutional context of UPNECH-Juarez?

What depends on not being left alone in a superficial reform policy increasing the bureaucracy but generating a deeper cultural transformation?

A basic component of violence is discrimination and intolerance exercised before those who are different, hence the importance of recognizing from the cultural root, the factors that favor it and the proposals that young people make to improve coexistence and university organization as students. and participatory citizens in social life.

With respect to the hegemonic masculine domination that is the axis of ordering of the current society, this is exercised basically through subtle mechanisms, difficult to identify since they are interpreted as something natural among human beings who have not had other educational references. . It has been questioned what can be the structural factors that condition and limit the full human development and what are the most influential values to make the problem invisible in the younger generations. A probable answer is offered by the report by Cynthia Camacho:

*Symbolic violence, insensitive, muffled and invisible to its own victims, which is exercised through the purely symbolic paths of communication and knowledge, or more precisely of the ignorance of recognition or, ultimately, of feeling (Camacho, 2006.12 )*

Discrimination is deeply related to the dynamic process in the construction of identity and is considered as a predisposing factor that can lead to different forms of violence through socialization and cultural meanings. In a theoretical sense of analysis and reflection shared with the work team in the process of consolidation as an academic body (P3000-Juarez, 2017) with university students.

Gender identity is based on sexual difference, but it is not a determining factor, although it has a great influence because it has been considered as a natural fact, which nevertheless constitutes an unfinished process that continues throughout life and is constantly reaffirmed or It changes with experience and education intervening in the reinterpretation of the meaning of the sexual. Daniel Cazés states that:

*Gender inequality, the axis around which other social inequalities are structured or enhanced, establishes an asymmetric order under which men and women differentially appropriate spaces, powers, resources, rights and opportunities, with profound implications in all dimensions of the social life and everyday experience. (Cazès, 2000. 11)*

Nonviolence according to Mario López Martínez is "the power of transformation of those who practice peace" is the "force of truth" of spiritual order that nourishes the liberating action that Gandhi mobilized in his village to free India from English oppression. This author proposes nonviolence as a humanization of politics and tries to confront one of the central issues within the social sciences in general and political science in particular by analyzing the relationship between politics, violence and social change. It will also argue that nonviolence could be identified with a form of "ethical-political practice", as a whole set of strategies, fight procedures, political and social pressure that can be more effective from a gender perspective when identifying the barriers created from sex differences (López M. 2017).

### Methodological Strategy

The proposed methodological strategy is theoretical / practical and is for now short term. It is specified in a semi-annual work plan as UIG. In the August-December 2017 semester, two activities were organized considering two aspects, both research and academic production and another aspect applied from the educational level aimed at students, academic, administrative and support staff. Records of direct observation and / or action research have been made, and surveys were applied to students as field instruments in an introduction or awareness phase. This proposal is part of a broader project derived from the guidelines for the incorporation of the gender perspective as a fundamental aspect of the political axis of the Unit for Gender Equality in the university sphere.

In the work plan, the two activities implemented in the framework of the institutional project respond to the commitment as UIG and as academic team of Pedagogy 3000: Educational Practices, Gender and Family. It is important to recognize that this has been a team effort that involved the university community directly and indirectly.

The aspects considered were:

On discrimination and Nonviolence. 1º. The work on discrimination was carried out by UPNECH-Juarez students.

The objective was to obtain information based on the question:

How does the student of the UPNECH degree program experience discrimination as a personal experience in the context of the Ciudad Juárez border?

A survey was designed that was applied in the month of August of this year to 108 students of the LIE and Pedagogy degree program, 99 women (99.6%) and 9 men (8.4%) through a survey about some personal experiences of discrimination in a broad sense.

The category of sociocultural discrimination, refers to external behaviors that imply in themselves disadvantageous or unequal treatment based on prejudices experienced by students. (Montes Berges 2008).

With the information gathered, it is presumed that 31 of the 108 respondents admit to having practiced discriminative behaviors, which corresponds to a percentage of the total of 66.52% that do not recognize these behaviors, which gives a guideline to a deeper study in this regard.

the majority of women who reported experiences of 7 cases marked the factor of the economic level to which they belong; while 6 by physical characteristics and in the same amount by religious creed. Likewise, due to age, academic level, sex or sexual orientation and cultural and / or linguistic aspects, the figure is relatively low in this first record, which is not equivalent to affirming that there is no 2º. The issue of nonviolence was addressed in another activity in the international framework of non-violence against women, with posters displayed by students, a panel and a conference was organized for the university community in COLEF facilities on the 28th. November 2017. An assessment instrument developed by 33 students out of a total of 77 attendees was applied, showing a positive result of interest.

In these activities, both the quantitative and the qualitative approach to obtain and process information always exposed to the debate have been considered. In the field of gender education, the methodology is usually flexible when considering conceptual categories as interpretative frameworks that are contrasted with field information.

### Conclusions

It is important that the proposed policy of linking from UIG to incorporate the gender perspective is an effective means to promote a social transformation by designing and sharing experiences and actions of pedagogical intervention in formal and non-formal areas. The phenomenon of discrimination in students of the UPNECH-Campus Juarez agrees that it is an invisible fact and does not relate directly to the violence that is received and that is exercised as a personal experience that denies the existence of a problem. However, students show interest in knowing the proposal of gender education.

The challenge is to implement actions that transversally encourage reflection on values and social practices in schools and in the community that are rooted in the cultural tradition, which marks possible routes of action for mainstreaming. Regarding the issue of nonviolence, the majority of the students surveyed showed interest and willingness to generate new proposals.

### References

1. World Bank (2001) Development Report. Fight against poverty in the Economic Policy Report.
2. Canovas Marmo Célida E. (2017), Gender, The art of its re signification. Ed. Fontana, Mexico.
3. Camacho Cynthia. (2006) "Rights without respect". The Journal of Juárez. June 4 Ciudad Juarez, Chih.

4. Giddens Anthony, (1990) *Consequences of Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
5. Government of Chih State (2017) Official publication, March 7.
6. López Martínez Mario (2017) "Dynamics and techniques of the action Nonviolence", Document of the Web. [Http://biblioteca.uniminuto.edu/ojs/index.php/POLI/article/view/246/244](http://biblioteca.uniminuto.edu/ojs/index.php/POLI/article/view/246/244)
7. Montes Berges, B. (2008) *Discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes: fundamental concepts, history of their study and sexism as a new form of prejudice*.<http://revistaselectronicas.ujaen.es/index.php/ininv/article/viewFile/202>
8. Osset Miguel (2001) *Beyond Human Rights*. Ed. Actual Eterno, Barcelona.
9. Tomlinson John, (2003) *Globalization and culture*, Oxford University Press, Mexico, Attorney General's Office of the Republic PGR, Agreement A / 063/15)
10. Zaremberg Gisela (2009) *Social policies and gender Volume I*. Ed. Flacso, Mexico.