



GENDER EQUALITY AN URGENT AND SHARED CHALLENGE

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Gender equality is still an urgent and shared challenge. It is shared because male and female subjects, girls and boys, are all equally involved in this very necessary task to try to implement what can be considered a very urgent challenge, namely 'gender equality', as soon as possible. I would like to structure this class in an interactive way and, to this end, I have prepared a quiz on Kahoot for you:

1. When was the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) adopted?
 - 1979
 - 2005
 - 1950
 - 2015
2. Which is the percentage of women on the board of Italian private companies?
 - 30%
 - 51%
 - 68%
 - 10%
3. When did boys and girls have access to the University of Oxford in the UK?
 - 1167/1280
 - 1167/1920
 - 1876/1900
 - 1910/1920
4. When did men and women in France first receive voting rights?
 - 1848/1848
 - 1848/1910
 - 1848/1850
 - 1848/1944
5. What is the percentage of women who have experienced some form of gender-based violence?

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- 20%
 - 30%
 - 15%
 - 65%
6. Since when can women drive in Saudi Arabia?
- 1980
 - 2018
 - They cannot drive
 - 2000
7. In which year and in which sports discipline did women first participate in the Olympics?
- 1875, bowling
 - 1900, tennis
 - 1990, golf
 - 1975, swimming
8. Which is the occupation employing the largest number of women?
- Domestic helpers and cleaners
 - Managers of small enterprises
 - Shop salespeople
 - Teachers
9. Which is the occupation employing the largest number of men?
- Building sector
 - Teachers
 - Managers of small enterprises
 - Motor vehicle drivers
10. Which is the only country in the Western world that does not recognize paid parental leave?
- France
 - The US
 - Greece
 - Italy

Which was the information that you found most surprising in the quiz?

When we discuss gender equality we touch on a great diversity of issues. For instance, the first question in the quiz is about one of the major legal documents ever to have been put in place by the United Nations to fight the discrimination of women, and that document goes back to 1979. Unfortunately, as you all know, discrimination against women still continues nowadays, not only globally but also locally. This is a

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demonstration that legal documents alone do not suffice. We need to take responsibility and each one of us needs to implement good practices in order for gender equality to become a consolidated practice that we perform daily in various sectors.

Another question is about the visibility of women in top positions in small companies. In today's Italy only 30% of women are positioned at the top of the career ladder or have a manager position in small private companies. A very surprising piece of information, in my opinion, is the fact that one of the oldest universities in Europe, Oxford, opened its gates to male students in 1167 (that is, in pre-modern times) while women were admitted to only in 1920. And I'm sure you're familiar with Virginia Woolf, one of the leading British writers. Well, even Virginia Woolf was not granted access to the university and was mainly a self-taught person.

Another interesting piece of information is that women in France had to wait almost one century to obtain voting rights. More specifically, while men could vote starting from 1848, women had to wait until 1944 before being granted the right to express their vote.

One further issue that we usually discuss when we talk about gender equality is violence. It has been shown that violence happens whenever there are asymmetries and inequalities. In the case of gender-based violence, in particular, this also happens whenever we have affective relationships based on inequality in the domestic environment, in which case the risk of violence is very high. As we have seen, one woman out of three (30%) between the age of 15 and 65 has been a victim of some kind of gender-based violence and this is unfortunately a trend that we find not only in Europe, in Italy and in our province, and very likely in our region, but I would say worldwide. Because gender-based violence is a true epidemic, it is fundamental to take measures to fight against this social illness.

As you can see, gender inequality affects different areas of our life, including sports. Women had to wait until the 20th century to be admitted to the Olympic Games and the first discipline that opened its gates to women was tennis.

Finally, the quiz deals with two very interesting topics that we are going to analyse more in-depth in the course of this seminar. I believe that these two topics are also strictly related to your life, since we are going to discuss work segregation and segregation at school, with an emphasis on gender segregation. What do we mean by gender segregation at school and in the workplace? Can anyone answer this question? What is gender segregation at school or at work?

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Sarah from Sarajevo: I would say that gender segregation in the workplace is when women earn a lot less than men, which is still the case today. It also refers to their positions: so, men are more likely to get promoted than women. And most of the time, when women get certain promotions, there are rumours that some unethical and unmoral things may be involved. That, I would say, is the problem in the working environment.

Lisa Marchi: Thank you, Sarah, for helping us understand a little bit better how many different aspects are involved when we discuss gender inequality in the workplace. So, yes, you rightly noted that women and men, especially in (small) private enterprises, are paid in a different way - they perform the same task, but the money they get at the end of the month is different and we usually call this 'gender pay gap'. This is the term to define the gap, that is the difference in payment that women and men get for performing the same job and the same task. You were also mentioning gender discrimination and probably also the so-called 'crystal ceiling', the fact that women are somehow prevented from accessing top positions, not only in small companies, but also in big companies, and the fact that promotions usually tend to favour male workers.

By gender segregation in the workplace we also mean that there are jobs that tend to be performed by men (e.g. drivers) and there are other jobs that tend to be performed by women (all the jobs that are based on taking care of other people, e.g. domestic workers, nurses, kindergarten teachers). Clearly, this creates segregation or, in other words, a division that is not natural, but is cultural and social, since boys and girls are usually influenced by the culture in which they live when they choose one working path over another.

The same happens with reference to education. The term gender segregation is also used at school to refer to the fact that there is a tendency among boys and girls to choose a particular school over another - in the case of girls, schools for arts and humanities would be preferred to schools that offer a technological or IT or scientific curriculum.

I wonder what kind of schools I'm teaching today. Which kind of school is your school and how many male and female students do we find in your class?

Leyla from Sarajevo: Prva Gimnazija in Sarajevo is a school that has, I'd say, 5 majors. And one of those majors is language sciences, who is dominated by females. We have two classes in my age that are all-girl classes in this field. And then we have the IT

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sector that is dominated by men. Besides that, we have the humanities, which is where I study, and I'd say that boys and girls are equally represented.

Lisa Marchi: I would say that this school confirms the general trend.

Kabir from Sonthofen: We are a technology and mathematics and also economics school. But in our school we do not have any gender difference. However, in our region there are two schools which are separated – there's a boys school and a girls school. This is unusual for Germany.

Lisa Marchi: Here I don't mean separated schools. I mean, is the composition of the class predominantly based on male students or on female students? I wonder if in your technology gymnasium we mainly find male students in your classes.

Kabir from Sonthofen: No, there's no difference.

Lisa Marchi: This means you have reached gender equality in your classes. Great, wow, well done, congratulations!

Was it like this even in the past, like 10 years ago? Or has it changed gradually over time? And have the numbers become more similar in more recent years?

Kabir from Sonthofen: Yes, they have become more equal in the last few years.

Lisa Marchi: OK, very good, thanks. This means that gender studies, politics, and policies work well and have some effect. Thank you. Other examples?

Laura from Meran: In our class there are three male students, while the others are girls. In our school we have three majors. One major is about tourism. There's another one focused on nutrition and sports and a third one on biotechnology. Gender separation is typical of our school too. We have mainly female students in our schools, about 70%, and there are only about 30% of male students. In the biotechnology classes there's a slightly higher number of male students. However, there are many girls too and that also comes from the fact that 20 years ago our school was an all-girls school.

Lisa Marchi: Okay, thank you very much. Your presentation was very clear and gave us an additional picture of the situation on the field.

We've got a clear picture of how gender equality or inequality has an impact on our everyday life and, as I was saying before, in different sectors, including in education.

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And because education is the door to work and to adult life, gender equality also influences our whole life.

Are you all aware of the existence of a European Gender Equality Index? Do you know what it is? It is a measurement tool that monitors the situation of gender equality in the EU as a whole and in different Member States. This tool shows how long it takes for the EU and for each single Member State to reach full equality between genders. I'm going to show you a video now, just to see how the situation in the different Member States looks like (the Gender Equality Index dates back to 2020, so it is quite recent).

video plays

As you have seen from this video, none of the European Member States, not even Iceland, which is one of the top countries when it comes to gender equality, has reached full equality (meaning 100% of equality) so far.

How is the Gender Index calculated? It is calculated by the European Union each year taking into consideration different Member States and also different domains, as you can see:

- Work: for instance, the participation of both men and women in the work market, the level of segregation (how many women perform one kind of job and how many men perform that same job) and also the quality – in this case, of course, the money that workers get will be considered one of the factors that determine the quality of work.
- Another trend is Money, financial resources and also the economic situation of, for example, male and female citizens of a country.
- Knowledge: how many citizens in France, let's say, have attained a university degree? What is the situation in schools when it comes to gender segregation? And how is the situation of men and women when we take into consideration lifelong learning, that is education that continues also while people are working?
- Time: for instance, how much free time – knowing that spare time enhances the quality of our daily life –, do men and women have in their daily life? How much time do they have to devote to care activities in the case of children, but also in the case of taking care of the elderly people in the family? How much time do women and men have at their disposal to entertain themselves with friends or to engage in social activities?
- Power: how many women sit in Parliament? How many women have been President, or Prime Minister, of that State? How many women can we find in very important social and economic positions within those countries?
- Health

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At this point I'd like you to play the index game. I will ask you to go to the Gender Equality Index page, where you can enter the country and gender. For example, let's say you want to see what your life looks like in Bulgaria if you are a man. I will then ask each school to share with all of us the most interesting information or the more surprising information that emerged when entering these two pieces of information, gender and country.

Daniela Ferrari: Maybe while we're waiting, can I contribute? I chose women and Ireland because Ireland is one of our partner schools and I was curious about that. A shocking piece of information is that if you live in Ireland, 48% of women have experienced sexual harassment and I was wondering if this is more or less the average in Europe or not, based on your own knowledge as an expert.

Lisa Marchi: The general trend would be around 30%. It's higher than the average, but that percentage refers to the cases that have been denounced. However, we know that there are many cases that are still submerged and have not been denounced yet, so the percentage is much higher than 30% in general.

Ethan from Granada: in Spain, 50% of women have experienced sexual harassment, so this is really similar to Ireland.

Lisa Marchi: It's even similar to Italy, I think the percentage is around 50%. So, as you can see, one out of two women in the course of their life have experienced some kind of harassment, because of course, gender-based violence has so many different aspects related to it. This is not surprising, but extremely saddening information which should really prompt us to take action; not merely legal action, because we know that laws and regulations do contribute to limit the problem, but they do not solve the problem. The problem is rather a cultural one and what we need to do is to educate the new generations about the fact that gender-based violence should never be practised and should never ever enter the conversation.

Irina from Sarajevo: Unfortunately, we don't have Bosnia on the list, so I compared it to Croatia because we're pretty much similar. And I chose the life of a woman in Denmark. So, when I compared these two sets of data, the most shocking was that 80% of women have experienced sexual harassment in Denmark, while in Croatia the percentage is just around 40%, that is a lot less. What was also shocking to me was that in Denmark women have 34% chance of graduating from university compared to 28% for men. According to this information women are more likely to finish university than men, which was really shocking to me, even if we are in the 21st century.

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Lisa Marchi: Let me just discuss these two very important datasets. As for the first one, the very high percentage of gender-based violence in Denmark, it looks shocking indeed, but it may also be caused by the fact that women in northern European countries are much more aware of gender-based violence as a phenomenon, and therefore there are more women ready to denounce having been a victim of this form of violence because in northern European countries the discussion about gender-based violence has been going on for decades now. In that country girls and women are very well aware of what it means to be sexually harassed, for instance, and of what it means to be sexually assaulted, while in other countries where the awareness is not as high it would be much more difficult for girls and women to realise that they have been victims of some type of gender-based violence. And when we say gender-based violence, we include psychological violence, economic violence, not just physical violence. The latter is probably the most visible form of violence and the most recognisable too, but there are many other different types of violence that we need to be aware of in order to be able to recognise them.

As for the data about the number of female students who graduate from university, I would say this is a general trend. We have more girls who complete their university degree than boys, but then unfortunately, when we look at work opportunities, we can see that there is big inequality there. And although girls are probably more educated than boys, they get less paid jobs.

Emina from Sarajevo: about jobs and hiring women in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is one big problem: when a young woman comes to an interview, the first question she is asked is whether she's planning on becoming a parent or if she wants a family. And that could be a criterion for offering her a job or not. I think that is a big problem for women as well.

Lisa Marchi: Not only this is a big problem, but this question is prohibited by law. The law today prohibits, at least in Italy, those kinds of questions that involve information regarding the private life of men and women. But this is unfortunately a form of discrimination that happens even before the woman gets the job, that is already during the job interview. Even here, I think that there are some good practices being implemented in different countries. Probably, Bosnia-Herzegovina too will soon have a law that prohibits employers from asking this type of questions.

Emina from Sarajevo: I really hope so. And as for women reporting sexual harassment, I want to say that I agree with you that women in Denmark know a lot about that and in Bosnia-Herzegovina we definitely need more education on this topic, because that is one of the things that we rarely talk about.

Schools beyond regions and borders (2021-2023)

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Leonie from Sonthofen: We looked up the percentages for Germany and we were quite shocked by the percentage of sexual harassment as being 60%. That's like three out of five women who are harassed, and I guess I can also talk about our own experiences here. Many girls at school have experienced verbal harassment, mostly verbal, and we were quite shocked. Personally, I was also surprised to learn that 43% of women do all the housework and cook every day. I think that in Germany this is really high.

Lisa Marchi: I confirm this is the general trend. We will talk about the household chores towards the end of our seminar and find more reasons to discuss that topic. But if you look at the Gender Equality Index subdivided by countries, you will find out precisely about the different percentages concerning the domestic space as well as information about the performance of household chores in each single country. Unfortunately, we don't have the time to go through them right now, but you can browse the Index yourself to obtain information about all the different domains, including house chores.

So far we have learnt about the consequences of gender stereotypes in different sectors of our everyday life. Now I would like to consider the roots of gender inequality, which are usually to be found in gender stereotypes or gender role stereotypes. In this regard, is there anyone who can tell me what a gender stereotype is? Or a gender role stereotype? I'm sure you have discussed stereotypes and gender stereotypes at school because this topic is widely discussed in schools nowadays.

Laura from Trento: I think gender stereotype is, for example, when girls are taught to wear pink and boys to wear blue, and that girls should play with dolls, while boys should play with cars and you can't switch the other way around.

Lisa Marchi: Exactly, thank you very much, Laura. You gave very important examples that help understand what gender stereotypes are. Gender stereotypes are expectations – we have a gender stereotype when a person is expected to act or to be in a certain way, based on the social expectations related to their gender. So, for instance, as you said, society would expect girls to enjoy playing with dolls and men not to feel too emotional. These, of course, are all stereotypes. And I'd like to share a video with you in which boys and girls bring even more examples about gender-based stereotypes that are circulating in our society.

video plays

Schools beyond regions and borders (2021-2023)

Austria – Bosnia-Herzegovina – France – Germany – Ireland – Italy – Spain

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In my opinion, one of the most important things that emerged from this video is the idea that not only girls are targeted with gender stereotypes, but even boys and men. And this is the reason why I believe that gender equality is a very urgent and shared challenge, as the title of this lecture reads. Usually, the idea is that when we talk about gender and about gender equality, this is a problem that girls and women have to confront with. On the contrary, as we clearly understand from this video, this is a challenge that is played on the mind and the bodies of both male and female individuals, boys and girls. It is worth noticing that during their life men or boys will also encounter some kind of stereotypes that will be harmful for their self-expression and well-being. This is why we have to be aware of stereotypes in order to easily recognise them and try to react and fight against them.

For this reason I would like to show you one last video that revolves around the idea of male stereotypes. While watching the video, try to answer the following question: which male gender stereotypes are being activated and are also dismantled or deconstructed?

*** video plays***

Emina from Sarajevo: I just wanted to mention an example of discrimination against men. When we take into account the current situation in Ukraine, I heard a piece of news that deeply touched me, according to which men between 18 and 60 years old are not allowed to leave their country and are forced to go to war. I think that nobody should be forced to do go to war, but it must be said that this happens mainly to men. Even in the history of our country, constriction was an obligation mostly for men. When it comes to fighting and to situations where people have to show how strong they are, they are always counting on men.

Lisa Marchi: Yes, thank you for pointing that out. I think it's very relevant given today's conflict in Ukraine. As you said, history also teaches us that men are the first victims of wars because they have no choice, they have to go to the front and fight and perform their role as heroes, even if this role entails losing their life. So gender role stereotypes can have very negative consequences and I think one of the most terrible consequences is the perpetuation of violence of these male gender role stereotypes.

Sarah from Sarajevo: I wanted to comment on the last video. What I notice is that men are also victims of many stereotypes and most of the time they are told to man up, which results in a lack of empathy which later on may in turn lead to violence, both physical and mental. I would also like to say that it's very healthy to express your emotions because that promotes better communication, which is also very important

Schools beyond regions and borders (2021-2023)

Austria – Bosnia-Herzegovina – France – Germany – Ireland – Italy – Spain

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for all kinds of relationships in our lives, and it also helps with mental health. In this regard, men are also victims of stereotypes, although not as much as women. But because it is not fair to make comparisons, I'll take back what I've just said. I realised that a lot of men make fun of other men or boys because of the way they show their emotions. I think that this is something we should work on and teach our friends and sons to basically stop doing that.

Lisa Marchi: Yes, thank you so much. Thank you for helping us pay attention not only to the public space with the issue of war and of how gender role stereotypes have an impact on who goes to war and why, but also to the private dimension, that is to intimate or affective relationships. Whenever boys are told not to show their emotions, as you were saying, the risk is that of ending up with people who cannot feel their own feelings and who cannot recognise the feelings of other people, and this may clearly lead to violence. Thank you very much.

At this point you may want to reflect back to other seminars that you have followed to see if there are any links between what you have heard today and what you have been discussing in previous meetings. Otherwise we can collect some practical tips – that is ways or guidelines on how to promote gender equality at school, and in the wider community, that you want to implement in your own schools and that you want to suggest to your colleagues abroad.

Adna from Sarajevo: I'm in the first grade of the IT department and in my generation the IT department is close to being 50-50, we have 13 guys and 11 girls in our class, so the male and female population it's pretty evenly distributed compared to other departments.

A tip with an eye on gender equality which comes from my personal experience: most people told me not to apply to this department because – they said – it is primarily mostly for guys. For this reason, women don't try because they believe that guys get more privileges in the department. My only advice, however, is: go for it! You have nothing to lose.

Lisa Marchi: Yes, very good. And thank you for showing the value of role models. You will be now a role model for the next generation. You were a pioneer, you opened the way for other girls to follow your path if they think that IT is their passion and if they want to follow their talent in STEM.

Adna from Sarajevo: In this regard, I myself had a role model. I attended a summer school for robotics and programming, which is where I fell in love with this subject. And it was an all-girl summer school where we actually learned the importance of

Schools beyond regions and borders (2021-2023)

Austria – Bosnia-Herzegovina – France – Germany – Ireland – Italy – Spain

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women in the IT department and we learned that Ada Lovelace was the first woman to ever programme in history.

Lisa Marchi: Your tip would then be to promote female role models to encourage the access of girls to STEM disciplines and also the other way around, to promote male role models in those disciplines that have a very low percentage of male members.

Adna from Sarajevo: Exactly. On that topic, I have a male friend who's studying to become a nurse (not a doctor) in a class where most students are girls. What he is doing is trying to set a standard that men can be nurses too.

Answer from Sonthofen: We discussed that it would be good if at school, including primary school, people started to talk about inequalities and maybe if people supported toys that are for both boys and girls, so that the kids learn to grow up equal. Also, generally speaking, it would be good not to advertise things that are just for boys or for girls. Finally, in sports it would be good if girls and boys were mixed in all classes because this way they would learn to play together.

Lisa Marchi: Thank you very much and thank you for touching topics that are so different, from toys to advertisements. For sure communication plays a crucial role in helping promote gender equality. And sport is also important because it is not a neutral sector. Even there we need to implement good practices to reach at least a certain level of gender equality.

Answer from Meran:

- 1) Offer school workshops on gender equality
- 2) Educate, not only children and teenagers, but also their parents
- 3) Start from a very young age (kindergarden)

Jasmine from Sarajevo: We have noticed that gender stereotypes start at a really young age. For example, when we look at babies' clothes, you can always find some sort of reference, like princesses or fairies printed on girls' clothes. This also goes on to toys – girls have toys that subconsciously teach them how to cook and clean while boys have cars and trucks etc. Parents too often say to boys who are crying "Man up, don't be a cry-baby", whereas when a girl starts crying they ask "What's happening?". So, our tip is that it should all start from the parents at home, people should be more conscious of what they tell their little kids, what they buy their little kids, etc. because what they buy can subconsciously have an effect on their children.

Schools beyond regions and borders (2021-2023)

Austria – Bosnia-Herzegovina – France – Germany – Ireland – Italy – Spain

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Lisa Marchi: So you agree with all your colleagues that not only the younger generations but also earlier generations should be educated, such as parents. I'd like to add that maybe you are the ones who can start this hard job of educating your parents and introducing some of the issues and themes we have been discussing in our seminar today. I wish you good luck with implementing gender equality in your everyday life and whenever you feel it's highly necessary. Thanks for listening and interacting with me and hopefully, sooner or later, we will have the possibility to meet in person.

Giuseppe Zorzi: Thank you, Lisa, for your very interesting lecture and for your approach to this complex and fascinating topic. This is the end of our seminar, I'd like to congratulate the students and teachers on the quality of their questions to you.

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Austria – Bosnia-Herzegovina – France – Germany – Ireland – Italy – Spain

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