



# **INSPIRE**

**Literature review report:**

**Gender Equality Plans, Policies  
and Measures in Research and  
Higher Education Institutions  
of Latin America**

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## Consortium

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SDU	Syddansk Universitet, Denmark
UJ	Uniwersytet Jagiellonski, Poland
Notus	Notus, Spain
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana De Ciencias Sociales, Argentina
EM	Europa Media Szolgaltato Non Profitkozhasznu Kft, Hungary
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## Executive Summary

The main objective of this report is to present the results of a literature review on the institutionalization of gender equality policies and particularly, on measures to mainstream gender in higher education institutions in Latin America; and its linkage with similar initiatives developed in Europe. It provides a mapping of approaches and knowledge produced on gender equality policies and plans in the field of higher education in Latin America, offering innovative ideas and new perspectives to academics, gender equality experts, interested professionals and trainers, as well as policy makers aiming at institutional change; it identifies research gaps in relation to gender equality and possible lines of research and future work that will contribute to closing these knowledge gaps.

For the survey, methodological search and selection criteria and different international and regional academic search engines were used (Google Scholar, Web of Science). It was defined as a time range from 2012 onwards and geographical scope focused on text from Latin America. The following types of texts were included: articles, book chapters, books, academic theses, conference presentations, as well as gray literature (articles, reports, reports). Regarding the thematic scope, only texts focused on the field of higher education and research were considered, excluding texts related to gender mainstreaming in other areas such as government agencies, media or companies.

As a result of the application of these criteria, a total corpus of 90 texts was obtained, which were classified into two categories: "GEP" (36), which are those closely linked to equality plans and/or gender mainstreaming; and "alternative" (54), which are those focused on other aspects, such as the elaboration of diagnoses, the identification of gaps, violence and harassment in university environments, women in STEM, among others. Most of the documents identified came from Argentina and Mexico, followed by Chile, Colombia and Ecuador.

The corpus analyzed presents different paradigms: on the one hand, those texts in which the production of knowledge and the analysis of gender inequalities are related to a more traditional paradigm, close to positivist models, with a hypothetical-deductive logic. On the other hand, there are texts based on an alternative model, with critical and feminist features; within which is promoted and situated knowledge, intersectional and decolonial approach.

Beyond the coexistence of different research approaches, the literature reviewed presents some terms repeatedly in their conceptual frameworks. Among them gender, gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender biases and social stereotypes, discrimination and violence. Likewise, regarding the processes of institutionalization of the gender perspective in HEIs and R&I organizations, the texts highlight two specific concepts that show the state of development of these processes: "secondary institutionalization" and "institutionalism in dispute". The survey also indicates that the gender equality measures most frequently used by HEIs and R&I organizations in LA are equality plans and programs, generation and review of knowledge, development and implementation of protocols, awareness raising and training, and implementation of affirmative measures.

One of the main findings is the identification of facilitating and hindering factors common to the different experiences and analyses. Regarding the former, the following stand out regulatory frameworks that promote gender equality in HEIs, strategic alliances between universities and external actors, networking, political will of university authorities, commitment and interest of students and teachers, among others. As for obstacles, the literature points to the existence of general factors or factors external to higher education institutions, such as dominant cultural patterns, vertical and horizontal segregation in the workplace, unfair distribution of care tasks and gender-based violence. As well as internal mechanisms of academic institutions: lack of sex/gender-disaggregated data and diagnoses of gender inequalities, conservatism in university structures, weak and/or formal commitment to gender equality, insufficient resources, lack of intersectional perspective and tensions between academic feminists and activists.

One of the main conclusions is that the analysed documents indicate that in the last decade, the processes for the promotion of gender equality in higher education institutions in Latin American countries have been strengthened. These advances have coincided with a period of intense mobilization and strengthening of the feminist and women's movement in the region, and its constitution as a political agent with the potential to raise its voice and incorporate demands into the public agenda.

Finally, some orientations also emerge for future research aimed at deepening knowledge regarding: i) the institutional characteristics that can foster gender equality in education and research institutions; ii) the design of analysis models to evaluate the implementation of gender equality measures in higher education institutions.; iii) in methodological terms, to advance in the production of studies with an integral perspective; iv) generate studies on measures to promote new masculinities and new femininities.

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## 1. Introduction

The main objective of the INSPIRE Project is to contribute to the production of knowledge on the institutionalization and implementation of gender equality policies in universities and research centers. It also seeks to strengthen and deepen the institutional transformations driven by gender equality plans, both existing and those in the design process. One of its main goals is the creation of a European Center of Excellence for Gender Equality in Research and Innovation. INSPIRE is based on the principles of feminism, inclusion, intersectionality and decoloniality, which implies a critical view of academic production, focusing on people at the center and advocates for university environments free of discrimination and violence.

This report presents the results of a literature review process on institutionalization of gender equality policies and particularly, on measures to mainstream the gender perspective in higher education institutions in Latin America; and its linkage with similar initiatives developed in Europe. Its objective is to provide a mapping of the development of approaches and knowledge produced on gender equality policies and plans in the field of higher education in Latin America, offering innovative insights and new perspectives to academics, gender equality experts, professionals and trainers interested, as well as policy makers aiming at institutional change. In other words, a process of knowledge production action oriented that provides quality information for evidence-based decision-making to promote gender equality in higher education institutions in the region. Likewise, the literature review seeks to identify research gaps in relation to gender equality in these institutions and to present possible lines of research and future work that will contribute to closing these gaps in knowledge.

The review process included a protocol developed by the "Widening Participation Knowledge & Support Hub"- described in detail in section 2 - and different types of documents (papers, book chapters, books, articles, conference presentations, theses). The texts were identified from international and regional academic search engines (Google Scholar, Web of Science).

The literature review was structured to address the following research question: what are the conditions for the implementation/institutionalization of gender equality measures (Gender Equality Plans -GEP-, organizational policies, programs, activities and similar) in academic institutions and research centers in Latin American countries. Although there are currently surveys that identify and analyze gender equality measures in higher education institutions, in order to guide the institutional actions aimed at these efforts, it is essential to go beyond descriptive approaches. For this reason the literature review included the analysis of aspects such as the main actors involved, the enabling factors, the main obstacles and the contextual conditions, as well as the similarities and differences between Latin American and European approaches to GEPs.

The document is structured in 5 sections including this introduction. The second section presents the methods and procedures applied. Subsequently, the main findings are described, divided into two subsections: one of a descriptive nature, which analyzes the set of documents surveyed, and another that explores in-depth into the key documents, i.e., that specifically address gender equality plans and/or measures to mainstream gender equality in higher education institutions. The fourth section presents a series of conclusions and recommendations on possible areas for future research. Finally, the Annex the systematization matrix.

## 2. Methodology: Scoping literature protocol-Adaptation for LAC context

This section presents and describes the most important aspects of the methodology used in the literature review, which followed the guidelines defined by the "Widening Participation Knowledge & Support Hub" for this- literature review. The process was organized into four main stages:

### **Stage One: preparation of the research protocol**

This first phase of the scoping process refers to the development of the criteria to guide the research, as well as the concepts and theoretical foundations and the key questions. The purpose of the search is twofold: on the one hand, to generate a mapping of the main concepts and discussions on Gender Equality Plans and alternative measures in Latin American higher education institutions; and on the other, to gain in-depth knowledge of the key debates and discussions on the subject. To achieve this, and in line with the INSPIRE project general protocol, the search will be conducted through a combination of search engines (Google Scholar), databases (Redalyc) and a regional virtual library (SciELO). This will provide a wide and at the same time in-depth diagnosis about gender equality measures in LAC Higher Education Institutions.

In addition, the knowledge produced will be useful: (i) to understand the context for GEP implementation, barriers and facilitation factors; (ii) to reflect on transferability of GEP into contexts beyond EU; (iii) to support institutions in the introduction of GEP (through a design of GEP support package)

One of the key actions in this stage is to define the research questions. The general question that will organize the literature review is: What are the conditions for the application of gender equality measures in higher education and research institutions in Latin American countries? Additionally, to deepen the analysis and achieve a greater level of detail, the following questions will be added:

- Which are the existing gender equality measures in education and research institutions in LAC countries? What is their thematic scope? Which are the target groups? What alternative measures to gender equality plans are available?
- What actors and processes support the development and implementation of gender equality measures in education and research institutions in the countries of the region?
- What are the factors (internal and external) that hinder the implementation of gender equality measures in higher education institutions in Latin America?
- How socio-cultural, political, economic contexts impact institutionalization of gender equality in R&I in the Latin American countries?

Additional questions to help contextualize the findings are:

- What theories/analytical frameworks/concepts are used to frame the issue?
- What countries are studied? Are there comparative studies?
- What type of organizations are studied?
- What methodologies and techniques are used?
- What are most common publication outlets?
- Do the texts include an intersectional approach?
- What are the research gaps?

As for the **search words**, combinations of the following are suggested: gender, gender equality, gender perspective, university(ies), higher education, mainstreaming, Equality Plans, gender equality policies and measures, affirmative actions, discrimination, LGBTI, Latin America. The search terms and keywords will be displayed using Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR) to refine the search. Finally, it is important to note that to broaden the sample size and avoid possible biases and exclusions of academic production from the Global South, searches will be conducted in both Spanish and English.

### **Second Stage: selection of texts**

A first search will be conducted through Google Scholar, which will yield a first overview of the main topics and issues around gender equality and Universities in the region. To refine the corpus and



narrow it down to those texts which are relevant for the project, the **inclusion** criteria will be used to identify relevant documents for the literature review:

- Time range: texts from 2012 onwards
- Geographical scope: texts focused on Latin America.
- Type of texts: texts of the following categories: papers, book chapters, books, academic theses, conference presentations, as well as grey literature (articles, reports, reports).
- Thematic scope: only texts focused on the field of higher education and research will be considered. For example, texts related to gender mainstreaming in other areas such as government agencies, the media or companies will be excluded.

After these filters are applied, a scan of the 20 pages of Google Scholar will be conducted, including an initial screening of titles and abstracts to identify relevant articles.

Afterwards, with the goal of deepening the analysis, key authors and educational institutions will be introduced in databases. As some difficulties were encountered with Web of Science, since recognized academics with experience working in gender in higher education institutions did not appear in the searches -which showed that this database does not reflect the local academic production in the field- the Redalyc database was included as part of the scoping protocol as well as the Scielo virtual library.

### **Stage Three: Presentation and description of the documents**

At this stage, a descriptive analysis of the texts will be carried out, and then entered into the systematization matrix prepared by the project. Aspects such as: author, title, year of publication, type of publication, country, type of institution, keywords, categories, disciplinary areas will be recorded and analyzed. The matrix will also include the link to the document, and additional comments that can complement the findings.

### **Stage Four: Reporting of results**

The core texts of the corpus, i.e. those directly linked to the Gender Equality Plans and measures to mainstream the gender perspective in higher education institutions will be subjected to an in-depth analysis and will be incorporated to the report. The final report will also include a final section with reflections and recommendations to advance GEP in higher education institutions.

## **3. Main findings**

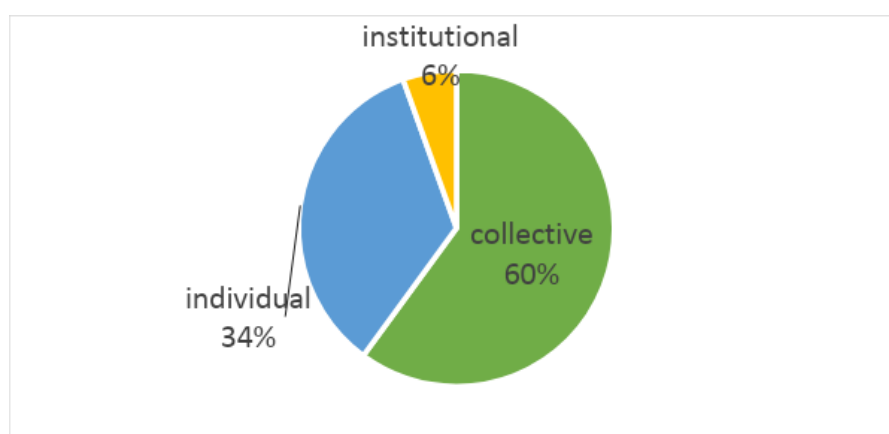
This section presents the main findings of the literature review according to the key categories defined by the Hub (see Annex 5.1 for the document analysis matrix). Following the objective of the review, the selected texts (90) have been divided into two categories: GEP (36), which are those closely linked to equality plans and/or gender mainstreaming; and "alternative" (54), which are those focused on other aspects, such as the elaboration of diagnoses, the identification of gaps, violence and harassment within university environments, women in STEM, among others.

Based on this classification, this section is divided into two subsections. The first part presents general information (descriptive in nature) for all the documents. This includes author, keywords, type of document, year of publication, place of publication, country of interest, type of institution, disciplinary area, and link between Europe and Latin America. This first part will include the analysis of the total of documents (90). The second sub-section is elaborated based on the texts included in the GEP category. This section will deepen into the methodological aspects of the studies, their theoretical frameworks, supporting factors, barriers and obstacles, and the influence of the context.

### 3.1 Diagnosis of studies on gender equality in higher education institutions in Latin America

Regarding the **type of authorship**, 60% of the texts are written by many authors. Thirty-four percent correspond to documents written by a single person, and 6% are presented in an institutional manner, without specific reference to the authors who wrote them. The latter type of documents corresponds to projects involving several academic institutions (such as the Equality project and the ORACLE project), or prepared by gender areas within the universities (for example, the case of the University of Chile).

Figure 1. Type of authorship



In relation to the **sex** of those who produce the documents, both in the case of individually and collectively authored texts, there is a significant predominance of women, what shows that although there has been an increase in male authorship on gender issues, gender equality in higher education institutions continues to be a largely female concern.

Table 1. Authorship according to sex in collective authored and single texts

	women	men
<b>Collective many authors</b>	79% (98)	21% (21)
<b>Individual single author</b>	80% (33)	20% (8)

Single male authors interests are mainly about gender inequalities and glass ceiling (Ogaz Rueda 2022, Colther 2022, Gaete Quezada 2015) and parity (Escobar Jiménez 2022, Vallejo 2022).

An analysis of the composition of the research teams<sup>1</sup> that produced the collective documents (43) shows that more than half (25) are made up exclusively of women, while only one document was

<sup>1</sup> The table analyses those teams composed for up to 4 people.

produced by an all-male team. Almost a fifth of the teams are composed mainly of women, and only 3 of them have an equal composition in gender terms.

Table 2. Gender composition of the author's teams

Exclusively women	Exclusively men	More women than men	More men than women	Equal number of men and women	Total
25	1	10	4	3	43

Regarding the type of documents, academic articles or papers with peer review predominate (32), followed by articles (23). In a second group are book chapters (8), grey literature -reports from researchs and multi-institutional projects- (8) and presentations or papers at conferences (7). Finally, there are digital books (3), printed books (3) and academic theses (1).

Another variable that contributes to the importance given to gender equality in academic production is the year of publication.

Table 3 Year of publication

Year	Number of publications
2012	1
2013	1
2014	10
2015	7
2016	2
2017	3
2018	5
2019	14
2020	10
2021	15
2022	21
2023	1

Although in the first years it is not possible to identify a sustained trend, if the period analyzed (early 2012 to early 2023) is divided into two five-year periods 2012/2017 and 2018/2023 (see Figure 3), there is a greater number of documents in the second period: 24 (27% of the total) in the first five-year period and 66 (73% of the total) in the second, which could account for a greater interest in studies linked to gender issues within the academic literature in Latin America. This increase in academic production focused on gender equality coincides with a process of strengthening of the feminist agenda in the region, in a social and political context marked by massive mobilizations (for example under the slogans #NiUnaMenos, Marea Verde). This process was reflected in a greater organization, strengthening and constitution of feminisms as political subjects with the capacity to influence the public agenda.



### **3.2.1 Concepts and theories**

This section offers a review of the theoretical approaches and main concepts used in studies related to the incorporation of gender equality in higher education and research institutions in Latin America identified in the literature review (concerning the corpus of annex 5.1). It is organized in two parts. The first presents the predominant theoretical perspectives and the second describes the key concepts that articulate the discussions related to gender equality measures in higher education and research institutions. Finally, a reflection on knowledge gaps and possible questions to guide the work of academics, experts and/or decision-makers is included.

#### **3.2.1.1 Main theoretical perspectives**

In the analyzed corpus, different paradigms coexist, which, by way of synthesis, can be grouped into two major traditions. On the one hand, those texts in which the production of knowledge and the analysis of gender inequalities is related to a more traditional paradigm, close to positivist models, with a hypothetical-deductive logic.

On the other hand, there are texts based on an alternative model, with critical and feminist features. This implies a new paradigm of scientific production, in which the concept of objectivity prevailing in the traditional model is questioned, and the idea of embodied objectivity is postulated. This assumes that knowledge has a situated character, i.e., that it cannot be separated from its context of production (Terrón-Caro et al 2015, 148; Rocha 2020, 7; Buquet Corleto et al 2020, 191; Conci et al 2019; Pabón Patiño 2015, 96). Linked to the above is a central aspect of feminist critical theories, which consists of a vision according to which the construction of knowledge presupposes a strong link between theory and practice. Thus, scientific production is not conceived as an intellectual process that takes place exclusively within institutions of higher education and research. Rather it is essential to establish links with the "outside", especially with feminist activism (Acevedo Zapata et al 2021, 213; Buquet Corleto et al 2020, 186; Chapa Romero et al 2022, 80; Rocha 2020, 1; Bermúdez Urbina 2021, 46; Rulli 2019, 9). Likewise, this paradigm has a strong political commitment, since it understands that scientific production seeks not only to know, but also to transform the world.

This tradition is characterized by the adoption of an intersectional approach: which means that gender is not the only source of inequality, but that other factors such as race or ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, functional diversity, among others, constitute axes of oppression and inequality that shape the different places and social experiences of individuals, groups and communities, and that these other axes must be taken into account in the process of production and analysis of knowledge (Acevedo Zapata et al 2021, 213; Ramos García 2022, 7-9; Martín 2021, 57; Vasallo Barrueta 2017, 169 ).

Finally, another key characteristic of these theoretical approaches is that they are decolonial and emancipatory, which implies on the one hand the deconstruction of traditional knowledge and the revision of university curricula in the light of these new perspectives (Ramos García 2022, 8-9; Rocha 2020, 7; Terrón-Caro et al 2015, 148); and on the other hand, a revision of academic referents and the recognition of the production of the Global South. In this sense, in the theoretical corpus there is a marked presence of Latin American feminist academics (Buquet Corleto 2013, Lagarde 2018 in Palacios 2020, Segato 2013, Morgade 2011, Aguilar Gil 2021 in Larreche et al 2018; Barrancos in Martín 2021; Bonder 2004 in Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014; Bonder 2009 in Martín 2021; Lamas 2000, Mingo 2011, Moreno 2018 in Benítez Martínez et al 2020; Giberti y Fernández in Buquet Corleto et al 2021; among others).

#### **3.2.1.2 Main concepts**

The conceptual framework will be presented in three blocks. The first, linked to gender and the concepts associated with it; the second, focused on the main obstacles to achieving gender equality in higher education institutions; and the third, which includes the key concepts through which the

documents characterize and analyze the processes of institutionalization of the gender perspective in higher education institutions.

#### A. Gender and other associated concepts

One of the central concepts of the corpus analyzed, that is present in a large proportion of the texts, is that of **gender** (in some texts it is called gender regime). It is a complex and polysemic concept. A significant number of the documents adopt conceptual proposals from the Global South. The following is a synthesis of the common aspects in the different definitions identified:

- System of classification and organizing principle of social relations between women and men, of an unequal nature. Which consider the attributes and characteristics associated with the masculine as superior to those linked to the feminine, placing the latter in a situation of subordination. It makes it possible to account for the symbolic framework in which societies represent sexed bodies (Acevedo Zapata et al 2021, 213, Vasallo Barrueta 2017, 166; Pabón Patiño 2015, 98; Martínez Benítez et al 2020).
- Linked to power relations, to the extent that gender is part of the organizational process of social life and is transversal to the different spheres of daily life, taking shape in different practices, discourses and representations. Likewise, gender is understood as a sphere in which different resources coexist to position oneself in the power games involved in institutional life (Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, 10; García Villanueva et al 2021, 4) .
- The result of cultural constructions, i.e., a symbolic principle that refers to the way in which each society defines the behaviors, roles, values and attitudes associated with the feminine and the masculine. This establishes a difference between the concepts of gender and sex (which refers to biological and physiological characteristics). One of the premises derived from this understanding of gender is that unequal relations are neither natural nor static, and can therefore be transformed through social action and modified over time (Acevedo Zapata et al 2021, 213; Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, 18; Palacios Gámaz et al 2020, 218).

The concept of gender has raised controversies and disputes among different theoretical currents, especially in its traditional conception, given that on the one hand it is based on the male/female binarism, and on the other, that it conceives women as a homogeneous whole. It is clear from the analyzed texts that the most recent theoretical developments recognize that gender can assume non-normative sexual expressions, preferences or orientations and identities, outside the binary structure. These new approaches, centered on sexual diversity, emphasize how gender inequalities especially affect LGBTIQ people. The university canon, with its reinforcement of the hegemonic, is positioned from a moral-moralizing of knowledge that is based on patriarchy (as a political and epistemological system), heteronormativism and phallogocentrism (Larreche et al 2018, 35). As a consequence, people with non-normative sexual identities frequently face problems of discrimination (Mazuera Ayala et al 2021,30). This inequality is reflected in intolerance, lack of acceptance, criticism and mockery on the basis of gender orientation, among others (García Villanueva et al 2021, 3). Also, this wider understanding of gender claims that women are diverse and not monolithic, and that they are crossed by other axes of inequality such as social class, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, among others, which produce asymmetries in different spheres of life.

Closely linked to the concept of gender is that of **gender perspective**, which refers to the set of conceptual, analytical and normative tools that view gender as a mode of analysis that allows us to understand phenomena of inequality and exclusion between the sexes, as well as to explain the causes and forms that these phenomena acquire (Buquet Corleto et al 2020, 185; Martínez-Benítez et al 2020).

Another concept that articulates the discussions in the corpus is that of **gender equality**, which refers to one of the basic human rights according to which all people, regardless of their characteristics - in this case their gender - have the same possibilities of being and doing, through the same conditions

and access to possibilities, to the full development of their potential and to life in society (Mercader et al 2022, 8; Martínez Benítez et al 2020, 111) Applied to higher education, gender equality in the university environment implies, in the case of female students, equal access to the educational system, at all levels of training and without segregation by areas of knowledge or disciplines. For women who are part of the teaching staff or who occupy positions of responsibility, it implies guaranteeing the conditions for their permanence and promotion, as well as the possibility of overcoming the barriers that exclude and discriminate against them because of their condition as women (Pastor Gosálbez 2014, 646).

Although less frequently, some of the analyzed texts propose as an alternative to gender equality the concept of **gender equity**, associated with the recognition of difference as a structural part of society, and the need to grant different treatment to ensure that those individuals and groups that are in a situation of inequality and subordination can enjoy the exercise of the same rights as the rest of the population. In this sense, equity is based on the principles of justice and social balance, and its emphasis is placed on achieving equality not at the starting point, but on guaranteeing access for all people to the same rights and possibilities, regardless of their gender (Mercader et al 2022, 8; Flores Jiménez et al 2022, 146; Baute Rosales et al 2017, 53).

The texts analyzed refer to **gender mainstreaming** as a term that emerged in the framework of the discussions of the United Nations System in the 1990's. Gender mainstreaming is conceived as a process of integrating the gender perspective within institutions, organizations, their structure, processes and culture, as well as throughout the policy cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and culture). Gender mainstreaming is conceived as a process of integrating the gender perspective within institutions, organizations, their structure, processes and culture, as well as throughout the policy cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation), in order to avoid the reproduction of gender-based inequalities. It involves a diagnosis of the needs and problems faced by men, women and LGBTIQ people, as well as an analysis of the possible consequences that may result from the application of different measures (Buquet Corleto et al 2020, Bonder 2019). It makes use of different tools and strategies, among which are: data and statistics disaggregated by sex/gender, gender budgeting, planning and evaluation with a gender perspective, among others. It is a comprehensive process, which is not limited to the application of certain procedures, but it involves transforming the prevailing structural and symbolic order to achieve gender equality.

## B. Concepts related to obstacles to achieving gender equality

One of the key concepts referred to in the texts to explain gender inequalities is **patriarchy**. Although there are multiple definitions, two common aspects are identified in the texts: (i) its character as a system of domination that results in the subordination of women and all those aspects associated with femininity, (ii) the use of multiple tools to perpetuate gender inequalities that are organized in a continuum ranging from the symbolic to the use of physical violence (Chapa Romero 2022, Flores Jiménez et al 2022, Vallejo 2022, Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, Pabón Patiño 2015, Palacios Gámaz et al 2020) .

**Gender biases and social stereotypes** refer to a structured set of beliefs and expectations about the characteristics that people possess or should possess based on their gender (Mercader et al 2022, 3; Castillo et al 2019; Flores Jiménez et al 2022; Vallejo 2022; Vasallo Barrueta 2017, 162; Martínez-Benítez 2020, 117; Pastor Gosálbez 2014, 144) .

Other relevant concepts to understand gender inequalities are **discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV)**. Discrimination is generally understood as unequal treatment between people that results in the violation of their rights (Ogaz Rueda 2022; Ramos García 2022, 7). In turn, the texts refer to gender violence as those actions or omissions that result in harm or suffering of the person being affected (Palacios Gámaz et al 2020, 218; Buquet Corleto et al 2020) . Violence can adopt different expressions (physical, psychological, sexual, economic, among others) and occur in both the private and public spheres (in the specific case of this analysis, the documents focused on the

university environment) (Ramos García 2022, 7; Castillo et al 2019). Gender-based violence is a complex, multidimensional and multicausal sociocultural phenomenon, supported mainly by socialization processes. The definitions of violence used in the texts showed a strong influence of international and regional conventions, especially the World Health Organization, and the Belem do Para Convention's conceptualization of violence against women. As regards the naming of the problem, some texts use the concept of "violence against women", which is the one embodied in international norms and agreements (Ramos García 2022, 7; Terrón Caro et al 2015, 142), while others refer to "gender-based violence", with the aim of including situations of violence based not only on biological sex, but also on sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Castillo et al 2019, Chapa Romero et al 2022, Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, Martínez Benítez et al 2020, Bonder 2019, Barreto 2017).

Finally, this framework is completed by the concepts of **vertical segregation (in many texts referred to as the glass ceiling) and horizontal segregation**. The glass ceiling is a metaphor used to describe the imbalance and difficulties that women generally face within organizations (companies, public institutions, educational institutions) in gaining access to senior management and decision-making positions. The expression "glass ceiling" refers to the set of invisible and subtle mechanisms and barriers -since they do not respond to norms or are not expressed in formal prohibitions- which, when materialized in practices and cultural patterns, prevent women from reaching leadership positions (Flores Jiménez et al 2022, 140; Gaete Quezada 2015, 5; Terrón Caro et al 2015, 141). In the case of higher education institutions, the concept of the "glass ceiling" is used to describe the difficulties in gaining access to leadership on the teaching staff, and in the case of authorities, access to positions such as rectors or vice-rectors. Horizontal segregation is a concept used to describe the way in which women and men are distributed in scientific disciplines. As in the labor market, horizontal segregation is a reflection of social roles and expectations regarding gender. In the university system, it translates into a concentration of women in disciplines associated with caring roles (e.g., nursing, education, health), and a low presence in STEM disciplines (Colther 2022, 53; Escobar-Jiménez 2022, 142; Bonder 2019; Ogaz Rueda 2022; Martí Reyes et al 2021, 1853; Pabón Patiño 2015, 116).

### C. Concepts related to the university system and institutionalization processes.

Given that the object of the literature review is gender equality policies in universities and research centers, one of the fundamental concepts is that of the **university**. In most of the analyzed texts, the definition of the university is not restricted to the classic conception of an institution for the formation and production of knowledge, but is defined in a critical way, as a space for the dispute of power and the generation of meaning. Likewise, a part of the documents refer to the University as part of a broader ecosystem, and to the need to intensify the links of higher education institutions with external actors, among which the feminist and women's movements stand out (Martínez-Benítez et al 2020, 119; Larreche et al 2018,17; Terrón Caro et al 2015).

The **processes of institutionalization** of the gender perspective in higher education and research institutions are defined in the texts as the incorporation of norms, structures and/or measures to promote gender equality on a permanent basis. Although the fundamental role of the political will of the authorities to achieve institutionalization is recognized, it is also pointed out that these processes seek to generate profound changes within the organizations, beyond individual efforts. To this end, a varied set of tools can be used. In the literature review, priority was given to those texts referring to Gender Equality Plans, as well as other alternative measures to promote gender equality (for further details see section 3.2.3 Gender Equality Measures).

Finally, the texts present two concepts that clearly exemplify the state of art regarding the institutionalization of the gender perspective in higher education institutions in the region, namely **"secondary institutionalization"** and **"institutionalism in dispute"**. Secondary institutionalization refers to those situations in which institutionalization exists, but it is secondary since it is not inscribed in the mainstream, i.e in the matrix of power and orientation of university policies (Larreche et al



2018, 32), while institutionalism in dispute refers to the fact that the efforts to achieve the institutionalization of the gender perspective are confronted with sexism, misogyny and machismo embedded in the daily practices of higher education institutions, and more recently, with conservative groups that actively and expressly oppose advances in gender equality (Ruiz Bravo et al 2022) The strength of these terms lies in their potential to synthesize and make visible complex processes in which efforts to adopt policies to promote gender equality by a proportion of faculty, students, educational authorities and the feminist movement coexist with structural barriers and the opposition of various actors seeking to maintain the status- quo.

### 3.2.2 Methods

As for the methods used in the research, qualitative methods predominated (20), followed by mixed methods (10), and to a lesser extent, quantitative methods (6).

**Table 4. Methods used in the surveyed studies related to GEP**

Type of method	Number of documents
qualitative	20
quantitative	6
mixed	10

As regards approaches, they are generally exploratory and descriptive in nature, while there are few documents of a causal-explanatory nature. In relation to the temporal scope, there is a predominance of synchronic analysis, centered on a specific moment, as opposed to those of a diachronic nature, which cover a prolonged period of time. In this second category, a wide variability was observed, since texts were identified ranging from those analyzing a period of 2 years to others whose analysis spans decades.

In line with the theoretical postulates of the research (described in section 3.2.1.1), several texts make explicit a methodological approach influenced by the feminist perspective and activism (Chapa Romero et al 2022, Ramos García 2022, Buquet Corleto et al 2021, Mazuera Ayala et al 2021). This implies a critical view, focused on the eradication of inequalities and anchored in experience.

The most frequent techniques are in-depth interviews with students, professors and managers, and to a lesser extent with administrative personnel (Ogaz Rueda 2022, Viana et al 2022, Martí Reyes et al 2021, Martín 2021, Rocha 2020, Castillo et al 2019, Barreto 2017, Pabón Patiño, 2015), focus groups (Chapa Romero et al 2022, Castillo et al 2019) and documentary analysis of regulations, plans, curricula (Flores Jiménez et al 2022, Mercader et al 2022, Martín 2021, Rocha 2020, Larreche et al 2020, Bonder 2019, Castillo et al 2019, Conci et al 2019, Vasallo Barrueta 2017, Barreto 2017, Equality Project 2015, Pastor Gosálbez 2014). Additional techniques are oral history, understood as a method in which the central theme of the phenomenon to be studied is established and interviews are conducted with participants who report their experiences (Viana et al 2022, 3) and discourse analysis (Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, Bonder 2019). Other tools such as focus groups (Buquet Corleto et al 2021), workshops (Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, Castillo et al 2019), participant observation (Buquet Corleto et al 2021) and virtual and multisite ethnography (Guber, 2001; Hine, 2004 in Barreto 2017) are also used. In the case of quantitative approaches, the most frequent tools are surveys (Ogaz Rueda 2022, Buquet Corleto et al 2021, García Villanueva et al 2021, Martínez-Benítez et al 2020, Palacios Gamaz et al 2020, Castillo et al 2019), as well as the statistical analysis of databases

prepared by different institutions -governmental, related to the national scientific system; university records- (Colther 2022, Escobar-Jiménez 2022, Vallejo 2022, Buquet Corleto et al 2021, Martí Reyes et al 2021, Gaete Quezada 2015, Pabón Patiño, 2015).

In terms of deficits, one point to note is that very little research provides details of the tools used, which hinders the comparability and replicability of the research<sup>2</sup>. Likewise, it is observed that much of the information included in the texts is focused on the diagnosis and existing obstacles to achieving gender equality in the university environment, and in a much lower proportion on the measures and strategies that can be implemented (or have been implemented) to address these problems.

### 3.2.3 Main gender equality measures identified

The objective of this section is to summarize the main findings of the literature review regarding the gender equality measures most frequently employed by higher education and research institutions in Latin American countries. Knowledge of these measures and their use is important given that they are the concrete tools through which educational institutions seek to promote gender equality. After describing the different types of measures, some reflections on the thematic scope, target groups and identified gaps are included.

**Equality plans and programs.** These are initiatives linked to strategic planning in the field of gender equality, and one of their distinctive features is their comprehensiveness. Thus, far from being punctual or isolated measures, they have a systemic character. Gender Equality Plans are closely linked to the concept of gender mainstreaming, since they address the different aspects and dimensions that make up higher education systems, while promoting the articulation of the efforts of the different actors and existing measures. Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014 refer to the concept of Gender Equality Plan included in Spain's equality legislation (Ley Orgánica 3/2007):

"an ordered set of measures, adopted after a diagnosis of the situation, aimed at achieving equal treatment and opportunities between women and men in the company and eliminating discrimination based on sex". As regards content, it specifies: "equality plans will establish the specific equality objectives to be achieved, the strategies and practices to be adopted for their attainment, as well as the establishment of effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the objectives set" and establishes that for their attainment "they may contemplate, among others, matters of access to employment, professional classification, promotion and training, remuneration, organization of working time to favor, in terms of equality between women and men, the reconciliation of work, personal and family life, and prevention of sexual harassment and harassment for reasons of sex" (Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014, 647)

As can be seen from the texts analyzed, the Plans do not arise in a vacuum, but are supported by a series of measures, such as diagnoses or protocols to address situations of gender-based violence. For instance, the "EQUALITY Project. Strengthening women's leadership in Latin American HEIs and society (2012-2015)" which aimed to promote gender equality and contribute to the greater visibility of women and their participation in science, academia and the workforce, decided to apply a successful trichotomy for the equality strategy in European universities, i.e.: 1) elaboration of a diagnosis of the university situation based on the analysis of data disaggregated by sex; 2) drafting and implementation of an Equality Plan; and 3) creation of an equality body that, on the one hand, leads the issue by generating information and knowledge in terms of gender, and on the other hand, monitors and follows up cases of discrimination (Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014:650). In the analyzed texts, the existence of a "critical mass" (a certain number of people committed to the gender equality agenda and the capacity to become a political actor) within the educational institutions is considered a condition for the feasibility of these Plans (Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014: 651). Associated with this,

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<sup>2</sup> A notable exception is Mercader et al 2022, which includes a detailed description of 8 strategies are classified according to the stage regarding the University (access, permanence, graduation), as well as by costs. It also includes concrete examples of the strategies and complementary bibliography.

the advantages of proposing participatory processes, which gather the voices and needs of the different actors. Due to their variability and the need to adapt to national contexts, there is no single recipe designing Gender Equality Plans, but they should be conceived as roadmaps and guidelines for action to achieve gender equality. Together with actions and programs, these Plans usually include goals, indicators and systems for measuring and evaluating progress. Finally, to ensure proper implementation and operation of the plans, they must be accompanied by resources, both human (teams trained in the matter) and economic.

As alternatives to the Plans, the literature review revealed the application of a multiplicity of measures, among which the following predominate:

**Knowledge generation and review.** The generation of knowledge is one of the central functions of the University. In view of the historical invisibility of women and their contributions to knowledge, a significant number of measures identified in the texts are related to the revision of university curricula and the incorporation of content from a gender perspective (Rocha 2020; Larreche et al 2018). Likewise, several universities in the region have made progress in the creation of chairs (Baute Rosales 2017, 57, Larreche et al 2018) institutes and study centers to generate knowledge that contributes to achieving gender equality. Some texts analyze the efforts to include and make visible the situation of LGBTIQ+ people. Feminist study groups are also an important strategy to create knowledge and to consolidate gender within the HEI (Bermúdez Urbina 2021, 45 ; Larreche et al 2018, 28-29; Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014, 655).

**Development and implementation of protocols.** These are measures that seek to standardize the responses of the educational community to situations of gender inequality. Most of them are protocols created to address cases of violence and harassment, focused on cis-heterosexual women, although it was also possible to identify some efforts to respond to situations of violence faced by the LGBTIQ+ community, especially trans people. Eighteen national universities in Argentina have approved Action Protocols against Gender Violence and twelve universities are in the process of drafting and/or approving them (Rulli, 2019, 11), including UNSAM, UBA and CONICET (Bonder 2019) and UNR (Conci et al 2019). Other universities are Universidad de Chile (Ogaz Rueda 2022, Bonder 2019), TEC in Costa Rica (Bonder 2019), UNAM in México (Bonder 2019, Buquet Corleto et al 2021) and Universidad Libre in Bogotá (Mazuera Ayala et al 2021,9). Some criticisms are that these instruments make it possible to initiate the complaint process, but then remains open and without sanction; that they are not always accompanied by a commission for their application; that cases of cover-up persist; and that there is often a mismatch between institutional and personal temporality (Bonder 2019, 11).

**Promotion and strengthening of gender equality in institutions.** Several texts refer to this type of measures consisting of the creation and/or strengthening of structures such as areas, directorates, centers, units, etc., whose main objective is to mainstream the gender perspective in the higher education and research system. The corpus analyzed shows a process of expansion of this type of measures, characterized by a wide variety in terms of their trajectory, institutional structure and hierarchy, functions and available resources (both economic and human resources). Some examples include:

- **Gender Commissions**, as in UDELAS Panamá (Castillo et al 2019, 217); Special Commission to achieve equity and equality in ITCR Costa Rica (Palma Picado et al 2019, )
- **Offices**, as the Office for Gender Equity in ITCR Costa Rica (Palma Picado et al 2019)
- **Programs**, as the Gender Equity Program of the University of Science and Arts of Chiapas, México (Bermúdez Urbina 2012, 37)
- **Observatories** such as in Universidad Nacional de Sur, Argentina (Larreche et al 2018, 34).

- **Directorates of Gender Equality**, as DIGEN in Universidad de Chile (Ogaz Rueda 2022,3)
- **Tables**, as DIGEN in Universidad de Chile (Ogaz Rueda 2022,5)

**Awareness-raising and training.** Some documents address the implementation of measures linked to awareness-raising and capacity-building policies on gender equality (Mercader 2022; Bonder 2019,4 ; Baute Rosales 2017, 56; Pastor Gosálbez 2014, 641, 651). These actions are aimed at the different strata (groups) that are part of the higher education system: students, teaching staff, authorities and non-teaching staff, and their thematic scope is broad, with a predominance of capacity building related to the confrontation of gender violence. As it will be developed in section 3.2.5, gender-based violence is one of the main barriers to achieve gender equality. But at the same time, addressing the problem of gender-based violence has been the starting point for including a gender perspective in the university environment. A wide heterogeneity is observed in relation to the trajectory and degree of institutionalization of these measures. Based on diagnoses, data, and the recovery of the voices of the protagonists (for example, testimonies of women who have suffered situations of gender-based violence), these spaces and/or initiatives seek to raise awareness of existing inequalities, as well as to offer possible courses of action. Generally, these measures are not presented in isolation, but in conjunction with other efforts.

**Implementation of affirmative measures.** These are measures that seek to improve the conditions and possibilities of exercising the rights of groups in situations of inequality and subordination (Colther 2022, Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, EQUALITY 2015). They are focused on ensuring that women can count on access to programs, jobs and fair conditions (Pastor Gosálbez 2014, 29). A review of the documents shows that these policies are not very widespread. In general, these are quota measures for the entry and permanence of women in STEM careers, and in some specific cases, of indigenous women. For example priority gender equity admissions (PEG in Spanish), which, starting with the 2014 admissions process, each year allows 40 women to enter the Faculty of Physical and Mathematical Sciences who are first on the waiting list (Ogaz Rueda 2022, 5).

The measures surveyed show a broad **thematic scope**, with a predominance of those with a broad approach and not centered on a single axis. However, there are several studies in which the focus is on discrimination and violence (Chapa Romero et al 2022, Flores Jiménez et al 2022, Ramos García 2022, Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, Palacios Gámaz et al 2020, Castillo et al 2019, Barreto 2017); and in others, on investigating the obstacles to achieving gender equality in higher education institutions (Colther 2022, Ogaz Rueda 2022, Martí Reyes et al 2021, Rulli 2019, Gaete Quezada 2015), and especially parity (Vallejo 2022, Escobar Jiménez 2022), i.e. equal representation of men and women in decision-making spaces. To a lesser extent, some initiatives seek to address and reverse the unfair distribution of care, for example through the creation of childcare facilities for both female students and teachers (Escobar Jiménez 2022, 142).

In terms of **target groups**, most of the actions are aimed at improving opportunities for women (and in some cases LGBTIQ people) to access and remain in higher education institutions. These actions are not limited exclusively to female students, but some of them also include female teachers, people working in the administrative area, as well as those in middle management and leadership positions in educational and research institutions.

From the analysis of the measures contained in the texts, some **gaps were** identified. On the one hand, it was observed that there are very few measures linked to the promotion of new masculinities; and, on the other hand, few economic incentive policies were identified to promote a greater presence and participation of women in universities, both for female students (for example, in STEM areas) and for teachers/faculty (especially regarding the reconciliation of work and family life).

### 3.2.4 Actors and enablers

To achieve a better understanding of the measures aimed at gender equality in higher education implemented in the countries of the region, it is important to analyze which actors facilitated and/or were part of their generation, as well as to identify the necessary conditions for the process of creation, expansion and strengthening of gender policies in the universities of the region.

An element which is present in several of the documents analyzed is related to the existence of **regulatory frameworks** that promote gender equality (Viana et al 2022, 5; Mazuera Ayala et al 2021,10; EQUALITY Project 2015). In some cases, these refer to university norms and rules, although in general they are national, regional or international laws, among which equality laws, parity laws and laws on gender violence predominate.

Another key aspect is the establishment of **strategic alliances** both within the universities and with external actors (Ramos García 2022, Bonder 2019, EQUALITY Project 2015, . At the internal level, the generation of links with the different areas and institutional configurations (for example, among the different academic units or faculties) and the incorporation of all sectors: students, faculty, authorities and administrative staff, appear as fundamental. Externally, a significant number of the texts point to the promotion of multi-stakeholder coalitions and mainly the articulation with the feminist and women's movement (Chapa Romero et al 2022, 77-79; Martín 2021, 112; Buquet Cortelo et al 2021, 60; Conci et al 2019, 2; Rulli 2019, 12; Larreche 2018, 28; Pabón Patiño 2015). In some of them, this alliance is referred to as a necessary condition for the advancement of gender equality in higher education institutions. Some texts highlight intergenerational alliances (especially with the student movement in secondary education), as these allow for the renewal of issues and perspectives on gender inequalities. In a similar vein and based on the recognition of the importance of collective action, is the **formation of networks** and spaces for exchange between different universities. Some examples include: RUGE in Argentina (Martín 2021, , Bonder 2019, Canci et al 2019, Rulli 2019), the Gender Commission of the Commission of the Chilean Rectors' Council (CRUCH) in Chile (Bonder 2019), and Red Nacional de Instituciones de Educación Superior: caminos para la igualdad (RENIES), which on November 22, 2017 became a national network ANUIES (Buquet Corleto et al 2020, 183) and the Red Mexicana de Ciencia, Tecnología y Género (RED CITEG) in México.

As the texts analyzed show, in order to ensure the correct implementation and success of initiatives to promote gender equality, it is essential to have the explicit and sustained **political will** of university authorities (Bermúdez Urbina 2021, Martín 2021, Buquet Corleto et al 2020, Palma Picado et al 2019, Barreto 2017, Baute Rosales 2017, EQUALITY Project 2015, Pabón Patiño 2015, Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014). As can be seen from the texts, another factor that contributes to gender mainstreaming processes in higher education institutions is the **commitment and interest of students and faculty**, as well as a previous trajectory in the generation of quality academic production related to gender equality. This must be accompanied by the promotion of a solid **feminist leadership** solid and legitimate in the university environment.

In the case of gender institutions, to ensure their proper functioning, it is necessary to guarantee that they have **resources of various kinds**: adequate organizational structure with personnel specialized in gender issues; a physical space; economic resources, among others.

### 3.2.5 Hindering factors

The processes of gender mainstreaming in higher education institutions have been complex and faced many obstacles. The following is a review of the difficulties that appear most frequently in the texts mentioned, grouped into two major categories: an external one, which points to factors beyond the university; and an internal one, which describes those difficulties that are largely the responsibility of those who make up the university system.

#### 3.2.5.1 External hindering factors

**Cultural patterns, roles and biases that perpetuate gender inequalities.** Among the resistances identified, factors linked to patriarchal cultural patterns occupy a prominent place, including: gender roles and stereotypes, androcentrism, sexism (and heterosexism), unconscious biases that give greater value to the masculine, as well as the invisibilization of women in academia (Flores Jiménez et al 2022, 142; Mercader et al 2022, 3; Vallejo 2022; Buquet Corleto et al 2020, 187; Martínez-Benítez 2020, 117; Castillo et al 2019; Vasallo Barrueta 2017, 160, 162; Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014, 644) . In some universities, a general support of the discursive principle of meritocracy still persists, naturalizing a supposed scientific neutrality proper to the academic world that harbors an androcentric vision of social life and a masculine conception of the subject. As a consequence, this generates a totalizing institutional order. Added to this is the lack of positive female role models (Gaete Quezada 2015).

**Vertical and horizontal segregation.** A significant number of texts refer to the existence of strong vertical and horizontal segregation tendencies. This implies, in the first case, restricted access of women to promotion and advancement mechanisms in academic careers, i.e., to the highest levels and hierarchies. (Colther 2022, 53; Escobar Jiménez 2022, 142; Martí Reyes et al 2021, 1853; Gaete Quezada 2015, 5; Pabón Patiño 2015, 116; Terrón Caro et al 2015, 141). In the second, a concentration of women in areas traditionally considered feminine, such as education, nursing, social work, psychology, and of men in the so-called 'hard sciences' or STEM (Escobar Jiménez 2022, 143; Mercader et al 2022, 6; Pabón Patiño 2015, 119; Rulli 2019, 12)

**Maternity and unfair distribution of care tasks.** As the documents analyzed show, social models still persist that are based on the traditional sexual division of labor, according to which men work in the public sphere and women in the private sphere, taking charge of caregiving tasks (Mercader et al 2022, 3; Buquet Corleto et al 2020, 187; Vasallo Barrueta 2017, 162). This makes it difficult for women to reconcile their family responsibilities with their work, directly affecting their career development opportunities (Escobar Jiménez 2022, 142, Ramos García 2022, Martí Reyes et al 2021).

**Discrimination, gender-based violence and sexual harassment.** Gender violence is one of the most widespread problems faced by women in the different areas in which they work. In recent years, progress has been made in the conception of gender violence as a problem of public order and not restricted to the private sphere. As Ramos García states, discrimination and violence against women are geographically, culturally and socially widespread problems that affect all spheres and areas of social life, including higher education institutions (Ramos García 2022, 7). Likewise, although studies on gender violence have been extended in universities, the texts refer to the fact that there is still a long way to go (Chapa Romero et al 2022, Ogaz Rueda 2022, Vallejo 2022; Mazuera Ayala et al 2021, Buquet Corleto et al 2021, Palacios Gámaz et al 2020, Bonder 2019, Castillo et al 2019; Barreto 2017, Terrón Caro et al 2015, 142). One of the problems consists in the naturalization of some types of gender violence (such as the so-called "piropos") and psychological violence, as well as the absence of centers for students who demonstrate that they are experiencing situations of mistreatment. A cross-cutting and recurrent problem in different departments, areas and programs is the stigmatization and re-victimization of women in situations of violence, sometimes reproducing a sexist, and blaming discourse towards them. Situations related to homophobia and transphobia towards the LGBTIQ community and myths related to gender violence also persist (Larreche et al 2018, Mazuera Ayala 2021, García-Villanueva et al 2021, 3).

**The advance of conservative and religious groups** that oppose the achievements in gender equality. These groups, which already had visibility and space in the public- political sphere, in recent years have extended their influence into other institutions, including the education system, opposing, among other things, the incorporation of a gender perspective in university curricula (Viana et al 2022, Ramos García 2022) .

**Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures applied by the States** to deal with it, such as quarantines and isolation. The texts analyze consequences such as the increase in the number

of hours that women dedicate to unpaid work within the home (increasing the gender gap). Likewise, the predominance of the remote study modality has revealed the existence of gaps in access to technology, mainly in access to the Internet, infrastructure and adequate inputs for carrying out work. In addition, there is a low capacity for digitalization of institutional processes (Ramos García 2022).

### *3.2.5.2 Internal hindering factors*

**Lack of data disaggregated by sex/gender and diagnoses of gender inequalities** in the university environment. As pointed out by different studies, having a baseline is fundamental for the design and implementation of measures to promote gender equality. One of the most recurrent difficulties lies in the absence or scarcity of data on gender inequalities within universities (Escobar Jiménez 2022, 140; Vallejo 2022, 358; Viana et al 2022, 1; Barreto 2017, 262; Vasallo Barrueto 2017, 166; EQUALITY Project 2015).

**Conservatism in university structures.** Some of the texts refer to the elitist and exclusive nature of universities. It is mentioned that they are institutions that generally respond to the needs of certain populations, and that they do not show sensitivity to groups and individuals who experience situations of inequality, as is the case of women (Colther 2022, Ramos García 2022, Bermúdez Urbina 2021, Rocha 2020, Palacios Gámaz 2020, Larreche 2018, EQUALITY Project 2015, Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014). Universities have been exclusive institutions not only because at different times in their history they have explicitly prohibited the admission of women, indigenous and mestizo populations, and slaves. They are also so because, even after eliminating the explicit prohibition, they still have low rates of participation of women, peasants, people with disabilities, and communities from popular sectors, LGBTI+ population, among others (Acevedo Zapata et al 2021, 220). An example of this is that gender mainstreaming in the curricula encounters marked resistance in different areas of knowledge, preferably in the so-called hard sciences.

**Weak and formal commitment to gender equality** in the university environment, which gives rise to **secondary institutionalization**. As shown in the conceptual section of this document (3.2.1.2), secondary institutionalization occurs when: (i) there is an instrumental vision of the issue, accompanied by low institutional recognition, and (ii) the university community adopts policies to promote gender equality as a political-administrative commitment rather than as a cultural-ideological transformation. That is, when the demands of the movements are incorporated through assimilation into the prevailing institutional culture, they tend to partially lose their transformative capacity. This secondary institutionalization also occurs when measures to promote gender equality are not applied in a systematic and sustained manner over time, but rather as partial and sectorial efforts. It also implies insufficient training in gender perspective for personnel (professional, technical and administrative) and a lack of comprehensive management of gender-based violence situations, which generates a dependence on personal initiatives rather than institutional policies. In some scenarios, this is accompanied by "passive" opposition from university personnel. All this reflects the persistence of referential frameworks that resist despite the creation of organizational units or policies that fail to achieve a transforming result.

**Lack of resources** to implement policies and measures to promote gender equality. It is frequent that the generation of regulations and the implementation of policies is not accompanied by the necessary human and economic resources for the adequate development of their functions and activities (Vallejo 2022, EQUALITY Project 2015, Martín 2021, Larreche et al 2018, Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014, Bermúdez Urbina 2012).

**Lack of an intersectional perspective.** Although in recent years there has been greater awareness of the multiple inequalities that can affect women (for example, the situation of rural women, indigenous women, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ people, women facing poverty), the analysis of the literature surveyed shows that the intersectional approach has not been incorporated into the functioning of higher education institutions and the content they teach (Viana et al 2022, Acevedo Zapata et al 2021, Gaete Quezada 2015).

**Tensions between academic feminists and activists.** In some texts, tensions arise between feminists from different fields, generally between those with an academic background and those belonging to the feminist and women's movement. This is a challenge of urgent intervention, since the fractures and divisions, far from contributing to the incorporation of gender equality in the university system, end up being functional to the patriarchal system. To this classic tension was added another, between those who propose an interdisciplinary and transversal vocation for gender studies and those who defend that they should be separate spaces, responding to the disciplines of origin (Rocha 2020, Larreche et al 2018)).

### 3.2.6 Factors in the local context and interaction with the European Union that promote gender equality as mentioned in the literature

A first contextual factor that has contributed to the promotion of gender equality in the university environment is the gradual **access of women to higher education** and a consequent increase in female university enrollment. Several texts refer to this phenomenon as one that gave rise to a "critical mass" of women capable of generating change. This has been accompanied by a growing interest in analyzing the demographics of those involved in research, including gender, and greater debate on issues such as feminism and parity in academic circles. It has also contributed to raising awareness of the importance of designing and implementing measures to prevent and sanction all expressions of violence and reverse manifestations of sexism and has resulted in institutional changes at different levels and aspects of the university system (Flores Jimenez et al 2022, Gaete Quezada 2015, Terrón Caro et al 2015) .

In the texts, the consolidation of gender equality at State level appears as a facilitating element, whether through **regulations**, the creation/hierarchization of mechanisms for the advancement of women (MAM), the design and implementation of **public policies and national equality plans** with objectives, actions and indicators related to gender equality at the higher level and the promotion of intersectoral work (Buquet Corleto et al 2021, Pastor Gosálbez 2014).

In a globalized world, **international norms and standards and the support of international cooperation in education** are recognized as key factors. Thus, in different texts there are references to international commitments and standards, among which the CEDAW, the Women's Conferences -particularly the Beijing Conference- and more recently the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), proposed and approved by the member countries of the United Nations, during the Sustainable Development Summit held in 2015, stand out (Flores Jiménez et al 2022, Mercader et al 2022, Palma Picado 2019, Canci et al 2019, Rulli 2019, Vasallo Barrueta 2017, Terrón Caro et al 2015) . Likewise, some documents mention the support by International Cooperation through technical and economic support, and especially projects (ACT On Gender, Equality, ORACLE) that have promoted the exchange and establishment of links between Universities in Europe and Latin America in relation to gender equality (Flores Jiménez et al 2022, Mercader et al 2022, Buquet Corleto et al 2020, Martínez-Benítez et al 2020, Bonder 2019, Conci et al 2019, Palma Picado et al 2019, Rulli 2019, Vasallo Barrueta 2017, EQUALITY Project 2015, Terrón Caro et al 2015, Pabón Patiño 2015, Pastor Gosálbez et al 2014, ). However, few documents offer in-depth comparative analyses of the situation in Europe and Latin America in terms of gender equality in higher education institutions.

Another of the contextual factors that has contributed significantly to the advancement of gender equality in higher education institutions in the region is the **strengthening of the feminist movement** (called in some contexts "feminist tide"), and the establishment of its demands, both in academia and in the public agenda. In this sense, the **support of the feminist and women's movement and the link** that has been forged between academia and the women's social movement has contributed to building bridges between feminist theories and activism (Pabón Patiño et al 2015, Terrón Caro et al 2015,. In this process, regional feminist meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean (dating back to the 1980s) have been key to the renewal of agendas and the inclusion of new issues, languages and actors that make visible the multiple manifestations of inequality,



discrimination and violence based on gender patterns. In recent years, critical contributions and perspectives from the LGTBIQ+ movement, queer theory and trans studies have also been incorporated.

## 4. Conclusions and reflections

This section presents a summary of the bibliographic review, recovering the main findings. It also includes a reflection on the information and research gaps identified throughout the process, and a final section with recommendations on possible lines of action and future research. The aim of the literature review was to elaborate and present a mapping of the main approaches and knowledge produced on gender equality policies and plans in the field of higher education in Latin America to offer innovative knowledge and new perspectives for the different actors in the educational field (researchers, experts, students, teachers, authorities). This analysis sought to describe the different types of measures and their main characteristics, as well as the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework in which they are framed. In addition, one of the distinctive and innovative features of the literature review was that it sought to investigate the conditions of application of measures to promote gender equality. To this end, the following issues were analyzed: facilitating factors and actors, contextual factors, obstacles (internal and external to the higher education system), and the role of women in the implementation of measures to promote gender equality.

A first conclusion that emerges from the literature review is the enhancement of processes to promote gender equality in higher education institutions in Latin American countries in the last decade. This is evident from: (i) a marked growth in academic production in this area as of 2018 compared to the period 2012-2017; (ii) the expansion of the thematic scope, moving from an emphasis on gender-based violence towards the incorporation of other topics such as parity, gender mainstreaming, women in STEM; and (iii) the diversification of the tools and measures employed for the achievement of gender equality in educational institutions. These advances have coincided with a period of intense mobilization and strengthening of the feminist and women's movement in the region, and its constitution as a political agent with the potential to raise its voices and incorporate demands into the public agenda. As the documents analyzed show, the links established with these movements were crucial, not only to nurture the discussions, but also to promote measures and tools in a participatory manner and taking into account the needs of women in the territories. In this sense, in Latin America it is not possible to understand the achievements in terms of gender equality in the field of higher education in isolation from social and women's movements.

As for the **theoretical framework**, it is worth mentioning that the corpus analyzed is not homogeneous, coexisting with different research traditions. Part of the academic production analyzed is framed in feminist, critical, intersectional approaches, and a vindication of situated knowledge and of the production coming from the Global South. Regarding the concepts, the analyzed texts compose a rich and complete conceptual framework, which in the review were classified into three types: (i) linked to gender (gender, gender perspective, gender equality, gender equity, gender mainstreaming); (ii) internal and external obstacles to the educational system (patriarchy, prejudices and stereotypes, gender discrimination and violence, vertical segregation or "glass ceiling", horizontal segregation); and (iii) linked to the university system (university, institutionalization processes, secondary institutionalization, institutionalism in dispute).

A central aspect of the literature review was to identify and map the **measures** used by Latin American countries to promote gender equality in their higher education and research institutions, with emphasis on **Gender Equality Plans**. The texts analyzed describe a wide range of measures. Regarding Gender Equality Plans, given that the focus was on the conditions of applicability, priority was given to those texts with an approach that was not exclusively descriptive, but also analytical in nature, in which the emphasis is placed on the configuration of the measures that make up the GEPs, analyzing the links between them. That is to say, conceiving the Plans not as a multiplication of

measures, but as the articulation in such a way as to contribute to a profound transformation of the organizational culture.

Together with this type of comprehensive measures, **other policies/actions** were identified, among which the following stand out: generation and revision of knowledge, which implies a questioning of the traditional methods of knowledge production; elaboration and implementation of protocols; promotion and strengthening of gender institutions; awareness raising and training; and affirmative measures. A comprehensive analysis of the corpus of texts shows a tendency to broaden the thematic scope, as well as to integrate the different groups that are part of the higher education system (students, teachers, authorities, non-teaching staff). The measures that appear most frequently are those linked to the elaboration of diagnoses and protocols and other tools for dealing with situations of violence. The need to be aware of the problems related to gender inequalities can be understood as part of the feminist premise according to which "what is not named does not exist". In other words, only after knowing and making visible the starting point is it possible to design measures and tools to promote effective gender equality policies within higher education institutions. As for the interest in gender violence, this is a trend that accompanies the positioning of the issue on the public agenda, and the recognition that violence is a public and collective problem that requires interventions by the different institutions.

To understand the conditions of possibility of the processes of promotion and incorporation of gender equality in higher education institutions, it is essential to know both the **facilitating factors and the relevant actors**. Those most frequently mentioned are: regulatory frameworks linked to gender equality (in universities, but also national and regional legislation or international commitments); strategic alliances with different actors, including the feminist and women's movement; the formation of networks between universities; the political will of authorities, as well as the commitment of teachers and students; the existence of a strong and legitimate feminist leadership; and finally, the availability of resources to sustain efforts, including both human and financial resources.

Along with the progress made in recent years, the literature review also revealed a series of obstacles and challenges to achieving higher education and research institutions free of gender inequalities. A series of **external and internal hindering factors** to the educational system were identified. In the case of external obstacles, the most prominent are: cultural patterns and gender biases; vertical (glass ceiling) and horizontal segregation processes; motherhood and caregiving tasks; discrimination, gender violence and sexual harassment; the advance of conservative and religious groups; and the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the measures applied by the States. Regarding internal obstacles, the most frequent are: lack of data and statistics disaggregated by sex/gender; conservatism of university structures; weak and formal commitment to gender equality; scarcity of resources (human and economic); absence of an intersectional perspective; tensions between academic feminists and activists.

One of the objectives of the literature review process was to identify **gaps in** the production of knowledge on gender equality in higher education and research institutions in Latin American countries to then reflect on possible lines of research. These gaps were classified into different types. Regarding **methodological gaps**, one of the main deficits is the scarcity of documents that include details of the tools employed. Given that the INSPIRE Project seeks to make innovative knowledge and new perspectives available to academics, gender equality experts, professionals and trainers interested, as well as to policy makers who aim at institutional change, the absence of information on the tools used becomes a problem that needs to be addressed. As for the **thematic gaps**, although in recent years the scope of the issues analyzed has broadened, there are still few texts that analyze measures related to the promotion of new masculinities and awareness-raising work with aggressors; as well as economic incentive policies to promote greater presence and participation of women in universities, both for female students (for example, in STEM areas) and for faculty (especially with regard to work to eliminate unconscious biases and policies related to the reconciliation of work and family life). From the analysis of the texts, **gaps in the target populations** also emerge. As with the topics, although the academic production has worked to represent in its

academic production all the groups that make up the university system (students, teachers, authorities and non-teaching staff), and even the community (for example through university extension work), there are still populations that are scarcely addressed -such as the LGBTIQ+ group, indigenous women-, and others that are practically invisible, such as women with disabilities. Finally, gaps were identified regarding the **phases of gender mainstreaming processes** in higher education institutions. Thus, the corpus of texts studied focuses largely on the genesis of equality measures, and to a much lesser extent on how these measures or policies are implemented and evaluated.

Based on the results of the literature review, the following are some recommendations and possible axes of future research to promote gender equality measures in higher education and research institutions, taking into account the conditions for their application.

Given that Latin America is a very diverse region and that countries with different degrees of advancement and institutionalization of the gender perspective within the higher education system coexist within it, it is difficult to establish general recommendations regarding research design and the development of research questions that are useful for different contexts and realities. However, it is possible to affirm that a key aspect consists of having a diagnosis of gender inequalities in educational institutions, to be able to design routes for action in relation to the production of knowledge. In this sense, those countries with a more recent trajectory in this area can begin with the elaboration of diagnoses, taking as a basis the work that has been done in other countries of the region.

For those countries that already have this information, and/or in which progress has been made in the implementation of various measures to promote gender equality in universities (such as plans, protocols, gender units, mentoring), it would be advisable to prepare studies on their implementation and evaluation, indicating the actors involved, obstacles, strategies, and resources needed for their adequate implementation. Some future research lines can include:

- **Investigate the institutional characteristics that can foster gender equality in education and research institutions.** This would imply analyzing which institutional factors can contribute to the incorporation of gender equality in higher education, and to what extent (i.e. size, public or private nature, previous trajectory, whether it has a gender institutional framework).
- **Design models of analysis to evaluate the application and degree of implementation of gender equality measures in higher education institutions.** As can be seen from the review, most of the studies are focused on the analysis of the genesis of the documents and there is less evidence about their implementation. While Equality Plans generally include components related to monitoring and evaluation, these dimensions are often absent for the other measures.
- **In methodological terms, advance in the production of studies with an integral perspective.** To this end, these analyses should combine various methods and sources of information and, in order to ensure replicability and comparability, include detailed information on the tools used in the analysis.
- **Generate studies on measures to promote new masculinities and new femininities.** As the review revealed, gender roles, gender stereotypes and gender violence continue to be obstacles that prevent educational institutions from fully incorporating the gender perspective. It is therefore necessary to work with men, who are the main reproducers of violence, so that they can be socialized in non-hegemonic forms of masculinity.

## 5. Annexes

### 5.1 General Database Matrix

Available [here](#)

### 5.2 Gender Equality Plans Database Matrix

Available [here](#)

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