

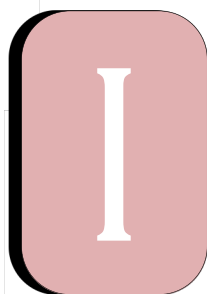
# Introduction

## Gender equality, media and education: A necessary global alliance

Igualdad de género, medios y educación: Una alianza global necesaria

Guest-edited special issue:

Dr. Francisco-José García-Ramos, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (España)  
Dr. M. Soledad Vargas-Carrillo, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (Chile)  
Dr. Alexandra Wake, RMIT University of Melbourne (Australia)



In 1979, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women", which recognizes that "the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields". Today, on the 40th anniversary of this Convention, the steps proposed in its Art. 10, relative to the role of education, says goals are still a pending subject for the education systems of even the most advanced countries. This problem becomes more poignant if we consider the new contexts of inequality arising from the media and technology revolutions as an obstacle to implement effective strategies and policies in educommunication, strategies which endeavour to fight discrimination and violence against women, educating in the principles of equality and diversity from a gender perspective.

The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995 took this endeavour to the next stage, resulting in the elaboration of the "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (Beijing 95), one of the most progressive and inspiring frameworks developed to date to promote women's empowerment and rights globally by focusing on twelve strategically relevant areas.

Regarding the role of women in and through the media, "Section J" of Beijing 95 set a milestone in establishing a specific framework of recommendations and strategic objectives in this area. Twenty-five years later, it is still vitally important to continue to demand "Section J" both from the media and from formal and informal educational spaces – a demand that should be particularly relevant for the various social agents involved in higher education both in the field of communication and educommunication.

As 2020 bears witness to the review of the "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" within the wider context of "Beijing +25", the strategic relevance of continuing to implement the measures and goals set out in "Section J" should be stressed once again in order to establish a necessary global alliance regarding gender equality, mass media and education. This is an issue more pressing than ever since the global agenda in this area is currently at risk of being diverted towards more contained and conservative spaces.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted by the United Nations in 2015. Its fifth goal, related to Gender Equality, establishes a framework that barely makes explicit reference to the key role of mass media for the successful achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as stated in the aforementioned Goal 5. This omission and simplification of its key points –both regarding "Section J" of Beijing 95 and all other sections approved twenty-five years ago– indicate that we are perhaps witnessing a progressive depoliticisation of the global agenda, as well as the dismantling of the fundamental role that the media and ICTs have in defending women's rights as tools for empowerment, shapers of meaning and creators of stereotypes.

# Introduction

Despite this scenario, the efforts to keep the Beijing 95 "Section J" framework alive and to continue creating comprehensive gender equality policies in the field of educommunication worldwide are still numerous. An example of this would be the various recommendations made by UNESCO through "The Global Alliance for Media and Gender" (GAMAG) and its network of universities integrated in "The International UNESCO UniTWIN Network on Gender, Media and ICTs". Amongst the specific actions undertaken by UNESCO-UniTWIN to promote these practices in the field of educommunication, its proposal for a model curricula developed in "Gender, media & ICTs: new approaches for research, education & training" (2019) stands out.



Taking the proposals by UNESCO and UNESCO-UniTWIN as a reference point, this special issue endeavours to deepen the analysis and discussion of the theoretical and practical aspects of the introduction –total or partial– of said recommendations, tools for assessment, model curricula, and methodologies. A space for critical analysis based on empirical contributions and specific experiences of implementation in different geographical contexts within the fields of gender training media and ICTs in education and teacher training in these areas.

In the first article, entitled "Gender equality and ICTs in formal educational contexts: A systematic review" Prendes-Espinosa, García-Tudela and Solano-Fernández present the results of a research project which, drawing on the scientific production of the last six years endeavours to analyse educational practices in formal contexts (childhood education, primary, secondary and higher education) that work on gender equality and ICTs. The research is designed as a systematic review, based on PRISMA statement and PICO strategy; after the filtering process of a total of 90 documents, 18 papers including both topics of study (gender and ICTs) were selected. One of the authors' main findings is that the majority of good practices detected at different educational levels are related to the use of web 2.0. and with STEM skills. Finally, regarding recommendations for the design of proposals that work on gender through ICTs, the "smart classroom" has become one of the emerging pedagogies of greater interest.

In the next article, "Gender studies in Communication Degrees" García-Ramos, Zurian and Gómez-Núñez analyse the presence of subjects with a specific focus on gender in the current degrees in the field of communication taught in Spanish universities, identifying as well the elements that define them at a thematic, methodological and relevant level within the curricula. The results reveal a scarce presence of this type of subjects, with a higher percentage in public universities than in private ones, and also a minimal relevance as compulsory subjects. This research study exposes the state of the current formal training in gender studies for future generations of media professionals, and serves as an endorsement for forthcoming changes of curricula in the European Higher Education Area context.

Thirdly, in the article, "Women on YouTube: Representation and participation through the Web Scraping technique", Regueira, Alonso-Ferreiro and Da-Vila analyse the representation and participation of women in what has already become the favourite entertainment platform for teens and preteens. In this sense, the paper explores the presence of women in these new spaces of participation, both from the perspective of producers and consumers

of content. An analysis based on Web Scraping of the Instagram profiles of the 50 most successful Youtubers in Spain was carried out, revealing a low representation of women among the channels with the highest number of views and subscribers. In addition, there is a lower presence of female audiences, and a strong segregation regarding topics: women are mostly associated with stereotypically feminine content such as beauty, drawmylife while men consume and produce mainly fitness and sports content. The study shows that YouTube, the platform representing the new online participation spaces reproduces the gender power structures and stereotypes of traditional media.

On their part, in the paper "Influence of Instagram stories on attention and emotion according to gender", Fondevila-Gascón, Gutiérrez-Aragón, Copeiro and Polo-López analyse the impact of media and social media on their users by enquiring about the success factors of actual influencers' Instagram Stories in order to determine whether the impact is greater or lesser depending on gender. This quantitative research uses Sociograph to measure the psychophysiological signals of the attentional level and the emotional level of people taking into account gender.

Last but not least, in "Victims and perpetrators of feminicide in the language of the Mexican written press", Tiscareño-García and Miranda-Villanueva Victims investigate the language used by national newspapers in Mexico when addressing the issue of feminicide regarding victims and perpetrators, as well as their relationship with the gender of the reporter and with each newspaper's agenda. Drawing on qualitative content analysis and on the theoretical framework of framing, the paper looks at the language used in the coverage of feminicide in 360 journalistic texts published during 2017, focusing on aspects such as the narrative of feminicide; the justification of the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator; social issues; and victim blaming. The results allow us to glimpse the ways in which written information on femicide is articulated today, as well as stressing the importance of continuing to work in a global way in the field of educommunication in order to definitively eradicate all forms of inequality and violence against women.

The articles published in this Special Issue contribute to deepen our understanding of the causes, realities and consequences of unequal gender relations; addressing the opportunities and practices stemming from unequal communication remains a challenge and an objective that, given the centrality of media and communication in today's world, must remain on the main agenda if we want to promote just, diverse and equitable societies.

Likewise, this Special Issue helps to make biased communicational treatments such as the perpetuation of stereotypes, discrimination and oppression more visible. At the same time, different understandings of the role of educommunication in transforming society are presented here, which could be used to train new generations of media professionals by making them fully sensitive to gender issues in both their workplaces and their productions.

Furthermore, this issue undoubtedly provides methodological valuable, since the approach to the subject matter is made from different perspectives. In summary, we have aimed to expand on the information about gender issues and, above all, to impact on the future communication environment to make it inclusive, diverse and open. All the contributions described here alert us to the need to accelerate the pace of progress in gender equality. We need to seize the opportunities provided by the digital environment to advance this purpose.

The challenge remains, as inequalities still exist. Thus, this special issue offers a deeper understanding of the complex underlying factors and how best to address them, which is key for the advancement of democracy and sustainable development in general.

If we are not sensitive to the inequalities exposed here, it will not be possible to respond to the challenge, let alone help the transformation. Therefore, this publication seeks to contribute to the full development of every human being -regardless of their sex or gender- in conjunction with the possibilities of the digital age

### Support

This Special Issue has been made possible thanks to the contribution of the network of universities conforming the International UNESCO UniTWIN "Network on Gender, Media and ICTs"; the founding provided by UNESCO and the Kingdom of the Netherlands; as well as the support of the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain), the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso (Chile) and the RMIT University of Melbourne (Australia).

### Referencias

- UniTWIN (2019). Gender, media, & ICTs. New approaches for research, education & training. UNESCO. <https://bit.ly/2LER4yQ>
- UN (1979). Convención sobre la eliminación de todas las formas de discriminación contra la mujer. 18 septiembre 1979. <http://bit.ly/35s9ry7>
- UN (Ed.) (2015). Transformar nuestro mundo: La Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible. Nueva York, 18 septiembre 2015. <https://bit.ly/2mej03a>
- UN Women (1995). Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995. <http://bit.ly/2PPYv7A>