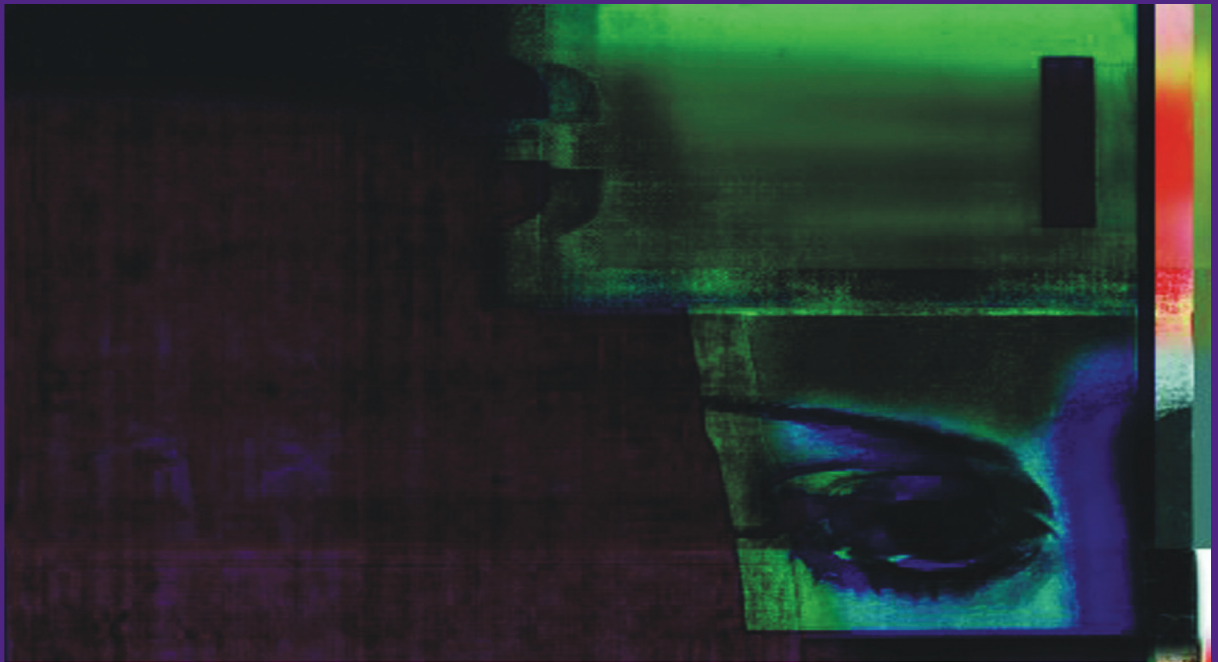


Studies on Higher Education



From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies Case Studies on Gender-Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education

Laura GRÜNBERG
Editor



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

CEPES

European Centre for Higher Education



From Gender Studies to Gender IN Studies
*Case Studies on Gender-Inclusive Curriculum
in Higher Education*

Laura Grünberg

Editor

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Serbia at the Crossroads. Gender Inclusiveness in Higher Education: Real or just Wishful Thinking?

Jelena ČERIMAN, Sanja MILUTINOVIĆ BOJANIĆ, and Gazela PUDAR

Abstract

The present paper examines and analyzes the level of gender content inclusiveness in faculty curricula, in Serbia. The analysis is focused on the introduction of gender curricula at the Universities of Belgrade, Niš, and Novi Sad and data gathered from interviews with academics from the investigated departments, and also supplied by experts in the field of education, working in governmental institutions. The case study covers the Departments of Humanities and Social Sciences of mentioned Universities. Findings indicate that the process of gender content inclusion in Serbia faces numerous difficulties and obstacles, often generating disapproval within the academic community itself. Nonetheless, owing to the individual efforts and enthusiasm of those academics involved in women's studies and in gender studies, university curricula in certain fields of studies such as Legal, Educational and Social Sciences are slowly, but steadily, undergoing revision while adapting their content to them, and the current of gender inclusiveness is on the rise.

Gender equality education constitutes an integral part of the entire education system in Serbia and in accordance with this principle, secondary school curriculum and faculty curriculum should be formulated so that they include gender sensitive content. One indicator that gender awareness policy is applied is the inclusion of the educational units that elaborate the gender dimension of social life at all levels of education. This kind of policy represents direct investment in democratically-oriented changes in Serbia, since the education system is the key instrument in endowing the younger generations with knowledge, values, and cultural models. The authors of "Women's human rights – practical application" submit an analogue statement:

"The curriculum is one of the main motors in developing stereotypes, in terms of gender roles – expected roles for men and women – as well as in promoting acceptance of such stereotypes. (...) But school could also reverse gender role stereotypes and lead the fight against discrimination of girls and women." (Mertus, *et al.*, 1995: 67)

This article examines and analyzes the degree gender related issues are included in Serbian university curricula. The research was conducted as a case study, by

examining faculty curricula at the Universities of Belgrade, Niš, and Novi Sad. In addition, the authors have also processed data gathered in interviews with the academic staff of the above-mentioned universities and data supplied by experts in the field of education and working in government institutions.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF GENDER AWARENESS

The country's legislation and institutions provides for the mechanisms required in implementing gender equality. The institutional mechanisms consist of bodies for gender equality on all levels of the government (central, provincial and local), strategies and action plans, as well as ombudsmen.

Laws and measures for establishing the conditions for the development of gender equality in Serbia are being enlarged more extensively during the past several years, alongside the processes that follow Serbia's accession to the European Union and the procedures of harmonizing the national laws with the European Union legislation. There are multiple reasons for such a late establishment of laws that regulate the field of gender equality. The political circumstances and the economic situation in Serbia during the 1990s, paradoxically, imposed other topics with 'higher' priorities. Moreover, the political structures of the '90s failed in even recognizing the significance of the gender equality issues. Actually, one of the main characteristics of that period was the destruction of a strong socially interactive platform, which also marked the removal of women/minorities/the disabled from the public to the private sphere. These were the factors that made Serbia the only country in the region without a law on gender equality until 2008.

Defining strategies and laws in the field of gender equality are mostly the result of the influence of the civil society and, above all, of women's associations, which worked on empowering and organizing women and on deconstructing the social context in terms of gender. Women's organizations (NGOs), operating in Serbia since the early 1990s. Their actions promoted and urged the faster development of gender policies by the government. Additionally, after 2000, they actively participated in the processes of setting up institutional mechanisms and developing the adequate legislation aimed at improving gender equality. The representatives of women's rights organizations actually participated in the Beijing Conference, when Yugoslavia's delegates were unable to officially attend it, due to sanctions. In 2003, Veronika Mitro, a member of the Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research, in Novi Sad, coordinated the development of an alternate report, for the CEDAW committee, on Roma women's rights in Vojvodina. In 2008, Marijana Dokmanović, member of the Citizen's association WSR NGO, coordinated the

project devising the indicators for measuring discrimination against women. (Svenka Savić, interviewee)

The legal framework on integrating the gender perspective in education is the *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia* (v. site), passed in 2006. It guarantees the equality of men and women in developing the policy of equal opportunities (Art. 15) and the possibility of introducing special measures for obtaining full equality and banning discrimination (Art. 21). It includes the *Anti-Discrimination Law of the Republic of Serbia*¹ and the *Law on the Equality of Sexes*.² The *Law on the Equality of Sexes* is in harmony with the European Union directives relating to gender equality. It is notable that the law is entitled *Law on the Equality of Sexes*, and not *Law on Gender Equality*, which is the result of a slight confusion in the understanding of the term, gender, by the decision-making structures. The title represents a compromise of sorts, needed so that the law could be adopted (Jasna Vujačić, interviewee). It also illustrates the ambiguous mood of the political structures towards gender issues in Serbia.

In addition to these laws, the base of the legal framework for gender-aware education was also laid by juridical measures and laws that indirectly regulate this field: the *Criminal Code*, adopted in 2005, the *Family Law* of 2005, and the *Labour Law* (v. sites). The *Family Law* regulates relations between partners, protects children's rights, and introduces special measures against domestic violence. The *Criminal Code* sanctions domestic violence, and marital rape. The *Labour Law* prohibits gender discrimination and sexual harassment at work, and ensures equal pay for work of equal value (Article 104). Two strategies that incorporate the gender perspective ought to be mentioned here: *Poverty Reduction Strategy*³ and *National Employment Strategy*.⁴

¹ In force since April 6, 2009, the *Law* stipulates: general ban of discrimination, forms of discrimination, and procedures for protecting against the same (Art. 1). Provoking and stimulating inequality, hate and intolerance based on sex and gender identity are qualified as severe forms of discrimination (Article 13) (See, website).

² This *Law*, adopted in 2009, is part of the set of anti-discrimination laws requiring public institutions to be engaged in establishing a policy of equal opportunities in all fields of social life. It also guarantees the equal participation of sexes in all phases of decision making processes (Article 3). It defines the duties of state administration, of the educational bodies and institutions, providing for the implementation of the equal opportunity policy, when it comes to drawing up secondary school and higher education curricula, as well as when setting standards for it (Article 31, para. 4).

³ The main goals of the *Poverty Reduction Strategy* are: reduction of gender inequality until its total annulment; greater representation of women in government and social institutions, gender budgeting; and setup of gender sensitive statistics. (See, website)

⁴ The *Employment Strategy* was adopted in 2005 and it provides an array of measures to improve the position of women on the labour market. Encouraging women's employment is one of the priorities defined by the *National Employment Action Plan for 2011*. (See, website)

The piece of legislation directly regulating the field of gender-sensitive education is the *Law on Higher Education* (v. site), the main principles of which are the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and respect for human rights and civil liberties (Art. 4). In general, the process of adopting various institutional mechanisms for gender equality started after 2000, along with the changes of the political regime in Serbia. Still, the only executive government mechanism for gender equality in Serbia is the Directorate for Gender Equality,⁵ at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, established in 2008. The *National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality*, adopted in February, 2009 represents the first strategic document of the Republic of Serbia in the field of gender equality and covers various issues, such as women's participation in policy and decision making processes, in the fields of education, economy, healthcare, violence against women, but also in the fields of media and public opinion, for the 2009-2015 period. One of the priorities of this policy is gender sensitive statistics. The Directorate for Gender Equality provided some recent data: 65 percent of students enrolled in Humanities and Art Faculties are female; the percentage is equal at the School of Medicine; only 25 percent of female student body is enrolled in Natural, Technical, and Technological Sciences.

Despite the great improvement in the establishment of the legal framework for the promotion of gender equality, the biggest challenge that still remains is its implementation and monitoring the enforcement of the *Laws*. Professor Svenka Savić, PhD., while considering the legislature in the Republic of Serbia, appreciated that laws in Serbia are written in a gender-insensitive language. (Savić, *et al.*, 2006: 55-63).

A 'BOTTOM-UP' GENDERING

Raising awareness about gender equality is primarily the task of those in the public office, educators, academia, parents, and the media, so that sexist, homophobic and discriminatory behavioural patterns are not reproduced.

One way of tracking the endorsement of gender equality in education is the adoption of the 'bottom-up' approach in leading empirical research on the various trends of the gender dimension. Good examples could always generate material for further theoretical studies and provide coherent data. In point, there are at least three sources of the analysis on gender sensitive-content in textbooks that can be compared. The latest volume, *Comprehensive Analysis of Gender Dimension in*

⁵ The Directorate for Gender Equality implements the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, as well as the Action Plan, which represents the strategy's operational development. This institution is also tasked with monitoring the execution of the *Law on the Equality of Sexes* (See, website.)

University Educational Material, was published in 2010, by the Centre for the Study of Gender and Politics at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. The conclusion advanced is rather pessimistic: "If the sample is representative, it would result that almost 90 percent of the educational material in the higher education system is, from a gender perspective, unacceptable." (Baćević, *et al.*, 2010: 33) Another study, *Towards the non-Homophobic Secondary School – The Analysis of a Representative Sample of Textbooks in Regard to the Treatment of Homosexuality* (Maljković, *et al.*, 2008), analyzed the gender sensitive-content of secondary school textbooks. Its results were also rather discouraging, specifying that, *e.g.*, homosexuality is mostly mentioned in textbooks of medicine rather than in those of Educational Sciences. LABRIS, the organization for lesbian human rights, carried out some similar research in higher education, *Same Sex Orientation in Faculty Textbooks and Literature* (LABRIS, 2006), and the findings provide unequally represented and misinterpreted gender themes.

THE USE OF GENDER-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

Topics covering this issue are present in the graduate Gender Studies curriculum, at the Faculty for Political Sciences, and at the Faculty of Law, both in Belgrade, within the course "Gender Studies". At the University of Niš, gender-sensitive language is listed as a subject matter within the curriculum of the Faculty of Law; at the University of Novi Sad, within the Gender Studies, various courses deal with this issue.

The greatest contribution to the gender awareness of students and the public, in the use of gender-sensitive language, is certainly that of the professors from the Department for Gender Studies and departments for language study in Novi Sad. Professor Svenka Savić is the author and co-author of several books and publications advocating for the introduction and use of gender-sensitive terminology in public speech and education. Likewise, Veronika Mitro, Marijana Čanak, Gordana Štasni, and many other experts are involved in this topic at the University of Novi Sad.

Generally, in Serbia, the scientific and professional communities have different opinions on the use of the gender-sensitive language. On the one side, there are experts claiming that the invisibility of women in language is connected to the invisibility of women in society. Therefore, it is important to challenge the current order of things. On the other side, certain authorities consider all gender-sensitive terminology as a violent threat against established norms, liable to trigger destabilization in the society. There are also experts engaged in mediating between these two opposing standpoints. They maintain that the use of gender-sensitive

language is important. To implement it non-violently, their suggestion is to promote gender equality by initially changing social relations.

This is the position of the Committee for the Standardization of the Serbian Language.⁶ The Committee finds certain proposals for innovation good, foremost because of their use in the Serbian language, so that the discrepancy between today's situation in society and the language structure⁷ would be diminished. But it also considers that certain examples lead to linguistically faulty derivatives⁸. Like in other languages, the male gender in job titles that are independent of the natural gender of their holder also has a universal and generic value in Serbian. In this sense, linguists do not advise the use of male and female forms of job titles, since the practice generally overloads the syntax.⁹ Professor Klajn states that "languages emerged in a time of absolute patriarchy from where the generic value of the male gender originates. However, the relations in society are changing, but language systems follow these changes in less regular speed." (Ivan Klajn, interviewee) It is thus advisable that the use of gender-sensitive language should not be imposed, but rather introduced gradually into the general language culture. Most students at the Faculty of Philology, according to Professor Klajn, do not have sufficient interest in the issue of using gender-sensitive language. It is clear that in the years to come, debates concerning linguistic changes will expand and the field of language will certainly be recognized as a realm of concrete measures in gender-inclusive practices in Serbia.

GENDERING HIGHER EDUCATION

About fifteen years before the 1990s, when gender studies started developing, in almost all republics of the Former Yugoslavia, the feminist movements were strong.

⁶ Professor Ivan Klajn PhD., member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences.

⁷ In Serbian language the name of certain professions is easily gendered for men and for women, but there are certain examples of professions the female gender of which is not 'naturally' resolved. Professor Klajn states the following: "The normative linguistics up to date didn't pay attention to the question of human rights but above all considered these innovative linguistic forms as a result of the lack of harmony between actual situation in the society and the linguistic structure, resulting in obvious grammatical faults". Professor Klajn provided an example: "Nastavnik je dete uputio školskom psihologu, a ova je rekla." [The teacher sent the child to the *school's psychologist*, and *she said...*]. In Serbian, the noun, psychologist, is masculine in gender; the use of the female pronoun in the subordinate clause seems grammatically inadequate.

⁸ Such as derivatives of nouns ending with suffix *-log*. Grammar experts agree that most of the female suffixes should be *-škinja*, as it is advised in the Register proposed by Savić, *et al.*, (*biološkinja*, *psihološkinja*, *etc.*), even though these solutions are not in harmony with the existing syntax rules.

⁹ When the man ticket-inspector the woman ticket-inspector asks for your ticket, you need to show him or her your ticket.

The creators of the feminist actions were largely interconnected among themselves, but they were also on very good terms with colleagues such as Christine Delphi, Diana Leonard, Dacia Maraini, Carla Ravaioli, Elisabetta Rasy, guests of the First International Feminist Conference, *Drug-ca žena/Comrade woman* (Mladenović, 2006), held in Belgrade, in 1978.¹⁰ The Conference debates and discourses critically unveiled 'universal' ideological issues, which disguised masculine logo centric domination. Mostly intellectuals, these Serbian, Croat, Slovene, and Bosnian women and men introduced to the Yugoslav public critical work and researches on the so-called second wave of feminism, *écriture féminine* and the French theory, in general, each of them continuing their own emancipating genesis.

The situation changed during the 1990s, when the predominant American paradigm of the conceptually groundbreaking gender studies started to appear. Authors, such as J. Butler, E. Grosz, D. Cornell, G. Rubin, and D. Haraway, were largely brought into the context of new political changes and have been read and translated.

From that period on, Gender studies in Serbia have been developing in at least two directions. One direction is Women's Studies that have expanded within the women's movements (preferring the activist side); the other one consists in developing gender studies as an academic discipline. In 1993, Anđelka Milić,¹¹ full professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, together with her younger colleagues, Žarana Papić, about to defend her PhD. Thesis, and Marina Blagojević¹² submitted the very first women studies curriculum to the University authorities, hoping to start teaching as soon as the officials receive their proposition. Unfortunately, they found out that most of the Faculty Committees considered women studies not opportune for the Academia and the only solution was to propose gender content as a complementary or elective programme of study. This finally happened and didn't change through time in almost all cases of our research. Since, within the women's movement, women's studies had a dual function: to articulate the knowledge gained through the fight for women's rights

¹⁰ From Croatia, were present Lidija Sklevicky, Rada Iveković, Slavenka Drakulić, Vesna Kesić, Ruža First, Đurđa Milanović, and Gordana Cerjan Letica; from Bosnia, came Nada Ler Sofronić; and Žarana Papić, Sonja Drljević, Jasmina Tešanović, Dunja Blažević, Lina Vušković, Sofija Trivunac, Lepa Mladenović, and Vanda Krajinović were from Serbia among many others.

¹¹ A. Milić spoke about this experience in an interview on "Ten years of Women studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade" (See, website)

¹² In an interview, Marina Blagojević explained three dominant currents of the movement: politically engaged and anti-war groups (Women's Lobby; Women's party, Women's Parliament, Women in Black); groups fighting violence against women (SOS, Incest Trauma Centre, Women's Safe House); minority group (the lesbians-Labrys, the refugees-The Swallow); educational group at the university (Centre for Women's studies). (Kolarić, 2008:154)

and to disseminate the standpoints of the feminist theories to the movement, they represented a basis for the development of gender studies in universities. (Blagojević, 1998) From the very beginning, women's and gender studies were conceived as interdisciplinary programmes. During the same period, the feminist group, "Women and Society," helped establish the "Centre for Women's Studies, Research, and Communication" as the first alternative academic program. Based, at the beginning, on the traditional and historical approach in the matter of women emancipation, the programme was gradually upgraded, in order to introduce courses that explored various topics of gender in a range of manners (especially in Arts, Media analysis, disciplines related to human/women rights). Within the third wave of feminism and under the Anglo-American influence (with English as a *lingua franca*), gender discourses were shaped in accordance to the new trends. Further actions were aimed at setting up high-level studies (graduate and postgraduate) at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad and Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. Nevertheless, together with improvements in the approach to gender issues, in Social Sciences and Humanities, the gender issue also raised a strong resistance that was backed by the overall painful ordeal of the whole society, caused by wars.

ACADEMIA AND GENDER STUDIES

The Department for Gender Studies, at the graduate and postgraduate levels, at the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Novi Sad is the only official academic centre of its kind, in Serbia. The Centre, set up in 2003, is administered by Vera Vasić. Within the graduate and postgraduate gender studies, students – coming from a wide range of scientific fields – obtain the needed qualifications to carry out gender-sensitive research; they learn to critically assess the concepts of sex and gender, natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, etc. the role of women in social life, and to recognize the social relations in micro- and macro-environment, based upon the distribution of gender roles. They are instructed to apply the interdisciplinary and gender sensitive approach to media, education, economy, law, and other social spheres, but also in Natural Sciences.

Gender studies were established thanks to the activists of the NGO Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research, who have invested great energy in raising the citizens' gender awareness, aiming at eradicating discrimination. The process of incorporating gender studies into academia began in February 2003 (Svenka Savić, interviewee), when activists of the Citizens' Association WSR organized an International Conference on Curriculum which was attended by representatives of Women's Studies from neighbouring countries: Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, etc. During the Conference, an agreement was reached on the steps to follow in the process of incorporating

gender studies at the University, which meant sending a request to the University on initiating a postgraduate studies programme. The Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality, the Citizens' Association WSR, and a network of women's nongovernmental organizations in Vojvodina were united in the idea of establishing the University Centre for Gender Studies. In 2004, a graduate Gender Studies course began, based on a curriculum proposed by Professor Svenka Savić. The University adopted a three-year postgraduate course, and the first generation of students enrolled in 2005. In 2010, sixteen students were enrolled in Gender Studies (seven in graduate and nine in postgraduate studies).

The biggest financial aid came from the NGO, Reconstruction Women's Fund (WSR),¹³ which invested 3.5 million dinars in scholarships for students enrolled in Gender Studies. Lectures in Gender Studies were held at the offices of the WSR, until 2009. The WSR library offers large gamut of titles for students' research purposes. The library of the Association accumulated 2,500 titles, partly donated to the University library of Novi Sad, in 2009. Thanks to professors active in the WSR, students have the opportunity to attend the lectures of various guest speakers from the country and from abroad. The distinctive character of the Gender Studies in Novi Sad relies in the fact that this is the only Centre training students in the use of oral history method, in their research work. They also lead projects in the field of gender-aware language.

GENDER STUDIES IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR OF EDUCATION

As already mentioned, the founding of non-academic women's studies in Belgrade was initiated by the feminist group "Woman and Society". The first one-semester course began on March 8, 1992. The Centre for Women's Studies and Associations for Women's Initiative (AWIN) were established in 1998. The Centre for Women's Studies, Belgrade, represents an interdisciplinary educational project, consisting of three elements: lecturing, research and publication program. Within the one-year undergraduate education programme, students are engaged in researching gender, body, and identity, the history and development of women's movement, women's human rights, peace studies, but also the critical theory and policy of diversity.

This programme is not accredited by the Republic of Serbia's Ministry of Education and from its beginnings it has fully relied on the initiative and activities of women's activist and peace groups. In 2010, the 21st generation of students was

¹³ The *Žarana Papić* scholarship programme represents the financial support to women for gaining knowledge, regional and global exchange in the field of gender/women's issues. RZF allocates the greatest number of scholarships for graduate and postgraduate Women's Studies in the country, as well as for certain gender and peace programmes abroad.

enrolled in the alternative non-academic programme of gender studies. Although academic gender studies do exist, a large number of students still apply to this programme. Nonetheless, because of insufficient resources, both human and technical, the Centre for Women's Studies cannot accept all applications. The main goal of the project was the establishment of academic gender/women's studies, goal achieved in 2003. Women's Studies in Novi Sad started as a non-academic programme organized by the NGO Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research which was founded in 1997. Therefore, the Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research carries out an interdisciplinary, non-academic educational programme, instructing on the sex divide in the domains of education, science, art, religion, technology, and other forms of everyday life, as well as on the issues of gender social defining in Serbia and the world. In one decade, from 1997 to 2007, one thousand women were educated within the two-year Women's Studies programme with this organization. (Svenka Savić, interviewee) The main goal of the organization was the establishment of the academic gender/women's studies which was realized in 2004.

The Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality established an award for contributors to the emancipation of women and gender equality in Vojvodina. It is equally awarded to individuals and organizations. Dr. Svenka Savić received this award in 2003. Gordana Stojaković, a member of the Citizen's Association WSR, received it in 2009, and in 2005, the recipient was the Citizen's Association WSR, for its work on promoting gender equality and reducing discrimination. There is no award of this kind in any other part of Serbia.

GENDER IN STUDIES

In the first decade of the 21st Century, gender studies adopted a mainly intersectional approach, introducing ethnicity, race (especially in Novi Sad, working within the female Roma population), poverty, and/or disability into its research categories. Veronika Mitro was adviser for the *Roma in Vojvodina – Expressions of Cultural Identity through Performance* project (Kaufman, 2000). Discrimination, domestic violence, homophobia, or sexism, women's and children's rights represented crucial issues in the courses thought by Professor Zorica Mršević, at the University of Singidunum, Faculty for European Juridical and Political Studies, in Novi Sad. Lately, some other issues were inducted, such as the treatment of the minorities and the 'normalization' trends concerning the non- / acceptance of gay-lesbian-trans population by the society.

Symptomatically enough, gender inclusiveness is still absent from the curriculum, at the faculties of Natural, Technical, and Technological Sciences, except for the courses taught by Associate Professor Biljana Stojković, in the

Department for Genetics and Evolution, at the Faculty of Biological Sciences, and those taught by Professor Dragana Popović, at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. The Faculties of Medicine in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, and Niš do not include gender topics in their curricula, although their curricula includes such topics as sex-change or various plastic surgeries related to sex.

Politics

In 1997, the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, started to offer an elective course in the field of gender studies, thanks to Professor Marina Blagojević and the then Dean, Professor Vukašin Pavlović. (Daša Duhaček, interviewee) At the beginning, it was offered as an elective course, in all departments, at the undergraduate level (except for the Department of International Relations). At present, it is still offered as an elective course only at the Department of Journalism and Communication. Gender Studies elective course also exists at the postgraduate level of study.

Graduate Gender Studies were established in 2003. Their name was later changed into Gender and Policy Studies. This graduate programme lasted until 2005, when it was officially cancelled. The course included lectures, various forms of practical activities, workshops, seminars, and consultations. Its curriculum was devised to emphasize the political consequences of the theoretical concepts. The biggest support for the establishment of the Gender Studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, came from the then Dean, Mijat Damjanović, and Professors Snežana Milojević, and Ljubinka Trgovčević, Dean of postgraduate studies, at the time. Even though there was substantial support by the educational structures for the institutionalization of the Gender Studies, the field met with strong opposition on the part of the Faculty of Political Sciences staff.¹⁴

In 2005, the graduate course on Gender and Policy Study was launched and in January 2006, the first generation of students enrolled for the course. Currently, the graduate Culture and Gender Studies – as the course is called today – students study the basic qualifiers of gender (gender, body, and sexuality); modern theories of gender identities; correlation of gender, language and politics; modern political philosophies and gender issues, as well as policies on gender equality.

The graduate courses, *Gender and Policy Studies* and *Culture and Gender Studies*, at this faculty were established with the support of the NGO Centre for Gender Studies militants, in Belgrade. The courses originated in the non-academic,

¹⁴ Completely misunderstanding the significance of the gender topic, certain professors failed to recognize the importance of institutionalizing Gender Studies. The Faculty for Political Sciences academics, even if aware of the topic, refused the official recognition of the gender studies because of the politically active Centre for Women's Studies.

alternative education programme on Women's Studies, which started in 1992. The curriculum for the graduate studies was designed by members and associates of the NGO Centre for Women's Studies Belgrade. In the years to follow, the course curricula underwent major changes that, above all, entailed the narrowing of topics. The reasons for such changes reside in Serbia's agreement with the Bologna Process and the switch from two-year graduate studies to one-year graduate programmes.

Owing to personal contacts among the professors who used to work with the Belgrade Centre for Women's Studies, their students had the opportunity to attend lectures of numerous guest speakers from the country and from abroad.¹⁵ The Centre library, set up in 1994, boasts around 4500 titles, in eight languages, 120 journals, and about 100 copies of national and international periodicals. The library also contains an archive and documentation centre. The library is the recipient of a donation – legacy of Žarana Papić – containing 2000 titles and extremely rich documentation on the women and feminist movement in Yugoslavia.

The *Women's Studies* journal, published by the NGO Centre of Women's Studies, was launched in 1995. It was envisioned as a space for the beneficial exchange of views on the modern issues of the gender theory in the region. Most importantly, the journal was conceived in the attempt to disseminate gender topics among the students, for them to identify the journal as the place to express their ideas and views, thus bringing the youth into modern feminist works. Lately, the journal has been renamed *Genero*. Even though intended to be a quarterly, because of financial difficulties, the journal is issued once a year.

In the near future, *Genero* will be integrated in the work of the Centre for Gender and Policy Study, founded in 2006, in Belgrade, within the Faculty of Political Sciences. From the very beginning, the target of centre was the foundation, implementation, and development of gender studies inside the academia as an independent research unit. The centre is administered by Daša Duhaček.

Sociology

In 1993, professors from the Department of Sociology, together with Assistant Professor B. Arsić, from the Department of Philosophy, initiated the introduction of a new course, subsequently presented as an elective course on women's issues to all departments at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. (Nada Sekulić, interviewee) The greatest contribution to the course introduction was that of Žarana Papić, who, at that time, was also active in the nongovernmental sector, so

¹⁵To mention only a few names: Isabel Marcus, Svetlana Slapšak, Celia Hawkesworth, Ania Meulenbelt, Paule Gentot, Armando Gnisci, Elizabeta Seleva, Heidi Witzig, Katarina Vesović, Daphne Winland, Andrea Feldman.

the lectures that she held represented a combination of activism and theory. Lectures at the newly established course were organized in a dynamic way so that students were introduced to the main subject matter relating to gender and were able to advance their knowledge of these topics through independent work. Students expressing their interests proposed topics for their papers. Furthermore, professors have given them main support and guidance in helping them in realizing their ideas.

In terms of Sociology studies, the University of Belgrade offers the most comprehensive curriculum on gender studies in Serbia. *Gender Studies* and *The Study of Gender* courses are maintained at the Department of Sociology as an elective course at all study levels (undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate). The curricula have not undergone major changes, so lectures are held using the initial principles of the course. The lectures are interactive in character, and students are mostly interested in topics concentrating on women's rights, the issue of reproduction, the issue of sexual rights, and cultural stereotypes.

At the undergraduate level, the *Gender studies I* curriculum includes: defining the main terms of gender categories (gender, sex, gender roles, and gender identities), the history of feminism and feminist theories, the topic of women's health, introducing students to the relevance and significance of gender studies to the modern social thought. This course carries three ESPB points.

At the graduate level, *Gender Studies II* course goal is introducing students to the latest trends in theoretical thought and practice of women's movements in the world, with a special emphasis on feminism and social position of women in Serbia. This course carries six ESPB points.

At the postgraduate level, the following subject matter is researched throughout the *Studies of gender* course: modern status of feminist ideas, practice, and organization; post-feminist and post-modern views on sex and gender; gender interrelations and interactions; commercialization of intimacy and sexual gender practice, as well as the modern social status of women in a comparative perspective, through economic, professional, political, cultural, and communication aspects. This course carries ten ESPB points.

At the University of Niš, the gender content is present in the curricula of several courses offered at the Departments of Sociology. The compulsory course on *Sociology of Relations between the Sexes* is addressed to undergraduate students and carries five ESPB points. At the postgraduate studies in Sociology, gender content is researched through the elective course *Sociology of Gender*, which carries ten ESPB points.

At the University of Novi Sad, at the Department of Sociology, gender content is researched through the compulsory course, *Social Anthropology*, at the undergraduate level, which carries eight ESPB points. This course examines the

process of socialization taking into account cultural differences, evolution of kinship, as well as concepts of body, sex, and gender.

Anthropology

At the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, the gender content is present in the curricula and courses offered by the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology. Namely, gender is, for the most part, examined in the undergraduate compulsory courses, *Anthropology of Gender and Affiliation*, *National Ethnology/Anthropology – Body and Identity*, *National Ethnology/Anthropology – Religion and Gender*, and *Anthropology of Material Culture*. At the graduate level, gender topics are studied in a compulsory course on the *Methodology of Ethnology and Anthropology*, as well as in an elective course on *Urban and Gender Studies*.

Anthropology of Genders and Affiliation was the first gender-related course offered by the Department of Anthropology and Ethnology. The course goal is introducing students to the theoretical approaches and studies of gender relations, marriage, family, body and sexuality, while examining the different cultural concepts of these relations. This course focuses on the problems of the conceptual overlapping of gender structures with kinship relations, displayed through different policies and practices in regard to family, biological reproduction, and new reproductive technologies. Problems of identity and the ethical issues related to it are the main interests of this course. The course carries six ESPB points. (Zorica Ivanović, interviewee)

The *Urban and Gender Studies* course offers students the opportunity to analytically grasp the gender aspect of the modern world, get acquainted with the basic network of concepts that enable gender analysis, and acquire knowledge in relation to the anthropology of public, administrative policies and practices, in terms of gender relations. Research on masculinity is an integral part of this course curriculum. Interestingly enough, the Anthropology of Masculinity emerged as a discipline, in order to match Women's studies. (Zorica Ivanović, interviewee) Nevertheless, this discipline gradually changed, due to the fact that the gender aspect of the human existence does not only mean reviewing the status of women, but also incorporating the dimension of correlation of different gender identities in the larger social context. This course carries six ESPB points.

Educational Sciences

At the Department of Pedagogy/Educational Sciences, at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, the gender content is present in the elective course on *Programmes of Civic Education* at the undergraduate level, which carries six ESPB points. The

Programmes of Civic Education course was introduced in 2006, at the initiative of Professor Mirjana Pešić, who, at that time, was the president of the Commission for the Democratization of Education in Serbia. (Mirjana Pešić, interviewee) The course aims at understanding concepts and educational principles of democracy and the civic society, acquiring practical knowledge in teaching civic education, and developing public awareness and activism. Through lectures of this course, students are able to grasp the political aspects of gender relations and deconstruct certain stereotypes present in both scientific disciplines and everyday life. They are engaged in preparing and questioning the practical project in one concrete field of the subject matter. During the course, students are taught to understand diversity and recognize the importance of diversity at all levels, from the biological, the individual-psychological, to the socio-political plan. Students are welcome to adopt certain values against gender stereotypes and different types of prejudice. Since students who successfully pass this course become qualified to teach Civic Education, in primary and secondary schools, the significance of implementing the gender content into the curriculum of this course is fundamental. Since the future lecturers are trained to transfer knowledge, provide abilities and skills to the younger generations, they can directly shape the future society given that school teachers are part of the educational process of a person from the very early age.

At the University of Niš, within the Department of Pedagogy, at the undergraduate level, gender content is studied in *Civic Education*, an elective course carrying five ESPB points. The course main objective is the comprehension of the concepts and principles of education for democracy and civil society, acquisition of practical knowledge in Civic Education and development of public awareness and activism.

The Department of Pedagogy/Educational Sciences, at the University of Novi Sad, included gender content in the elective course, *History of Women's Education*, which carries three ESPB points, at undergraduate level. The course goal is gaining insight into the specifics of educational work with girls and young women, through the historical development of pedagogical theory and practice.

Legal Sciences

Gender content is researched, to the greatest extent, at the Faculty of Law, at University of Niš, in *Legal Studies on Gender*, an elective course offered at the undergraduate level. The course lectures are held by Prof. Slobodanka Konstantinović-Vilić PhD, Prof. Nevena Petrušić PhD, Dr. Prof. Miomira Kostić PhD, and Prof. Natalia Žunić PhD. The course consists of theoretical classes, practical activities, seminars, and research projects. Its goal is developing the students' gender awareness – future lawyers and/or juridical experts – in issues of gender

discrimination. They are trained to perceive existing legal institutions and offices through the gender perspective and understand the significance of applying the gender theory in jurisprudence. The principal aim of this course is to enable students to connect theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of women's rights, but also to envisage alternative modes of partnerships taking into account the European gender perspectives. This course covers a wide range of the gender topics: prejudice and stereotypes pursuing feminism; gender analysis and the fight against misogyny; stereotypes of women in Serbian culture; forms and types of discrimination; status and rights of women through history; feminist legal theory; political rights of women as a democratic interest of society; discrimination and exploitation of women in marriage; reproductive rights and liberties; criminal justice status of women; sexism in language and gender sensitive public speech; gender regimes in countries in transition; standards and mechanism for achieving gender equality in democratic countries. The course carries five ESPB points.

At the Faculty of Law, in Belgrade, gender content is studied at the undergraduate level through the elective course, *Gender Studies*, which carries four ESPB points. This course is lead by Prof. Dragica Vujadinović and Prof. Vojislav Stanimirović.

As already mentioned, Novi Sad hosts a private Faculty of European Law and Political studies, where, among other courses, Professor Zorica Mršević, also a Deputy Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia, teaches an undergraduate elective course on gender. As an experimental scholar who taught at the Universities of Iowa, Budapest, Vienna, but also at the Centre for Women's Studies in Belgrade, since its beginnings, Prof. Mršević concentrates her teaching on gender-insensitive juridical regulations, in order to prepare her students to challenge these practices.

GENERAL FINDINGS: PAVING THE WAY FOR GENDER INCLUSIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The analysis of the gender-including faculty curricula in Serbian higher education, showed that:

- Gender Studies, as an independent study programme, is present in two lectureships in Serbia: graduate *Gender Studies*, at the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, and *Gender Studies* at the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Novi Sad, at the graduate and postgraduate levels.
- When it comes to the gender-inclusive courses, it is only at the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology of the University of Belgrade that students do get to know this topic through several *compulsory courses* at the

undergraduate and graduate level. At the other investigated departments, the gender content is part of *elective courses*.

- The process of establishing courses and departments in which gender topics are researched has always generated disapproval within the academic community itself.¹⁶ During 1990s, the reasons were political in nature, but they persisted at various levels, even after 2000. The main cause may be recognized at the overall cultural level of the society, accompanied by the lack of organizational skills.
- The availability of literature on gender, in faculty libraries, does not vary much from the availability of literature on other topics, if a comparison of representation of titles in library funds is made. The greatest number of titles in the field of gender can be found at the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade (due to the library of the NGO Centre for Women's Studies Belgrade), as well as the Department for Gender Studies at the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Novi Sad (due to the library of the NGO Citizen's Association Women's Studies and Research).
- Regardless of the presence of gender content (either explicitly or hidden in the context of educational units) in courses that do not primarily research gender, educating students on the topic depends most often by the professor's personal initiative. Likewise, it is difficult to measure the inclusiveness of gender content in disciplines other than in Social Sciences and Humanities.
- The endorsement of the 'gender' legislation is the indicator of the existing political will to introduce gender issues in the public area, in Serbia. However, this political will is mostly the result of the NGO pressure and synchronization with European Union regulations, necessary in the process of European Union accession. There are no specific regulations or bodies in higher education, except for the general stock phrases about the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and respect for human rights and civil liberties.
- Courses that incorporate the gender perspective for the most part are taught by women, and women often elect to follow lectures from these courses. Nearly all teaching is carried out by academics. However, a significant number of these lecturers is also engaged as NGO activists, which helps them

¹⁶ In 2004, when academic "Gender Studies" were being introduced, in the Senate session of the University of Novi Sad, the then Rector, Fuada Stanković, feeling the storm of indignation at the mere mention of the phrase, Women's Studies, suggested they remained under the label, Gender, since the term was less known!

gain specific active-oriented knowledge included in their lectures. Except for the close solidarity within their circles and the recognition of their work by sister-organizations in Europe or in the World, getting academic promotion or reward for efforts made in gender context is extremely rare at the state level.

- For the first time, in December 2010, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration and Minister of Science and Technological Development, Božidar Djelić presented two national scholarships of the UNESCO L'OREAL national programme, *For Women in Science*.¹⁷ On this occasion, Djelić also announced that Serbia has a solid gender proportion, as compared to Europe – 45 percent of scientists are women. Although this information indicates only women's participation, and not their decision-making role in science, it is compatible with the aims and procedures of gender mainstreaming in the European Union research and development policy.
- The most renowned centres and institutions for implementing gender content into educational curricula in higher education still largely belong to the private social sector. This sector is intent on training the new generations of students through networking on European programmes and providing individual scholarships.
- Concerning the financial support to 'engender' curricula in higher education, only the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Novi Sad manages to get funding for its functioning. There is no simultaneous effort to establish such studies at other universities, at the moment. Gender content incorporated in various disciplines and courses are funded through their financial lines.

Given the fact that, in Serbia, gender inclusiveness in higher education is still developing and in the process of adjustment, we are unable to recommend only one specific institution and we cannot ignore the extreme willingness and the enthusiasm of the entire private sector, also engaged in this matter, at the Universities in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš ... "Gender mainstreaming is a demanding strategy, which requires policymakers to adopt new perspectives, acquire new expertise, and change their established operating procedures," state Pollack and Hafner-Burton, in their concise overview on gender mainstreaming in the European Union. (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000: 33). In this sense, the internal institutional

¹⁷ The European Commission Communication, *Women and Science: Mobilising Women to Enrich European Research*, inaugurated the *Women and Science* programme in February, 1999. (Pollack, 2000:30). Serbia adhered to this programme, while following the steps to its EU accession in June 2010.

reform of higher education (yet to come in Serbia) – which would be able to make this a permanent strategy and no longer at random intervals – should represent the necessary steps to follow in order to support the efforts of numerous individuals seeking recognition within its realm, but also in the entire society.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULA IN SERBIA

- Gender topics should be introduced in all segments of higher education, by means of short-term workshops and training courses, considering the fact that the process of gender awareness depends on the cultural context as much as it depends on generation differences. Benefits of doing so could certainly result in tolerance toward practices that are less traditional and more democratically-oriented.
- Gender-Inclusive curriculum should above all contain gender-sensitive terminology that would enrich the Serbian language and justify the very nature of its adaptation to new contexts of knowledge.
- The main principles of the gender-sensitive education should be based on the holistic approach of respect for individual freedom that strongly takes into account the 'other' (human or animal, different or similar ... avoiding dichotomies in judgment).
- Sustaining the non-academic programmes on Women's/Gender Studies, at the undergraduate course level, as they are meaningful to students who want to improve their knowledge in the field. It is also important that these studies, unlike academic studies, should be accessible to all students.
- Set up of a partnership network of experts employed in the field of education and gender equality both within these fields independently and in interrelation.
- Organizing conferences on contemporary issues of gender in theory and practice.
- Financing publications on about Gender/Women's Studies.
- Supporting guest speakers and introducing dynamics of the research exchange.
- Working on eliminating stereotypes that accompany the feminist movement, and therefore influencing the understanding of the gender issue.

- Textbook check ups should ascertain the degree their content promotes gender equality.
- Conducting periodical research assessment of gender sensitive content in educational material.
- Launching education programmes on gender-responsible budgeting, as a strategy towards eliminating the inequality of men and women.
- Advocating for continuity in all activities and plans, in the field of gender equality.
- Increasing human capacity, in institutions and faculty research centres, dealing with gender issues.¹⁸

CONCLUSIONS

The degree of gender content in curricula of higher education showed that most of the credits for institutionalizing Gender Studies, in Serbia, go to non-governmental organizations and individuals active in the non-governmental sector. These individuals were the first to develop the gender studies programme in the private sector of education, and also influenced their institutionalization. In the beginning, researching gender content within faculties were made possible by courses including gender topics; afterwards, by establishing entire departments devoted to this topic. The introduction of gender content into higher education courses began in 1993, at the Faculty of Philosophy, in Belgrade. The first department dedicated to the research of gender was established at the Faculty of Political Sciences, in Belgrade, in 2003.

The process of establishing Gender Studies in Serbia was difficult and met with prejudice in the academic community itself. Even though the process of institutionalizing Gender Studies in Serbia finished seven years ago – and the term, gender, was studied in certain courses, for the past seventeen years – this topic has still remained unfamiliar to many representatives of both the educational system and political structures. Therefore, the process of educating individuals, who are in a position to make decisions and convey to others their knowledge, skills and abilities, is of vital importance in promoting gender equality in Serbia. The existence of non-academic *Women's Studies* programmes is essential since academic *Gender Studies* are not accessible to everyone and the topic is not studied in an equally detailed way. Furthermore, gender studies should be developed at faculties that were not initially recognized as the basis for researching the subject matter. An

¹⁸ For instance, the Directorate for Gender Equality has six full-time employees.

excellent example is provided by the Faculty of Law, which became the leading institution in the development of gender studies at the University of Niš.

Current discussions on the use of gender-sensitive language suggest that, in the near future, this field will be recognized as an important element in the efforts to improve the level of gender equality in Serbia. Therefore, we propose that further gender research in curricula explore the field of gender-sensitive terminology. It is also important that this kind of research should be carried out periodically in order to open the possibility of following linguistic changes. The best long-term strategy for the promotion of gender equality in Serbia relies on education. The joint activities of the public and private sectors of education alongside the institutionalized network for cooperation are of primary importance.

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