Gender Policy on IAI scientific projects and activities

Introduction

The Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), at its 28th meeting, adopted Decision XXVIII/6 which *Instructs the IAI Directorate, in collaboration with the Executive Council, to develop a policy on gender and IAI projects and activities.* In the development of the IAI gender policy, the IAI Directorate sought the advice of the IAI Executive Council, the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee on elements to include in the policy and on current in-force policies which could provide possible models and direction. Current policies from major universities, inter-governmental organizations, science funding agencies, and scientific associations were also consulted with a view to expand the pool of knowledge and approaches related to issues on gender and science.

The objectives of this policy are to ensure gender equality in IAI science projects and capacity building activities, to align these activities with those of IAI Parties to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and to support regional efforts to develop the highest quality science and improve on governments capacity for the development of public policy relevant to global change. This policy also establishes a framework that supports the principles of open science and transdisciplinary methodologies, especially with regard to equitable participation by all participants and subjects affected by the project or activity. Finally, the intersectionalities of gender with other dimensions such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, among others, are also recognized in this policy. Effective implementation of the policy will require commitment, validation and organizational support by the Conference of the Parties, Executive Council, the Scientific Advisory Committee, the Science-Policy Advisory Committee and the Directorate.

This policy recognizes that gender is a social construct that varies from society to society and can change over time. The policy also recognizes that gender is non-binary, and individuals with diverse gender identities often face stigma and discrimination, resulting in underrepresentation in the sciences.

It is also important that global change science considers gender dimensions (e.g., the ways in which different genders are impacted by and respond to global change), so that gender approaches can be adopted as integral dimensions of adaptation and mitigation policies and/or actions.

The mainstreaming of women and individuals with diverse gender identities in the sciences requires special attention and efforts, including the process of assessing the implications for participants of any planned action or projects. Mainstreaming provides a mechanism for highlighting everyone's concerns and experiences as a vital element in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all IAI science, capacity building, science-policy activities.

The IAI recognizes the urgent need for this gender policy given the persistent gap in the sciences and in the Americas. On average, 45.8% of researchers in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are women[1], and while this is markedly better than the global average, women researchers in the region are still underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields at 36%[2] (UNESCO, Institute for Statistics, June 2019). The IAI also notes that gender gaps in the sciences may vary across the region, with certain fields dominated by women.

Current numbers for North America on women in science presented by UNESCO are not available[3] making it difficult to present similar figures. However, a general overview is possible using other sources. With regard to STEM, women in North America comprise 27.5% of the workforce[4,5] Total numbers for women researchers were difficult to compile because of the incomparability of the data.

Women in STEM are less likely to progress to leadership positions in their field, increasing the gender gap at the level of senior scientists and principal investigators (PIs). Women in STEM publish less and are paid less. The reasons include discrimination, family decisions, household pressures, workplace cultures, and financial considerations. The lack of necessary information to fully understand the reasons for this gap has prevented LAC policy makers from designing effective interventions.[6]

The gender gap is also apparent in leadership decision making positions of in the Americas, with the exception of ministerial positions in North America. In 2021, the percentage of women in ministerial cabinet positions in LAC and in North America is on average 28.5% and 48.85%

[1] UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2020. *Women in science.* Fact Sheet No. 60. Paris: France (accessed: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs60-women-in-science-2020-en.pdf on 17 March 2021)
[2] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, June 2019
[3] UNESCO. 2015. *UNESCO science report: towards 2030*. Paris: UNESCO.
[4] Mckinsey & Company Canada. 2017. The power of parity: advancing women's equality in Canada.[S.l]: Mckinsey.

[5] United States. Census Bureau. 2021. *Women are nearly half of U.S. workforce but only 27% of STEM workers*. (accessed on 22 March 2021: https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/01/women-making-gains-in-stem-occupations-but-still-underrepresented.html)
[6] Castillo, R., Grazzi, M. & Tacsir, E. 2014. *Women in Science and Technology: What Does the Literature Say?* Technical note no. IDB-TN-637. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank.

respectively; however, this varies widely by country[7],[8]. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 39.9% of representatives in national legislative bodies are women[9]. In North America, 28.5% are women[10].

The number of women researchers in IAI supported scientific projects also point to a gender gap and provide additional reasons for the adoption of a policy on gender. For example, the number of women acting as Principal Investigators in projects under the Collaborative Research Networks (CRN) rounds 2 and 3 and under the Small Grants Projects (SGP-1, SGP-2, SGP-HD, SGP-CRA and SGP-HW), from 2002 to 2021, totalled 22 out of 75 or 29%. Women researchers acting in all roles including researchers and Principal Investigators in the above science projects totalled 194 out of 527 or 36%.

With regard to IAI capacity building activities, namely, the Science, Technology, Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program pilots in Argentina and Mexico, has an enrollment of 5 male and 4 female fellows. There are also 11 women enrolled out of a total 19 early career scientists participating in the STeP professional development training for the period 2020-2021. These numbers include participation by science-policy fellows associated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Mitacs Canada. This equitable participation indicates the positive impact of taking into consideration issues related to gender.

Women comprised most of participants at IAI training events, such as training institutes, workshops, seminars, and fora organized by the IAI Directorate in the past years. From 2012-2019, of a total of 906 participants, 467 were female professionals, or 51.5%, in 24 training events. The increase of women participation is due to the Directorate's criteria for the selection of participants, which took into account gender balance resulting in an increase in the number of female applicants.

Data from the second and third iterations of the Seed Grant Program also points to progress in gender balance. For example, in the second iteration of the Program, in 2011-2016, 11 projects were implemented with 4 women as Principal Investigators (PI) compared to 7 male PIs. Additionally, women counted for 26 co-PIs compared to 29 male co-PIs. The gender balance further improved in the Program's third iteration, in 2016-2017, where in 10 projects there were 5 women PIs compared to 5 male PIs and 24 women co-PIs compared to 13 male co-PIs.

Other IAI capacity building activities, such as the research internship and Directorate internship programs, have had a predominant female participation to date: 86% female researchers in the first program, and 67% women interns in the latter.

This policy takes into account and is in alignment with the *Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*, the IAI scientific agenda, and the IAI strategic plan. With regard to the IAI strategic plan, special note was made of Theme I, Goal 1, Objective ii, Action b, which states: *For every call for proposals, the Directorate shall ensure that the peer-*

[7] UN Women and Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2021. *Women in Politics: 2021*. UN and IPU.
[8] UN Women. 2021. *Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean commit to promoting actions to achieve substantive equality and parity democracy* (accessed on 18 March 2021: https://lac.unwomen.org/en/noticias-y-eventos/articulos/2021/03/ministras-de-america-latina-y-el-caribe-se-comprometen)
[9] Ibid
[10] UN Women and Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2021. *Women in Politics: 2021*. UN and IPU.

review committee is representative in terms of disciplines, regions, and gender balance, and that it includes underrepresented groups in science; and Theme II, Goal 1, Objective ii which states: *Support research that enhances social-environmental justice, gender equality, and engagement of underrepresented groups from the beginning of the research process.*

Additionally, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, Gender equality, Target 5.C., *Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels*, provides a framework to anchor the policy alongside global agreements which include elements related to gender and are promoted by and adhered to by IAI Parties. Among global agreements, this policy acknowledges in particular the *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women* and the current work under the Convention on Biological Diversity on the draft outline of a gender plan of action for the post-2020 period.

The *Gender Policy on IAI scientific projects and activities* is applicable to all IAI science, capacity building, open data, science-policy, and other activities, as appropriate. It establishes gender-related objectives, as appropriate, for the IAI Directorate's administration and execution of these activities.

The IAI recognizes the sovereignty of Parties and, therefore, this Policy does not supersede in any manner whatsoever national legislation, policies, and structures. It also acknowledges special needs and requirements as may be requested by donors and grantors.

Objectives

Objective I: Enhance the IAI's regional leadership in the promotion of gender equality in science

The IAI will strive to exercise leadership in the region to promote gender balance and gender mainstreaming in scientific research, capacity building, science-policy initiatives, both nationally and regionally and during different stages of their careers.

The IAI will partner with relevant international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and research institutions, among others, to promote gender balance and mainstreaming in science education, post doctoral research and public funded science research.

Objective II: Integrate the gender dimension in IAI supported science and capacity building activities

The IAI Directorate will strive to implement practices to support women scientists and scientists with diverse gender identities by increasing visibility, voice and recognition at different stages of their career.

IAI contracts and grant agreements in support of scientific and capacity building activities will include a clause on the need to achieve gender equality in participants, and an analysis of gender dimensions, as appropriate; these two areas should be addressed in the proposal and in annual and final reports.

Training and fellowship programs supported by the IAI, such as the IAI's Science, Technology, Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program, will encourage Parties and other participants to take into account the need for gender balance in the selection of fellows and mentors.

Objective III: Eliminate biases in project selection and in development of its science and capacity building programs

The IAI Directorate will ensure consistency, transparency, and clarity of criteria in the selection of projects and activities. It will also design each call for proposals to appeal to all applicants regardless of gender and career level and use gender neutral language and tone. The IAI will disseminate its open calls for proposals to a broader audience to ensure underrepresented groups are made aware of new IAI opportunities.

The IAI Directorate will establish gender balance throughout the peer review process, especially in the composition of the panel of experts, for the selection of IAI projects and activities.

The IAI Directorate will manage its grant agreements with flexibility to accommodate different career paths and work trajectories of grantees. The Directorate will strive to introduce grant period extensions and extra funding, as appropriate, and subject to the availability of external resources, for researchers on female parental leave during a funding period.

Objective IV: Establish a gender-inclusive environment in scientific research

The IAI Directorate will strive as much as possible to ensure gender equality and mainstreaming in research teams and the number of principal investigators, co-investigators and students.

Bullying or sexual harassment will not be tolerated in any IAI activity and may result in the termination of activities under the contract and/or the termination of financial support for the project.

Whistleblowers are encouraged to report alleged non-compliance with this policy to the IAI Executive Director during the development or implementation of the scientific project or capacity building activity.

The IAI Directorate will strive to develop mentoring programs with renowned women scientists for early career women researchers for training in future leadership positions.

The IAI Directorate will encourage the promotion of work-life balance in science projects and capacity-building proposals.

Objective V: Develop training and guidance to facilitate gender equality in science

The IAI Directorate will include gender issues in its training and capacity building programs with a view to increase awareness of the challenge in and support for the achievement of gender equality.

The IAI Directorate will, subject to the availability of external financial resources, develop education and training materials, including online materials, with gender diverse voices and perspectives to introduce the challenges and best practices of gender equality and mainstreaming in science.

The IAI Directorate will encourage project proposals to develop tools for the inclusion and evaluation of the gender dimension and participation in research design and project development and impact

Resource implications

Financial support for activities to implement the Gender Policy on IAI scientific projects and activities is contingent on the availability of external financial resources.