



Fostering gender dialogues in ECEC

13th SIG gender balance research Conference

Bratislava, Slovakia, Monday, 25th August 2025, 9.00-16.30

The SIG gender balance invites to its 13th research conference in a time of polycrisis. We experience a world tending to polarized discourses in many fields, including (but not only) gender issues. Researchers meet highly polarized conflicts around gender diversity (including the trans debates) and gender-inclusive legislation and language, and also the growing gender gap in recent political votes in the US, Germany, and other countries. At the same time, we experience a lack of interest in gender issues in the work force, despite the current shortage of teachers in many countries. Strategies and programs for achieving a better gender balance in the ECEC work force, which have been a starting point for the collaboration within the SIG, have not been continued.

Against this backdrop, we will take up these topics again and highlight the need for dialogue. The SIG gender research conference has enabled and supported open dialogue since its beginning. It has developed as a safe and productive space for discussing issues of gender equality and diversity in ECEC on a global level. The SIG is giving room for progressing the participants' individual research development by mutual support of well-experienced colleagues as well as early career researchers.

In 2024, the SIG agreed to change its name to "SIG gender", to embrace more aspects of gender, but it continues to have a strong focus on the ECEC work force. In this context, we welcome you to join our next conference. The meeting is the Annual meeting of the EECERA Special Interest Group Gender Balance, and as such it is open to all interested researchers.

The conference program on the next page.

The conference fee is 50 € including tea/coffee & lunch, to be paid on the conference in cash, either in GBP or in €. Participation in the welcome & exchange round and in the final round is free of charge.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Bratislava!

Joanne McHale, Tim Rohrmann & this year's SIG Gender Balance team

Conference registration with the attached registration form

→ Joanne McHale joanne.mchale@tudublin.ie

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Program

9.00 Reception and welcome *Joanne McHale & Tim Rohrmann, conference chairs*

Round talk - recent developments

9.45 Fostering gender dialogues in ECEC against the pitfalls of polarization

moderated by E. Birgitte Ljunggren, Norway

Gender issues have come in the centre of political debate and polarized ideologies. In social sciences it has become sometimes difficult to talk about "men" and "women" at all, as this is interpreted as a support of traditional gender binaries, whereas at the same time anti-gender rhetoric from media, politicians and social influencers has begun to focus on academia. We will address the issue, share experiences and discuss solutions about our role as researchers to support gender dialogues in policy and practice.

11.00 Tea & coffee break

11.15 The role of gender in the context of teacher shortage across the globe

moderated by Yuwei Xu, UK/China

In the OCED (2019) report, men's participation is phrased as a measure to address teacher shortage in ECEC. However, this universal assumption does not seem to apply to all countries, including for example China and South Africa where teacher shortage manifests in different ways in comparison to major OECD countries. We therefore would like to explore the cultural contexts related to gender and teacher shortage as a starting point for strategies for a more diverse ECEC work force.

12.45 Lunch break

14.00 Mentoring for men in ECEC

moderated by Tim Rohrmann & the MOMECE team

The aim of this international research collaboration is to foster the development of a gender-mixed work force, to support the further qualification of male practitioners, and to retain male workers in the field of ECEC. To achieve this aim, we conduct research, develop strategies and apply measures during the whole progress of vocational biographies. In a non-funded research exchange, we want to exchange and bring together ideas that have been applied successfully in the participating countries and regions.

15.30 Tea & coffee

15.45 The next steps

We discuss the further development of the SIG and possible joint projects, including a proposal for a special issue on international perspectives on gender in the ECEC work force.

16.30 End of conference