

# **FACETS, LEARNING PROCESSES AND VISIONING**

INNOVATION IN THEORY  
AND PRACTICE



**FLACSO**  
ARGENTINA

Facultad  
Latinoamericana  
de Ciencias Sociales  
Sede Argentina  
Área Género, Sociedad  
y Políticas

**GENDER, SOCIETY  
AND POLICIES AREA**

# GENDER, SOCIETY AND POLICIES AREA

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COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS



The Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO) was founded in 1957 as an initiative of UNESCO. The Academic headquarters in Argentina was established in 1974 and since that time it has been dedicated to scientific work in the Social Sciences grounded in ideological pluralism and excellence along with academic rigor and a commitment to the world around us in order to contribute to the betterment of society.  
[www.flacso.org.ar/investigacion\\_ayp\\_contenido.php?ID=4](http://www.flacso.org.ar/investigacion_ayp_contenido.php?ID=4)

The convergence of two areas of innovation in knowledge and practice for gender equality and equity in inclusive, pluralistic and responsible societies **in coexistence**

**Regional Program in Gender and Public Policy  
Master's Program & Post-graduate Diploma  
in Gender and Public Policy (PRIGEPP)**

[www.prigepp.org](http://www.prigepp.org)

**UNESCO Regional Chair Women, Science  
& Technology in Latin America**

[www.catunescomujer.org](http://www.catunescomujer.org)



# GENDER, SOCIETY AND POLICIES AREA

SINCE 2001, AT FLACSO, ACADEMIC HEADQUARTERS ARGENTINA

*Based on flexible planning, attentive to contemporary debates in the field of Gender and their link to significant issues of our time.*

*It brings together education, research, communication and the development of proposals for policies and programs that promote gender relations based on equality and the acknowledgement of diversity.*

## BEGINNINGS AND GOALS

In the mid 1980's, a pioneer in the field, Florence Howe, defined Women's Studies, as the academic branch of the women's movement. This statement distills the political, emancipating and transforming character of the knowledge, practices and subjectivities that gave meaning to and stimulated the remarkable growth and international expansion of research, educational programs, publications and interventions in this field.

Since the beginning, women/gender studies has shed light on the core issues of inequality and discrimination, and developed new interpretations of these issues. At the same time, it has taken a critical view of canonical knowledge in academic spheres, questioned the segmentation of disciplines and the adverse effects of power relations within universities and within society, viewed the ways in which invisibility and silence are woven into women's and men's lives, and challenged the criteria used to determine the scientific validity of new concepts and ways of thinking and acting.

## TO ACHIEVE AND GROW

This trend of thought would not enter into the universities without resistance, contempt, and more importantly, a road still waiting to be crossed: integrating with acceptance, recognition, support systems and alliances without having to abandon its fundamental stamp and without becoming a discipline along the lines of fields more prone to reproduce than to transform.

## A PROCESS WITHOUT RECIPES

The driving force that moves feminism, has powered, for many decades, a formidable process of intellectual and political change. The process is revitalized in collective achievements, great mobilizations that inspire hope and imagination, in the creation of thoughts and interpretations which, by giving name to silenced voices, place them inside of history and its power struggles and vigorous debates that bring into play the politics of knowledge and representation, with the hope that the future will redress the past.

Far from being a smooth road, it means traveling through the fatigue and frustration that come from processes that are slower and more unpredictable than hoped for, because of backtracking on successful advances that involve a great investment of energy and intelligence and because of the discomfort that comes from technocratic cooptation that, with its promises of "a la carte" effectiveness anesthetize sensitivities in order to capture the tensions and dissonances that are part of the transformation of the established order.

Hence the need to encourage an attitude of suspicion toward certainty, including those that come from gender theories; recognize the complexity of the phenomena; insist on asking questions (to oneself and others) before giving any answers; accepting the fact that all answers are merely provisional; leaving room for curiosity and intellectual exploration; running the risk of trespassing disciplinary and institutional frontiers in order to discuss and construct alternatives with others who are searching for meaning in and for a more just social order.



#### AN ATMOSPHERE OF CO-LEARNING THAT LINKS:

*Content that represents the advances made in gender studies in an interactive and esthetically attractive hypertext. Breaking the continuity of the written text, encouraging a more active and in-depth search for information and different viewpoints on similar problems. It provides surprises and unique journeys through the construction of knowledge.*

*Technical applications that facilitate communication, research, debate, movement through different sources of information, opinions and evaluations. Content is provided through a variety of multimedia resources: video, visual arts, exercises, animation, games.*

*A faculty specializing in the topics covered by the curriculum, flexible and open to participating in intense learning and communication experiences mediated by information and communication technologies (ICT).*





## REGIONAL PROGRAM ON GENDER AND PUBLIC POLICY -PRIGEPP-

*Created with the support of the European Union. It was the first on line post-graduate diploma initiative on gender studies in Latin America.*

The project was designed at the beginning of the 1990's even before ICT was widely used in higher education. The inspiration came from a variety of sources: the acknowledgment of the political necessity to offer more people access to a quality education in the field of gender with an emphasis on its application to public policy, especially to those far away from educational centers of this kind. At this time, the incorporation of a gender perspective began to gain acceptance and became institutionalized by the State.

Without it being fully understood, the incursion into a form of virtual teaching became very tempting because of its promise for innovation in ways of constructing knowledge, the capacity to expand almost without limit the communication among people from different regions, disciplinary references and professional careers, the facilitating of the active search for a wide flow of information and making it all coherent. We hoped that this would foster a habit of reading, interpretation and enunciation that would, by default, become a multidisciplinary exercise and an acknowledgement of cultural diversity.

We also chose this alternative, motivated by previous experiences in on-site gender studies courses that made clear the urgent need for academic spaces that are more participatory, autonomous and creative than those usually found within the walls of Universities.

PRIGEPP was created in 2001 in the Gender, Society and Policies Area of FLACSO, Argentina. At the beginning, a Virtual Post-graduate Diploma made up of four seminars was offered. In 2005, internal and external evaluations, along with requests from alumni, lead to expanding the program to offer a Master's degree. Graduates gain access to the Master's program after completing the Diploma (intermediate degree).

The Master's program brings together high quality content, that takes into account diversity and the reconstruction of knowledge, common ground for reflection, debate and experimentation, appealing, fun and inspiring hypertext with value added artistic design and ongoing, friendly yet challenging guidance by tutors, professors and experts who are eager to make the most of the interactive potential of educating with digital media.



*Selected by the European Union  
for "Best practices"*

[www.prigepp.org](http://www.prigepp.org)

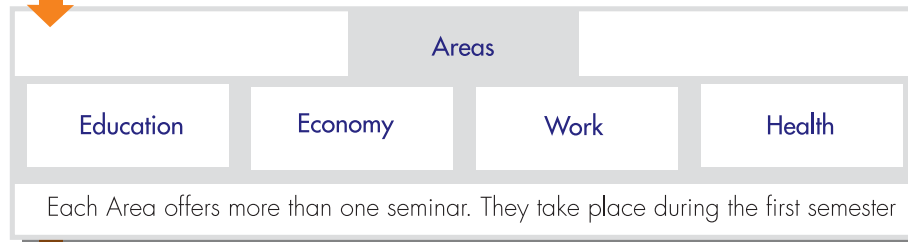


## Study Plan: **Mandatory Seminars**

- 1 Globalization and Gender
- 2 Democracy, citizenship and State: gender approach
- 3 Comparative analysis on gender equity policies
- 4 Strategic programming and evaluation of gender policies

On passing, a **Post-grad Diploma on Gender and Public Policies** is awarded.  
Offered sequentially (April-December)

## Specialized Seminars



### All seminars:

- Are 8 weeks long.
- Offer 75 credit hours accepted by prestigious universities.
- Are guided by an experienced tutor.

## Workshop of thesis project

### First Stage:

Methodological approaches for developing research and planning projects in gender studies.

### Second stage:

Approval of thesis project. Mentoring of thesis work by a tutor who is a specialist on the topic.

**Requirements:** Passing the four required seminars as well as two specialized seminars.  
**Duration:** Second semester (16 weeks) / Only for Virtual Master Program in Gender, Society and Policy students.

**Degrees granted by FLACSO.**

## LEARN BY TEACHING

### STUDENTS' TESTIMONIES

*"My ability to understand and to analyze problems has been strengthened, on many interrelated levels: the local, national, supranational and global. I have also got a better handle on ICT as a tool with which to navigate this complex Latin American and global reality".*

*"It has given me tools for understanding the complexity of power structures that affect the life of mainly women, but also men, particularly in my field of work - the cultural sector linked to local development".*

*"With a professional education in the "hard" sciences (...) I had trouble getting used to classes, readings, exercises from a purely social point of view. Now, in analysis, planning and implementation, my team contributes more, resolves more, when we talk about working from a gender perspective".*

*"The interweaving of knowledge and confidence during the forums and working groups brings about exchanges beyond the virtual classrooms. Now I am sure that I can develop interdisciplinary and comparative projects that will lead to an improvement in the quality of life for diverse groups of women and men in Latin America".*

*"It was a profound personal as well as professional change. I awoke to what had been dormant in me, or what was covered up by a flood of cultural assumptions that others do politics and you stick to your own thing. Everything comes together here, you become aware of how deeply everything is connected to politics. For me PRIGEPP was a an amazing educational experience – something that really changed my life".*

*"I acquired knowledge and skills that allowed me to be politically effective and make mainstreaming gender an important part of initiatives on Health and Development at the local, national and Latin American levels".*

*"A significant experience for the formulation of the Equal Opportunity for Gender Equity Plan in D.C. 2004-2012".*

*"I improved my teaching skills at the Intercultural University at Veracruz in a Nahua region. It has helped me to promote public policies with a gender and intercultural perspective, focused on poverty and health".*

## TEACH BY LEARNING

### PROFESSORS' TESTIMONIES

*"The Area is a continent of diversity that houses new voices that emerge from academic circles and the social arena. The Virtual Diplomas brought a new way of thinking and doing gender policy in Latin America".*

*"It was a transforming experience because it not only appeals to your mind, but also involves you emotionally. It broadens your views, motivates reflection, gets you closer to reality by accepting its complexity".*

*"Interacting with different groups of participants allowed me to find out more about what is going on in many Latin American countries and on a global level. Each student presentation was a real case study that when taken together contributed to the understanding of the simultaneity of so many singular processes that pointed to the same thing and that are leading to changes although you may not be aware of them".*

*"I have learned to establish contact with the participants: see them in my mind, think about what each of them is doing during different hours of the day, the places they are doing it from, its continuity or discontinuity, see them appear one by one like isolated raindrops or like a rain of interventions".*

*"Over the years PRIGEPP has generated trends of thought about the meaning of globalization, democracy and public policy. It is grounded in networks of people from different countries and professional backgrounds and a team that has been following up on this experience of constructing new ideas, a potential new political force (...)"*

*"PRIGEPP has managed to introduce gender issues into the bunker of those who think and make policies. It represents a very interesting cognitive project, both for its critical and multicultural aspects. It is an educational space where political voices that were not always considered nor valued in the academic sphere are being integrated".*

*"It is a meeting place, a crossroads of very special feelings between people who know that we are all really engaged in the same transformations".*

*"PRIGEPP opens the door for Universities, States and International Cooperation Agencies to work cohesively in the administration of programs, transforming the rhetoric of rights into situations that really affect changes in the quality of life of women".*

# STARTING POINTS

## THE CURRICULUM

It is renewed every year along with the bibliography and other resources. What remains the same is the conviction of maintaining the quality and direction of a program that contributes to:

- Understanding the interrelationship of gender and the social, economic, political and cultural transformational processes of the times and the specific ways in which these areas are expressed in different contexts.
- Giving shape to the panorama of trends and theoretical and political debates in the field of gender, recognizing their genealogy from different philosophical concepts and social theories as well as their political consequences.
- Encouraging discussion and multi/interdisciplinary projects that capture the diversity and historicity of gender relations, suggesting new categories which reflect this complexity.
- Encouraging the adoption of theoretical positions and the planning of interventions that approach questions of gender in a relational and situated manner, going beyond feminism, ethnocentrism, essentialism, providing explanations that recognize the multi-positionality of subjects within the framework of their relationships and the distinctions of gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and age.
- Establishing bridges for dialogue between sectors that are both critical and transforming of social power relations.
- Welcoming new voices from subaltern groups that articulate their uniqueness, demand to be acknowledged

and question the neocolonial practices of all ethnocentric theories.

- Examining the prevailing principles and methodologies used for integrating a gender equality approach into policies and programs in their respective institutions; focusing on uncovering micro-politics in all its phases as well as the features of its established processes.
- Understanding the part that gender relations play in the tensions and articulations between social, economic, political and cultural processes on a global, regional, national and local level.

### A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH THAT:

- Values “unlearning” as much as the joy of learning.
- Acknowledges previous experience and knowledge, but not without questioning them.
- Stimulates understanding of intra and inter-subjective diversity and encourages intercultural dialogue.
- Encourages the invention of new social and political imaginaries as well as desired alternatives for social change.
- Facilitates the articulation of knowledge and responsible decision making in courses of action for changing “glocal” scenarios.



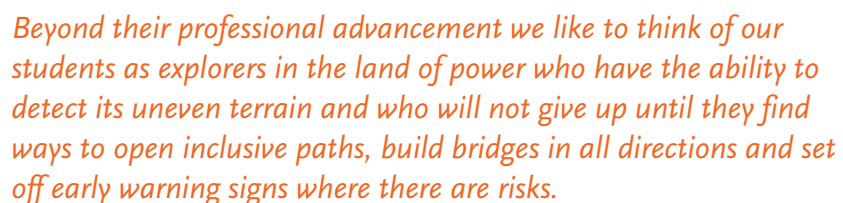
- Preview of "Cibernetica y Lenguaje: Teoría, Teoría y Teoría"**  
**encontrar los otros**

**2. INTRODUCCIÓN**

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# CONNECTING THREADS OF THE PROGRAM

## MAINSTREAM AND GET MAINSTREAMED

Establishing a dialogue between Gender Studies and the scientific and political debates of the time, the explosion of cultural creation, institutions and models in crisis, technological and social innovations, require channels of genuine listening that are open to the desires fears and resistance to change from very different groups.

The representatives of policies and institutions that are to be “mainstreamed”, should participate equally in this conversation as if they were fertile ground for gender theory to be applied. Gender specialists should participate as well, being aware that their theoretical capital can slip into dogmatic and segregationist biases, proposed as meta-narratives that universalize aspects of a particular time, culture, class, sexual orientation and ethnic group, ignoring the polyphony, and contributions of other transforming currents and ways of knowledge that come from practical experience. Dismantling this tendency is a part of the pedagogical work.

## TURNING CONTEXT INTO TEXT

New issues, lifestyles, scientific, technological and cultural production, institutional and political adaptations, actors and forms of participation, have emerged at a frenetic pace from societies' accelerated dynamic, which question the crystallized explanations of gender inequality.

Our time demands a situated, multidimensional and inter-sectional understanding of gender from which we can move towards strategic propositions with prospective views.

## TEST OUT INTERDISCIPLINARITY

The professional profile of students and teachers, make the Masters program a multidisciplinary space. It is an entry point into different codes for reading and transforming reality. The challenge is to step through the door and penetrate the rough and tangled path of interdisciplinarity, more commonly invoked than practiced.

We encourage the type of experiences that affect not only the intellectual but also the emotional side of us, that question our identity, that challenge our habits, assumptions, approaches and actions, making room for new categories that destabilize and give room to more complex exchanges, requiring interventions that will be learned along the way.

# ACCOMPANIED PRACTICE

## ON LINE TUTORIALS

When the study program is completed...

The moment comes to put what has been learned into practice; to confront the hopes and expectations that dynamize the creation of all projects and the realities offered by our current scenarios; the skills, the willingness and the proclivity of those with whom we will collaborate as well as our own. It is the time to put our abilities to the test by confronting the obstacles that inevitably present themselves even when they have been anticipated “on paper”.

In these situations, an open and constructive dialogue with others of similar but also more extensive and deeply rooted experience, could make a difference in many ways: by looking at problems from different angles, providing pertinent and effective methodological and strategic resources, even dealing with feelings because working on gender issues will inevitably arouse emotions and conflicts. This is what the tutorials are about.

They are organized meetings between students and gender specialists that take place at the end of an educational cycle. They are carried out using technological resources (forums on the platform, conversations on Skype or by telephone). The purpose is to reflect on the obstacles, unforeseen events and progress of research and intervention projects and to continue working together to find optimal paths, styles, lines of arguments and frameworks to overcome them.

## VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

ICT facilitates systematic work between people situated in different places who share objectives and aims and who agree on a working plan for a determined period of time.

What happens in this setting goes way beyond the circumstantial exchange of information and opinions. Operating as a laboratory of ideas focused on a defined task, what is produced is representative of the joint interests and contributions of those involved.

There is potential for creating a productive climate and a pleasurable sense of belonging. The facilitators' involvement helps to ensure that the action plan is completed and results are achieved.

**True learning factories, the tutorials and communities of practice are guides to the modalities of information management and communication flows most suitable for making exchanges with “others” as condition for innovative ideas and proposals.**



## NEW NEEDS – DIFFERENT MODALITIES

### DIPLOMAS AND BLENDED COURSES

They emerge as a response to the specific demands of institutions (Women's Secretariats, Universities, Cooperation Agencies) that express the need for resources -within the State and civil society, at the local or national level- that can undertake research, and carry out policies and programs that aim to eradicate gender inequities.

Governments are showing an increasing acceptance of the need to create policies to this end and to have them supported by people, teams and local organizations trained to plan and develop them effectively.

Degree programs offered in Medellín, Colombia and Tegucigalpa, Honduras, were intensive learning experiences for members of the PRIGEPP Community Teams participating in different roles (general and local coordinators, professors, tutors and mentors in the virtual spaces).

The nature of the situation, called for a blended methodology with intensive on site classes taught by specialists and a systematic plan of virtual encounters through forums, working groups and mentoring by experienced tutors.

This model turned out to be the appropriate response for the context and goals of the program as well as innovative for students, not only because of the smart use of technology, but also because of group work in the design of class content and reading materials and the advice from mentors while they developed research projects or interventions.

One of the biggest challenges was to find a harmonious and flexible balance between pedagogical concepts adopted by PRIGEPP and the social, cultural and institutional contexts, beliefs, interests and needs of all the participants.

It was an exercise of negotiation that involved everyone from all the institutions and that brought into play the difficult and exciting task of learning by teaching.

### RESEARCH FOR AND FROM PRACTICE

The methodology we have adopted for analyzing and evaluating all the activities is not limited to using commonly accepted procedures.

It also includes frequent meetings in which those involved can enjoy thinking freely about what has been done, pointing out gaps without taking offense, theorizing about practice, imagining other possibilities and uncovering the seeds of ideas that will grow into future developments.

It is well known that the interface between research and action and especially the “filtration” of research results in the creation and administration of policies and social interventions is not simple nor linear. It is in fact a field of research in itself, a handcrafted practice, as it were, that requires “translations” between different logics.

Being aware of this complexity while planning research is both a difficult and stimulating challenge. Evaluating the inconsistencies and results of this process is still in its incipient stages, but already replete with lessons learned.

We are moving in this direction working with projects that focus on issues that – in our opinion – are strategic to understanding gender relations in current scenarios. Most adopt qualitative and participative methodologies with a view to using knowledge to empower women, level gender inequalities and contribute to rethinking institutions through solid and popular policies and programs.

## BLENDING DIPLOMAS

### IN COLOMBIA

In cooperation with the Mayor's Office of Medellín (Colombia) and the Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios de Género en la Universidad de Antioquia (Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at the University of Antioquia).

- Gender and Local policies
- Gender and Education for teachers
- Gender and Justice

### IN HONDURAS

- Diploma in research with a gender equity approach. In cooperation with UNDP. 2010
- Diploma in public policy with a gender equity approach. In cooperation with UNDP - UNITEC. 2010
- Technical support in the formulation of the II National Plan of Gender Equality and Equity of Honduras – UNDP and UNIFEM Honduras, 2009.
- Diploma in Public Policy Administration with a Gender equity approach. In cooperation with UNDP– UNIFEM – INAM – UNITEC. 2008.

### EXPERIENCES ON OTHER INSTITUTIONAL PLATFORMS

- **Workshop** “Gender and Public Policy”. (Training + Tutorials) In collaboration with the America Latina Genera Program (UNDP El Salvador). Editions: 2006 and 2007.
- **Program** “The construction of innovative strategies for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS”. (Training + Mentoring + Tutorials) Addressed to the Armed Forces and National Police of Latin America and the Caribbean – COPRECOS – LAC. With the support from UNFPA LAC RO. First edition: 2009 - 2010.

## RESEARCH

### ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS IN QUOTA LAWS

#### IN ECUADOR AND COSTA RICA

Conducted in the framework of the Project: “Strengthening of Governance with a focus on Gender and Political Participation for Women in the local sphere.” by UN-INSTRAW. 2008-2009

### WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA: A PROCESS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Map of initiatives and actors. In collaboration with UNDP, RBLAC and Fondo España – UNDP. 2009

### GENDER, INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION AND LAW

In collaboration with CISDL, IDRC. 2007-2009.

### DIAGNOSTIC OF LOCAL ACTORS NEEDS, RESOURCES AND DEMANDS AIMED AT GENDER EQUALITY IN COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE ANDEAN REGION

In collaboration with UN-INSTRAW. 2006

### DECENTRALIZATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Coordination and administration of Research competition. Theoretical-methodological advising on projects. In collaboration with IDRC. 2006 -2010

### DEBATES AND PROPOSALS ON THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER EQUITY IN THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN LATIN AMERICA: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CONSTRUCTING CITIZENSHIP

PRIGEPP Community. 2004

### GENDER EQUITY IN ARGENTINA: DATA, ISSUES AND GUIDES TO ACTION

In collaboration with UNDP - Argentina. 2004

## FINDING YOURSELF IN A COMMUNITY

The intensity, even the intimacy, of interactions in all activities of the Area, made easier by ICT, bring about a sense of belonging and connection among students, alumni, teachers and researchers. This has resulted in collaborative projects, graduates going on to participate in new educational and research opportunities as tutors and mentors, debates on key themes, sharing what is new in the field, announcements of personal and group projects, requests for support for campaigns, among other initiatives.

A periodically updated contact list of alumni is maintained and serves as an open space to announce professional opportunities.

### MEMBERS' THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

*"Belonging to the PRIGEPP community has lead my thinking and investigative spirit down new paths and to my formulating new questions in which women are the subjects of knowledge."*

*"(...) If there is one thing that I really appreciate about being part of this, is that it is grounded in a profoundly active perspective. I am not only receiving but also contributing, and this encourages me to look ahead."*

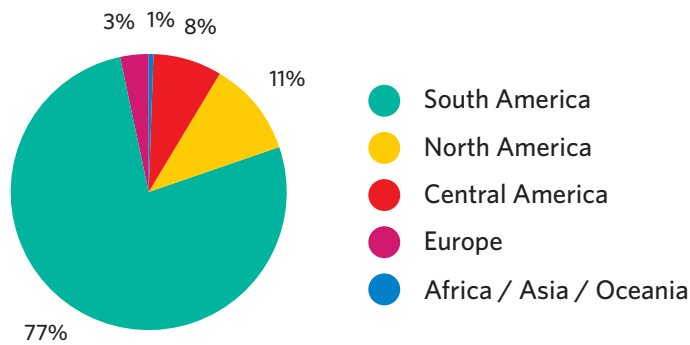
*"This is a continual opportunity to remain updated, learn, have access to a lot of specialized bibliography, keep in touch with important people from the academic world, know about colleagues from different countries in the region and work opportunities and to participate in competitions."*

*"I have built valuable professional and personal relationships that have helped me to develop projects that might not have happened otherwise."*

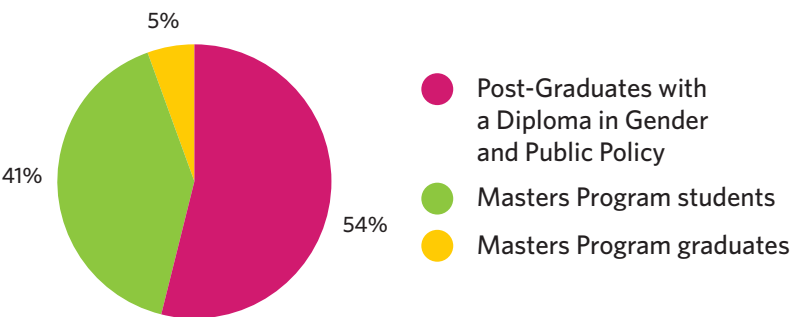
*"It makes me proud – it is a valuable reference in my country and in the region."*

The majority of graduates have made great progress in their professional careers, participating in or creating projects and programs in governmental departments, cooperation agencies, universities and NGOs, in areas such as: political participation and leadership, violence, armed conflict, security, gender sensitive budgets , health and human development, equitable quality management, migrations, among others.

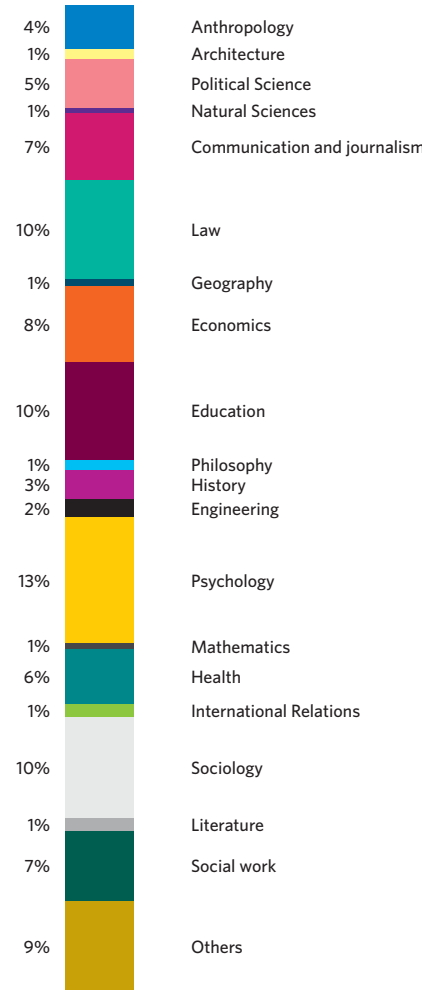
**PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHICAL ZONE OF RESIDENCE**



**PRIGEPP COMMUNITY OF GRADUATES**



**STUDENTS' DISCIPLINES**



# REGIONAL UNESCO CHAIR WOMEN, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN LATIN AMERICA

*Think and do science, technology and innovation for socio-economic and cultural development founded in inclusion, human rights, justice, gender equity and the acknowledgement of the Region's cultural diversity.*

One of the promising phenomena coming from research in the field of gender is having dared to unmask andocentric biases in the scientific production, especially the so-called exact or "hard" sciences and more recently in the world of technology.

Along with other critical trends of the positivist framework in the Sciences, a crucial step has been taken to deconstruct regimes of truth that for centuries have justified, with more or less subtlety, inequality between the genders during all stages of patriarchy.

The increasing number of women with university degrees, even in some branches of the hard sciences, as well as the dismantling of the sacrosanct attitude toward access to scientific information, favoured by its disclosure, and the use of technology -which is part of the cultural capital needed to get around in today's world among other factors-, have opened cracks in bastions that appeared to be impassable to scrutiny and debate from the "outside".

Research is advancing through these cracks in a multiplicity of areas, unimaginable years ago; from

the reconstruction of the history of Science incorporating women and their contributions, to epistemological and methodological issues that allow for alternative explanations to problems being studied: sexist practices in scientific institutions, the stories of the professional lives of women and men in science and technology, among many others.

This is complemented by educational innovations that bring science and technology closer to issues that affect daily life, development, rights, and ethical decisions; outstanding examples of the way a gender perspective is being incorporated into scientific-technological policies.

All of this makes clear that no plane of reality, as armed as it may be with emblems of "reason" and "truth", can remain immune to the advances of the persistent, indocile and intrepid passion that drives feminism's political project to uncover and transform the mechanisms that, throughout History, have built and reproduced the gender hierarchy.

If we add to this the increasing influence of Science, Technology and innovations in the economic, health, communication,

education, governance of societies and globalization processes, it is imperative for us to focus our gender magnifying lens on that which so powerfully influences the way we perceive (ourselves), act and make decisions for the future of humankind.

The UNESCO Chair, early on assumed the commitment to listen to and understand issues that are still on the periphery of women's group's agenda priorities, convinced that the intertwining of gender theories with advances in science, technology, communications and other emerging concerns and actors, would contribute unprecedented proposals to unresolved matters in societies' development.

[www.catunescomujer.org](http://www.catunescomujer.org)

**Regional Forum on Women, Science and Technology in Latin America**  
**Bariloche- Argentina**  
*(October 21-23, 1998)*

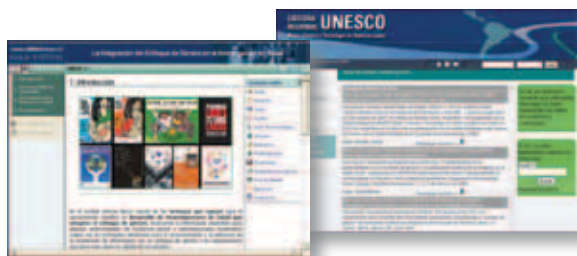
**World Conference “Science for the 21st Century: For a new commitment”**  
*(Budapest, 1999)*

## **UNESCO Regional Chair on Women, Science and Technology in Latin America**



## To RESEARCH

- The “official” history of science, unveiling contributions to knowledge and its application by forgotten women pioneers and all women who contribute to its development.
- Gender narratives in scientific paradigms legitimized by the academic establishment and in current critical trends.
- The educational and professional careers of women in different fields of science in order to:
  - ▶ Identify the obstacles, both manifest and hidden, which prevent women from fully developing their abilities and interests, as well as the ways in which they react to these obstacles and the consequences in their personal and professional lives.
  - ▶ Analyze the interrelatedness of academic/professional experience, and gender patterns in the lives of women and men who work in the scientific and technological spheres.
- Detect gender codes in institutional cultures and scientific communities. The culture of women who grow up in these spaces and their potential to change discourses, practices and values.
- The multiple factors that limit women’s access to and job performance in decision making positions and the leadership styles of those who do make it.
- The imaginaries on gender and science, and gender and ICT which canalize opinions and justify decisions made in different sectors of society.



## To EDUCATE

- Contributing to a renewed quality and appeal of scientific/ technological education at all levels, infusing education with the findings and innovations that have come out of historical, sociological, philosophical studies and cultural and educational criticism of androcentrism, sexism and other discriminatory biases in the production and reproduction of knowledge.
- Showing appreciation for imagination, motivating the questioning of hegemonic reasoning in the creation of knowledge and of the binaries (reason/emotion, theory/ practice, expert knowledge/practical knowledge, hard/soft sciences) that reinforce hierarchies of power.
- Recognizing the socio-historic nature of science and technology, locating them in people’s lives and linking them with communities’ needs and knowledge.

## PRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE

- Evidence that justifies the social and economic benefits of scientific research and technological innovations imbued with a gender perspective.
- Studies in topics that appear to be “neutral” and that question scientific findings that are presented as universal truths, by integrating concepts and analysis from a gender approach.
- Examples of innovative and participatory programs that increase new generations’ interest in doing science and technology for the wellbeing of their societies.

## INFLUENCE POLICY AND PROGRAMS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

With descriptions, objectives and goals that safeguard gender equality in all its ethnic, social and age diversity.



## WOMEN/GENDER IN/AND THE SCIENCES

*Access to scientific knowledge: a right and the potential to broaden our understanding of the world and make informed decisions.*

*Participating in the creation of scientific knowledge: necessary for enriching its quality and social sense from different points of view and leanings.*

*Having a voice in decisions about priorities and resources allocated to the Sciences: being responsible to the present and the future of humanity.*

### RESEARCH

- **“Diagnóstico de situación, necesidades y capacidades de mujeres profesionales, investigadoras en el campo de la salud en Latinoamérica”** (Diagnostic of the situation, needs and abilities of women professionals, researchers in the health field in Latin America). In collaboration with the Women’s Health Observatory. Ministry of Public Health and Consumption of Spain. 2006
- **“Equidad de Género en Ciencia y Tecnología en América Latina: Bases y Proyecciones en la Construcción de Conocimientos, Agendas e Institucionalidades”**. (Gender Equity in Science and Technology in Latin America: Bases and Projections in the Construction of Knowledge, Agendas and Governance). Published by CIM-OAS. 2004
- **“Estado del arte de las investigaciones en Género, Globalización y Salud en América Latina. Aportes para el documento internacional: Globalización, género y salud: Relación entre la investigación y la generación de políticas”**. (State of the Art Research in Gender, Globalization and Health in Latin America. Contributed to the international document: Globalization, Gender and Health: Relationship between Research and Policy Making). In collaboration with the Institute on Gender & Health, Canadian Institutes of Health and Research, IGH-CIHR. 2004
- **Investigación Multifocal: “Equidad de Género en Ciencia y Tecnología en América Latina: Representaciones y propuestas de funcionarios/as, investigadores/as y académicos/as en posiciones de liderazgo institucional”**. (Gender Equity in Science and Technology in Latin America: Representations and proposals from administrators, researchers and scholars in institutional leadership positions). Countries: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela. In collaboration with UNESCO. 2002



## INTERNET TRAINING

- **Comprehensive Program for career development and strengthening research skills in Biomedicine in Latin America and the Caribbean.** (Education + Tutorials). In collaboration with Fogarty International Center. 2005-2007

It includes:

- ▶ *Workshop and Virtual Tutorials* for Career development and the taking on of transformational leadership.
- ▶ *On-line seminar:* Integrating gender analysis into Health Science research.

- Training for health and technical assistance staff in integrating a gender perspective in health policies and programs. - In collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). (Intensive workshops + On-line tutorials + Designing of manuals and work guides)



## COURSES

- **“Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad: Aportes del enfoque de género”.** (Science, Technology and Society: Contributions from the gender perspective). In collaboration with OAS. First edition 2004.

With the participation of 150 educators and professionals from 13 Iberoamerican countries. Has been taught by the OAS (2004 and 2005) and the Galician Counsel of Education and University Regulation Board (Xunta de Galicia Consellería de Educación e Ordenación Universitaria ) (2008) through their educational portals.

- **“La integración de la perspectiva de género en el abordaje de la salud: aportes conceptuales y metodológicos para fortalecer la calidad y la equidad”.** (The inclusion of a gender perspective in tackling issues in health: Conceptual and methodological contributions to strengthen quality and equity). In collaboration with Women's Health Observatory from the Ministry of Public Health and Consumption of Spain, Andalusian School of Public Health and the sponsorship of PAHO. Since 2007

Since first offered, more than 180 professionals in the field of health from 17 countries in Latin America, Spain, Italy, France and the United States have attended.

## MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

- CD Rom Alicia en el País de la Ciencia y la Tecnología (Alice in Science and Technology Land). Created in 2004



- VIDEO: “Ampliando las fronteras de la Ciencia y la Tecnología. La educación abre paso a las jóvenes latinoamericanas” (Expanding the frontiers of Science and Technology. Education makes way for Latin American girls). Created in 2004



## IMPACT ON POLICY

- Expert Group Meeting “Gender, Science and Technology”, Washington DC (August 2004).
- First Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities for Science and Technology in the area of CIDI (Inter-American Council for Integral Development) of the OAS (Lima, November 11 – 12, 2004). Integration of a gender perspective in Science and Technology policies and programs in the Americas.

## NETWORKS

- Creation of “Red de Mujeres Investigadoras en Salud de América Latina y el Caribe” (Network of Women Health Researchers of Latin America and the Caribbean). 2007
- As part of:
  - ▶ UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme.
  - ▶ TWOWS - Third World Organization for Women in Science
- Member of the Advisory Board/Counsel of WIGSAT- Women in Global Science and Technology



# GENDER IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

According to the World Telecommunication/ ICT Development Report from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (IMDT2010) in 2009 approximately 1.7 billion people, 26% of the world's population, had access to the Internet. More recent estimates (September 2010) state 1.9 billion Internet users.

In America, the percentage of Internet users is 44%, varying widely by region (56,5% in North America, as compared to 2% in the Caribbean) and in different areas within each country).

A powerful factor for change is the use of mobile phones, now reaching 75% of the world's population and connecting large groups of people, especially in rural areas, all over the world.

Other data speaks of profound inequalities – for example the ability to access high-speed broadband networks by schools in developed and developing countries. A phenomenon that is also found in universities, research centers, medical centers and hospitals. The problem is not in being completely disconnected to technology, but in the quality of services that can be accessed, the way they are used as well as the human capital that can take full advantage of them.

How are women and men involved in this techno-cultural change?

Although information from certain countries and regions is encouraging as it indicates that women are making gains and even exceeding men in terms of access to the Internet, men still have an edge over women. Differences persist in the way in which technology is being put to use, in the representations of gender in the content and design of technologies, in the place women occupy in technological policy decisions and in more subtle aspects, such as gender biases in the imaginaries surrounding the Information Society.

The aforementioned does not prevent us from considering some trends that are starting to emerge. For example:

- Women are the main users of most of the social networks. They represent 64% of users for the most popular sites like My Space, and 57% for Twitter and Facebook. On Youtube and LinkedIn both genders are equal.
- In the Blogosphere studies done in Europe show that there is a slight majority of women (54%).

We are still far from knowing the socio-economic, age and ethnic profiles of the women that access these social networks as well as the modes, meaning and benefits of their involvement.

All in all, the inequality between genders in the Information/ Knowledge Society is a moving target. It goes from access to technology, which does not place women in competition with men for the distribution of power and resources, and on the other hand serves as a means of accumulating capital placing them in the role of consumer. And this inequality is entrenched in places where power (in capital letters) resides: among those who run technological and communication companies, where agendas, regulations and policies for digital development are decided, by those who define production priorities, create content and design technological tools.

Thus the necessity to plan and implement long term multidimensional strategies that move simultaneously at two different speeds. It is important to accelerate the measures that insure the right to universal access and equality of conditions for these social goods. And at the same time, create the conditions for women and men to use ICT in a intelligent and responsible way, grasping both the benefits it can bring to them and their communities – as well as the risks and the way power relations play out.

**It is time to invent an Information and Knowledge Society that makes room for our hope for justice, the appreciation of diversity and creativity, the democratization of opportunities and the fulfillment of human rights.  
Our action is oriented towards these goals.**

## RESEARCH

- **ICT and Gender Equality: New Opportunities and Challenges for Public Administration to Implement the IADGs including MDGs** ECOSOC, UNDESA. Published for ECOSOC. 2009-2010.
- **Estrategias para la Integración del Análisis de Género en el Programa ICT4D Américas** (Strategies for the Integration of Gender Analysis in the ICT4D Americas Program) – PI. IDRC, 2007.
- **Mujeres en la ruta hacia la sociedad del conocimiento: Reflexiones sobre contextos y oportunidades.** (Women on the road to a knowledge society: Reflections on context and opportunities). Presented in “Jornadas Solidaridad en Red: Nuevas tecnologías, ciudadanía y cambio social”, organized for HEGOA (Instituto de Estudios sobre Desarrollo y Cooperación Internacional, Universidad del País Vasco). 2004
- **“Género en acción en la Sociedad del Conocimiento. Oportunidades para la innovación”.** Presented in Seminario Internacional “La Sociedad de la información en la cooperación al Desarrollo” (International Seminary “The Information Society in cooperation with Development”, Tres Culturas Foundation of the Mediterranean 2006.
- **From access to appropriation: Women and ICT policies in Latin American and the Caribbean.** Elaborated by the Expert Group Meeting “Information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women” DAW in cooperation with ITU and United Nations ICT Task Force Secretariat. 2002
- **“Las nuevas tecnologías de información y las mujeres: reflexiones necesarias”** (The new information technologies and women: necessary reflections) (2001). Published by ECLAC

## INTERNET EDUCATION

### PROGRAMS

**“Digital Inclusion and Citizenship with a gender approach. Training Program for instructors and coordinators of “Centros MEC” in Uruguay.”** In collaboration with the Pilot Support Program for public policies to reduce generational and gender inequities – Project G. UN (UNFPA-UNIFEM), National Institute for Women and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Uruguay.



### COURSES

- **“Women’s leadership in present contexts: renewing strategies and practices”.** In collaboration with CIM/ OAS. First edition: 2009  
Concurrent: Women from 9 Member States of the OAS.
- **“Creative resources for developing a vision on gender in the field of communication information technologies”.** In collaboration with UNIFEM. First edition: 2008  
With the participation of professionals from 10 countries of Ibero-America.



## IMPACT ON POLICY

- **Member of the Board of Directors of the UN GAID** (Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development- United Nations).
- **Ministerial Conference on the Information Society of Latin America and the Caribbean.** Contributions to the elaboration of the “Meta sobre Género & Sociedad de la Información” (Goal for Gender & Information Society. (El Salvador, February 2008).
- **10th Regional Conference on the Latin America and Caribbean Woman (ECLAC).** Contributions to the Quito Consensus. Coordination of the parallel event “Las Políticas de paridad de Género en y para la Sociedad de la Información: Nuevas agendas, nuevas alianzas” (Policies on Gender parity in and for the Information Society: New Agendas, new alliances”). Ecuador, 2007.
- **Delphi Research on the eLAC policy priorities of the Information Society Program.** Inclusion of the Gender approach. ECLAC. 2007
- **World Summit on the Information Society – WSIS** (Geneva 2003 - Tunisia 2005).
  - ▶ Coordination of the Latin American Chapter of the WSIS Gender Caucus.
  - ▶ Workshops, virtual forums and publications during the preparatory stages.
  - ▶ Contributions to:
    - The Regional Preparatory Conference of the second phase of the WSIS. (Brazil, 2005) and GRULAC, 2005.
  - ▶ Organization and coordination of regional and international Panels.
  - ▶ Monitoring of Action Plan



## NETWORKING

- Coordination of the **International Taskforce on Women and ICT** (ITF) of UN GAID.
- Community of expertise “**Gender, Development and Information Society Policies**” of the UN GAID, UN. [www.ITforChange.net](http://www.ITforChange.net)
- **Creation of the Regional Working Group “Gender and ICT”.** Buenos Aires, 2005.



## VIRTUAL FORUMS

- **Gender, ICT/Information Society in Ibero-America.** Preparatory of the 10th Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC. August 2007.
- **Gender and ICT in Latin America: World Summit on the Information Society and beyond...** In collaboration with APC-WNSP. July 2003.
- **Women and the new information and communication technologies. Perspectives and experiences on increasing opportunities for development and innovatio.** In collaboration with the Lawoman Network (Colombia). August 2002.

## YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN AS PROTAGONISTS IN THE INFORMATION/KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Young people are a group both socially heterogeneous and segmented according to gender, social class, ethnic group, nationality, culture and religion.

They are the depositaries of the ideals, hopes, fears, envy and neglect of the adult world and its institutions. Objectified and placed into the same mold, in a way that borders on racism, as regards beauty and triumph when faced with the signs of time of the flesh and a success by record consumption.

They are perceived, watched and controlled like a group at risk and dangerous. They live in tension between the continuity and changes of gender patterns and relationships; between the expectations of better opportunities and access to resources, and the limitations for satisfying them; between greater freedom for choices in sexuality and lifestyles, and institutions that resist supporting their choices; between the hunger for innovation that would make them the protagonists and that would finally provide answers to questions of inequality, and the injustice in the evolution and survival of the nuclei of adult power that decide the course and rhythm of the transformation of the social order.

They are constantly invoked, but little known or listened to.

Admired for their skillful use of information technologies, the well known digital natives are not part of, or at most are secondary actors in decisions made concerning the meaning, aims and ways of shaping the new social environments that dynamize the expansion and constant renewal of ICT.

Nevertheless many are showing a capacity for invention and are becoming political actors and cultural creators in the digital world.

The gender gap in the access of youth to the Information Society is closing every day.

This does not mean that other problems of the same or greater impact on the subjectivities and relationships between young men and women are not going to surface. Therefore the need to encourage the strategic appropriation of ICT with the interests and perceptivities of both, expand opportunities, take notice of and confront the stereotypes, violence, racism and sexism that is conveyed in the content that circulates online. We also need to question the pretence of liberty and equality in power based environments, and exploit to a maximum the potential to democratize those spaces and inhabit them with new forms of communication and participation.



## INTERNET EDUCATION

### PROGRAMS

“Jóvenes investigando jóvenes. Las mujeres jóvenes en la Sociedad de la Información” (Youth researching youth. Young women in the Information Society). (Workshops + Communities of practice + Tutorials). 2009 and 2010. In collaboration with UNIFEM and UNFPA.

Aimed at getting young women started on research of youth and gender with a focus on:

- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Patterns of gender based violence
- Political and citizen participation
- Employment

Grant holders from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Central America have completed the program developed research projects and received financial support for the first implementation phases.



### COURSES

“Género en Acción. Proyectos con jóvenes y TIC. Fundamentos y Estrategias para la Sociedad del Conocimiento” (Gender in action. Projects with young men and women and ICT. Foundations and strategies for the Knowledge Society). Aimed at educators and representatives from youth organizations and NGOs. In collaboration with IDRC. 2006.

### MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

CD Rom: Creador@s en la Sociedad del Conocimiento: Estrategias para incorporar el enfoque de género en proyectos con jóvenes y TIC (Creators in the Knowledge Society: Strategies to incorporate a gender approach in ICT projects with young people). Produced in 2006.



## RESEARCH

- **“Juventud, Género & TIC: Imaginarios en la construcción de la Sociedad de la Información en América Latina”** (Youth, Gender & ICT: Imaginaries in the construction of the Information Society in Latin America). 2008.
- **“Del dicho al hecho: Equidad de género en el acceso y usos de Internet por parte de la juventud latinoamericana”.** (From Words to Action: Gender equity in the access and use of the Internet by Latin American youth). 2004-2005. In collaboration with IDRC/CRDI.
- **“Piloteando Futuros: Mujeres y varones jóvenes construyen su proyecto de vida”.** (Piloting futures: Young women and men constructing their life projects). 2001. In collaboration with IADB (Inter-American Development Bank).

## NETWORKS

- **Map of organizations** of /for young indigenous and Afro-descendants women in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Central America. In collaboration with UNIFEM and UNFPA. From 2010.
- **Online database of projects and digital training programs** for young people in Latin America. In collaboration with IDRC /CRDI. From 2006.
- **Community of practice: Youth, Gender and ICT** in Latin America and the Caribbean. Created in 2006. Integrated by organization's coordinators and youth networks.

## IMPACT ON POLICIES

- World Summit on Youth. Mexico, 2010. Workshop: **“jóvenes investigando jóvenes desde la perspectiva de género en la Sociedad de la Información”** (Youth researching youth from a gender perspective in the Information Society).



- World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Tunisia, 2005. Panel **“Creador@s en la Sociedad del Conocimiento: Estrategias para incorporar el enfoque de Género en proyectos con jóvenes & TIC”.** (Women creators in the Knowledge Society: Strategies to incorporate a gender approach for ICT projects with young people).



## GLOBAL NETWORK OF UNESCO CHAIRS ON GENDER



Twenty-three UNESCO Chairs from around the world develop research, training and action programs from a gender perspective.

Each of them works from this approach in a specific field (education, communication, science, technology, media, political participation, development) which signifies an asset rich in knowledge and experience.

The Regional Chair located at FLACSO (Argentina) has opened a micro site on its institutional Website to promote the exchange of information, dissemination of activities, dialogue on topics of common interest and development of group projects within this network.

Its aim is to build an updated data base of publications and documents produced by all Chairs, maintain an active virtual classroom, have web conferences and meetings for researchers, professors and other professionals from their own teams as well as guest institutions.

# LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN CENTER ON GENDER AND INFORMATION SOCIETY



ITF – GAID

Global Program on Women and ICT



LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN CENTER ON GENDER AND INFORMATION SOCIETY

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

- **Workshop** for the preparation of the publication “Creadoras en la Sociedad del Conocimiento” (Women Creators in the Knowledge Society). Buenos Aires, 2009.
- **UN GAID’s Global Forum.** Monterrey, Mexico 2009:
  - ▶ Presentation of the CGC
  - ▶ Plenary Session: ICT and Inter cultural Innovations in Education
  - ▶ Parallel Event “Gender and ICT”
- **Resources in Gender and ICT in Latin America**
  - ▶ **Expert Directory**
  - ▶ **Map of Gender & ICT /** Information Society initiatives in Latin America.



[www.catunescomujer.org/cgyi-lac/](http://www.catunescomujer.org/cgyi-lac/)

*This publication was produced in the framework of the International Conference "Gender Equity Policies – A Prospective View: New Scenarios, Actors and Articulations".*

*Gender, Society and Policies Area, FLACSO Argentina*

*Buenos Aires, Argentina - 9 to 12 November 2010*

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