

Category 5: GENDER ISSUES

(*Participants from Greece*, Albania, Georgia, Kenya, South Africa), offering a panel for varied viewpoints on crucial gender-related matters.

The following is an overview of the primary subjects addressed and the outcomes reached:

Key Topics Discussed

1. Non-Binary Inclusion

- Participants emphasized the need for inclusive policies and societal acceptance for non-binary individuals.
- The discussion highlighted the challenges faced by non-binary people, including:
 - Lack of legal recognition in many countries.
 - Cultural and societal stigma.
 - Limited representation in mainstream media and educational content.
- Examples from participating countries:
 - **Greece:** Progress made in gender equality policies but non-binary inclusion still lags.
 - **South Africa:** Legal recognition exists, yet societal attitudes remain a barrier.

2. Gender Equity and Its Achievability

- The focus was on **gender equity** as a precursor to gender equality, aiming to provide fair treatment and opportunities tailored to specific gender-related challenges.
- Strategies discussed:
 - Education and awareness campaigns to dismantle stereotypes.
 - Gender-sensitive budgeting to ensure resources are allocated to address gender gaps.
 - Addressing unconscious bias in workplaces and institutions.
- Examples:
 - **Kenya:** Grassroots initiatives for empowering women in rural areas were highlighted.
 - **Albania and Georgia:** Policies encouraging gender equity in political representation.

3. Cultural and Societal Barriers

- Participants delved into the deep-seated cultural norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality.
- Issues raised:
 - **Dowry practices** (notably in Kenya and Greece) were discussed as economic and social burdens on women and men.
 - **Patriarchal norms** in many societies limit women's autonomy.
- Challenges:
 - Resistance to change in traditional communities.
 - Lack of enforcement of gender-related laws and policies.

4. Intersectionality in Gender Issues

- The interplay between gender and other factors such as race, class, and ethnicity was explored.
- Notable observations:
 - Marginalized women (e.g., women of color, and indigenous women) face compounded challenges.
 - Tailored solutions are needed to address these intersecting forms of discrimination.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Policy and Legal Reforms

- Governments must focus on:
 - Comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that include non-binary and transgender individuals.
 - Policies promoting women in leadership roles and equitable access to education and healthcare.

2. Education and Awareness

- Incorporation of gender studies into school curriculums.
- Public campaigns addressing harmful gender norms and stereotypes.

3. Community Engagement

- Involving community leaders in driving change, especially in traditional societies.
- Supporting grassroots movements to challenge practices like dowries.

4. Global Collaboration

- Sharing best practices across countries to address shared challenges.
- Participants emphasized the importance of international forums for fostering solidarity and cooperation.

5. Inclusive Solutions

- Ensuring that gender equity initiatives are tailored to cultural contexts while remaining inclusive of all genders.

Notable Outcomes

- Participants agreed that achieving gender equity requires a multi-faceted approach, combining policy changes, societal shifts, and grassroots efforts.
- South Africa's efforts to address historical injustices and promote equity in education by prioritizing black women's access to universities come up as a critical and complex initiative. While these measures aim to correct deeply entrenched disparities caused by apartheid, they also raise concerns about finding a balance that ensures fairness across all demographics, including white women and black men. Achieving true equity requires nuanced policies that acknowledge intersectionality and strive for inclusivity without fostering new forms of exclusion or resentment. This highlights the ongoing challenge of navigating justice in deeply stratified societies.
- The dialogue underscored the importance of intersectionality and inclusive frameworks in addressing gender-related issues.

I would like to conclude by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the ERASMUS Office of the University of West Attica and specifically to you Evi and Fani, for the kind invitation to serve as a moderator during this enlightening roundtable discussion.

It was an absolute privilege to engage with such diverse and insightful perspectives on gender issues. This experience was both productive and rewarding.

Thank you for creating a space where meaningful dialogue can thrive.

I'm so grateful for the connection we've built and look forward to continuing this journey together.

My warmest regards to both of you,

Antigoni Sarantaki