

## Questions, aims & objectives: a mixed methods research

One of the most important mission of university is to incorporate the cultural and social changes in order to elaborate new reflections on didactics and research fields. The research is focused on how and why to integrate a gender education in PhD curriculum studies. The new idea has been listed among the priorities of intervention in the Horizon 2020.

- What is the Academia Role?
- Which is the training in Italian universities regarding gender issues? And in Europe what is the strategy?
- How to improve the skills of researchers? How to introduce transversal skills about gender issues at all scientific areas?
- Which pedagogical methods and tools can be used to train future researchers to improve their basic skills in this specific case?



The hypothesis is to design a **blended learning** : a mix of different learning environments that combines classroom lessons and e-learning activities.



The final objectives are **sensitize, inform and training** PhD students about gender issues.

- To improve the basic skills to use existing resources (Moodle platforms).
- To provide new opportunities for reflection and new tools to do research.

The idea is the creation of a collaborative research community where the learning is not acquisition of personal skills but is a **construction of a common knowledge**.



In an overall view, the research uses a **mixed methods approach** and operates in the **lifelong learning** perspective. The research process was divided in several steps.

## First step: literature review

The first step was to realize a literature analysis and to search “best practices” of gender education specifically aimed to PhD courses at national and European level. It was possible to individuate a different approaches to introduce gender studies.

Results:

### ➤ European level:

the “**interdisciplinary mainstreaming**” action is widespread among different scientific areas. We can distinguish two different approaches: “**Explicit**” is related to PhD, Master, and lifelong learning courses focused on Gender Equality; “**Integrated**” is related to studies, theories, research and methods gender oriented which are incorporated into different disciplines in transversal ways.

### ➤ National level :

In opposite in Italy there are only fragmented experiences as “spot interventions” without mainstreaming vision and any consolidate or transversal actions.

Figure 1

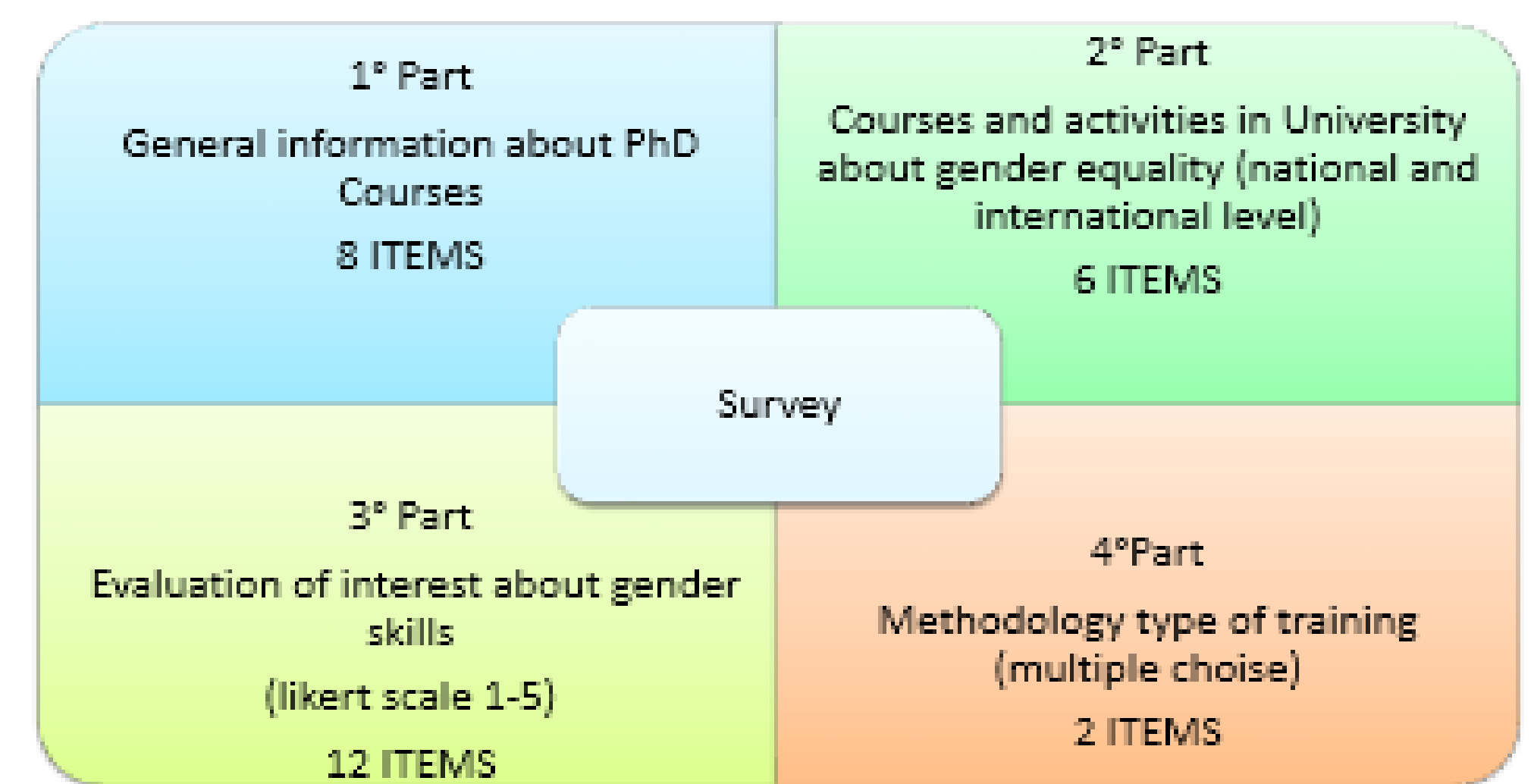


Figure 2

Transversal training about gender issues (evaluation by Likert scale 1-5)	% 4-5	
	Men	Woman
Women history in scientific research	32	52
Gender stereotypes	46	78
European/ national Gender mainstreaming policies	46	78
Educational segregation	50	73
New perspectives in research: gender innovations in research	38	66
Media, languages and communication	51	86
Work life balance	59	80

## Second step: survey, quantitative data

To design «gender education courses» it is necessary to test the interest. For this reason has been realized a questionnaire addressed to all coordinators of PhD courses in Italy (854 in different scientific areas). The aim was to understand the interest of implementing training programs related to gender issues.

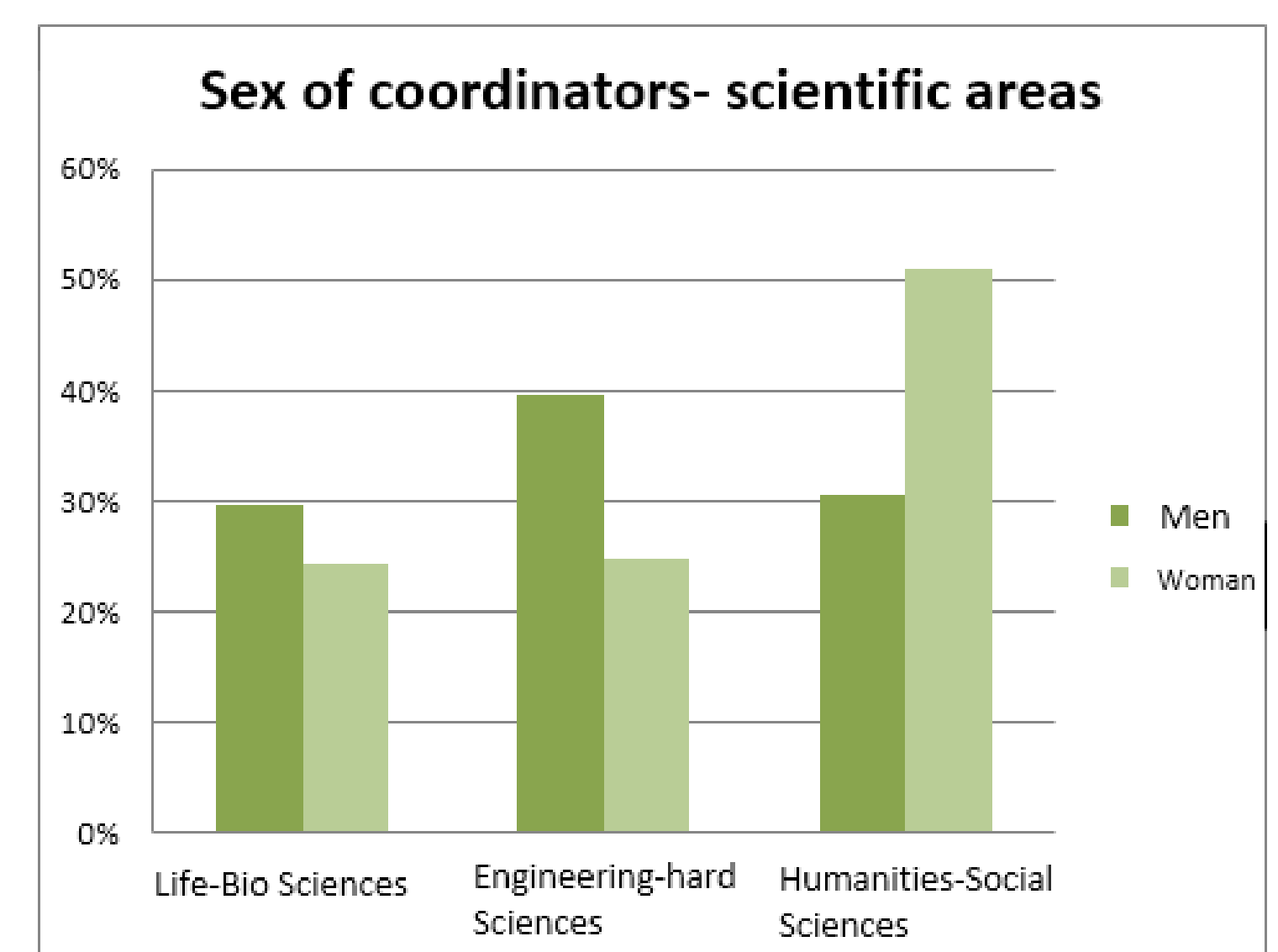
- The CAWI survey (Computer Assisted Web Interview) has been sent in sequential way for regional universities groups, ensuring anonymity and the ethical ways to use data obtained.
- The questionnaire has been composed of 28 items with medium-high structure, and the data obtained have a quantitative polarity.
- The keywords were: gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender stereotypes, gender innovations research, education and segregation.
- Four dimensions helped us to understand the interest of PhD courses’ directors about gender issues (fig.1).
- All data obtained were sex disaggregated to highlight any gender differences in the responses received (fig.2).
- The response rate was 27,6%. National data shows that most coordinators are men (76%). Data confirms European trends: the presence of women is more significant in the Humanities-Social Sciences (fig.3).

## Third step: design gender blended learning

Thank’s to collecting data it was possible to design an experimental course addressed to PhD students. The Coordinators showed the most important areas of a gender transversal training (fig.2).

- The pedagogical approach is to mix classrooms lessons and e-learning activities: the course includes a “welcome module” (2 hours of seminar) and after the online activities.
- In Moodle Platform (University of Padua) was opened a virtual space for training with different units (fig.4).
- The course is divided into macro-areas with a narrative approach. In particular four short video lessons (on average 5 minutes) was realized. Each section is completed by materials and forums. All activities are supported by an expert in the matter/tutor that will supervise the activities and will animate the discussions.
- The different sections are opened in steps according to an agreed calendar. The activities require a total commitment of 25 hours.

Figure 3



## Fourth step: experimental phase (currently underway)

The experimental phase will involve italians PhD courses in different scientific macro areas: Humanities-Social Sciences, Life-Bio Sciences, Engineering-hard Sciences.

A first trial will start and will involve 40 PhD students at the University of Padua. Students will have the opportunity to work together through various activities such as online workshops, web forums and theme-based activities. At the end of the course the participants will fill an evaluation questionnaire that aims to verify the interest and usefulness of the proposed activities. The data collected will allow any new design changes to review and improve the Blended course.

Figure 4

Module	Title	Skills	Methodologies
Part 1 Seminar	Welcome module 2 hours	Description educational goals Showing activities familiarization platform	Working group
<b>Training on-line, Moodle Platform University of Padua</b>			
Module1	A hidden “history”: narrating excellence	<b>Sensitize</b> to gender equality issues	Video-lesson (5,40 minutes), discussion forum, workshop on-line
Module 2	Education segregation and Gender Equality Index	<b>Inform</b> , to share, to stimulate new dialogues	Video-lesson (6,30 minutes), discussion forum, workshop on-line, practice and exercises
Module 3	Gender and research, glass ceiling and Leaky pipe	<b>New reflection</b> about obstacles and opportunity of scientific carriers and gender equality process	Video-lesson (4,30 minutes), discussion forum, workshop on-line, practice and exercises
Module 4	European Projects and Gender	<b>Training</b> : provide tools to insert a gender perspective in researches. Introduce a gender analysis in the research process	Video-lesson (4 minutes), discussion forum, workshop on-line, practice and exercises, check-list
Module 5	Narrative and comments section	Operative section where participant will be able to raise report and contribute to the collection of in-depth materials and enter their comments. Final survey	

## Highlight ...

- This research is innovative: this is the **first Blended course designed to insert a gender perspective in scientific research** in Italy. In particular the training is focused on enhance the transversal skills and to promote gender mainstreaming action.
- The research introduce a change through pedagogical tools. The adopted methodology promotes the creation of a collaborative research community.
- Future perspectives, that the phase of experimentation will be concluded, are those of proposing the training course carried out in different doctoral courses in Italy.

Short bibliography : Braidotti, R., De Vos, M. (2005). The Women's Studies Ph.D. in Europe: An Archive. *States of Insecurity and the Gendered Politics of Fear*, NWSA Journal, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 157-172, The Johns Hopkins University Press, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4317162>  
Brown, E.M. (2010). Gender Toolkit for educators. Techniques to assist educators in mainstreaming gender. UNESCO, May 2010  
Cherubini, A. M., Colella, P., Mangia, C. (2011). Empowerment e orientamento di genere nella scienza. Dalla teoria alle buone pratiche. Milano: FrancoAngeli  
Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education, sixth edition*. London: Routledge

De Rossi, M., Petrucco, C. (2013). *Le narrazioni digitali per l'educazione e la formazione*. Roma: Hausmann, R., Tyson, L. & Zahidi, S. (2012). *The global gender gap report*. World Economic Forum, <https://agenda.weforum.org/topics/global-issues/gender-parity/> ultima consultazione 20/11/2015  
Messina, L., De Rossi, M. (2015). *Tecnologie, formazione e didattica*. Roma: Carocci  
Modernisation of higher education in Europe, Access, Retention and Employability, Eurydice Report, 2014, [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic\\_reports/165EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/165EN.pdf),  
The contribution of the European Commission to responsible research and innovation. A review of the science and society (FP6) and science and society (FP7) programmes, SIS\_RRI, APRE, 2014  
Toolkit for Integrating Gender-Sensitive Approach into Research and Teaching. Garcia Working Papers 6, 2015

Contact:

[julia.dicampo@phd.unipd.it](mailto:julia.dicampo@phd.unipd.it)

[marina.derossi@unipd.it](mailto:marina.derossi@unipd.it)