



Does gender matter?

14th SIG gender research conference – in hybrid mode

Funchal/Madeira & Online, Tuesday, 25th August 2026, 9.00 – 11.45 WEST

(Western European Summer Time)

Room: to be announced

In a world of escalating conflicts and struggles for basic resources, gender issues in ECEC might seem to be only academic or irrelevant. However, researchers continue to discuss gender gaps in education, gender disparities in the work force, and the underrepresentation of men in the early years. The EECERA Special Interest Group (SIG) *Gender* invites you to its 14th research conference, connected to the 34th EECERA conference in Funchal/Madeira.

We ask *Does gender matter?* and will discuss this question in several contexts:

- Tensions of masculinities and femininities between caring professions and militarisation.
- Relevance of gender in pedagogical content and practice in ECEC.
- Reassertion of gender stereotypes generated by artificial intelligence (AI).
- A gap between academic gender discourses and the reality of how people experience gender in everyday life in education and care.

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.

We welcome you to join our next conference. As many colleagues will not be able to travel to Madeira, we decided to arrange the conference in hybrid mode. Small group sessions will be conducted partly on-site, partly in online breakout rooms via zoom.

The EECERA Special Interest Group *Gender* embraces contributions to all aspects of gender relevant in the field of ECEC, with a special focus on gender issues in the ECEC work force. The conference is the annual meeting of the SIG, and as such it is open to all interested researchers. Participation in the conference is free of charge.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Funchal or online!

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

Conference registration via Eventbrite: [link](#)



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Program

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

9.30 **Start of hybrid session - round talk - recent developments**

10.00 **Small groups & Breakout Rooms**

1. *On-site*: Relevance of gender in pedagogical content and practice in ECEC (Moderation: Ricardo Goncalves, Sweden/Brazil)
2. *Online*: Reassertion of gender stereotypes generated by artificial intelligence (AI) (Moderation: Halah Elkarif, Germany/Egypt)
3. *Online*: A gap between academic gender discourses and the reality of how people experience gender in everyday life in education and care. (Moderation: Konstantina Rentzou, Greece)
4. *On-site or online*: Tensions of masculinities and femininities between caring professions and militarisation. (Moderation: N.N.)

11.00 **Break**

11.15 **Plenary round** – report from small groups & discussion

11.30 **The next steps & final round**

We discuss possibilities for collaboration and the further development of the SIG.

11.45 **End of conference**

*An informal **SIG dinner** will take place Monday evening – more information later.*