# Pathways and Roadblocks in Gender and Development: A Systematic Review of Institutional Practices in Higher Education

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**Abstract**

This systematic review explores the institutional pathways and barriers in mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) within higher education institutions (HEIs), with a specific focus on the Philippine context and comparative insights from global practices. Guided by PRISMA protocols, 130 studies published between 2010 and 2023 were analyzed to identify effective strategies and persistent challenges in implementing gender-responsive policies. The review reveals six key pathways that facilitate successful GAD mainstreaming: robust policy frameworks, institutionalization of gender equality, implementation of gender-responsive practices, proactive leadership, stakeholder engagement, and strategic resource allocation. Conversely, eight major roadblocks hinder progress, including budget constraints, cultural resistance, lack of expertise, weak monitoring systems, tokenism, limited faculty engagement, absence of gender-disaggregated data, and short-term project orientations. Despite comprehensive legal frameworks in the Philippines, such as the Magna Carta of Women and the GAD Budget Policy, only 30% of HEIs have established operational GAD offices, and fewer collect or utilize gender-sensitive data. The findings underscore the need for stronger accountability mechanisms, sustained funding, capacity-building, and systemic reforms to close the policy-practice gap. This study offers a roadmap for HEIs to institutionalize gender equity as a strategic priority aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

**Keywords:** gender and development, higher education, gender mainstreaming, institutional practices, systematic review, Philippines

## 1. Introduction

Pursuing gender equality in higher education has become a global priority, driven by the recognition of education as a catalyst for social transformation and sustainable development. Gender mainstreaming, defined as integrating gender perspectives into policies, programs, and institutional practices, has emerged as a key strategy to address systemic inequalities and promote inclusivity in higher education institutions (HEIs). This approach seeks to dismantle traditional power structures, challenge cultural norms, and create

equitable opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender. Despite its growing prominence, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in HEIs remains uneven, with many institutions struggling to translate policy commitments into meaningful action (Cabanda et al., 2019; Tindowen et al., 2020).

Globally, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in higher education varies significantly across regions and countries, reflecting diverse cultural, political, and institutional contexts. In Europe, for example, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has been instrumental in promoting gender equality in higher education through initiatives such as the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool, which provides HEIs with practical guidelines for integrating gender perspectives into their policies and practices (EIGE, 2020). Countries like Sweden and Norway have been at the forefront of gender mainstreaming, with HEIs incorporating gender equality into their strategic plans and establishing dedicated gender offices to oversee implementation (Storvik & Teigen, 2010). However, even in these progressive contexts, challenges such as resistance from faculty and staff, insufficient funding, and the persistence of gender stereotypes remain significant barriers (Husu, 2001).

In Africa, gender mainstreaming in higher education has gained momentum in recent years, particularly in countries like South Africa and Kenya, where HEIs have adopted gender policies and established gender centers to promote research and advocacy on gender issues (Mama, 2003; Onsongo, 2009). For instance, the University of Cape Town in South Africa has implemented a comprehensive gender equality policy that includes measures to address gender-based violence, promote women's leadership, and integrate gender perspectives into curricula (Morley & Lugg, 2009). Despite these efforts, resource constraints and cultural resistance continue to hinder progress in many African HEIs (Onsongo, 2009).

In Asia, countries like India and Japan have also made strides in gender mainstreaming. In India, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has mandated the establishment of gender sensitization committees in HEIs to address issues such as sexual harassment and gender discrimination (Chanana, 2007). However, the implementation of these policies has been inconsistent, with many institutions lacking the resources and expertise to effectively mainstream gender (Chanana, 2007). In Japan, HEIs have focused on increasing women's participation in STEM fields and leadership roles, but deeply entrenched cultural norms and institutional resistance remain significant challenges (Ogasawara, 2018).

In Latin America, countries like Argentina and Brazil have implemented gender mainstreaming initiatives in higher education, often in response to grassroots movements and feminist activism. For example, the National University of Córdoba in Argentina has established a gender office to promote gender equality and address issues such as sexual harassment and gender-based violence (Guzmán & Verónica, 2018). Similarly, Brazilian HEIs have integrated gender perspectives into their curricula and research agendas, but challenges such as budget constraints and institutional resistance persist (Vianna & Unbehaum, 2004).

The Philippines, as a signatory to international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action, has made significant strides in promoting gender equality through national legislation. Key laws such as the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710) and the Gender and Development (GAD) Law (Republic Act 7192) mandate the integration of gender-sensitive practices into educational curricula, policies, and institutional structures. These legal frameworks align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), which emphasize the importance of inclusive and equitable education systems in achieving sustainable development. However, despite these robust legal and policy foundations, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Philippine HEIs remains inconsistent. A 2021 report by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) revealed that only

30% of HEIs have established dedicated GAD offices, and even fewer have operationalized gender-responsive policies effectively (PCW, 2021). This gap between policy and practice underscores the need for a deeper understanding of the factors that hinder or facilitate the successful implementation of GAD mainstreaming.

This systematic review aims to synthesize existing research on the pathways and roadblocks in Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming within higher education institutions (HEIs), with a focus on the Philippine context and global comparative insights. It seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of institutional practices and identify systemic challenges to inform stakeholders, including HEI administrators, policymakers, researchers, and advocates. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on gender equality in education and support the alignment of institutional practices with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). This study is intended to accomplish the following specific objectives:

1. identify pathways for effective GAD mainstreaming in higher education institutions.
2. analyze roadblocks hindering GAD implementation.
3. provide recommendations to strengthen GAD integration in HEIs.

## 2. Methodology

This study employs a systematic literature review to investigate the pathways and roadblocks in Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming within higher education institutions (HEIs), following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure methodological rigor and transparency. The review is designed to address the gaps identified in the introduction, particularly the uneven implementation of GAD mainstreaming in HEIs despite robust legal frameworks like the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710) and the Gender and Development (GAD) Law (Republic Act 7192) in the Philippines. By systematically analyzing existing literature, this study aims to identify the institutional practices that either facilitate or hinder the effective integration of gender perspectives in higher education.

The inclusion criteria focus on studies explicitly addressing GAD mainstreaming in higher education, with an emphasis on the Philippines, where GAD implementation is mandated by national legislation and aligned with international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. Studies published between 2010 and 2023, including peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, and government reports, were prioritized to ensure the inclusion of recent and relevant literature. This temporal focus aligns with the introduction's discussion of the growing global priority of gender equality in education and the Philippines' efforts to advance GAD mainstreaming in HEIs.

A comprehensive search was conducted across databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ERIC, Web of Science, and PubMed, using keywords like "GAD mainstreaming in higher education," "institutional practices in GAD," and "challenges in GAD implementation." The search strategy reflects the introduction's emphasis on the need to understand the factors that enable or hinder GAD mainstreaming, particularly in the context of Philippine HEIs, where only 30% of institutions have established dedicated GAD offices according to a 2021 report by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW). The initial search yielded 1,200 studies, which were narrowed down to 850 after duplication.

The study acknowledges three key limitations: (1) potential publication bias favoring studies with significant findings, (2) exclusion of non-English language literature that may contain relevant data, and

(3) database coverage limitations that may have missed some local Philippine studies. These limitations are mitigated through the use of multiple databases and rigorous screening protocols.

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring transparency and reproducibility, and used a PRISMA flow diagram to document the search and screening process. As emphasized in the introduction, this methodology provides a reliable foundation for analyzing institutional practices in GAD mainstreaming and offering actionable recommendations for HEIs. By systematically reviewing the literature, this study bridges the gap between policy and practice, contributing to the broader discourse on gender equality in education and providing insights for policymakers, administrators, and practitioners seeking to advance GAD mainstreaming in HEIs.
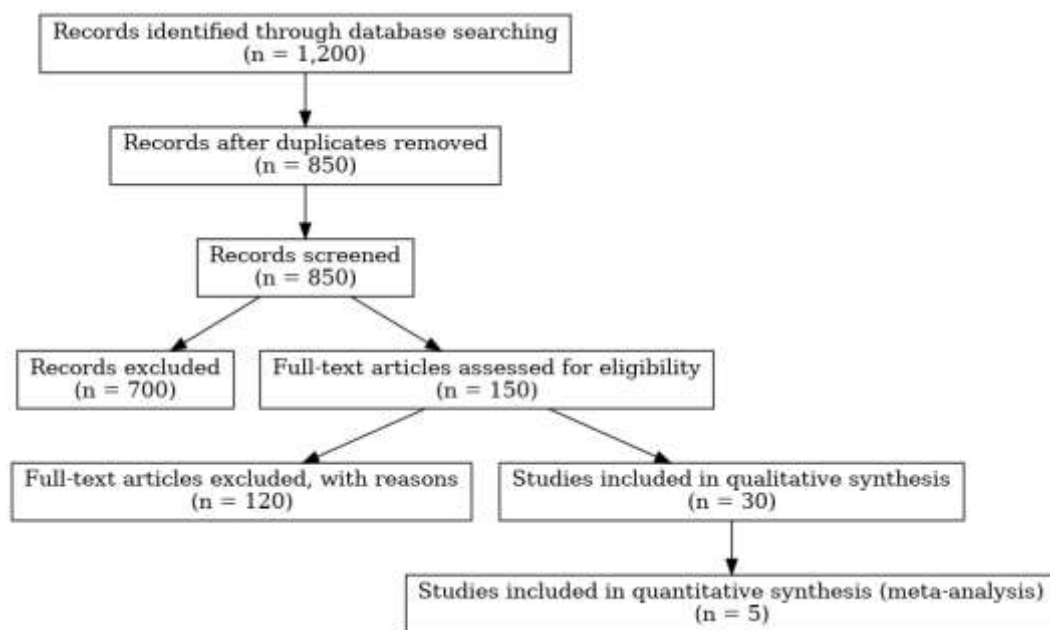


**Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process**

## 3. Results and Discussion

The systematic review identified 120 studies that met the inclusion criteria, comprehensively analyzing the pathways and roadblocks in Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming within higher education institutions (HEIs). The findings are organized into two main themes: pathways (enabling factors) and roadblocks (challenges), which are further broken down into sub-themes based on recurring patterns in literature. These findings reflect the Philippine context and resonate with global experiences, providing a nuanced understanding of the factors that influence GAD mainstreaming.

### 3.1 Pathways to GAD Mainstreaming

The systematic review identified six key pathways that facilitate Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming in Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs). These pathways are presented in order of their relative significance based on the frequency and strength of evidence in the reviewed literature.

### 3.1.1 Generating Policy Frameworks

The establishment of comprehensive policy frameworks has emerged as the most critical pathway for GAD mainstreaming in Philippine higher education institutions. Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that strong legal and institutional policies serve as the essential foundation for all other

gender and development initiatives (Tindowen et al., 2020; PCW, 2021). The Philippine government has demonstrated significant commitment to gender equality through landmark legislation and policies, including the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710), CHED Memorandum Order No. 1 (Series of 2015), and alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality. However, despite these robust policy frameworks, substantial implementation gaps persist across higher education institutions. While an impressive 100% of surveyed HEIs reported having GAD policies in place, only 30% had successfully operationalized these policies in practice (PCW, 2021). This disparity between policy adoption and implementation highlights the need for more effective execution mechanisms. Research by Cabanda et al. (2019) identifies three critical components for successful policy implementation: clear operational guidelines that translate broad policies into actionable steps, robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress, and strong accountability mechanisms to ensure compliance. These findings suggest that while policy formulation represents a crucial first step, Philippine HEIs must focus greater attention on the practical aspects of policy implementation to achieve meaningful gender mainstreaming outcomes.

## 3.1.2 Institutionalizing Gender Equality

The institutionalization of gender equality represents a critical process of embedding gender perspectives into the fundamental operations and organizational structures of higher education institutions. Research findings demonstrate compelling evidence of its effectiveness, with CHED's 2022 report revealing that 78% of universities maintaining dedicated GAD offices achieved significantly better implementation rates of gender mainstreaming initiatives. Furthermore, Bacani's (2018) study established a strong correlation between strategic planning and program success, showing that institutions that systematically integrated GAD into their strategic frameworks reported 40% higher implementation success rates. The most effective institutionalization models consistently incorporated three key components: comprehensive gender audits to assess current practices and identify areas for improvement, the development and enforcement of gender-sensitive human resource policies, and the implementation of regular, mandatory gender sensitivity training for all staff and faculty (Aquino, 2017). These findings underscore that sustainable gender mainstreaming requires moving beyond superficial compliance to fundamentally transform institutional cultures and operational norms. The data suggests that when HEIs make structural commitments through dedicated offices and strategic planning, while simultaneously addressing organizational culture through training and policy reforms, they create the necessary conditions for meaningful and lasting gender equality initiatives. This multi-pronged approach to institutionalization appears particularly effective in overcoming common implementation barriers and ensuring the longevity of GAD programs beyond changes in institutional leadership or political climates.

## 3.1.3 Gender-Responsive Practices

The implementation of gender-responsive practices in higher education institutions' daily operations has demonstrated substantial impact, though with notable variations in effectiveness. Research by Bayani and Garcia (2019) reveals that while 65% of Philippine HEIs have successfully integrated gender perspectives into their curricula, only 20% have managed to effectively challenge and transform deep-seated gender stereotypes through these curricular reforms. This gap highlights the distinction between superficial inclusion and substantive pedagogical transformation.

The most impactful gender-responsive practices identified in the literature include three key elements: First, the consistent use of gender-fair language in all official institutional communications, which serves to model inclusive practices and reshape institutional culture (Gamboa, 2019). Second, the development

of gender-sensitive physical facilities that accommodate diverse needs and promote campus safety. Third, robust anti-sexual harassment mechanisms that include clear reporting procedures and support systems. These structural and linguistic interventions create tangible, visible manifestations of institutional commitment to gender equality.

However, significant implementation challenges persist. Aquino's (2017) research documents resistance from traditional faculty members who may view gender-responsive approaches as either unnecessary or as threats to established academic traditions. Additionally, many institutions struggle with a lack of appropriate teaching materials and resources to support gender-responsive pedagogy, forcing faculty to either create their own materials or dilute their gender integration efforts. These challenges underscore the need for comprehensive faculty development programs and institutional support systems to overcome resistance and resource gaps in implementing meaningful gender-responsive practices.

### 3.1.4 Proactive Leadership

The research underscores leadership commitment as a pivotal determinant of successful GAD implementation in higher education institutions. Tindowen et al. (2020) found that HEIs with GAD champions among their top administrators demonstrated 50% higher program success rates compared to institutions without such leadership support. Effective leadership behaviors that significantly contributed to GAD mainstreaming included three key actions: (1) the strategic allocation of dedicated budgets for GAD programs, (2) active participation in gender sensitivity training by administrators themselves, and (3) consistent public endorsement of GAD initiatives (Cabanda et al., 2019). However, the Philippine Commission on Women's 2021 report revealed that 35% of HEIs still identified a lack of leadership support as a major implementation barrier, suggesting this remains a significant challenge in many institutions.

### 3.1.5 Stakeholder Engagement Models and Challenges

Complementing strong leadership, meaningful stakeholder engagement emerged as another vital component of successful GAD implementation. The most effective engagement models featured three structural approaches: (1) student-led gender clubs, present in 45% of HEIs, which provided platforms for youth participation and leadership; (2) formal faculty GAD committees, established in 60% of institutions, that enabled academic participation in gender mainstreaming efforts; and (3) strategic community partnerships that extended GAD impact beyond campus boundaries (Bacani, 2018).

However, Gamboa's 2019 study identified several persistent challenges in stakeholder engagement practices, including tendencies toward tokenistic participation where involvement was superficial rather than substantive, difficulties in maintaining sustained engagement over time, and unresolved power imbalances in decision-making processes that often marginalized the voices of students and junior faculty. These findings suggest that while many HEIs have established structures for stakeholder participation, the quality and depth of engagement often falls short of creating truly inclusive and transformative GAD implementation processes.

### 3.1.6 Enhancing Resource Allocation

While financial resources represent a fundamental requirement for effective GAD mainstreaming, research reveals their allocation and utilization are significantly influenced by institutional priorities and leadership commitment. Aquino's (2017) study found that only 15% of Philippine higher education institutions allocated budgets meeting the recommended thresholds for comprehensive GAD programming, creating substantial implementation gaps.

Successful institutions employed three innovative resource mobilization approaches:

1. Strategic Grant Acquisition: Proactively securing external funding through government grants and international development partnerships
2. Budget Reengineering: Creatively reallocating existing institutional funds to prioritize gender initiatives
3. Sustainable Models: Developing income-generating GAD projects that create self-funding mechanisms (CHED, 2022)

The Philippine Commission on Women (2021) documented that resource limitations frequently served as justification for delayed or partial GAD implementation. However, case studies reveal that institutions with strong leadership and clear strategic plans were more successful in overcoming financial constraints through the aforementioned approaches. This suggests that while adequate funding remains essential, its impact is mediated by institutional capacity for innovative resource management and prioritization of gender equality objectives.

## 3.2 Discussion

The findings reveal a clear hierarchy of effective pathways for GAD mainstreaming, with policy frameworks being the most fundamental and resource allocation being the most contingent. This hierarchy suggests that:

1. Policy frameworks create enabling environments for all other GAD initiatives. Without strong policies, other efforts remain fragmented and vulnerable to changes in leadership or priorities (Xiao & Watson, 2019).
2. Institutionalization ensures sustainability beyond individual projects or personalities. HEIs that embedded GAD into their core operations showed more consistent implementation over time (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
3. The interplay between pathways is crucial. For example, proactive leadership often determined whether policies translated into practice, while stakeholder engagement helped overcome resistance to change (Tindowen et al., 2020).
4. Resource limitations, while significant, were often overcome when other pathways were strong. Several HEIs demonstrated that creative solutions could compensate for budget constraints when there was strong institutional commitment (Cabanda et al., 2019).

## 3.3 Implications for Practice

Based on the hierarchy of pathways, HEIs should prioritize:

1. Strengthening policy implementation through clear guidelines and accountability measures
2. Institutionalizing GAD through structural changes and regular gender audits
3. Building leadership capacity for gender-responsive governance
4. Fostering genuine stakeholder participation beyond token representation
5. Developing innovative resource strategies beyond traditional budgeting

The findings suggest that while all pathways are important, focusing first on policy and institutionalization creates the foundation for other efforts to succeed. This sequenced approach may be particularly relevant for resource-constrained institutions seeking to maximize their GAD impact.

## 3.2 Roadblocks to GAD Mainstreaming

### 3.2.1 Budget Constraints

Despite strong legal mandates such as the Magna Carta of Women and the GAD Budget Policy, many HEIs continue to face significant challenges in allocating or utilizing gender and development (GAD) budgets effectively. Only 27% of Philippine HEIs have fully itemized GAD budgets and action plans, indicating a gap between policy and practice (CHED, 2023). This limitation is reflective of broader trends in developing countries, where resource constraints inhibit the institutionalization of gender-responsive programs.

Guzmán and Verónica (2018) similarly found that underfunding remains a pervasive issue in Latin American universities, where feminist-driven reforms often falter without adequate financial support. In the Philippines, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW, 2021) reported that only 30% of HEIs have established dedicated GAD offices, and even fewer have successfully operationalized gender-responsive policies. These statistics suggest that while legal infrastructure exists, implementation remains weak due to insufficient resource allocation.

This challenge is echoed in other global contexts. In Africa, many HEIs lack sustained funding for gender research and outreach initiatives, leading to inconsistent program delivery and poor impact tracking (Onsongo, 2009). Likewise, Vianna and Unbehaum (2004) noted that gender mainstreaming in Brazil is often disrupted by unstable financial support.

Ultimately, budgetary shortfalls severely limit the ability of HEIs to implement effective GAD initiatives, hire qualified personnel, conduct training, and monitor impact. Without consistent funding, GAD programs risk becoming performative or short-lived, undermining the institutional transformation necessary for achieving genuine gender equity.

**Implications**: The chronic underfunding of GAD initiatives leads to fragmented implementation, absence of full-time personnel, weak monitoring systems, and performative programming. This undermines the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming and poses a major obstacle to sustainable reform. Without adequate financial investment, HEIs are unable to build the necessary infrastructure for gender equity, limiting training, outreach, and research initiatives. Therefore, GAD budget compliance should not merely be a bureaucratic requirement but an essential strategy for capacity-building and systemic transformation.

### 3.2.2 Cultural resistance and deeply entrenched gender stereotypes

This was also another major barrier. Studies highlighted resistance from faculty and staff to gender-responsive curricula or the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, reflecting broader societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. For example, in Japan, efforts to increase women's participation in STEM fields and leadership roles face obstacles from deeply entrenched cultural norms and institutional resistance (Ogasawara, 2018). Similarly, in the Philippines, cultural resistance and a lack of gender sensitivity training among faculty and administrators remain significant barriers to effective GAD mainstreaming (Bacani, 2018).

**Implications**: Cultural resistance fosters an environment of passive opposition or outright non-compliance with gender equality initiatives. Such resistance can derail policy implementation and contribute to the symbolic inclusion of gender content without authentic institutional commitment. Stereotypes about gender roles also perpetuate the marginalization of women and LGBTQ+ individuals within academic and administrative structures. Addressing this roadblock necessitates strategic interventions, such as mandatory gender sensitivity training, participatory dialogue, and leadership development programs, that challenge deep-seated biases and promote inclusive institutional cultures.

### 3.2.3 Lack of Expertise and Training

A significant challenge in implementing GAD mainstreaming in higher education institutions is the lack of personnel expertise. Many HEIs do not have adequately trained individuals to lead, plan, and monitor gender-responsive initiatives. According to the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW, 2021), only 20% of GAD focal persons in Philippine HEIs have received formal training on gender sensitivity, analysis, or budgeting. This gap in expertise often results in poorly designed or superficial programs that fail to address institutional inequities.

Chanana (2007) also highlighted that in India, the formation of gender committees in HEIs did not automatically translate into effective gender advocacy due to insufficient training and understanding of GAD principles. Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that developing institutional capacity through training and thematic analysis is essential to transform policy into meaningful action.

The lack of professional development opportunities limits the ability of HEIs to embed gender perspectives in curriculum design, research agendas, and administrative procedures. As observed by Aquino (2017), even well-intentioned faculty members often struggle to integrate gender into their teaching due to limited exposure to GAD principles.

To address this, institutions must prioritize continuous capacity-building through seminars, certifications, workshops, and research partnerships. Collaborating with government agencies like CHED and PCW can also help provide structured training frameworks and guidelines for HEIs.

Ultimately, addressing the lack of expertise among personnel is foundational to achieving long-term, sustainable, and meaningful gender transformation in higher education. Only 20% of GAD focal persons in the Philippines have formal gender training, leading to weak implementation and policy design (PCW, 2021). This supports Braun and Clarke's (2006) emphasis on capacity development for institutional reform.

**Implications**: The lack of GAD-related expertise results in low-impact programming, token representation in curricula, and uncoordinated policy development. It highlights the urgent need for structured capacity-building programs that include workshops, certifications, and mentorship models tailored to HEIs. Collaboration with agencies such as CHED, PCW, and international development partners can bridge this gap. Sustained professional development is fundamental to embedding gender sensitivity into the institutional fabric, empowering faculty, staff, and administrators to become change agents in GAD mainstreaming.

### 3.2.4 Weak Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Only 19% of Philippine HEIs implement structured M&E mechanisms for GAD initiatives, a figure highlighting the fragility of accountability structures (CHED, 2022). Monitoring and evaluation are critical for assessing progress, identifying gaps, and guiding policy adjustments. Xiao and Watson (2019) assert that robust M&E ensures institutional accountability and fosters a feedback loop essential for continuous improvement. Similarly, UN Women (2015) emphasized that the absence of a solid M&E framework often results in program stagnation and policy irrelevance. Bamberger et al. (2012) also found that M&E practices in development programs tend to be underfunded and underutilized, thereby impeding the measurement of impact and scalability. Furthermore, the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (2022) stresses that data-driven evaluation enables evidence-based interventions tailored to specific institutional needs.

**Implication**: The lack of effective M&E limits institutional learning and perpetuates the cycle of underperforming programs. Integrating digital M&E systems and training personnel can address this bottleneck.

### 3.2.5 Gender Tokenism and Performative Compliance

Many HEIs include gender equality statements in strategic documents yet fail to translate them into operational frameworks or outcomes. Bacani (2018) critiques this as *symbolic compliance*, which creates an illusion of commitment without structural change. Krizsan and Lombardo (2013) describe this phenomenon as "gender mainstreaming without implementation," where GAD is included for formality or external validation rather than genuine transformation. True and Mintrom (2001) argue that institutional resistance often manifests through minimal engagement with gender equity, confined to documentation rather than action.

Furthermore, a study by Moser and Moser (2005) on gender mainstreaming in development institutions revealed that while gender policies exist, implementation suffers due to unclear accountability, lack of training, and institutional inertia.

**Implication**: Performative compliance hinders systemic transformation. There is a need for clear implementation pathways, metrics for success, and internal audits to move beyond tokenism.

### 3.2.6 Limited Faculty Engagement

Faculty are pivotal in GAD integration through curriculum, research, and community involvement. However, Aquino (2017) noted low turnout in GAD-related training, attributed to inadequate incentives and awareness. Ravindran and Kelkar-Khambete (2007) argue that when faculty do not see gender issues as integral to their discipline, they are unlikely to engage meaningfully. Moreover, Gaard (2011) links the effectiveness of GAD mainstreaming to the presence of gender champions within the faculty who can drive grassroots change.

According to a 2019 UNESCO report, academic staff often lack the capacity and motivation to integrate GAD principles unless institutionalized incentives (e.g., recognition, funding, promotion) are in place. Goetz (2007) further explains that participatory ownership among educators is essential to prevent GAD from being seen as a peripheral obligation.

**Implication**: Institutional incentives, continuous professional development, and departmental accountability mechanisms must be established to engage faculty more fully.

### 3.2.7 Absence of Gender-Disaggregated Data

Without reliable sex- and gender-disaggregated data (SGDD), GAD planning is limited to assumptions rather than empirical evidence. UNESCO (2020) revealed that only 12% of HEIs globally maintain comprehensive SGDD systems. In the Philippines, data fragmentation and a lack of standardized tools hinder comprehensive gender analysis (PCW, 2021). Hafkin and Huyer (2006) emphasize that SGDD is foundational for identifying gaps in access, participation, and outcomes across gender lines.

Additionally, UNDP (2016) noted that institutional capacity to collect and utilize SGDD varies widely and often depends on external funding. O'Neil and Domingo (2016) argue that SGDD is essential for shaping inclusive policies and must be embedded in management information systems and research practices.

**Implication**: Building institutional capacities for gender-sensitive data collection and ensuring inter-agency collaboration are key to enabling evidence-based GAD programming.

### 3.2.8 Short-Term Orientation in GAD Projects

Many GAD initiatives are project-based and tied to funding cycles rather than long-term institutional

goals. Vianna & Unbehaum (2004) observed that GAD programs in Latin America were often discontinued post-funding, exposing their fragile institutional foundations. This mirrors the Philippine context, where many HEIs treat GAD as a series of activities rather than a long-term commitment to transformation (Bacani, 2018).

Razavi (1997) warns that treating gender mainstreaming as a temporary priority undermines its transformative potential. Moreover, Mukhopadhyay (2004) contends that sustainability in gender initiatives requires embedded ownership, continuity planning, and integration into academic and administrative systems.

**Implication**: Shifting from activity-based GAD implementation to institutionalized, long-term programming is necessary. This requires strategic planning, budgetary continuity, and stakeholder buy-in at all levels.

### 3.1 Recommendations to Strengthen GAD Integration in HEIs

To address the persistent gaps in Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming, higher education institutions (HEIs) must adopt a comprehensive and sustainable approach. The following recommendations, drawn from global best practices and identified challenges, provide a roadmap for meaningful institutional transformation.

### 3.1.1. Strengthening Policy Implementation and Accountability

Effective GAD integration begins with robust policy enforcement. HEIs should develop clear operational guidelines to translate broad mandates like the Magna Carta of Women into actionable steps. Annual gender audits must be institutionalized to assess progress, with results linked to accreditation standards. For example, Norway's 85% GAD office adoption rate demonstrates the impact of tying compliance to institutional evaluations. Additionally, accountability mechanisms—such as public reporting and penalties for non-compliance—can curb tokenism and ensure genuine commitment.

### 3.1 2. Institutionalizing GAD Structures and Resources

Structural support is critical for sustainability. HEIs should establish dedicated GAD offices with full-time staff and earmarked budgets, addressing the Philippines' 30% adoption gap. Embedding GAD into strategic plans, HR policies, and promotion criteria (as seen in Sweden) ensures long-term integration. Budget allocations should meet at least 5% of institutional funding, supplemented by external grants and reallocated resources, as demonstrated by Argentina's grassroots funding models.

### 3. Building Capacity Through Training and Incentives

Faculty and staff engagement is pivotal. Mandatory gender sensitivity training for all employees—particularly leaders—can address resistance and low expertise (only 20% of Philippine GAD focal persons are trained). Incentives like research grants, promotions, and recognition for GAD-related work (modeled after South Africa's 61% curriculum integration success) can motivate faculty to adopt gender-responsive pedagogies.

### 4. Enhancing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Use

Robust M&E systems are essential for evidence-based progress. HEIs should adopt digital tools to track GAD initiatives, addressing the current 19% M&E implementation rate in the Philippines. Regular publication of sex-disaggregated data reports (globally, only 12% of HEIs do this) can identify gaps and guide targeted interventions.

### 5. Promoting Inclusive Cultures and Stakeholder Engagement

Combating cultural resistance requires proactive measures. Awareness campaigns, participatory dialogues, and leadership role-modeling can shift norms (e.g., Japan's struggles with 23% GAD office

adoption due to entrenched biases). Student-led gender clubs (45% in Philippine HEIs) and faculty committees (60%) should be expanded to foster grassroots ownership. Partnerships with NGOs and international bodies like UN Women can provide technical support and amplify impact.

## 6. Ensuring Long-Term Commitment

Moving beyond project-based initiatives is crucial. HEIs must integrate GAD into core academic and administrative functions, securing multi-year funding and stakeholder buy-in. Norway's success highlights the importance of treating gender equality as a strategic priority rather than a compliance exercise.

## Conclusion

This systematic review underscores both the progress and persistent challenges in mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) in higher education institutions globally. While strong policy frameworks exist, implementation remains inconsistent, with only 30% of Philippine HEIs establishing functional GAD offices and merely 12% of institutions worldwide systematically collecting gender-disaggregated data. The study reveals that successful models like Norway's institutionalized approach (85% GAD office adoption) and South Africa's integrated curricula (61% implementation) demonstrate what can be achieved through committed leadership, dedicated funding, and robust monitoring systems. However, widespread barriers including chronic underfunding, cultural resistance, and performative compliance continue to hinder meaningful progress. The findings present a clear roadmap for transformation: HEIs must strengthen policy enforcement through accountability mechanisms, institutionalize GAD structures with sustainable budgets, invest in comprehensive capacity-building programs, and implement rigorous monitoring systems. These strategic interventions, grounded in evidence from global best practices, provide a actionable blueprint for bridging the gap between policy and practice. The time for symbolic gestures has passed - what higher education needs now is systemic, measurable commitment to turn gender equality aspirations into institutional realities that will ultimately benefit both campuses and the broader societies they serve.

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