



PUBLIC LECTURE

Towards Gender Equality in Education: The image of maths and science and students' career aspirations in STEM

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2023 | 6PM-7PM | WEBB LECTURE THEATRE, GEOGRAPHY BUILDING, UWA
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Male dominance in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) remains persistent across most OECD countries. The persistence of horizontal gender segregation in educational and occupational fields contributes decisively to the preservation of gender-stereotypic beliefs about a “natural fit” of women in careers in more expressive and human-centred fields and men in technical and math-intensive fields. Such stereotypical beliefs and various social expectations associated with them play a crucial role in the development of occupational aspirations.

School is one of the main contexts where young people develop their career-related interests and aspirations. Consequently, it is of utmost importance to ensure that students do not encounter gender stereotypic images or beliefs about maths and science in schools. But are we there yet?

Using findings from a series of empirical studies in the Swiss educational context, Professor Elena Makarova will illuminate this question by discussing key factors affecting children's career aspirations in STEM, including: how science and scientists are portrayed in textbooks, teachers' beliefs, and student perceptions of maths and science.

Professor Makarova's talk will conclude with a discussion of the implications for the promotion of gender equality in STEM.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER

Elena Makarova is a Professor of Educational Sciences and Director of the Institute for Educational Sciences at the University of Basel. She received her PhD and her Venia Docendi at the University of Bern.

Professor Makarova is a fellow representative of the Board of the International Academy for Intercultural Research (IAIR). Her research focuses on development, learning and teaching in the face of heterogeneity in the school context. Her research interests include: acculturation and school adjustment of minority youth, gender and career choice, and value transmission in the family and school context.

Her research is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality.

Professor Makarova is a UWA Institute of Advanced Studies Visiting Fellow.



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