

## Article

# Inclusive Higher Education and the Built Environment. A Research and Teaching Agenda for Gender Mainstreaming in Architecture Studies

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**Abstract:** As one of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, gender equality is a necessary foundation for a peaceful and sustainable world. The integration of the frameworks of analysis and action provided by gender perspective into the design, development and assessment of any program related to university education, research and management is essential to the fulfillment of both quality higher education and an effective transfer of knowledge and values to society. Starting from a standpoint of commitment to this progressive outlook, this essay focuses on the specific case of the University of Alicante, Spain, and on its Architecture studies. It seeks to underline the achievements of this institution in the fostering of a critical spirit and the empathy of its students by way of the implementation of gender perspective as a tool for the conception of complex, diverse and integrating projects, aligned to the objective of mutual care between people and the environment. This is crucial for the co-education of future generations of architects, who will play a central role in the definition of new practices and policies related to space and materials, which favor a more sustainable, inclusive and caring scenario for both humans and non-humans.

**Keywords:** gender mainstreaming; co-education; architectural research; equity; diversity; common world; inclusion; built environment; sustainable practices; ecofeminism



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## 1. Introduction

Gender mainstreaming is a set of strategies geared towards the realization of gender equality. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality [1], gender mainstreaming, which requires both gender representation and gender responsive content, involves the integration of gender perspective/s into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies, programs and measures of the European Union with a view to promoting equality and combating discrimination.

Firstly, gender equality is the fifth goal of the United Nations' set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 [2]. In this sense, among other UNESCO statements, the Incheon Declaration explicitly recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development [3]. Secondly, any equality goal is inextricably linked to education, at all levels, given that this "impacts on our possible modes of being in a very special way" [4] (p. 51).

In fact, as Spanish philosopher and educator Marina Garcés states, "the raw material of education is, precisely, the possibility of being-able-to-be". To educate, she writes, is to "purposefully intervene in the possibilities of the life of those we are teaching" and they cannot really "be" without equal opportunities. Equality, however, is a deceptive abstraction, as Garcés also cautions. Although the system of education is committed to equality, it is the organizer of the hierarchy of life's provisions and is the distributor of future possibilities. Education is ultimately, "like a distributor of life's possibilities" [4]

(p. 51), which are broadened or restricted depending on multiple parameters, such as gender, ethnicity, physical capacity, neurotypicality and, of course, social mobility. For this reason, it is the responsibility of university researchers and instructors to provide students with the conceptual tools which help them to empower themselves by detecting and combatting any possible inequality which could stifle their potential.

With this in mind, this article addresses the implementation of the frameworks of analysis and action of gender perspective/s as a *sine qua non* condition for the achievement of higher (co)education which is both egalitarian and inclusive [5]. Specifically, it focusses on the teaching of Architecture, which is of utmost importance for sustainability. The professionals we educate today will soon play a fundamental role in the definition of new practices and policies regarding space and materials, which favor a more caring, integrating, and sustainable environment. In order to achieve this, the experience of the University of Alicante (UA), Spain, has been taken as a case study to expound: firstly, the challenges and achievements of gender mainstreaming in the design and management of the infrastructures and the built environment of its campus over the last 8 years; secondly, the specific example of the School of Architecture, built in 1999 by a woman architect, Lola Alonso Vera, and which we will analyze as an insightful case of inclusive architectural design; and, finally, we will discuss some of the results of the integration of gender perspective into the teaching and research which take place within this space and which we believe contribute towards a more sensitive production and transfer of knowledge.

Any objectives regarding inclusivity, equality and sustainability in the realm of public universities entail simultaneous action on three different levels by way of three interrelated strategies applying to all infrastructures, spaces and resources that make research and education possible. Firstly, that of technical and design conditions which are conducive to the efficiency of the built environment; secondly, that which is concerned with the management of said environment, for which the Administration should put into place effective policies which, for example, guarantee equality of opportunities; and lastly, social commitment that, explicitly in line with the SDGs call for action, ensures that nobody is left behind in the design of new scenarios of resilience and joint responsibility which our times' urgent need for sustainable development demands [6].

## 2. Gender Perspective/s and the Management of the Built Environment

### 2.1. Agenda 2030 and the University of Alicante as a Case Study

With the aim of attending to and promoting the three components of sustainability; economic, social and environmental, the UA, during the period of office of Chancellor Palomar (2012–2020), has carried out exemplary management policies for its built spaces and green areas, educational facilities, and services within the campus. This management has been the responsibility of the Secretariat of the Development of the Campus (SDC) of the Vice-chancellorship of Campus and Technology—later renamed Campus and Sustainability between 2012 and 2016—under the direction of one of the authors of this article. The SDC has put in place energy saving and efficiency measures in the installation of the buildings and as part of the urban planning of the campus, it has established the powers of the Eco-campus Office of Environmental Management and has demonstrated its firm commitment to the social responsibility required of a public institution such as this.

Although it is essential to take into account the above mentioned economic and environmental components of sustainability which have been addressed by way of the maintenance, Restoration, Conditioning and Improvement (RCI) of buildings and the construction of new installations in the UA, this section focusses on the social component based on the innovation and contribution provided by the actions related to integrating gender perspective into the management of infrastructures and facilities, of which, as is widely recognized by the academic community, very few references exist [7].

In this sense, it can be said that adherence by the UA to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations Agenda 2030 [2] has been a common policy across all the Vice-chancellor departments, as stipulated by the government of the University,

although it has been the Department of Social Responsibility, Inclusivity and Equality which has taken charge of this area. From the abovementioned SDGs, in the SDC, we have focused our attention on two in particular: SDG 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, and SDG 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

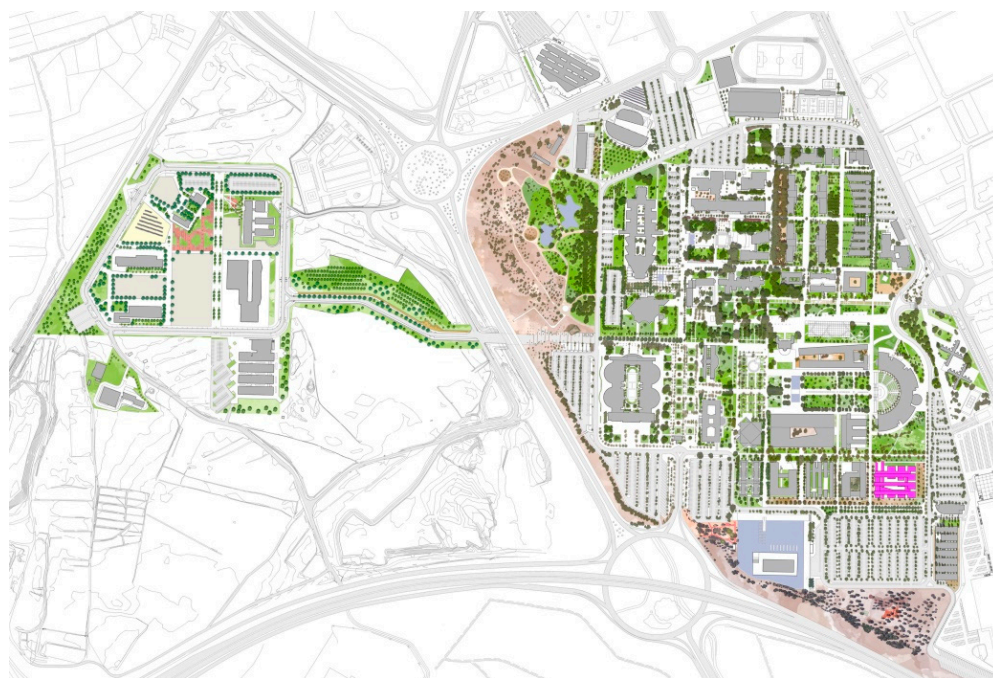
Before we explain and discuss the actions taken by the SDC in the UA, it is important to briefly describe the principal traits and characteristics of its spaces. Firstly, we must emphasize the commitment to a physical and institutional presence of the UA throughout the province of Alicante through three basic types of infrastructures: its campus headquarters, its teaching, cultural and social facilities, and its scientific research facilities which support the transfer of knowledge in this region in the Southwest of Spain.

Secondly, it should be highlighted that, although the UA was created in 1979, the beginnings of its campus were much earlier, given that the University was founded on the old structures of the Rabasa military aerodrome, built in 1919 [8]. This historical infrastructure makes up the urban center of the campus, which stretches out along a longitudinal north–south axis. This axis was adopted for the growth of the University towards the west with the first faculties and facilities. At the beginning of the 1990s, plans for a significant expansion towards the south were carried out with the basic aim of creating an emphatic east–west axis perpendicular to the existing axis. A noteworthy part of this expansion is the Chancellorship building designed by Alvaro Siza. The end of the 1990s saw the completion of the expansion towards the south which included architecture of great quality whose development processes and results made them a reference point not only in our own country but also abroad—a good example of this being the Museum [9–11]. The turn of the century also saw the University make an incursion into the urban center of the town of San Vicente del Raspeig, where a new UA campus location was set up. It was at this time when the first buildings outside the perimeter of the original campus were established. Additionally, the creation of the Alicante Science Park rolled out the main campus towards the west. The creation of these new facilities adhered to the good practices and results used in the construction of the first campus, such as: vehicle traffic around the perimeter and pedestrian traffic in the interior, prominence given to open spaces with vegetation and quality architecture [12] (Figure 1).

We have carried out, over the whole of this built environment, the actions which we will describe below. The objective of these actions has been to achieve a more livable set of university spaces, which means a more caring, intelligible, comfortable, safer and more integrated campus; and of course, a more sustainable and healthier site, prioritizing the creation of spaces which favor interrelation, meetings and exchanges, designed for all people regardless of their situation or condition.

## 2.2. Equity Policies: Accesible, Inclusive, Egalitarian Campus

In order to achieve this triple objective, we have coordinated a wide range of university life-centered initiatives; two institutional projects: “Accessible Campus, Egalitarian Campus” and “Inclusive Campus, Technological Campus”; as well as collaborating with the UA Equality plan [13–15], entwining a web, from which we can combat inequality and construct more livable spaces, in a transversal way. Considering that the campus is one of the major assets of the UA, these actions contribute not only to its environmental and architectural excellence but also to making it a benchmark for inclusivity [16].



**Figure 1.** Alicante University campus. The School of Architecture is colored in purple. Drawing: Tatiana Martínez Soto.

As these are direct actions coming from the SDC, we have been able to push forward a policy of gender and intergenerational equal opportunities in the design of the projects commissioned to professionals. Up to 2012, works by women architects made up only 5.5% of the buildings on the campus. Since then, commissions for women architects or architectural studies whose authors have been women make up 55% of all architectural activity undertaken, independent of scale. Moreover, we commission young architects and graduates from the UA, in this way, the campus itself becomes an expression of the quality of training they have received. Additionally, we have always called on the architects of the buildings in the campus to plan any alterations, in such a way that we have been able to combine respect for the authorship of each work with the will to give an opportunity to those who had, until now, not been given the chance. As a result, the group of professionals who have worked and who are working for the UA has been enormously enriched and diversified—the formula of an ideas competition has also contributed greatly to this.

Another action to which we have devoted constant effort has been that of the outreach of the patrimonial and environmental values of the UA campus. To this end, we have via the SDC webpage [17] an enormous quantity of resources (in Spanish, Catalan and English) which allow people to approach and get to know the campus from the point of view of multiple interests and sensibilities. The outreach work was complemented by the task of putting at the disposal of the educational community the results of both research—articles in scientific journals expressly dedicated to the maximization of works by women architects in the campus—and of the specific actions which had been carried out.

The “Accessible Campus Accessible, Egalitarian Campus” project (2014–2016) had as its objectives universal accessibility and the integration of gender perspective into its construction, maintenance and management as a generator of new points of view which enrich the space and life itself by welcoming complexity and diversity.

In order to achieve the first objective, we drew up a report which included a diagnosis for the whole of the UA campus [18] and, at the same time, proposed a plan to move forward with more inclusive architecture and urban planning. This was made available to the whole of the university community in compliance with the Spanish Organic Law 4/2007 [19] which states: “all the study programs proposed by universities must take into



account that education and training must be provided based on the basic principles of universal accessibility and design for all". Similarly, since 2014, we have taken part in each of the Networks of Research in University Education Conferences, organized by the UA [20], as we considered our participation as an opportunity for the thoughtful criticism and debate at the heart of the project, which had its outcomes in the different transformative actions that were undertaken.

Furthermore, we have carried out the corresponding diagnosis of sport-related spaces within the UA, both dedicated functional spaces and the campus as a whole, as an environment which provides the space to carry out physical activities such as walking, running, etc. The final work which we undertook focused on improving our built environment and included the setting up of a workshop entitled "Reacquainting ourselves with the Campus". The idea was to rediscover the campus with a critical look at the design and the organization of public space in keeping with gender perspectives.

By way of the "Inclusive campus, Technological Campus" initiative (2016–2018) we have undertaken the analysis of each and every classroom and assembly hall in the UA, given that these are spaces with the greatest impact on the life of the university community. We have classified them into different categories and created a Catalogue of Educational Spaces, which is available on the web [21]. This work also constitutes the basis for programming future interventions which will improve the conditions of these spaces. We have also created a Laboratory Classroom of Accessible Technologies.

As part of the UA's *Second Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men* (2014–2016) [14] we designed a gender itinerary for the campus, which will allow people to become acquainted with it, stroll around and enjoy it from this perspective; linking the different landmarks and monuments which commemorate the recognized achievements and accomplishments of women in science, architecture, sports, journalism, etc. This route is a practical proposal which brings together educational innovation and the fight against gender inequality with a strategy of giving visibility to the contribution made by women to knowledge, the management of the University and also to the urban and architectural development of the UA (Figure 2).

We produced a report entitled *A Study of Sport and Physical Activity in the UA 2016*, based on the findings of a survey regarding *The Practice of Sport and Physical Activity in the UA from a Gender Perspective* [22]. The aim of the study was to seek out assessments and opinions from those who use the sports facilities at the UA with regard to various diverse aspects of sport and physical activity. The survey took gender perspective into consideration by way of a comprehensive approach, in such a way that it transcended a mere yardstick of the satisfaction of the users with a specific service and sought, in its diagnosis, conclusions and proposals for the achievement of more accessible, safe and inclusive spaces.

In compliance with the UA's *Third Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men* (2018–2020) [15] and given the great number of services which are put out to tender—and the important impact that their effective functioning has on the university community—we have prioritized the aim of implementing gender perspective into the wording of the corresponding tender contracts by way of social clauses in addition to the administrative clauses.

The Playroom was inaugurated in November 2019. Located in the UA Museum, this is a space dedicated to play, whose objective is to promote the quality of life of children by way of educational play activities which foster the habits of a healthy life, facilitate the participation of children, social inclusivity and increase awareness of children's rights, equality and sustainability. The service strives to help guarantee a balance between personal and family life and work for the students, teachers and administration staff, with children aged between 6 and 12 years old.



**Figure 2.** Gender perspective-designed routes at Alicante University campus. (<https://web.ua.es/es/unidad-igualdad/documentos/proyectos/triptico-ruta-campus-igualitario.pdf>, accessed on 1 February 2021).

We have, then, undertaken the management of the UA campus from the point of view of social sustainability on three different levels: direct action or policies promoted by the SDC, which, as a result, have provided parity between the presence of men and women architects in the authorship of the architectural works undertaken; the incorporation of young professionals into the team of planners who work for the institution; and an intense and dedicated campaign of spreading the environmental and architectural values of the campus based on research and transfer to education.

The institutional projects: “Accessible Campus, Egalitarian Campus” and “Inclusive Campus, Technological Campus” bring together the forces of specifically contemplating infrastructural interests and cooperation. They allow, propose and put forward far-reaching actions with a profound impact. Sometimes, they are delayed more than we would like, but are operational and successful, in terms of public acceptance, in the case of the smaller interventions.

In the case of the Equality Plans [13–15], the formula of a call for committed collaboration in the form of official documents whose level of compliance is audited, is extremely efficient, and the proposed actions are undertaken within the stipulated time. Additionally, they are interventions derived directly from the agenda of the University’s governing bodies, so they must be aligned with.

From all of this, we can conclude that the first condition for managing space in a way that is sensitive to social sustainability as well as for facilitating co-education is to observe the diversity that is around us. The second is the permanent cultivation of a healthy and tireless, but also caring and flexible, critical spirit. One of the main contributions of this approach is that it forces oneself to consider the different situations, aspirations and needs of others, not as a problem to surmount but as an opportunity to include them [16].

### 3. The Architecture of the Educational Spaces

Having explained how we manage the spaces of the UA campus from the point of view of social sustainability, especially as regards the implementation of gender mainstreaming, at this same level of analysis, we now focus on the physical and intellectual context where the teaching of Architecture and thus our co-educational work takes place.

The UA School of Architecture is part of the Higher Polytechnic School and, more specifically, occupies building number 4 (HPS4). It is one of the few architectural works within the UA campus designed by a woman. It was the result of a public competition—for many years one of the few channels by way of which women could gain access to public tenders—it was built between 1997 and 1999. The Architecture School is the work of local architect Lola Alonso Vera (Alicante, 1951), and is located on the southwest perimeter of the campus, bordered by the orbital vehicle traffic routes.

Faced with the hierarchical organization of the nearby surroundings, the architect establishes her own interior order [23]. She conceives a permeable spatial system able to generate a singular universe. It is first revealed through a semi-covered passage, like a bridge which is inviting us to cross and discover, and at the same time promoting and incorporating a new itinerary within the campus [24]. It is an open building made up of a series of prismatic volumes which are organized around a central sunken patio, to which access is gained via a large ramp communicating the two public use levels. Around this are located, in the basement and on the ground floor, the classrooms and laboratories, which are independent units directly linked to the exterior space by way of the circulation routes and a series of secondary patios. This may be interpreted as an open cloister on whose perimeter stand three large longitudinal closed blocks which house the private use facilities of the faculty members' and departmental offices. The building is thus the expression of a clear structure where void spaces rhythmically alternate with solid matter. It is an elegant articulation of space and an enjoyable way to traverse its different sections.

The Alicante School of Architecture is a Mediterranean building in the way that it plays with light and the perception of physical limits. This porosity, as regards exterior space, adheres to the imagining and reimagining of architectural and urban planning models with respect to their civic dimension. Those where public space participates in the interior life of the buildings and vice-versa, just as woman architect Izaskun Chinchilla proposes [25]. The organization of the Architecture School allows not only for the play of the pieces, of light and shade and of visual relationships between the different levels of the buildings, but also, read from an ecofeminist perspective, it allows for an interconnection between public and private activities which enrich its experience and perception. In this sense, we can appreciate that the building expands its presence beyond the space that it occupies. Around it there are several places of welcome, of encounter, conversation, celebration or even controversy [25], all of them provided by the gesture of the walkway which crosses its ground floor and the ramp which links it to the patio.

If we look into this atrium, we discover its intimate and, at the same time, alluring character. The central patio acts as a centripetal force [26] from which the space surrounds us in successive transitions from the open to the protected. Herein lies another aspect of its possibilities, faculty and students can exercise the freedom to scrutinize the eventualities, events, and incidents that the building offers up to us: classrooms, patios, corridors, stairways, ramp and above all, light, space and greenery. The Architecture School building was conceived from the vocational starting point of service to the community, in this case the university community, which facilitates processes of socialization and inter-subjectification of the perceptions and emotions that the building awakens.

In contrast to the sober composition of its forms and austere material, the building allows us to enjoy multiple academic and personal experiences, embodying Paul Valéry's famous comment that the greatest liberty is born of the greatest rigor [27]. The central patio is an area equipped for informal encounters among the students, the carrying out of group work and exhibitions or, recently, given the situation imposed on us by the COVID-19 pandemic, for open air classes. All of these are workable appropriations of the space thanks to the use of the building's furniture at the disposal of the user. This is the very nucleus of the building and it expands along its edges right up to the point where it meets the classrooms. The secondary patios, of a smaller dimension, on the basement floor, facilitate the entrance of natural light and ventilation of the building's rooms and, along with different covered and semi-covered corridors, they become places where activity takes



place, going beyond the physical limits of the closed spaces. These patios and corridors are not just waiting areas, or areas for interaction, or places of protection from the high temperatures in summer or for those seeking the warmth of sunlight on a cold winter's day, but also, they are places open to occupation by the university community which gives them their identity. This, in turn, periodically transforms the building in accordance with the diverse educational dynamics that architecture itself instigates (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Actions and projects activating the spaces of the University of Alicante Architecture School. Photos: authors and courtesy of Miguel Mesa del Castillo, Asunción Díaz García, *Made in Alicante* and Javier Pitaluga.

The building designed by Lola Alonso is a generator of multiple situations which promote the movement, interaction, and inclusion of all its “inhabitants”. It is an adaptable educational area which allows different moods and ways of being there. Of course, it has some drawbacks which have their origin in decisions taken during the works and which were especially motivated by the limited budget with which the building was finally built.



Among these, for example, is the fact that it provides scarce thermal comfort—although this is bearable in the benign climate of Alicante—and, also, the constant necessity for maintenance derived from the deterioration of some of the modest materials used. However, it is precisely these problems which make us surrender ourselves to the building, given that the building functions best when it is in action. In this sense, the School of Architecture in Alicante also understands the process of teaching, learning and constant experimentation. The School's building is conceived as a living matter, relating it to the provisional and perfectible nature of knowledge [28], supporting the idea of transforming the classroom into a laboratory of experiences where students and teachers together assume uncertainty and risk as relevant factors [29]. These concepts find in this building a framework within which to devise, research and develop educational models open to multiple possibilities which the building itself and the diversity of the students provide. Similar ideas have been applied to design strategies which have shown the adaptability and flexibility of “open works” in architecture [30]. They also appear in discourses which address the synergies which might be established between “contents and containers” as explored by pioneering institutions like the Bauhaus [31,32] or the Black Mountain College [33], among other radical schools. Being more focused on inclusive practices, the latter is probably closer to the spirit of the case study of the UA School of Architecture's research and teaching experiences, which will now be explained below, and which are inevitably influenced and stimulated by their physical and intellectual milieu.

#### 4. Inclusive Research and Teaching in Architecture Studies

Beyond the built object—the *re aedificatoria*—with which architecture is associated, this is a coming together of practices and assemblages [34]. These spatial, material, and symbolic assemblages connect the private and public realms by way of multiple cross-scale relationships which interweave buildings with cities, and cities with the infrastructures and territories which sustain them. Research and education in architecture must, then, strive to untangle this complex knot of agents, interests, policies and technological forces which shape our habitat [35] with the aim of rendering visible and understanding the reasons which explain the inequalities, conflicts and preoccupations [36] which take place in a space, as well as their impact on bodies and on the construction of subjectivities [37,38]. Andrés Jaque calls this form of architectural production “transmaterial”, arguing that it is the result of “processes developed through the coordination of different material media (the built environment, the biology of beings, the online interaction)”. This notion, Jaque states, can be found both in research-based projects as well as in design projects and help us “rethink daily life as the trans-enactment of heterogeneous technologies, materialities, performativities and practices” [39] (p. 14). Within these processes, the inclusion of gender perspective allows us to implement its own tools in the analysis of existing architecture, not only by laying emphasis on the experience of women, but also by combating the relationships of power and the prevailing gender norms which feminist thinkers have criticized [40–42]. It also offers a constant conversation and transfer of methodologies between disciplines, such as that proposed by queer theory [43–48]. Additionally, of course, it makes possible new inclusive ways of looking at the planning, making and appropriation of both architecture and the city [49,50].

In the transmission of stories, theories and design methodologies, that is, of the understanding of architecture—and approach to it—by means of its physical works (buildings), of the criticism of the ideas involved (discourses) and of the imagining of its future (designs), one of the principal challenges is the necessity to undertake its academic teaching with the urgent need for inclusion that gender perspective ensures. The first thing would be to avoid leaving by the wayside fundamental parts of architectural culture, which, logically, would mean impoverishing architecture itself [51]. For this reason, and despite the efforts made in recent decades in Spain [52–56], there is an urgent need to reappraise the long and not innocently unknown, ignored, and silenced contribution that women have made to architecture. Additionally, it is important to pay proper attention to what has

been previously considered as “minor” (design of objects, of interiors, etc.) and in which the presence of women has been significant. In other words, build up and tell “women’s stories”, but also those of other groups, collectives and subjectivities such as the LGBTQ community which because of their identity, location and/or culture (on the margins or periphery) have been ignored or kept silent.

This gender blindness brings with it not only situations conducive to discrimination, inequality and sexism in education, research and professional practice, but also an androcentric vision of the discipline. It has primarily focused its discourse on the work carried out by male figures—famous designers, publicly presented as geniuses working alone—and heteronormative benchmarks that have conditioned and limited the way we know, study, and feel architecture, up to the point where a social image society envisages is that of the solipsistic creator in which architecture, individualism and masculinity are mutually reinforcing ideologies [57]. This vision, however, has little to do with reality, not only that of men themselves, as diverse as women, but also that of the vocation of service which must be at the heart of architecture and which unfailingly implies the involvement in its processes of an enormous quantity of agents and interactions, which requires a healthy dose of empathy.

Thus, faced with this blindness which renders invisible and forgotten episodes of major importance when they are carried out by women, by minorities or in non-canonical geographies, we must ask ourselves and invite our students to ask themselves, what logic and interests lie behind the mechanisms of construction of both public memory and hegemonic discourses and how did they infiltrate themselves into the teaching of architecture. The fostering of teaching which is critical of any bias—be it gender, cultural, ethnic, related to class, etc.—awakens the attention of the student to diversity, and, therefore, results in inclusivity as a guarantee of equality and quality [58].

As we have stated, because of the attention it pays to diversity, gender perspective allows us to conceive analysis, projects and educational and research methods [59,60] which approach architecture as a cultural, political, social, ecological and technological assemblage capable of generating new ways of looking at the built environment. It equally brings us closer to a sensitivity towards the plurality of ways to be and of being in the world of its inhabitants. Therefore, to introduce this perspective into the teaching of architecture and to teach and to research, starting from practical works, with a gender focus is, ultimately, to accompany and encourage students to adopt a critical position as receivers of knowledge and up until they become a producer of knowledge.

Possibly, compared to other cultural fields such as philosophy or social sciences, but also with clear advantages over other STEM disciplines, teaching and research in architecture has been relatively slow to incorporate reflection on the achievement of equality, despite which, as Lucía Pérez-Moreno states [61], the interlacing of this discipline with gender studies and perspectives are numerous. In this way we can consider scenarios as diverse as that of the agent, who works in the creation of architecture—and therefore has experienced multiple inequalities between men and women throughout their training and professional career, whether they be private, public, in Academia, in public works, etc.—; and, on the other hand, that of the user of architecture, whose experience, notwithstanding all the efforts made, is still clearly determined by gender conditioning.

The introduction of gender perspective into architecture and urban planning must also mean then, the creation of opportunities of the effective equality to which all society must aspire, not only that of gender (between people of different sexes or identity), but also that of generation (between professionals of different ages), between people with different capacities and resources and, by extension, given the interdependence of our species with the finite resources and environment of our planet, between human and non-human agents [62]. It is, consequently, paying more attention to diversity and making it a central pillar, which, in addition to suppressing bias and barriers, allows us to take full advantage of all the social and cultural capital available to us. It is, also, making the effort to look at things in another way, to put ourselves in another’s shoes and, thus, cultivating a

critical, rigorous, permeable and sensitive spirit, open to the perception and understanding of the ever-changing reality of the contemporary world.

In opposition to this, social norms and stereotypes—among them those concerning gender—significantly affect numerous aspects of people's public and private life, in which they intervene by way of design, its conditions and protocols of use, etc. acting as axes of oppression and marginalization. Architecture can perpetuate more or less explicit or subtle forms of violence [63] or, on the contrary, stand up to this system of order with proposals which are able to emancipate. For this reason, the introduction of gender perspective in education can enhance the students' ability to counter and exercise dissent towards any form of injustice whether it be in the concept, in the context or in the content of a project [64], analyzing with a critical attitude, even those paradigms which are fully assimilated to gender perspective when they might be in conflict with other parameters. It is important to make the student aware of the importance of understanding the space we design and inhabit from the point of view of its plasticity as the border that intersects with the sexuality, gender and identity of those who use it. This has been one of the lines of discourse of feminist criticism of architecture since the 1990s, for which the identification of gender and sexuality with metaphors and devices related to spatial organization has been a recurrent theme. For example, in 1992, Beatriz Colomina [65] reflected on the way space and representations of space produce and reproduce gender. Her work did not only base itself on and give support to previous feminist interpretation [66,67] but also demonstrated the need for interdisciplinary spatial criticism, paving the way for later research on gender transversality in the negotiation of modern and contemporary architectural discourses, among which that which arose from queer theory and activism.

By politically questioning the spatial categories on which family structures and social conventions are based, these, and many other gender studies, have opened architecture to other instituting practices which shape and transform multiple identities and experiences and which, beyond contributing to the suppression of dual thinking, introduce a diversity of new ways of understanding of how identities arise, in space and in time, not only as an intersection of sexuality and gender, but also of other equally fluid categories such as generation, ethnicity, race, class and social capacity.

Thus, reflecting on architecture from a gender-based perspective does not merely seek to put the spotlight on certain situations to include more differences: more women architects, clients or users, not even more non-white perspectives or more homosexuals, but also as Paul B. Preciado argues [68], to question the hegemony of the patriarchal, colonial, and hetero-centric epistemology which construct us as subjects and, therefore, exclude all that which is outside of the norm. To sum up, in the case of the teaching of architecture, it is essential to invite the student to question what role the normativity is playing in the production of space and, also the inverse, how space itself can consolidate or contribute to dismantling that normativity.

This epistemological framework, along with the social, institutional and normative framework that the current legislation establishes in our particular context as regards equality [13–15,19,69], has encouraged the intensification and improvement of the introduction of gender perspective into the teaching of architecture. It perfectly conforms to the spirit of the discipline which, as has been highlighted, is no other than imagining architecture and making architecture be imagined from its vocation of service. This implies an understanding of architecture itself, in the words of Michael Hays, “as a way of negotiating the real”, which means “intervening in the realm of symbols and signifying processes at the limit of the social order itself”. Thus, architecture must be thought of as an activity whose primary task is “the construction of concepts and subject positions rather than the making of things” [70] (p. 1).

This stance in favor of co-education in Architecture studies at the UA and, in particular, the efforts made to implement gender perspective by the Department of Architectural Theory and Design of this institution, has been evidenced by several projects and participation in networks of research into educational innovation [71,72]. For this reason, in order to



give a deeper understanding of our experience, we present the specific case of an area of knowledge from the abovementioned department, Architectural Theory, and within that, of a compulsory module, Theory and History of Modern Architecture, which comes right in the middle of the Architecture Degree—in the first term of the third year. Due to the relevance of its content and of its conceptual tools for considering contemporary architecture in all its political, social, and cultural dimensions, this case study allows us to make plain our objectives, methodology and the results which certify our commitment to the achievement of an inclusive education which fosters a spirit of criticism towards any form of inequality in the design, production and habitation of the built environment. The material of this module's program is, fundamentally, the present, as it puts forward ways to approach modern architecture from the point of view of an intellectual and sensitive experience—that is to say, as much from the senses and the body as from a capacity for reflection—which seek to recognize the current values that architecture holds dear, its character and meaning.

## 5. Method

In order to provide examples of the way these aspirations are materialized; we will now give a summary of four practical proposals of course projects from the last three complete academic years up to this date. All of these were conceived in order to explore certain aspects of inclusive design based on ideas taken from the theory program, which were, respectively: the symbolic construction of architecture and public space; categories and discourse legitimized by the dominant culture and institutions; the contribution of women to new domestic paradigms in the 20th and 21st centuries; and the contesting of the normative basis of design by queer theory. Each one of these exercises is an interrogation of the roots and historical evolution of these issues, at the same time as it questions them from a situated knowledge [73,74], so the project must deal with the emergencies, aspirations and values in dispute which put our contemporary society into question. In order to do this, each one of these activities provides its own methodologies of research and design based on the exploration of a specific concept, context and content (the parameters of the assignment), in accordance with the cited Tschumi process-method of cross-application [64]. The concepts—mentioned above—were given, in each case, by the instructor; the way to approach them, along with the provision of a specific context and program, and, therefore, diverse solutions, were provided by the students.

Along with the projects proposed in 2018–2019 and 2019–2020, those undertaken during this current year 2020–2021 add up to a collection of research and design activities. Each year the course content varies, while the objectives, principles and methodology are maintained. From the standpoint of an inclusive and diversity-aware spirit, all these projects gravitate around the introduction of feminist ways of looking at architectural works, which are previously discussed in the theoretical seminars, in terms of both their historical experience and contemporary values. Every exercise, carried out in groups of 3–4 students, was introduced in a theoretical session in which the relevance of the assignment was explained, and conceptual tools were provided. Related case studies were also made available in such a way that by being presented with a variety of very different attitudes and ways of doing things, the students were able to take their own position on the issue.

### 5.1. Challenging the Gender-Biased Symbolism of the Public Space

The first exercise was based on the study of the symbolic dimension of the architecture of the Enlightenment. For French revolutionary architects like Étienne-Louis Boullée [75], architecture was central to the construction of the values of the new society. For this reason, his first problem was not one of a technical nature, or even artistic, but a question of philosophy and ethics. However, from its very beginnings, the public expression of the values of the French Revolution (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*) by way of architecture and urban planning had not been at all “fraternal” nor sensitive to the diversity of society, rather the opposite, since numerous communities had been purposefully excluded from these

supposedly “shared” symbols. Without visibility nor public recognition, for a large part of the population, whether it be due to their biological sex, sexuality, gender, identity, race or social class, “equality” did not exist for them and thus, their “freedom” was limited.

In this sense, this exercise underscored the deplorable lack of representation of women, and stereotypes in the urban sphere. “The denomination of public space by way of the naming of streets, squares or emblematic buildings, has been a way of ennobling and distinguishing important people and remembering a part of the history of each city” and, however, women and their contribution have frequently been forgotten [76] (p. 17). Although gradually this situation is being slowly reversed, recently established organizations—such as *Breaking the Bronze Ceiling*—and, within the framework of the fourth wave of feminist thinking and activism, movements like *MeToo*, have sought to demand visibility in the form of monuments, memorials, or the names of public spaces for women who have made a noteworthy contribution to society. This limit on the access of women to the symbolism of public space, this “bronze ceiling”, is not innocent nor is it innocuous. It has significant consequences for the co-education of future citizens since our students—and particularly our women students—need inspiration in order to harbor aspirations.

The objective of this project is, therefore, to understand the importance of the symbolism of public space and its impact on the construction of collective imagery which contest or perpetuate gender stereotypes, and therefore, have the power to include or discriminate. In order to achieve this, it was proposed to the students: firstly, to choose and document a neighborhood where a lack of representation of women in the naming of public spaces is detected; secondly, to carry out research on prominent women figures or role models linked to the context in order to name a street, square, park or representative location after them; and, finally to develop a project of redefinition in this space in order to more effectively and sensitively remember these women.

## 5.2. *Desmantling the White Cube*

Faced with the instrumentalization of scientific reason and the cultural basis of the Enlightenment, being subject, as it was, to the project of colonial domination, we seek to encourage the student to reflect on the determinist and neo-liberal drift of contemporary architecture, confronting it with the emancipating and critical idea which Marina Garcés has called a new, radical enlightenment [77]. In order to achieve this, the museum as a hegemonic cultural institution of modern culture is taken as a case study.

Contrary to what is commonly supposed, the museum is not a neutral exhibition space to which a director, curator or artist can provide content. As Paul B. Preciado argues [68], the museum is a *performative* apparatus which produces both the object and the subject it is said to represent; and it does this fundamentally by way of a series of devices, among which are the collection and the exhibition. The 19th century saw an unprecedented increase in art collecting which led to the creation of museums. A passionate interest for history fueled this increase and led to the displacement of many treasured pieces from their places of origin, which, while benefitting their appreciation by the public, produced an unseemly system of transplantation which still continues and generates repeated controversy [78,79]. The museum, a literal “utopia”, seemed to forgive everything: even the extraction of art, which had been conceived for another function, from its own context in order to convert it into objects of art, solely, so they could be exhibited in an exhibition hall [80]. The paradoxical nature of this meant that other cultures were deprived of their legacy—and therefore their own voice—which the museums were claiming to represent. The museum of the 19th century captivated historians, intellectuals and artists due to its limitless capacity to generate knowledge. This was its greatest power, but also its greatest danger as a modern institution. The colonial empires used the museum to construct their own version of history by purposely bringing together decontextualized objects from other times and places for their own interests, fostering a generalized reification of reality, including, as Didier Maleuvre states [81], the subject itself.

The object of this project is to work on the idea that an exhibition is a medium of communication which employs a language which presents itself as being illustrative, that is to say, that it claims to describe and to help us to see, using objects to express ideas but, nevertheless, fabricates that which it claims to represent [68]. Given that exhibition space is not a neutral space, but one that enshrines great political weight—it verifies, validates and legitimizes that which it exhibits, constructs discourse and, thus, produces subjectivity: hegemonic or subordinate—, what needs to be done is to pay attention to the production practices which are hidden behind the illustrative device of the exhibition. The exercise proposed to the students consisted of visiting an exhibition on a theme and in a place which the team considered interesting, graphically documenting the said exhibition, and paying attention to its narratives. They were to detect any possible bias (gender, generational, cultural, ethnographic, religious, etc.) and try to counteract it with a small museographical intervention, installation or alteration of some parameter of the montage, spaces, itineraries or the supporting images of the exhibition which would provide a more inclusive view of the theme.

### 5.3. *Women and the Making of the Modern House*

As we have stated, the quality and diversity of practices developed by women architects, promoters, critics, editors, curators or cultural agitators were decisive in the shaping of modernity. Yet, the majority of their contributions, and they themselves, still remain on an unjustifiable second plane, or directly forgotten, up to a point where, to use the words of Beatriz Colomina [51], they might be defined as the “ghosts of modern architecture”. Fortunately, in recent decades, feminism’s concern with rewriting a history of architecture that would do justice to women [82], but, especially, to place value on their contributions in order to also learn from them, has given rise to excellent studies examining modern architecture from a gender-based perspective, as well as its technologies and ideological and political constraints which explain the construction of domestic space and those who have envisaged it. In the 1980s, Dolores Hayden [83] demonstrated the subtle paradigmatic changes which had occurred in the home as a consequence of the first and second waves of feminism, and their impact on the lives of middle-class women in North America. Alice Friedman [84] meanwhile focused her analysis on the woman as a fundamental agent of modern architecture and brought to our attention an entire genealogy of women patrons who, not only contested patriarchal norms, but also moved architecture forward, as the new forms and spaces they commissioned or built were created to accommodate the new needs of their independent, unconventional lives.

In this sense, the work has a double objective. On the one hand, to investigate important contributions to modern architecture carried out by women, which have been, and still are, silenced or forgotten. On the other hand, to focus the discussion on the domestic realm, a space to which traditionally women have been relegated, without them, apparently, taking any part in their design. Additionally, to study a series of important examples of modern houses and elucidate how many of their values can be attributed either to their creation by women architects, in some cases and/or, in others, to the role women played as their promoters. In order to achieve this, from a selection of examples of domestic architecture commissioned and/or built by women, the work consists of, firstly, a gender-based analysis of the assigned case; and, secondly, of an exercise of “architectural fiction” to underline the values of women’s contributions on said homes by way of redesigning parts of them to speculate, depending on each case, either how the house would have turned out without her involvement, or how the work would have changed if the male architect had listened more to their client.

### 5.4. *Grasping Queer Space*

The final exercise is based on the identification of a plurality of post-modern discourses, among others that of feminists [85], belligerent towards the civilizing project imposed by capitalism and its colonial expansion. As an example, students were shown how, since



the 1960s, the collectives most oppressed by the determinist and uniformity-inducing drift of the modern project had raised their voice to question the categories which produced dominant subjects and identities (bourgeois, patriarchal and colonial) in opposition to subordinate subjects (women, homosexuals, individuals who had been racialized, etc.) and, therefore, to articulate proposals of resistance to the heteropatriarchy, the ethnocentrism and the attitude of exclusion of the western elites. Thus, focusing the debate on the alternative political identities of the 1970s and 1980s, the emergence of queer theory is explained within the discussions of space and sexuality which channeled the energy of post-Stonewall militancy, providing it with a discourse which, supported by feminist criticism, articulated the symbolic and material presence of practices and groups which until now had been rendered invisible in the public sphere.

Compared to other disciplines, queer theory and activism has had a more limited impact on architecture. In the 1990s, a series of influential studies focused on the issue of visibility and pushed for a deeper assessment of how sexuality and gender interact with space. After the seminal *Queer Space* exhibition in New York in 1994, Aaron Betsky [86] presented a history of apparently public (clubs, public baths, theatres...) and private (bathrooms, bedrooms, *boudoirs*...) spaces conceived or used in a multivalent way by queer people, in this case, mostly white gay men. With the turn of the century, this research has focused on the crucial, but still unexplored role of the inhabitants of architecture [84,87]. Queer analysis of iconic houses of the Modern Movement revealed how the non-normative lifestyles of their clients challenged the spatial, material and symbolic paradigms of modern architecture. These works also opened up a stimulating series of investigations into situated practices [88–90] which addressed the different ways in which some queer subjects, because of and beyond the fact of their sexual orientation, had challenged the normative basis of domesticity, by destabilizing the family values, socially fixed layouts and material culture which had prevailed in the modern project [91].

This fourth project raises the question of what exactly queer space is, and if such a thing can be said to exist. In order to try to respond to it, the student is invited to analyze experiences, projects and cultural manifestations, such as books, series and films with LGBTQ themes, in order to gain familiarity with interventions into, transformations and appropriations of space, each one very different from each other but linked by being “at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant” [92] (p. 62). All of which reveals the elusive elements of this concept, at the same time as the imagination of space as a series of layers of experiences and symbolic registers by means of which people use architecture with very different ways of understanding it, feeling it, etc. To use George Chauncey’s expression [93] (p. 224), there is no queer space, “only spaces used by queers or put to queer use”, that is, “ambivalent, open, leaky, self-critical or ironic and ephemeral” uses of space, according to Betsky’s interpretation [86] (p. 18). As the students were able to recognize, in their queer performativity, the said spaces subvert the repetition of meanings which the norm establishes, deconstructing, in this way, the binary structures which gender articulates in order to advocate other spatial practices that do not conform with the excluding modes of codifying sexuality, identity, pleasure or dissenting affections. The ultimate aim of this exercise is to see and make others see that space is not neutral and, in order to achieve this, we worked on the idea that by destabilizing conventions, queer criticism, along the lines of other feminist research, has opened up architecture to a multiplicity of identities and very different experiences which make up and transform space and must be integrated into more inclusive projects.

## 6. Results

Several years having passed since the introduction of gender perspective into the teaching of subjects concerning the theory of architecture and, specifically, after the comprehensive experience of the academic years of 2018–2019 (partially), 2019–2020 (by then fully) and 2020–2021 (limited by the COVID-19 pandemic), it is important to express the satisfaction of the teaching staff with the level achieved and the degree of implication

shown by the students in the projects described (Figure 4). Throughout these years, this co-educational proposal has been put into practice with an average of 90 students (Table 1), involving local students, whose working language is Spanish (approximately 70–80% of the total) and international students, of very diverse origin from inside and outside of Europe and whose teaching was given in English.

**Table 1.** Case study characterization: Architectural Theory. Years 2018–2019, 2019–2020 and 2020–2021.

Year	Total N° Students	Origin	Gender	Distribution	
				N°	% (Total)
2018–2019	83	Local (UA)	Men	33	0.40
			Women	31	0.37
		International	Men	8	0.10
			Women	11	0.13
2019–2020	90	Local (UA)	Men	37	0.41
			Women	28	0.31
		International	Men	9	0.10
			Women	16	0.18
2020–2021	95	Local (UA)	Men	36	0.38
			Women	41	0.43
		International	Men	8	0.08
			Women	10	0.11

Source: own elaboration.

Generally speaking, there was parity in the composition of the Architecture students, although the presence of women was greater last year, 54% as compared to 46% of men, confirming the tendency of a majority of women students in our classrooms, although the teaching staff and their mentors are still masculine.

Tables 2 and 3 bring together, disaggregated by gender, the academic results of our students in the last three academic years. Their academic performance was very satisfactory both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. We should highlight the fact that practically all the students who took this module passed without difficulties, showing more than sufficient signs of implication with the project.

**Table 2.** Architectural Theory workshops final results. Academic years 2018–2019, 2019–2020 and 2020–2021.

Year	Origin	Gender	Pass		Fail	
			N°	% (Total)	N°	% (Total)
2018–2019	Local (UA)	Men	27	0.33	6	0.07
		Women	27	0.33	4	0.05
	International	Men	7	0.08	1	0.01
		Women	11	0.13	0	0.00
2019–2020	Local (UA)	Men	29	0.32	8	0.09
		Women	26	0.29	2	0.02
	International	Men	8	0.09	1	0.01
		Women	16	0.18	0	0.00
2020–2021	Local (UA)	Men	27	0.29	9	0.09
		Women	37	0.39	5	0.05
	International	Men	8	0.08	0	0.00
		Women	10	0.11	0	0.00

Source: own elaboration.

**Table 3.** Success rate: gender-disaggregated data. Academic years 2018–2019, 2019–2020 and 2020–2021.

Academic Year	Gender	Distribution		Success Rate		Overall Success Rate %
		N° /Total	%	Pass	%	
2018–2019	Men	41/83	0.49	34/41	0.83	0.87
	Women	42/83	0.51	38/42	0.90	
2019–2020	Men	46/90	0.51	37/46	0.80	0.88
	Women	44/60	0.49	42/44	0.95	
2020–2021	Men	44/95	0.46	35/44	0.80	0.86
	Women	51/95	0.54	47/51	0.92	

Source: own elaboration.

The success rate (number of students who passed over the total), broken down by academic years (see Table 3), has been 87% in 2018–2019; 88% in 2019–2020; and 86% this current academic year 2020–2021, thus very similar results were maintained. The table also provides the same information by gender, which allows us to ascertain that the success rate in women students is slightly higher than with male students, in that while male students provide figures of around 80% in the three selected academic years, the figures for their female classmates were always above 90% and, even reached 95% in 2019–2020, 15 percentage points higher than the men in the same academic year. Lastly, we should indicate that the results of the international group were especially satisfactory, both in terms of the quality of their analysis and of the intensity of their projects, which benefited, no doubt, from the confluence of very diverse skills, cultural traditions and curricula.

**Figure 4.** Instructors and students of seminars of Architectural Theory at the UA. Photos: authors.

## 7. Discussion

The assessment that the students made of the described exercises was very positive. At the end of each academic year, a survey was conducted which enquired, among other aspects, about the relevance and interest to the students of the practical seminar program and how it related to the theory classes; how much the introduction of gender perspective had contributed to broadening their vision of the subject, provided analytical tools, awoken concerns and given rise to new questions. They were also asked to give their opinion on



which exercises they had found to be the most relevant or attractive to them and with which they had found the most difficulties. The survey was completed, in 2018–19, by 41 local students and 14 international students, which meant around 66% completion rate of answers; and, in 2019–2020, by 52 local students 19 international students, which meant 75%. We do not have the data yet for 2020–2021.

The majority of answers, around 82%, recognized the strengths of this group of exercises, although, as is logical, they were not exempt from criticism, fundamentally related to certain prejudices regarding their relationship with architecture—still understanding it as uniquely the act of building—and with the freedom they were given, which was not always well received, and caused certain uneasiness when they were faced with the openness of the exercises they were set. The international students were the most explicit regarding the perplexity that these proposed activities had caused. More than a few students had admitted that, at the beginning, they had felt disoriented—in many European contexts, design is heavily compartmentalized and protocolled, with hardly any margin for the introduction of subjectivity in its processes, much less for questioning its methodologies, tools and premises, which, precisely, here were criticized to their very roots. Yet, once they had got over their initial skepticism, they showed themselves to be delighted to have been able to decide on their own conceptual approach to the project and, above all, to have enjoyed the opportunity for the (self) exploration which each exercise provided.

It should be mentioned that, in 2019–2020, the project which was most valued was the third, followed by the fourth in the Spanish-speaking groups and the second in the international group. Conversely, the first exercise was the least valued, it being noteworthy that several students initially questioned the need to “to remove men’s names from streets in order to give them to women”, a situation which changed after the first analysis, which showed that more than 80% of the streets and monuments in the public space are dedicated to men and even that there are more allegorical names, names of battles or women saints than names of historical women. There were, also, many notable results, one being the remarkable implication of almost all the teams in the last project. It has been especially emotional in the case of those people who wished to assert their sexual-affective dissidence, given that their classmates empathized with the invisibility, discrimination, insecurities and even the forms of violence which they had been subjected to since infancy, converting all this negativity into a material proposal of a project in which everyone can recognize themselves.

Analysis of the students’ answers has also revealed that gender inequality is one of the principal concerns of the student. In fact, many students, around 50%, of which a significant share were men, were explicitly appreciative to discover how these structural inequalities permeate from the public sphere to the smallest details of spaces in which domestic life takes place. Finally, it is remarkable that the majority of the international students expressed that they had never heard about gender perspectives in their respective architecture schools. They equally appreciated the fact that they could return to their home institutions with a broader vision of the subject.

## 8. Conclusions

In the field of architecture, gender perspective plays an essential role in the conception of plural, complex, diverse, inclusive and egalitarian projects linked to objectives of mutual care between people and the environment, which defend, among other standpoints, that of eco-feminism [25,94]. In turn, in its enlightened expression, as Alicia Puleo argues, this movement has even reformulated the slogan of the French revolution in terms of liberty, equality, sustainability. “Sustainability is fraternity with all citizens, with it we commit to preserving the space for life in common and it is our responsibility to future generations. It is fraternity with the most vulnerable to contamination and the degradation of the Earth: women, girls and boys, those in poverty in the South. And (...) it is also compassion for the silent and ignored Other, who is capable of feeling, desire, aspiration, love, and, consequently, of suffering” [95] (p. 59).

Therefore, our work as lecturers and researchers in architecture is based on this idea of sustainability derived from environmentalism—act locally, think globally—and from feminism—the principle of equality of rights for women and for men. In order to achieve this, our work is assisted by the analytical and methodological tools provided by gender perspective or, rather, gender perspectives. At the University of Alicante, we have been pioneers in its implementation into the design, construction and management of the spaces and infrastructures of our campus and, definitively, in reimagining the environment which we inhabit from the multiple frameworks which this focus and its objective of inclusion opens up. This work has been carried out, fundamentally, from the area of knowledge of Architectural Theory. Its teaching staff, motivated by and committed to the multiple and diverse experiences described and their encouraging results, have worked, simultaneously, in the practice of research into this area of teaching and, also, in its management and in the professional exercise of providing feedback. By bringing together all these facets, they have developed and made available to the whole university community, the first guide to the introduction of gender perspective into the teaching of architecture ever published in Spain [5].

The main contributions of this guide can be summarized as follows: firstly, it contextualizes and details the situation of architectural practices, teaching and research in Spain with regard to the implementation of gender perspective and the evolution of its main lines of action: from those centered around promoting equality policies [96] and those rethinking urban design [76,97,98], to the latest historiographical investigations [56] and studies on women architects' diverse professional experiences [99]; secondly, it offers a complete overview of the possibilities and opportunities of integrating gender perspectives into Architecture studies and dedicates a special effort to deploying conceptually founded and highly innovative strategies to co-educate and to teach to research in architecture with a gender perspective; finally, it collects, organizes and assesses a considerable number of pedagogical resources, curricula, academic associations, discussion groups, feminist and LGBTQ forums, guides, handbooks, etc., as well as it provides a reference bibliography on the matter.

This guide will allow us to rethink teaching and research in architecture, contributing to an inclusive and egalitarian higher education for future architects. Sustainability, empathy and the solid training of new generations has to be the base of new architectural practices which embrace the necessary socio-environmental responsibilities needed to guarantee opportunities for lives which are fully worth living.

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