



GENDERED DESIGN IN STEAM



Buenos Aires,
Argentina

Team

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Gender, sexuality, feminism

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Re/designing the University of Buenos Aires campus to be gender inclusive in Argentina



This research aimed to identify the impact of the gender policies implemented by the University of Buenos Aires, specifically on the spaces and everyday uses of its campus spaces. In order to understand how students, faculty, and staff perceive and appropriate campus space, the team carried out a massive online survey as well as an ethnographic study of social media accounts discussing campus spaces. Based on their findings, they have developed recommendations for institutions for the strategizing and application of gender policies in campus design.

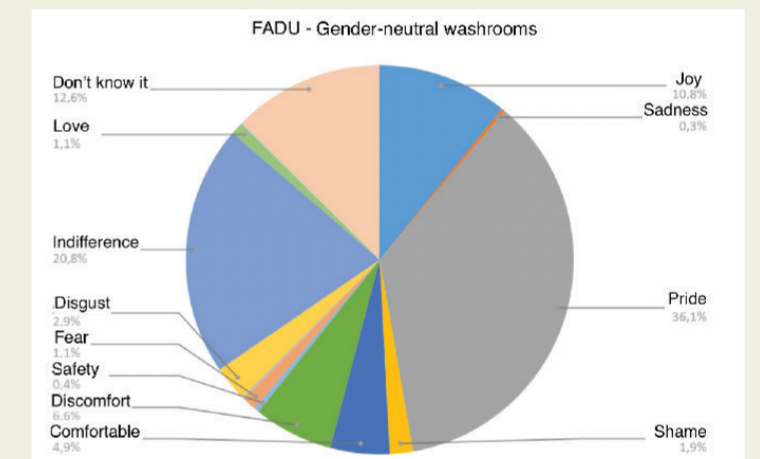


Sign for the gender neutral washroom on the University of Buenos Aires campus.

Outcomes

- From this research they have been able to identify a lack of knowledge about services available, the failure of some university space to meet certain needs, and some resistance to gender policies in the university community, as well as which spaces have had positive impacts.
- They developed recommendations based on their findings for designing educational spaces with a gender perspective. Recommendations included carrying out communication campaigns regularly to inform everyone on campus where spaces like kindergartens, gender-neutral restrooms or breastfeeding centers were, as well as how these spaces have a positive impact on the entire community and not just those specific individuals using them.

- The team has disseminated their findings and recommendations through presentations at universities in Argentina and around the world, and published articles and chapters on their conclusions. Their work has received very positive responses, because the issue of spatiality is not generally taken as a priority in institutional gender programs and policies.

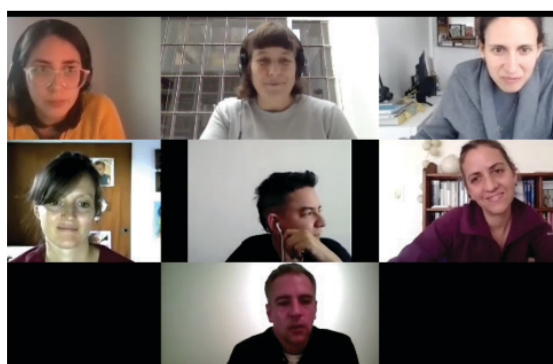


Graph of results from survey regarding perceptions of the gender-neutral washroom in the Faculty of Design and Urbanism.

Methods

- The team conducted a large survey with SurveyMonkey, to find out the perceptions of university spaces from students, professors and staff in the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences (FCEyN) and the Faculty of Design and Urbanism (FADU), with a total of 2064 responses. The team designed a list of sensations for the survey in order to understand the emotional associations of users with different spaces on campus.

- The limitations posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in conducting in-person ethnographic research made them turn to a digital ethnography methodology, developing what they call "netnography". Through this research they have made important findings about the perception of campus spaces, including the development of a strong resistance to spaces that are the result of the university's gender policies (such as gender-neutral restrooms).



Team meeting. Top, left to right: Florencia Scalise, Griselda Flesler, Paloma Carignani. Middle, left to right: Carolina Spataro, Ana Quaglino, Valeria Durán. Bottom: Rafael Blanco.



Plan of the Faculty of Design and Urbanism (FADU) used by the team.

"When you analyze spaces, you cannot analyze the material architectural space alone, but rather must analyze what happens with the uses of that space."

— Griselda Flesler

Lessons & Future Directions

- It became clear from their research that resistance to gender policies needs to be taken into account in strategizing institutional gender policies.
- The development of this resistance is part of a broader phenomenon, and demonstrates that advances in the feminist agenda are not linear. The team plans to deepen this aspect of their analysis in further publications, and it will be the starting point for future research.

Learn more



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