

# The impact of Women Writing Weeks in Research Performance

eman ta zabal zazu



universidad del país vasco euskal herriko unibertsitatea

UPV/EHUko BERDINTASUNERAKO ZUZENDARITZA DIRECCIÓN PARA LA IGUALDAD DE LA UPV/EHU

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## AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- To present an innovative experience in which 30 academic women (junior and senior) get together to achieve their writing goals is presented.
- To provide the rationale and first results of two Women Writing Weeks (WWW) in the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) in July 2015 and 2016.
- To assess the costs and benefits of organizing an WWW open only to academic women.
- To suggest guidelines for similar events to take place.

**Emakume Ikertzaileentzako I. Idazketa Astea**  
1ª Semana de Escritura para Investigadoras

Day / Eguna	am (in el aula AA Itazgailuan)	pm (Dekuntza taldeetan)
2015/07/1	10:00 Ongietorria / Bienvenida a cargo de Ana Arrieta (Viceresitora Campus de Gipuzkoa), Gabriela Choto (Directora de la Escuela de Máster y Doctorado) y Teresa Nuño (Directora de Igualdad, UPV/EHU)	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre (aula AA Itazgailuan)
2015/07/2	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre	16:30 Hizketa / Conferencia: Mujeres investigadoras y el factor de éxito (Eva Femenia)
2015/07/3	10:00 Visita guiada a la biblioteca / (Bisitatu)an bidai a gabitia	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre (aula AA Itazgailuan)
2015/07/4	12:00 Hizketa / Conferencia: Comunicar en igualdad. Uko no seceda a la igualdad (Rafaela)	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre
2015/07/5	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre	16:30 Hizketa / Conferencia: Preparando un artículo para su publicación (Gisela Draper)
2015/07/7	11:00 Ebaluaketa bilera / Reunión de evaluación: sugerencias de mejora	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre (aula AA Itazgailuan)

Lugar / Tokia: Centro Carlos Santamaría Zentroa - Gipuzkoako Campusa (Plaza Euzkay 2, Donostia - San Sebastián), UPV/EHU

**Quantitative methodology:** data provided by the Office for Equality of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) was used to determine whether there was a need for such an initiative.

**Qualitative methodology:** After analyzing the participant questionnaires, hypothesis were checked against semi-structured interviews with 3 representative participants and a member of the organizing committee.

**Emakume Ikertzaileentzako II. Idazketa Astea**  
2ª Semana de Escritura para Investigadoras

Day / Eguna	am (in el aula AA Itazgailuan)	pm (Dekuntza taldeetan)
Uztailak 4 de julio 2015	10:00 Ongietorria / Bienvenida: Ana Arrieta (Viceresitora Campus de Gipuzkoa), 10:30 Prestaketa bilera / Reunión de preparación	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre (aula AA Itazgailuan)
Uztailak 5 de julio	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre	18:00 Hizketa / Conferencia: Preparando un artículo para su publicación (Beatriz Moral)
Uztailak 6 de julio	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre (aula AA Itazgailuan)
Uztailak 7 de julio	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre	18:00 Mahai Inguru / Mesa redonda sobre Convenciones: Gabriela Choto (Directora de la MDE) y Carmen Aguiar (Directora de Cursos de Maestría). Moderadora: Teresa Nuño (Directora para la Igualdad)
Uztailak 8 de julio	12:00 Ebaluaketa bilera / Reunión de evaluación: sugerencias de mejora	Idazketa librea / Escritura libre (aula AA Itazgailuan)

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## RELEVANCE

- Numerous studies covering a variety of social and physical sciences have regularly reported two major facts about women in academia: women publish less than men, and women make up declining percentages of the professorate as we move up the academic ladder. (1)
- This data may vary locally, but sex-difference patterns persist. The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) (Spain) is no exception, and in its 2nd Gender Equality Plan (2014-2017) several actions are contemplated to reverse that trend. (3)
- One of those actions has been inspired by a series of writing retreats in New Zealand in which academic women gathered to write together. (2)
- In the Basque case, the retreat used on-campus facilities during summertime. Such activities have proven to be effective and empowering for women and they could be easily replicated in other academic environments.

## RESULTS

- 30 women attending two different editions of the WWW provided quantitative and qualitative anonymous data about their experience in the retreat.
- Participants evaluate positively the space and time provided for writing. Women claim having been concentrated during most of the time despite their family/work duties (Note: arrangements for shared family responsibility were independent of the course organization, but somehow they were encouraged by it.)
- All women were partially able to disconnect from their work and family obligations thanks to the compromise of attending the event and the physical isolation it involved.
- For some participants the relationships created among women were very important and helped them make a symbolic commitment with their writing.
- There was a high diversity of women's profiles which reflected on their education level, family obligations and working obligations. Some women believed the diversity of profiles was enriching, while others did not think the event was positively affected by that.
- Writing process was experienced with more and less productive periods, but many women expressed the working environment and the "protected space" provided enabled them to experience writing process in a new way.
- Participants self-organized to create a "community of practice" focused on research, sharing clues about information gathering techniques and document organization.



## CONCLUSIONS

- This WWW retreat is easy to organize and uses existing resources in an efficient way.
- With a low cost, it makes much in terms of impact in the individual careers of the participants.
- Women researchers would appreciate more positive action measures such as this.
- The WWW is a model which could be adapted in other universities.

## REFERENCES:

- [1] K. J. Hancock & M. Baum, *Women and Academic Publishing: Preliminary Results from a Survey of the ISA Membership*, International Studies Association annual convention, New Orleans, LA, February 17-20, 2010.
- [2] B. M. Grant, Writing in the company of other women: exceeding the boundaries, *Studies in Higher Education* 31:4 (2006), 483-495.
- [3] University of the Basque Country, *2nd Gender Equality Plan (2014-2017)*, Bilbao, 2015.