



Oliver Holz  
Fiona Shelton  
(Eds.)



# EDucation & GEndEr

Gender-specific education  
in different countries  
Historical aspects – current trends



WAXMANN





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## Contents

Foreword from the editors .....	7
<i>Oliver Holz and Fiona Shelton</i>	
Gender-fair education in Austria .....	9
<i>Renate Seebauer and Johann Göttel</i>	
Gender: a never-ending story .....	25
<i>Luk Bosman</i>	
The past, the present and the future situation of gender specific education in the Czech Republic .....	37
<i>Otakar Fleischmann</i>	
Gender mainstreaming in Germany .....	47
<i>Bernd Drägestein and Olaf Schwarze</i>	
Gender research in Estonia against the background of traditional education ...	63
<i>Meeli Väljaots</i>	
Education for gender equity in Spain, a socio-cultural and historical analysis ..	75
<i>Víctor Pérez-Samaniego and Carmen Santamaría-García</i>	
Gender-equitable education and training in Hungary .....	85
<i>Erika Grossmann</i>	
Girls ignite education .....	93
<i>Kristof De Witte and Ferry Haan</i>	
“Gender equality is no longer the big issue ...” .....	103
<i>Herbert Zoglowek</i>	
From history to the present – faces of gender in Poland .....	119
<i>Małgorzata Jarecka-Żyluk and Justyna Ratkowska-Pasikowska</i>	

Gender and education in Turkey . . . . .	137
<i>Nesrin Oruç Ertürk</i>	
Upsetting the apple cart: Overachieving girls, underachieving boys . . . . .	145
<i>Fiona Shelton</i>	
Gender specific education in 12 European countries – a comparison . . . . .	159
<i>Kristof De Witte and Oliver Holz</i>	
Authors . . . . .	175

## Foreword from the editors

The changes in our society can be identified in our educational institutions through for example, a diluted range of values and norms, blurred role definitions, new and differentiated structures of communication, differentiated forms of family organisation, and also through the increasing restriction on the ability to act. These developments lead increasingly to uncertainty and sometimes dissatisfaction in the professional action taken by teachers and educators.

The developments of recent years also indicate that educators are trying to implement gender-specific emphases in education and thus are trying to have a gender-justified and gender-specific impact. The background for this commitment is partially sobering evidence and results from different studies (PISA studies, etc.) which show that significant differences between girls and boys can be found, particularly in relation to educational results. In addition, the report of the European Commission “Gender Differences in Educational Outcomes: Current situation and measures in Europe” (2010) shows that:

- the increasing research on gender and education emphasizes the importance of stereotyping;
- gender justice is an issue in many countries, but often general equality policies are lacking;
- gender stereotyping should be counteracted, for example, through changes in the level of the curriculum, the educational and vocational guidance and the school environment;
- measures to eliminate gender differences in performance tend to focus on the underachievement of boys;
- single-sex education in public schools are an exception and
- in the lower levels of education, female teachers dominate.

In those circumstances it is not surprising that the report published by the European Commission “Gender and Education” states for example that: *“All school and college programmes, from pre-school to university, including professional and occupational training courses, should involve a core module on gender equality.”*

Within this publication, the historical aspects and current trends in gender-sensitive education of 12 European countries are shown for each country individually and questioned comparatively. The production of this book is the result of the multilateral Comenius project “EDGE: EDucation and GEndEr” that started in autumn 2011 and is to be completed by the end of 2014. This project is funded by the European Commission. At the end of this project – as described earlier in the Commission’s call – a curriculum for gender-sensitive education, which can be integrated in whole or modular in teacher training, should be available. More information can be found on the project’s website: “[www.education-and-gender.eu](http://www.education-and-gender.eu)”.

Cooperating in this project are 12 countries from North, East, South, West and Central Europe. Since not all European countries are involved in this project, there can be no definitive analysis of the current situation of gender-sensitive formation in the education of Europe as a whole. The different case studies from each country are threaded together. Whilst the studies share a common underlying structure, this structure is broken at different points due to country-specific characteristics.

The order of the text corresponds to the alphabet of the English country codes, as they are used universally by the EU institutions. Subsequent to the case studies of the 12 countries, two comparative studies will be presented:

There is the contribution “Gender-specific education in 12 European countries – a comparison”, a comparative study based on a written survey of 2,806 girls and boys aged 13 to 15 years in the Member States of the project’s participants. Aspects of personality, sexuality, interculturality and motivation are analyzed and compared. Accordingly, 280 teachers were surveyed, the results of this survey are included in this comparison.

The publication is published in German, English, Dutch and Turkish. It is therefore worth noting that, due to the translation from the original languages, various forms of address such as student, female student, students, etc. are used, whereas in other texts, there is only talk of students and teachers. The editors have – as far as this was possible – used exclusively the male form of address (which is interesting in a book about gender) as in some original languages such distinctions cannot be found.

With this publication, the authors hope to provide information and inspiration to all those who are interested in gender issues in education.

*Oliver Holz and Fiona Shelton*



# Gender-fair education in Austria

*Renate Seebauer and Johann Göttel, Europahaus Burgenland, Austria*

*As this article shows, the desire for a gender-fair school is not new. In the 19th century issues of equal access rights for girls and women to educational institutions became the focus of attention. From the 1980s onwards – as a consequence of various investigations into the differences between girls/women and boys/men – the demand of a gender-fair school emerged. The ‘Treaty of Amsterdam’ (1999) laid down gender mainstreaming as a joint task with the firm commitment to the implementation in the Member States of the European Union. Some of the initiatives outlined in this article are to be understood as a long-running issue, others, however, result from demands on the world of employment or are a consequence of demographic changes.*

## 1. On the historical development of gender-fair education

### 1.1 The long struggle against discrimination of girls

In the last third of the 18th century, during the reign of Maria Theresia and Joseph II, a growing influence on education came about from the state; requirements for an elementary education were created; for both sexes: education became compulsory, admittedly with different educational curricula for girls and boys.

As late as 1848, when a ministry of public education was established (from 1849 onward “Ministry for Culture and Education”) technical schools were not accessible to girls. One of the few educational possibilities – accessible to girls as a continuation of the six years of compulsory education – was in teacher training for primary education.

The “Offizierstöchter-Erziehungsinstitut” (an institution where daughters of members of the Austro-Hungarian Army were educated to become educators/teachers – often in aristocratic families [founded in 1775]; selected girls entered at the age of five and left the institution at the age of 20) and the “Civil-Mädchen-Pensionat” in Vienna (an institution where daughters of officials or daughters of members of the Austro-Hungarian Army were educated to become educators/teachers [founded in 1786]; selected girls were expected to enter between 10 to 12 years of age and should remain there for about eight to ten years) were for a long time the only higher state schools for girls (Branky, 1886).

Even though the government found the separation of the sexes desirable and established separate schools for boys and girls (with regard to “morality” and “dissimilarity of the sexes”), the majority of children still went to so-called “mixed schools”. This fact was not based on a positive idea of coeducation: “Mixed-sex education

– for economical reasons” however, “didn’t mean anything more than instruction and disciplinary control of girls and boys at the same time and in the same place; communication between boys and girls being prevented as far as possible by the seating arrangement” (Fischer-Kowalski, 1986: 46).

In the ecclesiastical schools, and later on also in the general secondary schools, separation of the sexes was mainly put into practice.

With the “Reichsvolksschulgesetz” from 1869 (a comprehensive School Act) the general compulsory education was prolonged from six to eight years. Compulsory education is fulfilled by attending primary school for eight years. This compulsory education could also be reached by joining five years of primary education and three years of ‘*Bürgerschule*’ (lower secondary school). There, girls and boys had to follow different curricula: girls had six hours of needlework, in return less arithmetic, geometry and drawing.

The “Reichsvolksschulgesetz” for the first time made it possible to establish a state institute for teacher training for female teachers (=“*Lehrerinnenbildungsanstalt*”).

*De iure* the “Reichsvolksschulgesetz” (1869) had created a joint public school for all school-age children; *de facto* there was an enormous resistance against this School Act: Exception clauses and child labour impeded the all-encompassing implementation of eight years of compulsory schooling.

Reformatory effort regarding better educational possibilities for girls came “bottom up”, from the circle of involved female teachers. At the same time, these reformatory efforts started with the growing women’s rights movements and other women’s and educational associations (cf. Seebauer, 2007, 2010).

In 1871 the “*Höhere Bildungsschule für Mädchen*” (higher school for girls) was founded by the “*Wiener Frauen-Erwerbs-Verein*” (an association promoting the education and employment/employability of women, founded on 1866) – as a consequence, the municipality of Vienna as well as the government refused to establish parallel classes for girls at upper secondary schools, which existed only for boys at that time. By the end of the 19th century the commitment of associations (e.g. Marianne Hainisch) as well as the strong involvement of Eugenie Schwarzwald succeeded in creating preconditions for an equal status of the educational conditions of girls and women to those of boys and men – at least in terms of the statutory provision (for details see: Seebauer, 2007: 57ff).

On the basis of a Ministerial Decree, girls could do the “maturity exam” “matriculation examination” (general qualification for university entrance) at an upper secondary school for boys from 1872 onwards. However, this didn’t give them the right to study at a university. In 1873 Graz followed by establishing a higher school/secondary school for girls (for a duration of six years), which was called “*Lyzeum*”. This became the prototype for all subsequent six-year secondary schools for girls. In 1892 the “*Verein für erweiterte Frauenbildung*” (association for women’s extended

education) established the first grammar school for girls in Vienna (first place: Heugasse; later; Rahlgasse). At that time, there were 77 grammar schools for boys!

The following decree “concerning the higher education for the female youth” (1897) introduced a development, which should direct the educational demands of girls to the “care for female virtues” (see Fischer-Kowalski, et al. 1986: 24). During these years, a number of vocational schools for girls were established, in the first place schools for cooking and sewing, to safeguard the subsistence of unmarried women.

In 1898 the first female students of the grammar school for girls, took their matriculation exam as external students at the “Academic Grammar School” (only accessible to boys at that time); from 1901 onwards the “maturity diploma” acquired the supplement “mature for attending university”.

For the following 50 years, the female holders of a “maturity diploma” were very restricted in their choice of study: from 1897 onwards, only the faculty of philosophy and from 1900 onwards, the faculty of medicine were open to them (see Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2003: 1). In 1910, the number of girls, who could attend grammar schools for boys, was drastically constrained to 5 % by the minister of education: these girls were only allowed to listen, they were not allowed to ask questions, and were not allowed to take exams, as not to disturb the boys (Seebauer, 2007).

Only after the establishment of the First Republic, from 1919 onwards, women had access to the Faculty of Law, the University of Veterinary Medicine, the Technical University and the newly established World Trade University; from 1920/21 also to the Academy of Fine Arts, from 1922 to the Faculty of Protestant Theology and from 1945 to the Catholic Theological Faculty.

With the decree of July 1919, the social-democratic secretary of state Otto Glöckel allowed girls as ordinary students at grammar schools for boys to make the girls’ education independent of their parents’ income. At the same time the “Lyzeen” should be abolished, what led to protest from the “umbrella organisation of the women’s rights movements in Austria” – amongst others, pedagogical objections against coeducation were uttered. The proportion of female students who attended upper secondary schools for boys (in most cases they were taught in classrooms especially set up for them) increased in 1932/33 to 40 % (Fischer-Kowalski, *inter alia*, 1986: 53).

Glöckel’s reform aimed at a policy of equality for girls in education; coeducation in a modern sense, however, wasn’t of particular concern to the reformers of the 1920s.

With the argument of the ‘female nature’ and ‘female tasks’, as well as the different pace in the development of boys and girls, a countermovement came into being, which demanded schools “suitable for the female individuality”. This is why in 1921, a special higher school for girls was established, namely the “Frauenoberschule”.

This school had to provide general education, had to show the female pupils the chores of housewives and mothers and had to prepare them for typical female jobs. Instead of Latin, female pupils were taught “female subjects”. These “Frauenoberschulen” had a more specific female interpretation than the former “Lyzeen”.

Because of the “Haupt- und Mittelschulgesetz” of 1927, the “Bürgerschule” (three years) was replaced by the “Hauptschule” (general secondary school, four years); four years of “Volksschule” (primary school) were followed by four years of “Hauptschule” (general secondary school) in order to meet the statutory requirements of compulsory schooling. For girls who attended grammar schools for boys, parallel classes had to be established.

In the “Ständestaat” (Corporate State, a period in the First Austrian Republic from May 1, 1934 until March 13, 1938, during which the Constitution of 1920/29 was replaced by the so-called May Constitution) the educational possibilities for girls were drastically restricted because girls were practically not admitted anymore to boys’ grammar schools. Girls had to attend “Frauenoberschulen” (an upper secondary school; in addition to teaching academic subjects – only one foreign language – it intended to cater for the “special characteristics of women and their cultural tasks” by putting the main emphasis on subjects such as child care, dress-making, cooking and housekeeping).

The separation of the sexes became even more strict during the Nazi Era (1938–1945). The “Frauenoberschule” was the only school open to girls; girls’ admission to a grammar school needed ministerial approval.

After World War II, all curricula of the Nazi Era as well as all laws enacted since 1934, which were incompatible with the “Bundesverfassungsgesetz 1929” (Federal Constitutional Law) were abolished.

Not until the creation of the extensive and detailed school legislation (“Schulgesetzwerk 1962”) the Austrian educational system of the Second Republic got a common legal basis. Compulsory schooling was extended to nine years, the educational institutions for future teachers were replaced by Colleges of Education (Pädagogische Akademien), that started in Vienna in 1966 (see Seebauer, 2011).

## 1.2 Gender in curricula, gender-reflected vs. gender-unreflected coeducation

Joint education for girls and boys, coeducation, is obligatory since 1975 for all state schools (§ 4 Abs. 1 Schulorganisationsgesetz = § 4 Par. 1 Act on Education). However, in the school year 2009/10, 1.3 %, i.e. 80 schools from a total of 5940 Austrian schools were not mixed, 10 % of these were private schools and only 0.4 % of these were state schools. Two thirds of the single-sex schools are to be found in the vocational area of education.

In scientific studies, coeducational practice has been a subject of discussion since the 1980s. Research and debates have focussed on the relationship between girls

and boys and their mutual perception, their self-assessment and the assessment by teachers; the interactions between male/female teachers and pupils as well as on the curricula and teaching aids (textbooks), respectively the instructional design of the lesson content.

Previously in 1980, an “inter-ministerial workgroup” was appointed in order to deal with woman-specific matters with reference to education. In the 1980s a number of organisational changes in education were implemented and curricula were adapted:

In 1982 the “Bildungsanstalten für Arbeitslehrerinnen” were closed down; teacher training in the subject areas “Hauswirtschaft” (=“Home Economics”) and “Werkerziehung für Mädchen” (=“Craft”) at compulsory schools were transferred to the Colleges of Education (Universities of Education since 2007).

Further on, the “Bildungsanstalten für Kindergärtnerinnen” (Schools for kindergarten teachers) were closed down and replaced by the “Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik”, which now finish with the “Matura” (upper secondary school-leaving exam which allows them access to universities).

Since 1985 the subject “technical drawing” in general secondary schools has not only been compulsory for boys, but also for girls and since 1987, the subject of “home economics” has not only been compulsory for females, but also for males in general secondary schools. The differentiation of “Crafts” – dependent on gender (needlework vs. wood-/metalwork) – was cancelled in the 7th and 8th grade of general secondary schools. Regardless of gender, male and female students can choose between “textiles” or “technical work”. A similar scheme for the lower secondary level of the “Academic Secondary School” (Allgemein bildende höhere Schule =AHS) followed in 1988, for the 5th and 6th grade in 1993.

Since 1994, “education for equality between women and men” has been anchored in the Austrian school curricula as a “teaching principle” (i.e. an educational task that can be managed across disciplines) – this occurred initially in business colleges, trade schools and colleges for kindergarten teachers, and in other types of schools between 1994 and 2004.

This will help motivate all people working in education to place more attention on issues of gender equality, in terms of contents of curricula, when teaching, and in textbooks and other teaching aids in use.

The educational principle “education for equality between women and men” is meant as a temporary special measure within the meaning of Article 4 of the “United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (Federal Law Gazette 443/1982), ratified by Austria in 1982. Austria has committed itself to ensure, through legislation and other measures, the implementation of the principle of equal rights and to pursue a policy of eliminating discrimination against women (Article 2).

For the education sector in particular, Articles 5 (awareness-raising measures to eliminate prejudices and to promote cooperative behaviour between men and women) and 10 (measures to eliminate discrimination in education) are of importance. A fundamental decree adopted on 15 November 1995, (Zl 15.510/60-Präs.3/95), regulates the related objectives and contents and provides information on the implementation.

The “Curriculum 99” of the general secondary school also contains the didactic principle of “gender-reflected co-education”, and explicitly points out that this “coeducation is [...] not to be understood as teaching students simultaneously”. Moreover a reflected debate of prejudices based on gender has to be conducted.

Furthermore, it states: “It is essential to select content that appeals to both girls and boys, to make the lessons so that it meets both the needs of girls and boys and to create a (learning) environment of mutual respect and to reflect expectations and manners of teachers towards girls and boys...” (Curriculum of the general secondary school, 2007: online).

If everything is considered on the basis of gender-sensitive education, then the educational principle of “gender-reflected coeducation” cannot be disconnected from the didactic principles of “strengthening of independent activity and direct responsibility”, “intercultural learning” and “integration”.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education presented the “Action Plan 2000”, with 99 measures to promote gender equality in the field of school and adult education. The information sheet for education and equality “SCH.UG” No. 12/2000 reports on the implementation of the “Action Plan 2000”. Unfortunately we aren’t able to address all 99 measures at this point, however, please find some information below (available at: [http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/Bildungsanliegen\\_Aktions1791.xml](http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/Bildungsanliegen_Aktions1791.xml)):

- Special attention of girls’ need for improvement in the field of science and technology with regard to measures for education planning and school development (gender-specific analysis of the TIMSS study – “Third International Mathematics and Science” – for the intermediate range;
- Provision of information on gender and education issues specific to women via the Internet;
- Research into educational motivation, career prospects of male and female students in non-traditional training programmes (e.g. opportunities and obstacles for male or female kindergarten teachers or for male or female technicians);
- Increase of the proportion of men in training in the areas of kindergarten education, educational homes and social education;
- Information campaign on training opportunities for occupations that are not typical for women and men: initiative “girls and boys in atypical jobs”;
- Women’s projects, which are working towards an active participation of girls and women in technical and scientific fields;

- Consideration of the educational principle in the context of teacher education and further education;
- Development of gender-homogeneous opportunities for girls with special methodological support (such as girls' classes, groups of girls...);
- Special attention of coeducation in physical education. Providing a basis for an assertiveness training for girls and groups of girls in physical education;
- Focus on gender-specific issues in the field of peace education and civic education (e.g. wars: the role/situation of women and men, tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution, especially for boys);
- Measures against all forms of violence and measures to prevent sexual harassment of girls in educational institutions;
- Promotion of 'working with boys' / 'boy-specific projects': views on the situation of boys; supporting boys in finding their gender-role identity; awareness of teachers for the socialization of men; work with boys as simultaneous support of the development of girls and women and prevention of gender-hierarchical patterns of interaction;
- 'Work with girls' / 'girl-specific projects' to promote self-esteem of girls. Encouraging and preparing girls to take on an active role in society, in political, economic, social and cultural life and in decision-making processes;
- Measures to strengthen attention to gender equality in the field of teaching materials (textbooks, films, new media: reality-based representation of women and men, and the strengthening of self- and group awareness of girls, avoidance of gender-biased language, highlighting gender prejudices in texts and images,
- Attention to girls and young women in rural areas, migrant women, refugee women and women with disabilities in all activities mentioned;
- Gender focal points in the field of intercultural learning (e.g., in cooperation with relevant journals);
- Addressing and discussion of the situation of "foreign" women and girls as part of the EU 1997 "Fight against racism and xenophobia".

It is evident that these 99 measures that aim at the special promotion of girls and women, have only one point – in the 66th position – that expressly uses the word "working with boys".



## **2. Tasks, objectives and contents of gender-fair behaviour in and out of school**

### **2.1 On the objectives of the educational principle “Education for equality between women and men”**

The principle of instruction mentioned above should help motivate all people working in education, to increasingly consider issues of gender equality in curriculum content, when teaching, in textbooks and other teaching aids in use. In daily contact with other people it should promote a behaviour that is supported by the principle of equal partnership between women and men. Female and male students will be guided to the willingness of reflecting upon causes and consequences of gender-based discrimination and to develop, based on this knowledge, a behaviour that can be a contribution to equality between women and men.

The following content-related issues describe the educational principle:

- Raising awareness of gender socialization through family, school, media and the workplace as well as effects of this socialization on educational and career choices, life planning, leisure activities and their own thinking and behaviour (such as body language, communication, role models) each in age-appropriate form.
- Perception of causes and forms of gender-based division of labour in the private sector and in the workplace, the associated career opportunities and working conditions and the different representation of women and men in certain areas (such as politics, education, art, science, craft, technology) in the past and the present.
- Identify the possible contributions to the handing down and solidification of stereotypes in the school habitat (and other areas of life) through curricula, teaching materials and practices of all school partners.
- Reflection of their own behaviour, interaction in the classroom, the daily contact with each other, their own notion of gender roles.
- Raising awareness of everyday forms of violence and sexism in school, at work, in the media; identifying opportunities for prevention and intervention as well as steps to a collaborative partnership with each other.
- Encourage the combating of gender prejudice and discrimination, promote or compensate for disadvantages in terms of socially cooperative behaviour and self-confidence and promote the partnership behaviour of boys and girls (see details of the statements in the policy adopted under: [http://www.bmukk.gv.at/ministerium/rs/1995\\_77.xml](http://www.bmukk.gv.at/ministerium/rs/1995_77.xml)).



## 2.2 The National Action Plan “equality between women and men in the labour market”

Based on the fact that the unsatisfactory situation of women in the labour market continues, the government agreed on a National Action Plan (NAP) for equality between women and men in the labour market in 2008. After numerous discussions with male/female experts as well as national/international experts, and after intensive negotiations with the social partners, the National Action Plan was presented on 30 June 2010.

It defines the strategy of the federal government until 2013. The Action Plan contains a package of 55 measures, several of which affect the domain of education and training, e.g. gender sensitivity in elementary education (2010-2012), gender specific representation of the contents in textbooks (from 2010-2013), the promotion of gender equality expertise in teacher education and school development as well as with school principals (ongoing); promote gender-sensitive use of language (beginning 2010), more women on “stage” (beginning 2010), increasing the proportion of girls as representatives in school boards (2010/11), advice and guidance on learning and work at the 7th and 8th grade with mandatory measures (ongoing); implement new models for the joint education of male and female students in the areas “textile” and “technical works” (start 2010), create new attractive educational opportunities for students in vocational schools (IT priorities, natural sciences, biomedicine, health technology) (ongoing); ... (see National Action Plan 2010: 46). Numerous other measures go beyond educational measures, such as training of underprivileged women, particularly of women with immigrant background; improve financial safeguard for the acquisition of educational qualifications; establish or expand maternity management in businesses; visualize qualified women for functions in supervisory boards; increase the proportion of women in supervisory boards; introduce statutory mandatory income analyses by the company... (see National Action Plan 2010: 52).

On 17 October 2011 the “Gender Index Austria” was presented. It is interpreted as a continuation of the Women’s Report 2010 and contains key information on the situation of women and men in Austria (see Gender Index 2011).

## 3. Pedagogy for girls, pedagogy for boys, coeducation between the conflicting priorities of theory and practice

The following chapter briefly describes some initiatives and projects that are in connection with certain initiatives of the European Union, with the “National Action Plan” (see above), but also with the “99-point programme”. These relate to gender equality in teaching material, to the improvement of science teaching and to the

increase of the proportion of women in scientific professions, gender-sensitive violence prevention, gender and migration.

### 3.1 Gender equality in teaching materials

The advisory committees have to take into account the “equal treatment of men and women and the creation of a collaborative partnership in social developments” with regard to their eligibility declaration of teaching materials (Federal Law Gazette No. 370/1974, as amended by Federal Law Gazette Part II, No. 248 [lit. especially. i] on 29 July 1998).

Early initiatives go back, however, to the first Austrian Minister for Women’s Affairs, Johanna Dohnal (1979 Secretary of State for Women’s Affairs, 1987 chairperson of the women’s committee of the Austrian Social Democratic Party and from 1990 to 1995 first Minister for Women’s Affairs). In the 1980s, she published a folder for the “reality-based representation of women and men in the Austrian textbooks”. It was followed by the study “The role of women in traditional textbooks” Pink – blue life images. On 15 December 1986 the BMUK (Ministry of Education) held the inquiry “woman and man, partnership in the textbook” (see [http://www.ofra.at/findbook/XI\\_Bildung.pdf](http://www.ofra.at/findbook/XI_Bildung.pdf)).

The “Guide for the representation of women and men in teaching material” (2003), published by BMUK provides amongst other things suggestions on and initiatives for:

- The development of materials in which girls and boys are offered a variety of identification options to expand their interests and behaviour;
- The support of teachers in selecting appropriate teaching materials;
- The encouragement of students to come to terms with gender inequality, with gender stereotypes and discrimination in various media (see Guide 2003).

The guide offers practical suggestions on the subjects “behaviour/lifestyles, work and society; for example: In which activities are women/girls and men/boys visible? What characteristics and behaviours are associated with women/girls and men/boys (girls/women: passive, emotional, quiet, honest, ... men/boys: active, objective, wild, assertive, ...)? Are women/girls and men/boys shown in behaviours and situations that are more like associated with the other sex (“sporty girl”, “caring boy”)? Is the behaviour of women and men only described as biologically determined or as a historically, politically and culturally conditioned and variable? Do the teaching materials show real life and living situations (in addition to mother-father-child(ren) relationships, also single parents, extended families)?

What jobs are assigned to women and men? Are women and men also shown in non-traditional occupations for their gender? Are the reasons for the gender-divided labour market identified? Are women represented in leading positions? Is

housework and practical education of young children valued as much as paid work? Are the problems of working women (frequently double or triple burden, wage/salary differentials, different opportunities for advancement...) discussed?

Are women shown in public places, in political activity (citizen's initiatives, parties...) and in historical references? Is the discrimination against women an issue? Are the various forms of violence against women addressed? Is the situation of girls/women and boys/men of different nations and cultures, living in Austria discussed? How are gender relations described in other countries (Guide 2003: 4).

Furthermore, the guide provides suggestions for projects in which students can analyze a textbook or another medium themselves (newspaper, book, film...). Male and female students should recognize the often one-sided portrayal of the sexes seen in the media and compare this with actual conditions, but they should also detect the – to some extent – covert forms of discrimination. Quantitative and qualitative criteria are appropriate for a class project: How often are women/girls and men/boys represented as “actors”? How and in what activities are women/girls and men/boys represented? (Guide 2003: 4).

### 3.2 Gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming in the natural sciences

“IMST – Innovations Make Schools Top” is a project run by the BMUKK in co-operation with universities, universities of education, school boards and schools by the help of which the teaching of mathematics, science, ICT and German, as well as related fields should be improved. IMST operates in four programmes (regional and thematic networks, funds for education and school development, gender network, testing culture) on the levels of education, school development and the entire education system. IMST evaluates the activities systematically and integrates gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming into all areas.

The aim of IMST is to establish and structurally anchor a culture of innovation to strengthen the “MINDT-”teaching (mathematics, ICT, natural sciences, German, technology) in Austrian schools. Key principles in the project are the promotion of equal opportunities with particular emphasis on gender issues.

The starting position was formed by international comparative studies (e.g. PISA), which confirmed the Austrian educational asymmetries regarding gender relations: in these comparative studies, girls performed worse in natural sciences than boys. Boys on the other hand had lower reading skills than girls. This fact shows that not all challenges in terms of gender roles could be met appropriately in the education system (cf. <https://www.imst.ac.at/>).

The projects “Girls and Technology” (=“mut!”) and “Women in Technology” (=“FIT”), which are commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, have been carried out successfully since 2002 as part of the inter-ministerial initiative. “Women in Science and Technology” (=fFORTE), have become more

important, as in Austria (and Europe) there is currently a shortage of engineers/technicians.

In the “Lisbon strategy”, attention was already drawn to the shortage of engineers in an effort to increase the number of graduates in mathematics, engineering and science education with at least 15 % by 2010, while reducing the gender imbalance.

The project “mut!” aims at reducing gender segregation in training and career choices as well as at an increase in the proportion of women in technical schools, course of studies and professions. Nine regional “mut!”-centres in Austria are working under the strategic control of the individual women’s departments/offices in the provincial governments for the implementation of this goal: Workshops and seminars are offered in every federal state for interested teachers and multipliers; Pilot projects are monitored and materials on certain aspects of career choice based on gender, provided (see: [www.gender.schule.at](http://www.gender.schule.at); [www.gender.schule.at/bo](http://www.gender.schule.at/bo); as well: [http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/ind\\_gb.xml](http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/ind_gb.xml)).

The project “Women in Technology” (“FIT”) is understood as technical support for girls in upper secondary schools. In this context, it is the most important girls’ technology information programme with regard to access to universities and universities of applied sciences. The increase in the proportion of women in technical and scientific fields will be affected by motivation and specific advice on technical and scientific training and career opportunities. The target group are students from the 10th grade, who can participate at information sessions (directly at the schools) as well as at taster days (which take place at six universities) for technical and scientific disciplines (see [www.bmukk.gv.at/FIT](http://www.bmukk.gv.at/FIT)).

Efforts to get girls interested in technical careers and to enable them access to higher skilled and thus – better paid – so far “typical” men’s jobs, go back to the 1980s: Since 1984 the Secretary of State Johanna Dohnal started the action “Daughters can achieve more – Career Planning is Life planning”.

Despite higher education levels, the training and career choices of Austrian youth stay shaped by traditional gender stereotypes.

### 3.3 Gender-sensitive violence prevention

Violence by and among children and adolescents has increasingly become a public issue. A closer look shows, however, that boys and girls are affected in a very different manner. A gender-sensitive approach to everyday forms of violence and aggressive behaviour, the perception of the relationships between violence, and the identification of opportunities for prevention and intervention will lead to a collaborative partnership with each other.

The campaign “Together against violence” is based on the fact that only by working together, a good school climate can be created. A peaceful coexistence requires clear rules, also in the school habitat. About 40 % of schools have reached agree-

ments between parents, teachers and students. To encourage all schools in Austria to such agreements, a guide for joint agreements has been created. In critical situations, school psychologists play an important role in preventing crises. For this reason, the ministry aims to increase the number of school psychologists by 20 %, from 150 to 180. An important approach to violence prevention and awareness of the issue of violence, is the exploration of art. Thus, theatre projects on violence in cooperation between theatres and schools arose in the school year 2010/11 in each federal state (see <http://www.gemeinsam-gegen-gewalt.at/die-weisse-feder/>).

In autumn 2011, working papers were published on boy-specific projects – “Strong! But how?” – with a focus on violence prevention. In this handout you will find practical exercises and suggestions for violence prevention with regard to boy-specific projects in schools. Particular attention is hereby paid to the relationship between violence and male socialization (“Strong! But how?”, 2001, and: <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/gewaltpraevention.xml>).

### 3.4 Gender and migration

The increasing number of students with immigrant backgrounds is another challenge for the Austrian education system. At the beginning of 2011 about 18 % of women in Austria had an immigrant background: on 1st January 2011, 43 % of women of foreign origin came out of EU and EEA States, 57 % were from other countries. Most immigrants came from Germany, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Turkey (see Janda 2011:8). The highest proportion of students from abroad or non-native speakers of German can be found in the following districts of Vienna: Leopoldstadt with 60.9 %, followed by Brigittenau (58.6 %) and Margareten (57.5 %) – excluding agricultural and forestry schools and vocational schools. In Burgenland, Mattersburg (17.4 %) is the district with the highest proportion of foreign students or non-native speakers of German, the city of Klagenfurt in Carinthia (13.2 %), Baden in Lower Austria (20.0 %) and in Upper Austria the town of Wels (25.1 %). In Salzburg, the city of Salzburg (24.5 %), in Graz, Styria (17.5 %), the district Reutte in Tyrol (16.3 %) and Dornbirn in Vorarlberg, the district (23.5 %) (see ORF: Ethnicity, Diversity: <http://volksgruppen.orf.at/diversitaet/aktuell/stories/99029/>).

Apart from language difficulties, also traditional roles of men and women/ boys and girls can affect the educational and career choices, as well as future life prospects. Therefore, there is a challenging task for the school system to address personal restrictions and to help students to cope with their new environment ([http://www.bmukk.gv.at/training/teaching/ba/gender\\_migration.xml](http://www.bmukk.gv.at/training/teaching/ba/gender_migration.xml)).

As the “Report on Migrants 2007” showed, “female migrants are exposed to [...] more difficult circumstances than male migrants [...]”. The report 2007 refers to a “double disadvantage of female immigrants: they are on the one hand women with the associated disadvantages and on the other hand, they are members of an ethnic

group, defined as foreign” (Report on Migrants 2007:44). Many women, often those from the Islamic world, have to tackle the social conflict between a modern and a traditional woman’s role and solve it for themselves. Specific problem areas are multiple pressures, domestic violence, the consequences of failed bicultural marriages, trafficking in women, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (Migrant Report 2007: 44).

Various working and teaching materials on gender and migration are made available by the Ministry of Education, e.g. The journal “TRIO – reading fun in multilingual classrooms” (<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/training/teaching/trio.xml>), as well as by the association EFEU (Association for the development of feminist educational and teaching models) (<http://www.efeu.or.at/index.html>), but also by the Integration Fund ([http://www.integrationsfonds.at/top\\_services/lehrmaterial/](http://www.integrationsfonds.at/top_services/lehrmaterial/)).

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## Suggestions for further independent study of the topic

1. Numerous initiatives that tried to create better access for girls /women to the education system, go back to women, who in the 19th century worked in Austria, in associations of women. A good guide to this phenomenon is offered by this publication: Seebauer, Renate (2007): *Frauen, die Schule machten*: LIT, Vienna/Munster (partly also online at Google Books). Compare the situation in your country with that, as described in the above publication.

2. What impact did EU regulations have on the implementation of gender-sensitive policies in your country (and in the school system in general)? Give examples of some successful initiatives and projects.



# Gender: a never-ending story

Luk Bosman, vzw Leer-Kracht Antwerp, Belgium

*The way in which women and men can and want to relate to each other in society differs in space, time and culture, so do their roles in life and the expectations people have of them. School (alongside family, peers and media) offers a unique context in which boys and girls acquire important and meaningful experiences. Puberty and adolescence are important phases in the development of a plural identity. They are about shaping a gender identity and an identity as a pupil. In this text we plead for a didactic method for identity development with special attention to developing the ability of youngsters of getting interested in something, and to shape themselves in a meaningful way.*

## 1. Gender in Flanders

The differences between men and women are constantly striking us. The media still finds it interesting enough to write about. In daily life we often hear people saying 'it's a woman again' or 'typically male'. The gender topic still offers vibrant discussions worldwide. Time and time again new research tries to find out how men and women relate to each other. Recent topics published in Flemish media were: the sexual abuse of children and teenagers by the church, schools and sport clubs; the inequality in wages between men and women and the glass ceiling that hinders women to advance up the corporate ladder; and sexual harassment in professional relationships. As is the case with many hot potatoes in our society, education is the first thing people look to for a remedy.

In Flanders *co-education* has only legally been obliged since the school year of 1995-1996, many schools still contain traces of their past as an all-boys or all-girls school. Often such a past goes hand in hand with some kind of gender specific study course from Year 9 and 10 onwards (e.g. child care for girls or a car mechanic course for boys). One of the consequences is that parents and pupils already look at the courses offered in Year 9 and 10 at the end of elementary school. This influences the gender ratio in the first year of secondary school in Year 7 (normally this would have a 50/50 ratio).

Flemish education usually scores very high on the quality of its education. However, research shows that there are important differences between boys and girls. In the mid seventies educators worried about the underperformance of girls. In the beginning of the nineties the focus shifted to the school performances of boys. Something serious was going on with boys in school: bad study results, falling behind in school, unqualified outcomes, drop-outs, and even behavioural and tru-

ancy problems. This is not just a Flemish or Belgian problem, because international research also indicates this occurrence of the *'boy problem'* in secondary education elsewhere. Some research data as an example:

Van Landeghem and Van Damme (2007) researched the situation of 22-year-old men and women to find out how many of them had put in enough effort to get a degree or certification.

Table 1: Pupils leaving school with a diploma in birth cohort 1983

Birth cohort 1983	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
General Education (ASO)	28.4	41.0
Art Education (KSO) and Technical Education (TSO)	30.3	26.7
Vocational Education (BSO)	19.1	19.1
SYNTRA (Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training)	3.2	1.5
DBSO (part-time educational curricula)	2.4	1.7
TOTAL	83.4	90.0

Striking in table 1 is the significant difference in General Education: 41 % of the girls get a degree, but only 28 % of the boys (researched in 2005).

Table 2 shows an increase in unqualified outflow both in girls and boys, also the outflow in boys is larger (16.6 %) than that of the girls (10 %). Together with these researchers we point out that this is a significant group of young people who do not get a lot out of what school has to offer. This group is sufficiently numerous to deserve the attention of policy makers.

Table 2: Unqualified secondary pupils in a series of birth cohorts

Year of birth	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Both (%)	22-year-olds
1977	14.3	8.9	11.6	1999
1978	14.1	8.6	11.4	2000
1979	15.0	9.0	12.1	2001
1980	14.8	9.0	12.0	2002
1981	15.6	9.7	12.7	2003
1982	16.4	10.3	13.5	2004
1983	16.6	10.0	13.3	2005

Every school year the Department of Education collects data about falling behind in school and repeating a year in secondary education. Falling behind is the delay that a pupil experiences compared to other pupils born in the same year. This only indicates how much a pupil has fallen behind during their entire school career. Unfortunately, this does not tell us anything about the possible causes for this delay (illness, moving to a new school, family troubles...).

Table 3: Falling behind in ordinary secondary education per year

School year 2003/04	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Total (%)
1th SO	21.4	17.5	19.5
2nd SO	25.7	20.2	23.0
3rd SO	31.2	23.4	27.4
4th SO	35.7	25.2	30.5
5th SO	42.1	29.4	35.9
6th SO	43.1	28.8	35.9

In the first year of secondary education more boys (21.5 %) stayed back than girls (17.5 %). This accumulates year by year, the difference between boys and girls keeps getting larger every year. At the end of secondary education it is twice as many boys (41.3 %) than girls (28.8 %) that have stayed back.

Someone who is kept back is defined as a pupil who does the same school year twice. Whereas falling behind indicates the delay that a pupil has endured during his or her entire school career, being kept back only indicates a snap shot of one school year (in this case 2003-2004).

Table 4: Amount of pupils that stayed back a year (%) in ordinary General Education, per gender

	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Total (%)
2000/01	8.2	4.4	6.3
2003/04	7.4	4.2	5.8

In comparison to the school year 2000-2001 the percentage of pupils that stayed back has dropped. The difference between the two sexes is still significant in 2003-2004: 7.4 % of the boys were kept back and only 4.2 % of the girls.

When it comes to study performances gender differences are not clear-cut. School subjects, age groups and the field of study have an impact. For instance, in a recent comparative analysis about information acquisition (Year 7 and 8) there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Boys outperform girls in reading maps, plans and drawings, while girls are better at structuring verbal information. Another recent survey from 2012 about the skill level for mathematics in General Education (Year 9 and 10) shows that girls are performing less well than boys.

The feminization of education has occasionally been indicated as the culprit for the so called '*boy problem*'. On the one hand feminization means that the majority of the teaching staff are women, and on the other that the curriculum is more orientated to benefit girls.

The *Genderjaarboek* (gender year book) 2007 says that "from nursery school until secondary school pink (85 %) is the defining colour for the teaching staff, the touch of blue is usually situated within 'subjects for boys' such as exact sciences or technical subjects; and vertical segregation makes sure that male role models in education are found in executive jobs". It is expected that this trend will continue

during the next few years, because for every 100 male students there are 690 female students enrolled in courses to become an elementary education teacher. Furthermore, girls have more and better pass grades – for every 100 male graduates in 2005 there were 1075 female graduates. Enrollment in courses to become a teacher in secondary education is more balanced, the pass grade here is also better for girls than boys (140/100 in 2005).

Siongers (2002) researched whether the feminization of the teaching staff had any consequences for the quality of secondary education. She concluded that male and female teachers are more alike than they are different. It does not really matter whether pupils are being taught by a woman or a man. Siongers also contributed to get rid of the perception that female educators would have a negative impact on the quality of education.

The curriculum and the present day vision on 'decent education' have undergone important alterations during the past twenty years. Some say the attention to socio-emotional development of pupils, to social and cooperative skills, to verbal development and communicative skills mainly benefit the (learning) skills of girls. While those things that appeal to the interest and skills of boys gradually vanished from the curriculum. Things such as a diminished amount of sports and physical education lessons, and content that requires logical and abstract thinking as well as rote learning.

## 2. Education policy and gender

Many initiatives have been taken by the Flemish education policy makers to find solutions for the so-called *boy problem*. For example:

- The VENUS-project (2006) of the *Dienst Beroepsopleiding van het Ministerie van Vorming en Onderwijs* (see also part 4). This focused mainly on learning style differences and personality differences.
- The EQUAL-project (2008), a project between universities that developed gender sensitive Human Resource instruments to increase the number of female professors.
- The Gen-Basac-project (2008) that developed a manual for schools in elementary and secondary education that want to have a gender sensitive policy in a numerous array of educational themes.
- The Gender-in-the-Blender-project (2008), that developed a set of teacher tools about gender diversity and transgender, which should facilitate making these topics discussable in education in a nuanced manner.
- On the 1st of January 2012 the '*Strategisch Basis Onderzoek: Onderwijzen in het bed van Procrustes*' was started. A project involving several universities and running for several years that wants to identify the causes of the *boy problem*,

propose policy changes and develop materials (training courses, manuals, work forms) to handle differences in a more gender sensitive way.

In the most recent *Beleidsbrief Onderwijs* (2010/2011) of the Flemish Minister of Education Pascal Smet we can find the following strategic and operational goals:

- *Forming open, versatile and strong personalities* (= first strategic goal, see also part 3) with i.a. learning competences, social competences, civil competences and social awareness competences.
- *Integrate gender diversity into the policy of schools* (= operational goal). The Flemish Government has extended the reach of its equal opportunity policy. The Minister pledged to include gender identity and sexual identity into his policy proposals.

He wants to contribute to a more equal composition of teaching staff. Especially elementary education and teacher training courses need to attract more men. He also says that as long as there are many teachers of the same sex they need to be made aware of gender specific treatment. He also focuses on using gender neutrality when developing teaching materials. He wants to meet with the publishers of didactic materials and the powers that be in education (*inrichtende machten*) to make sure that gender stereotypes are avoided.

### 3. Theory, research data and practice

Developmental psychology indicates that girls generally develop earlier than boys. Recent discoveries in neurobiology also confirm that girls usually have a two year maturity lead on boys. We might ask ourselves whether education would be more effective if study groups are formed when maturity is taken into account instead of age. This is already the case for the transition between nursery school and elementary education.

This is important because girls usually have a cognitive head start during early adolescence – for example in the area of accessibility of new experiences and the quality of their reflective abilities. These differences in cognitive competences also influence the differences in identity development: by reflecting on their own identity their personality becomes more consistent and they mature faster. Klimstra (2009) suggests that it may be useful to stimulate boys to close the gap. Stimulate them to self reflect, to be open to new experiences and to develop deeper friendships.

Ten to 15-year-old boys are in an important development phase of puberty and early adolescence, a very important phase because they shape their own identity then (see: strategic goals of secondary education). In this text we will limit ourselves to identity as pupil and gender identity.

Especially during puberty and early adolescence a desire for a more ideal identity (*Who am I?*, *Who do I want to be?*, *Who do others say I am?*) is coupled with a significant other (*What kind of behaviour will make others appreciate me?*). That significant other can be a parent, a teacher or a peer. The youngster continuously probes how others react to him/her and adapts his/her behaviour accordingly. The expectations of parents, teachers and peers are vitally important in the development of a positive identity for the pupil, but these often contradict each other. Peer pressure is the reason why boys consider school *un-cool*, it is considered *cool* not to do your best at school. Girls do a better job in peer popularity at school and doing their best in class and getting good grades.

One of the most important challenges of puberty is the development of an identity as a boy, a girl or 'something in-between'. People become more aware that in most humans the so-called male or female characteristics are – to a certain extent – naturally inherent. One can identify some sort of continuum from super macho boys to boys that give their female interests a chance (e.g. the movie character Billy Eliot by Stephen Daldry) or from girls with a tough attitude, to girls that exhibit their femininity in all of its aspects.

The conclusions of the research of the influence of others (peers or teachers) on behaving as a typical boy or girl can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, here are some recommendations to aid the development of a differentiated gender identity:

- Value the things young people -boys and girls- find important at a certain moment in time;
- Point out that certain ideas, interests and choices are only temporary and that personal development is very dynamic;
- Stimulate the research for alternative perspectives and opinions and the practice of less familiar behaviour;
- Point out that education offers an opportunity to experiment. Stimulate youngsters to get them to know the life of a journalist, a researcher, a musician, a biologist, a leader... Let them reflect on that opportunity afterwards.

Arguably, teachers are unaware of the fact that they are taking the gender of their pupils into account when teaching them and when they are reacting to their behaviour. They think they are teaching in a gender-neutral fashion, and that they do not distinguish between boys and girls. Several studies indicate this is not the case.

Demunter (2002) says teachers are selective in giving response opportunities to pupils, this is influenced by the gender of the pupils. "Boys receive more '*Who knows the answer?*' type of questions and girls receive more revision questions. This difference occurs because teachers react while influenced by certain stereotypes and they attribute bad performances of boys and girls to other factors."

Other research indicates that female teachers interact more with pupils, that male teachers (in secondary education) give more attention to female pupils, that female teachers who teach in Vocational Education are less confident in their pupils than their male counterparts, etc.

But pupils – both girls and boys – also tell us that there are differences in the way they are treated by teachers. Boys are punished harder when they are acting inappropriately, boys attract more attention from teachers – both positive and negative. Boys are praised for their skills, whereas girls are praised for their efforts and hard work (Younger and Warrington, 1996).

Teachers have certain gender related expectations about both short-term performances and long-term social and cognitive competences of their pupils. Both male and female teachers have lower expectations of boys from lower class environments and express doubts about their ‘teachability’.

Mieke Van Hecke, Director-General of Catholic Education, caused quite a stir in the media (2011) when she stigmatized some young people as ‘unschoolable’. She wanted easier ways to exclude and expel them from schools. By saying this she puts the responsibility for this problem with the young people themselves and not with the schools. This only reinforces the hopeless situation in which these so called ‘unschoolable’ young people try to survive. We can tell from the information of child protection services that being expelled from a school is rarely successful: 65 % of the “heavy cases” show recidivism once they leave child protection services. Expulsion from a school does not alter the causes (unequal opportunities, family situation) or the feeling of helplessness that is the source of the problem.

Obviously, schools do encounter all kinds of behavioural problems from pupils: verbal violence on the playground, vandalism, truancy before and after school holidays, cyber bullying... Problematic behaviour in school incorporates all transgressing behaviour by pupils or behaviour that can cause damage. Teachers view this – because of its extreme or repetitive nature – as unseemly, intolerable and disrespectful.

Vettenburg (2006) differentiates between four kinds of anti-social behaviour. Those are: school related transgressive behaviour, offences that only apply to under aged persons (in Dutch: statusdelict), delinquent behaviour and (threatening with) physical violence. Pupils that exhibit this kind of behaviour risk a serious conflict with their schools. The risk of escalation or dropout increases. Their vulnerability in society increases and these youngsters might end in a downward spiral.

Experts indicate that only a small group of pupils cause severe problems: ‘On average the number of serious cases of aggression and violations of the rules are between 5 and 10 %. Researchers of the *Youth Research Platform* claim that there are no indications that youth violence is on the rise.

Some research results regarding bullying (Vettenburg, 2006):

- As pupils get older bullying decreases. Bullying behaviour peaks at about age 12 (10-14 years). Cyber bullying peaks at about age 15 (between 12 and 17 years).
- There is no substantial difference between girls and boys when it comes to bullying. Girls are subtler about it (gossiping, ignoring, excluding, glowering). Bullying behaviour in boys is more apparent.
- Some researchers think that boys are more likely to become a victim of bullying. Boys bully more often and keep at it longer.
- The amount of people who bully increases in boys, as they grow older, in girls this remains more stable.
- No matter how tough bullies may seem, they are struggling with a negative self-image. Their vulnerability is hidden behind aggressive behaviour and a tough image. A solution for this is working at a plural and positive identity.

#### Criminological research data:

- In his research Smits (2004) concludes that the Flemish youngsters behave rather well, and their transgressive behaviour is closely connected to their age. An interesting find is that youngsters who have friends are happier. Youngsters who feel comfortable in their own skin, who have a positive image of themselves and their future are behaving less problematic. Good friends encourage positive behaviour. However, a problematic group of friends does the exact opposite.
- Boys commit (far) more crime than girls.

In the interaction between teachers and pupils *personal factors* are also involved. Teachers do not share the same appreciation for certain personal qualities of pupils. Some teachers feel more challenged in a good way by pupils who ask unexpected – even amusing – questions, while it might make their colleagues crazy. Some teachers work better with silent, obedient and dutiful pupils, while others complain about their passiveness and apathy. Some teachers expect a lot of input from the pupils and prefer autonomous and self-aware pupils. Both in teachers and pupils personal preferences, dislikes and personal qualities are involved in the interaction between them. An increased insight into these interaction processes might increase the quality of pupil-teacher interactions.

Education that gives more attention to personality increases the chances of a crush between a pupil and a teacher. Teenagers and adolescents are in a developmental phase where they are more prone to falling in love. Teachers have the same kind of attraction to pupils, as therapists do to their patients. Teacher training courses ought to prepare future teachers more in recognizing, interpreting and reacting to amorous signals of pupils.

Many researchers looked for learning style differences (i.e. VENUS-project) between boys and girls. They rarely found anything significant. Boys have more of a competitive and independent style, whereas girls have more of a participatory style.



These researchers recommend teachers to keep an eye out for the specific learning style of their pupils and alter their teaching style accordingly.

#### 4. Oh My Gods – a case

In the VENUS-project (see previously) we tried to find out more about the way the learning performances and success opportunities of boys can be increased. And how education can be exciting and challenging for them. Two options were explored. On the one hand there was a study of the differences in learning styles between boys and girls, based on the learning circle of Kolb, and the development of a learn and education style test, with the intent to help teachers match their teaching style with the learning style of the pupils.

On the other hand there was a focus on the identity development of boys and girls. Teachers were stimulated to develop a greater sensitivity and have a sharper eye for the huge differences in personal qualities between boys and girls, and to take this into account during the pedagogic-didactic process.

Boys received an IT-tool to acquire more of an insight into the forces that steer their behaviour, into the construction of their identity and into the conscious choice of the development of their strengths.

To lock on into those forces, inspiration was found in Greek mythology and in psychology inspired by Carl Jung (Bolen, 1998). The Greek gods are used as a metaphor for male and female qualities that are present in every human being, yet each time in a different, personal dosage.

The test with the gods has seven male gods (Zeus, Hades, Poseidon, Apollo, Hermes, Ares, Hephaestus and Dionysus) and six goddesses (Aphrodite, Demeter, Athena, Hera, Persephone and Hestia).

The test poses questions to young people who have to self-reflect. The questions – 56 for boys, 49 for girls- ask about their way of observing, feeling, thinking, judging, acting and cooperating with others.

The question is always whether they recognize themselves in the characteristics of a certain god. There are four possible choices: I agree completely, I agree sometimes, I agree most of the time, I don't agree.

The results of the test can be printed and contains information about how much each god (= personal quality) is present in every participant. We get a nice and nuanced image.

During the many tests done by pupils of all age groups and all subject areas in secondary education, it became clear how inspiring this gods metaphor really is when talking about personal qualities. It is not threatening at all and inspires the realisation of identity in young people.

## 5. The need for education that develops identity

Each society and culture redefines how men and women relate to each other. In this way gender themes are a *never-ending story*. The school can be seen as an institution that takes on this socializing function.

In this contribution we have focused on gender differences in education. Still, beyond gender differences, we plead for an education that approaches young people (boys and girls) more as a person, that education allows them to explore their own talents, that they -through studying- develop into powerful 'identities' who think and do, plan and research. Taking gender related differences into account in this context means that as a teacher one should inspire and create room for boys and girls to complement each other and cooperate together.

The core objective of (secondary) education ought to shift from a rigorous competence orientated training, towards a didactic approach that supports the talent and identity development of young people. Boys and girls need to receive opportunities to develop an interest or a calling for life within themselves, this in a constant inspiring interaction with others.

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### **Suggestions for further independent study of the topic**

1. Create an inventory/literature study of which strategies in working more gender sensitive have been tested within one country (U.K., Northern-Europe, Australia). Give the conclusions of those initiatives on:
  - macro level (school policy)
  - meso level (school level)
  - micro level (class situation)
2. Test a random class in secondary education using the ‘gods tool’ (see VENUS-project <http://www.ohmygods.be>).
  - Let the pupils fill out the gods tool individually (either on paper or use the electronic version)
  - Have a class discussion where the personality profiles are put into themes. For instance: Explore during the conversation which gods should become more important within themselves, which gods are present in their friends (are they the same or other gods), which ‘gods’ that are dominant in other pupils are difficult to interact with...



# **The past, the present and the future situation of gender specific education in the Czech Republic**

*Otakar Fleischmann, University of Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic*

*This paper shows the main changes in education in the Czech Republic after 1989 and describes in the context of gender issues the current state and trends of education in the Czech Republic.*

*In a historical overview of the developmental stages regarding the educational policy, in particularly the possibilities and limitations of the education of girls and women are taken into account.*

*This historical analysis is followed by an illustration of the current situation in the Czech educational system. This paper refers to gender-specific tasks and objectives and emphasizes the so-called “gender-sensitive education”.*

*This paper also addresses the differences between girls and boys in the school environment and discusses the question of whether gender-separate classes (again) are desirable. Here the advantages and disadvantages will be juxtaposed.*

## **1. Historical development**

In recent years, the Czech educational system also deals with gender issues more often. Here, the idea of a re-introduction of gender-separate education and learning opportunities for boys and girls is discussed.

The history of education in the Czech Republic substantially matches with the development of educational systems in Austria and Hungary. The year 1774 is seen as a critical year of change in the educational system, when upon the request of Maria Theresa a reform of the Austrian elementary schools was initiated by JI Felbiger. With the new school rules, compulsory education for children from six to twelve years, was introduced. In the countryside, so-called “trivial schools” (Trivialschule) were established, where boys and girls learned the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. In the cities, secondary schools (Hauptschule), where a wider range of knowledge and skills could be acquired, were founded. In 1869 with the passing of the so-called “Imperial primary school act”, the system of elementary education was changed. The dualism of trivial schools and secondary schools was being replaced by a dualism of elementary and junior high schools. The educational opportunities were expanded and an eight-year compulsory education was introduced.

At the junior high schools, religion, the language of instruction (German and Czech, both in 1866 recognized as equal national languages), history and geography, natural history (biology), mathematics (and simple accounting), geometry, calligraphy, painting, gymnastics and singing were taught. Schools were teaching

classes to either only girls or only boys. The girls' schools also included subjects such as handicrafts, shorthand, typing and home economics in the curriculum. Boys and girls were taught separately until 1921 in the cities, girls 'and boys' schools were the norm. In the village schools, girls and boys were often taught together. In 1921, due to an educational reform, the transition of the so-called "co-educational school" took place. This type of school is defined as a "school that, for the appropriate ages, ensures a common education of students of both sexes in common classes" (Průcha, Walterová, Mares, 1995: 98).

After the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1920, it came to the ratification of laws that affected and changed the organization of schools. This positive trend continued until 1939 and was interrupted by the emergence of the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia". In the years 1945 to 1948, a comprehensive debate on education policy arose in respect to the design of schools. When in 1948 the Communist Party took power, a concept for a unified school system in the tradition of the Marxist-Leninist ideology was approved. The political character of the "institution school" was emphasized and compulsory education was extended from eight to nine years. In 1953, however, the compulsory education was reduced back to eight years, only to be extended again to nine years in 1959. In 1976, the 10-year compulsory education was introduced. In this new and modified school practice, the elementary education comprised eight years, which was followed by two years at a middle school.

After the political changes of 1989, the school system was restructured and reorganized content-wise. The intention was to tie in the old traditions of the school system and, in particular, to integrate (even stronger) the Western Education. In the 1990s, the need for changes in the educational system was discussed publicly. Reviews related primarily to the didactic teaching methods, where "chalk and talk" teaching (frontal teaching) was dominant, and thus restricting the active participation of students in the educational process. This led to a limitation in the development of skills. Furthermore, in this public debate education and training were criticized for being based on authoritarian rather than democratic principles. The excessive focus of schools on the acquisition of knowledge and expertise at the expense of developing skills and abilities also came under fire. These political changes since 1989 have consistently led to some changes in the educational system, since personalization and socialization processes and the formation of values, norms and attitudes emerge primarily at the "Institution school".

An important aspect of the administrative and curricular reform was the decentralization of (school) positions. The governmental jurisdiction gave way to a growing strengthening of the autonomy of schools. The responsibility was transferred to counties and municipalities, where middle schools usually were assigned to a county, kindergartens and primary schools, however, were assigned to the municipalities. The lesson content and the formal organization of education are based

on regulations verified and published by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT). Counties and municipalities exert influence over the staffing of the schools, they appoint the school principal and assign the schools an appropriate budget. In this way, schools can take specific factors for individual locations better into consideration.

The greater autonomy of schools is an essential foundation for the curricular reform in the Czech educational system. The core of this reform constitutes the changes and adaptations made to the directives and regulations of the educational policy. The curricula were for example replaced with “educational framework programmes” that dictate the lesson contents for each individual school level. Lesson content is defined in the curriculum at the end of each grade in terms of learning goals and verification of those goals. Educational framework programmes exist for pre-primary education, for primary schools, secondary schools and for vocational schools. For students with physical or intellectual needs “special schools” (*Hilfsschule*) were set up and specific curricula were developed. While earlier curricula were focused more on the acquisition of expertise and knowledge, educational framework programmes aim at the development of personality of pupils and students. These include for instance the development of key competencies such as learning skills, problem solving, communication, social and personal skills or work skills.

The way in which the specified objectives and achievements of the educational framework programmes are implemented, is the responsibility of the schools, and is regulated through a so-called “education programme”. This must match the educational framework programme. The school can set different priorities (for example, various forms of teaching, methods and content), in order to distinguish itself from other school programmes. Education programmes ensure a high degree of autonomy for the schools, which mostly is associated with advantages but also some disadvantages. Reference may be made to the example of changing schools that can lead to problems for the particular boy or girl, since the material is not necessarily compatible or the grade level in which the curriculum is taught, does not match.

## **2. Gender specific education and formation**

### **2.1 Girls' education in the “Czech regions”**

The upbringing and education of girls (especially in middle-class families) up until the 1940s, was primarily the responsibility of the family itself, with the help of private tutors, boarding and/or parochial schools. For most girls and women, their education and formation was limited to an extremely general education at a low level. Because the lives of girls and women were tied in a very narrow context to the individual circumstances of the family, the education of girls was initially aimed ex-

clusively to fulfill their role as a woman and preparing them for motherhood. Girls were expected to later run the household, to care for the children and appropriately stand beside their husband (Bauertová, Bártoová, 1987, Burešová, 2001). The quality of education for girls and boys was therefore very different. For girls, importance was placed on skills in handicrafts. These formed together with the basic skills of reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion, the foundation of girls' education until the second half of the 19th Century (Bahenská, 2005).

Changing social and economic conditions resulted mainly in the second half of the 19th century to new demands in the field of education. Since the middle-class women could work in occupations corresponding to their social status (they could not perform the same jobs as women from the lower classes), they had to receive appropriate training and obtain a qualification (Malinska, 2005). After 1860 the first middle schools for girls were founded, where girls were able to complete primary school education or junior high school. Girls could thus study at secondary schools, at home economics schools or high schools for girls (Zormanová, 2001). These schools were primarily requested for and established by women's groups and later by cities. At the so-called associated schools (*Verbandsschule*) the courses for girls were essentially practice-oriented. Whatever school type a girl attended, depended on the financial possibilities of her family. Private boarding schools or higher schools for girls did not prepare girls for a specific profession. Their goal was to offer a general education and the acquisition of skills that were required to appropriately behave in higher circles. Wealthy families especially opted for these types of schools. Girls from poorer families often learned at schools which prepared them for a certain profession (Bahenská, 2005).

To facilitate women's access to high schools and further university education, primarily on the part of men, many stereotypes had to be broken down and obstacles had to be overcome. The writer Eliška Krásnohorská brought to life in 1890 the Association for Women's Studies. Ultimately, thanks to her, the gymnasium (secondary school) for girls "Minerva" was founded. However, the girls at this school did not have the right here to sit for the final exams to achieve a high school diploma. They had to sit for their high school diploma at public secondary school (gymnasium) for boys. Only since 1907, could girls obtain a high school diploma at the institution they had attended (Bahenská, 2005, Burdova, 1990). From 1896, female high school graduates could attend universities in the country. However, they had to be satisfied with the role of "guest students". Only with the approval of the teachers, were girls allowed to attend lectures. A legal right to take exams did not exist. This situation changed in 1897 when the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague for the first time admitted women as "regular students". From 1902, at Charles University women could, for the first time, study pharmacy and medicine (Zormanová, 2011).



## 2.2 The current context

In the context of education, gender is defined as a term that expresses the “socio-cultural differences, based on allegiance to biological sex” (Mares, Gavora, 1999: 71); as socio-cultural parameters, socialization, prejudices, expectations, traditions, customs, religion, etc. are mentioned (Helus, 2007). After the political change in 1989, Czech schools taught according to curricula, published by the so-called “curricular institutions” (departments in the Ministry of Education and Sports) for the various subjects. Schools had little freedom to adjust to the needs of students in their school.

As mentioned previously, in the educational framework programmes, the possibilities and the limitations for educational action by the school and the teachers are determined. In these regulations, gender equality is not taken into consideration. The programme itself does not lead to a moderation of gender inequalities. These documents include statements and invitations for more respectful treatment between people and groups, for respectful attitudes towards others and for the breakdown of prejudices and stereotypes.

As Smetáčková (2008) mentions, there is no uniform view regarding gender equality in the educational framework programmes. One of the educational objectives is the recognition of gender stereotypes and the questioning thereof. In addition, the lessons should lead to the respectful treatment of the opposite sex and to positive relations. Furthermore, the educational framework programme is usually interpreted in the context of stereotypical notions about men and women. There is often a lack of a deeper understanding of gender issues. Currently, it is in particular non-governmental institutions, who strive for the introduction and consideration of gender-specific aspects in the teaching and education. These non-governmental institutions are trying to create conditions for gender sensitization of teachers and of the school environment. Since 2003, the first major activities of these institutions have been noted. There are a number of non-governmental institutions that are interested in the introduction of gender issues in the Czech education system. Also, the first initiatives at the level of higher education can be seen (Ciprová, 2008).

## 2.3 The purpose and intention of gender-specific education

In the context of education, as opposed to biological sex, gender refers to properties and behaviours that are associated with a particular image of women and men and which is shaped by culture and society. The images of women and men, the definition of social roles, values, norms and attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices have changed over time in different societies and cultures, and are variable. For the formation of male and female images, socialization processes and social control play a substantial role (Maříková, 1999). In this context, there is a considerable risk.

So, just like society changes, so do the roles of men and women gradually change in society. The differences between men and women can shift. Šmausová (2003) cites in this respect that this development could mean in the future that the only aspect by which women and men can be distinguished, is the biological aspect.

The current goals of education are, as indicated earlier, the development of key competencies, such as:

- Learning skills;
- Development of problem-solving ability;
- Communication, social and personal competence;
- Professional competence.

With regard to these general goals of education and formation and in the light of gender-specific aspects, Egger (2000) and Bosa (2004) talk about a “gender-sensitive education” which allows teachers an individual approach to the students. This approach is influenced consciously or unconsciously by prejudices and stereotypes. Gender-sensitive education should therefore develop and support the critical mind of boys and girls, so that they can critically confront social stereotypes in regard to both genders and their roles in society and so that they can develop their own values.

According to Egger (2000) in respect of a gender-sensitive conception, boys should learn that imitating the behaviours of different male role models will result in different negative or positive outcomes. Additionally boys should be made aware that admitting mistakes and showing emotions is allowed. Whereas the second principle (with restrictions) can be approved of, there is a controversy about the first principle.

Individual access to both male and female students and the consideration of their specific needs surely should be endorsed. But in this context, the question seems interesting, what vision of future society one should have with regard to mutual expectations and specific behaviours of men and women, when in the future all social stereotypes and prejudices about male and female roles would be diminished. Will, little by little, the conception of the social role(s) of men and the role(s) of women change so that what is now expected of men can be expected in the future of women and vice versa? Are there clear conceptions of gender-appropriate education, formation and objectives of how these conceptions can be realized?

### **3. Education and formation through single or co-education?**

In relation to the increasing discussion of gender-specific educational aspects, the question of gender-separate classes or the recent re-establishing of boys’ and girls’ schools, plays an important role. The main argument that the proponents of this approach emphasize, is that greater consideration of gender specific issues in these

schools is possible, whereby in particular so-called “gender stereotypes” can be counteracted. “Gender stereotypes” are understood in this connection as “typical attitudes, behavioural patterns, prejudices, activity types, etc. shared by men and women” (Průcha, 1997: 122). The perceptions of the differences between girls and boys is referred to by Vágnerová (2001: 250) as “the sum of empirical experiences and myths” and “includes conceptions of different skills, various attitudes toward work and school, and different behaviours (...). These stereotypes are generalized and do not consider personal-specific differences of the individual.”

The ideas about women and men and respectively their gender roles are different in our society. They have been developed from mutual expectations between the sexes and their social roles. For example, a higher sensitivity, tenderness, delicacy, obedience, adaptability, conscientiousness and emotional support was expected of women. In contrast; dominance, physical aggression, ambition, impatience and disorderliness were defined as typical characteristics of men. In school, students acquire knowledge and skills in various subjects which they need to fulfill different roles. Different subjects give both male and female students, through the use of differentiated teaching and learning materials, tangible values and attitudes about various employment opportunities, and behavioural patterns of men and women, as well as various roles in our society. Precisely, the study material used and the forms of communication used with the students on the one hand and amongst the students on the other hand, influence each other's perception of the world and of themselves. The “hidden curriculum” (Valdrová, 2006, Zormanová, 2011) is surely not to be underestimated in this respect.

Stereotypes influence social perception and interaction. In school, female and male teachers have different expectations of their students through the influence of stereotypes. Also on the assessments of male and female students, stereotypes have a not unimportant influence. It was, for example, found that in elementary and middle schools in the Czech Republic, students are often viewed differently because of their gender, where girls usually get a better deal. Between the various school subjects, a large deviation can be observed in this respect. It was equally shown that girls get better grades, although boys show better test results, as for example in mathematics (Jarkovská, 2003, SCIO, 2012). The rating is influenced not only by the actual performance, but also on factors such as diligence, the student's behaviour, the student's attitudes toward schoolwork and towards the teachers. Many teachers believe that good grades of girls are often (only) the result of diligent work, while good grades of boys are rather seen as the result of their gifts and talents (Smetáčková, 2006). Girls reflect upon their performance usually more critically than boys and tend to compare themselves more often with their fellow students. Boys are more generous in this regard. This fact is especially clear at the time of failures. Mistakes that girls make, are more likely attributed to the inability to cope with more challenging and

more logical tasks. For boys, the opposite is true. Mistakes boys make, will be attributed to the task itself, to indifference or laziness.

Another example of different attitudes towards girls and boys is the different interaction between male and female students and male and female teachers. These differences manifest themselves in the style of speech, language frequency and communicational content. For example, boys, more than girls, interact with the teacher. Boys often cross established boundaries. They try to a greater extent, to attract the attention of educators to themselves. But boys are less blamed for misconduct and inappropriate behaviour, than is the case for girls (Minarovičová, 2003).

To this regard, gender-separate schools would help to break down gender stereotypes and to would help to consider and develop individual and gender-specific elements. This allows, for example, that boys and girls devote themselves to fields of study that are unusual for their gender according to a gender-stereotyping perspective. Girls could for example thus choose more readily a course of study in information technology, without having the uncomfortable feeling of belonging to a minority. Gender-separate schools at the same time eliminate the favour of boys, prevailing more often in co-ed classes to the detriment of girls. In gender-separate classes, teachers can apply differentiated teaching methods that correspond better to the differences between girls and boys. In this way girls can be confronted with more situational and staging methods, role-playing or methods with dramatic elements where they can bring to use their “empathical advantage”. These methods prove useful in the classes of “educational subjects” such as literature, history, etc., that is subjects that girls prefer traditionally. However, boys prefer methodological approaches such as project work, or different forms of conversation (Zormanová, 2011).

Critics of co-education in the Czech Republic are numerous representatives of the Catholic Church. For the Church it is, in the first instance, not the consideration of gender-specific attitudes and the application of differential (gender-equitable) teaching methods that is important, but the “moral purity of the youth”. Accordingly, co-education has the most serious influence during adolescence and beyond. The Church plays thereby on “continuous stimuli” that is, deliberate challenges (for example clothing, behaviour, etc.) (<http://verumetbonum.webnode.cz/news/koedukace/>). In this regard, it is no coincidence that the Catholic Church was one of the first institutions to set up gender-separate schools, such as for example the middle schools for girls. Accordingly, the establishment and existence of co-educational schools are considered to be a failure.

Gender-separate schools are a relatively new phenomenon in the Czech Republic. To date, few studies on domestic, social and cultural conditions are available, so one has to turn to the findings of international research (eg, Riordan 1990, Lee, Bryk, 1986, Finn, 1980). Despite many undeniable advantages of gender-separate schools (especially secondary schools), still many questions remain unanswered:

- For what students (of what social class), are these schools meant?
- Is social segregation encouraged in these schools?
- Do gender-separate schools not contribute to the alienation from real life (whose core is the coexistence of men and women and their mutual interaction)?
- On what should the measurement of individuals be based: on their own successes? What behaviour is expected in the community: aggressiveness and ruthlessness, or capability of cooperation, acceptance and tolerance?
- Can we encourage and support the critical thinking of boys and girls, so that, out of a gender specific perspective, they can develop a critical distance away from social stereotypes?

Many questions to which answers still have to be found in the Czech Republic.

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### Suggestions for further independent study of the topic

1. Compare the notions of the social roles of men and women in adolescence and early maturity.
2. Outline the historical development of gender specific education in your country.
3. What possibilities do you see for the Czech Republic to integrate gender sensitive issues better in the existing educational system?
4. Perform a textbook analysis and describe where and how gender-specific aspects can be found in the textbooks used in primary schools.

# Gender mainstreaming in Germany

*Bernd Drägestein, mannigfaltig-Institut für Jungen- und Männerarbeit,  
Olaf Schwarze, Münchner Waisenhaus, Germany*

*The article gives an overview of the historical development of the school culture from the Middle Ages up to the present day. On the one hand it considers the situation and participation of girls and boys and on the other, it demonstrates the development and continuation of gender-related extracurricular educational work in Germany. Additionally, the current educational gender perspective is outlined in relation to its mission, objectives and content, with regard to gender homogeneous and coeducational approaches in schools and outside schools.*

## 1. The historical development of gender specific education in Germany

The history of school education in Germany, which corresponds approximately to the modern ideas of education, dates back to medieval times. The medieval Latin schools were generally convent, cathedral and collegiate schools. They were mainly attended by boys, to ensure the Church's need for clerics (religious instruction). At the age of six or seven years, boys left their parental homes and went into the schools. Even students, who did not intend to enter the service of the church later on, were allowed to visit these so-called "outside schools." Tuition was usually in groups of about ten students, mostly in the form of chalk and talk, which was read in Latin and then repeated afterwards.

Girls and women were regarded as inferior to men and boys in the medieval church. However, there were nunneries, where novices and noble girls were taught. Training as a knight could only be done by boys. Aspiring knights were trained in three phases (between the age of 7 and 21 years old). They were trained in different physical rituals and religion, but also in behaviour by the chaplain and the lords.

In the course of the 13th Century, the newly formed council and city schools took over the task of education. In view of the economic recovery/upturn and development of trade education numeracy/arithmetic was introduced or intensified. It was probably the first academic institution that could be called co-educational and was also available to children from poorer classes. Boys and girls sat strictly separated from each other in the classrooms. "Where no separate damsel-schools are, the girls should (...) not be mixed among them, but put apart" (Stalman 1991: 7). It was a decision of the cities, that funded schools, to teach boys and girls together, because education for girls was not "really worth it" in the prevailing gender perspective. The educational content differed: Girls were prepared primarily to fulfil



their role as wife and mother (handicrafts), boys, however, should be able to count, write and read. Initially, the educational language was Latin, later on German.

By the middle of the 17th Century schools found themselves confronted with an increasing focus on religion and confession. In 1717, compulsory education was introduced in the Kingdom of Prussia. This provoked opposition from the companies and farmers, who would not do without the labour of girls and boys. A great influence on the German school development came from William von Humboldt. He had a theory called “theory of education of the individual”. He wanted a “general human development”, in which “each child was offered the opportunity to develop its humanity” (Horns et al, 2008). The new ideal of education interpreted people as the product of their abilities and thinking. In the mediation training, a new objectivity and impartiality was developed, which relied on new scientific insights, discoveries and inventions. The era of Enlightenment supported the idea of social change and saw man as a rational, responsible/empowering human. Better situated classes took Humboldt’s theories as a basis to establish so-called “higher-daughters’ schools”. These schools offered girls a broader spectrum of learning, so that “they will not (...) bore the German man by their spiritual short-sightedness and narrow-mindedness in the domestic herd and will not paralyze him in his devotion to higher interests. The woman should rather assist her man with understanding of these interests and the warmth of feeling” (Kreienbaum, 1992). This statement reflects the then prevailing zeitgeist regarding the role of different tasks of men and women. Girls and women were intellectually estimated lower, their interests and abilities were suppressed. The level of “higher-daughters’ schools” was far behind that of boys’ schools, and the school completion didn’t entitle them to further studies.

Around the second half of the 19th Century, politically-oriented women’s movements were formed for the first time in Germany. They demanded the expansion of female education in professional fields (Kreienbaum 1992: 51). Under the motto “Right to Work”, Otto-Peters and other women of a women’s congress in 1865 in Leipzig, demanded access also for women to vocational education. Initially, this meant access to the jobs as a kindergarten teacher, educator or teacher. However, this could at that time, be seen as progress for girls and women, because it allowed them access to further education. August Bebel demanded at the same time, the admission of women to all professions. In the last third of the 19th Century, there was a “higher daughters’ school”, also called “Lyzeum” in every major German city. At the end of the 19th Century more radical women’s movements demanded more clearly the equality of girls and boys in all areas of education. Training opportunities, such as school or university should no longer be accessible only to men. As already the majority of the population was outraged at the thought of co-education, implementation of this requirement did not seem feasible.

At first, girls were allowed to prepare themselves for the high school exams in the context of short courses. In 1895, six girls graduated. Later, it was occasionally



permitted for girls to complete their high school education at a boys' school with special permits. Only from 1908 onwards were female students formally admitted into state schools for girls to study. Where there were no such girls' schools, they were allowed to do their "maturity exam/ matriculation examination" at a boys' school with a special permit. This is why, in 1911, five percent of high school graduates in boys' schools were girls.

In the era known as the German Empire (1871-1918), religious education was next to reading, writing and counting/arithmetic as a part of teaching. Virtues such as obedience, order and self-control were pedagogical concerns. Respect, discipline and authority shaped the school day. Teachers were permitted the right to administer punishment.

Only in 1924, the so-called "emergency co-education" was enshrined in law: "Where there were no institutions of higher education for young girls, girls were admitted exceptionally to boys' schools" (Stalman, 1991). After Germany became a democratic state structure after the end of the Empire and the First World War (the Weimar Republic, 1918/19 to 1933), the discussion about the introduction of co-education in schools stayed a current topic. Opponents of co-education stressed that girls and women, by their very nature, were not able to handle the same tasks as boys and men. On the one hand, they feared that boys' concentration in learning would be restricted by joint teaching. On the other hand, they were concerned that girls may affect the level of learning in a negative manner. Only in some places, for example in Tuebingen, girls and boys were formally admitted to higher schools.

"During National Socialism/Nazism, they tried to prevent co-education on the basis of the prevailing gender ideology" (Scheffel, 1996: 30). Pfister writes: "This policy met the requirement of strict separation of the sexes in education" (Pfister, 1988: 32). In principle, separate schools for boys and girls were established, however, children had to continue to study together in elementary school for economic reasons. In the upper grades of secondary schools for girls, girls were only offered science and language or home economics, to prepare them for their role as mothers and for their responsibilities in family, work and community. They didn't have any access anymore to mathematics and science. The numerous educational opportunities for young women, for which they had fought, were reduced drastically. Thus, school completion didn't entitle them anymore to Abitur (final exams at the end of secondary education) and therefore neither to further or higher education. The mathematics and science education was open to boys only. Also the subject "physical exercises for boys" won in importance. Extracurricular educational work ("Hitler Youth") was brought more sharply into focus. During Nazism, girls and young women found themselves forced back into old roles again and fought again for access to the matriculation examination. More and more young women attended a boys' school. The proportion of female graduates was 13.8 % in 1932 in Prussia. The

ratio increased gradually and even reached 16.7 % in 1937. In the years of World War II the education reforms stagnated.

After the defeat of the Nazi regime and the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany, the topic of co-education was reopened again. In the German Democratic Republic, the legal re-introduction of co-educational classes took place in 1945 without much resistance. In the Federal Republic the three-tier school system (Hauptschule, Realschule, Gymnasium, secondary schools up to grade 10, 11 or 12 respectively. Gymnasiums deemed to be more academic and therefore better than Hauptschule and Realschule), was reintroduced. There were still many conservative opponents. In particular, the Catholic Church feared a moral decline. Some elementary schools were placed under ecclesiastical structures once again and girls and boys were taught separately. Also, outdated teachers ("denazification") affected the post-war school. Fundamental reforms in education have been deferred for financial reasons. Mainly for economic reasons regionally limited coeducation was reintroduced in the Federal Republic. The first states that chose this in the mid-1950s were Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen and Hessen.

The criticism of the backwardness of German educational structures with its separate girls and boys schools intensified in the 1960s. As long as economic conditions and societal gender roles allowed it, the employment of women (especially mothers) was not necessary. The dominant image of femininity was based on "morality, concerns, protect and serve". The phrase "You will marry anyway!" led many parents and their daughters to finish their school career after the 10th Class. In 1965, the proportion of female high school graduates was 37 %. In 1970, German Education developed a structured plan under the influence of Scandinavian models. On the one hand it supported equal opportunities through the promotion of socially disadvantaged children, and on the other hand, it pursued the introduction of a horizontally divided school system.

The student movement in the late 1960s, with its new ideas about social life and new role models, brought the discussion of new social models back as a public issue. The issue of gender parity was politicized; prevailing stereotypes such as "women in the kitchen, men at work" were denounced discriminatorily against women. These socio-political discussions challenged the educational system to deal more with the issue of gender parity. Since the 1960s, co-education in the Federal Republic has been officially launched. In reality, we see a different picture. With the introduction of co-educational education, the curricula of the existing so-called "boys' schools" were declared the standard curriculum. The repeal of the single-sex education did, however, not provide the desired "elevator effect" for girls. It was found that the majority of young women continued to turn to traditional female occupations, despite the same educational content in the coeducational setting. Pfister, in that regard: "Numerous studies show that there is a secret additional curriculum next to the official curriculum for the suppression of girls in school ..." (Pfister: 63). Stalman

describes for example problems with the implementation of co-education, with the telling title “The school makes stupid girl”. It refers to the so-called “secret curriculum” that reinforced gender inequality in school. The representation of women and men in textbooks is often outdated. Girls and women in many textbooks are represented as good, nice, hardworking, passive, peaceful, and in any form dependent, if represented at all. Boys and men, however are represented as bold, active, independent, intelligent, logical and creative. They are more often called upon in class, praised and blamed for their behaviour. Teachers perceive striking and challenging female students as unpleasant. In her study Stalman (1991) points out that the school system uncritically perpetuates traditional gender roles and thus does not contribute to gender equality in society.

Due to the school authority of the federal states, different models developed. Co-education was indeed groundbreaking, but education should be increasingly adapted to the educational skills of boys and girls. The key word was “reflexive co-education”. Individual subjects could be taught mono-educatively, but they could also be taught occasionally adapted to the demand/need. Since 1992, statistically, the majority in the successful completion of the baccalaureate are girls. Also in reading girls perform better, boys perform a little better in the mathematical basis of education and no difference can be discerned in science education. Boys more often have to repeat a grade (3.2 % boys, 2.3 % girls), but on the other hand can skip a class more often than girls as well. According to Kraus, 54 % of students of upper secondary school are girls, 44 % of students of comprehensive school are girls but only 36 % of the special schools are girls, non-completed education has 6.5 % of girls and 10.4 % of boys. In the business world these accomplishments are not perceived. In business mostly men occupy the better-rewarded jobs and benefit from faster career progressions.

## **2. The purpose, intentions and content of gender-equitable behaviour in and out of school and other educational institutions**

### **2.1 In school**

With the introduction of “gender mainstreaming” as a legally binding EU gender policy in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999, the debate about the implementation in Germany intensified and the question about how to ensure equality between men and women was posed. A cabinet decision defined gender mainstreaming as a cross cutting issue for the government. With this political decision, the federal German school system was obligated to be attentive to the permanent realities of life for men and women/girls and boys in the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational measures. It is also about discrimination against men or boys.

The Federal Equal Treatment Act (AGG) of 2006 followed a relevant EU directive, and requires all people involved, including management and leadership, to support the guiding principle of equality between men and women.

“Gender mainstreaming in the school means opening up equal opportunities for boys and girls, and to specifically promote each weak subjects without being stuck at the differential strengths and weaknesses” (Plaimauer, 2008: 53), “(...) develop fully their abilities, without limiting them in their opportunities for development, because they belong to one of the two sexes” (Fallers et al., 2003: 122). It is important to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of gender in a differentiated and subject-specific manner, because this knowledge provides the opportunity for optimal development.

“The treatment of gender issues through gender mainstreaming in the first place enables the urgent need to work on the social and other adverse treatments by the school. Or vice versa: overall equality work can only be effective and sustainable if the gender aspect is integrated. This is so, because gender roles, gender stereotypes are associated with more ‘feminine’ or ‘male’ assignments, with regard to social, ethnic, cultural and religious terms or with regard to age, individual ability or disability, etc.. Girls and boys, women and men are thereby affected in school in the development of their potentials and in the coping with their problems, especially when inequalities are combined” (Enders Dragässer, 2009: 28).

For the sustainable implementation of gender mainstreaming principles in schools, Uta Enders-Dragässer suggests (ibid.):

- The school board is committed to the implementation of gender mainstreaming principles (top-down approach);
- Special education and training of educational professionals in the field of gender expertise (i.e. a bottom up approach);
- Provision of financial and human resources for the implementation;
- Development and use of educational know-how;
- Co-operation in education projects with professionals of youth services;
- Inclusion of the gender mainstreaming principles already in the preparation of school budgets.

The goal of gender specific behaviour in school is to help boys and girls to develop their intellectual and social resources and to enable them to develop further. This also means counteracting narrow gender roles (discrimination), i.e., taking into account gender perspectives in all areas of learning and teaching and in everyday activities.

Budde and Venth (2010) describe another aspect of gender specific action: gender expertise as a guarantee of lifelong learning. This links gender expertise with the life course perspective and with all stages of learning, from early childhood education across the school sector, the transition into paid work up to adult educa-

tion. Gender competence is discussed in all phases of education and in each phase, specifics are pointed out, e.g. gender diversity in play and interaction behaviour of young children, differences between boys and girls with regard to school forms or related fields of learning and gender-specific career choices.

## 2.2 Outside school

The objective of after-school education is the production of real equality of opportunities, and the promotion of gender equality in daily work with children and adolescents. The centre of after-school education offers the establishment and qualification of specific offers for young girls and boys.

Overall goals:

- Provide guidance for all people working with boys and girls in an educational environment;
- Promotion of Gender Democracy (breakdown of dominance);
- Identify situations and needs in all areas of work with boys and girls and develop action-oriented goals.

Action-oriented goals:

- Perceive boys and girls for their differences, needs, interests and social behaviour, and support them in their development;
- Support in areas of communication and self expression;
- Sensitize the perception of emotions, skills and awareness of one's body;
- Encourage respect and exercise their own and other peoples' limits;
- Recognize hurtful, violent, racist and sexist attitudes and counteract this in a resolute manner;
- Encourage personal responsibility and accountability to others in the social structure;
- Offer protection areas for boys and girls;
- Engage in preventative work against abuse;
- Assist boys and girls in situations in which they are victims;
- Present offers in an attractive manner;
- Focus on the living environment of boys and girls.

Although single-sex approaches are still important, the "girls' and boys' work" has to be developed further (Bothmer, 2001; Bitzan, 2004). With the qualification of gender-specific or gender-desegregated education programmes as part of co-education, educational assistance also has to be developed and promoted. In this way, benefits can even be achieved in single-sex approaches.

In appropriate settings boys and girls in gender-heterogeneous communities can reflect their attitudes toward the other group directly. The male or female teacher

becomes a role model, with which the boys and girls can compare their behaviour. Therefore, gender-heterogeneous groups should be directed by a male and a female person.

A major challenge of gender education can be realized more easily in reflected heterogeneous group programmes: 'boys' and girls' work, should be less of an exclusive offer for special educational work areas (e.g., boy groups), it must be qualified rather as a part of the educational and institutional daily life (sectional approach), as a continuous maintenance in facilities for children and youth work, because 'girls' and boys' work' must prove itself in unstructured daily situations. It should not retreat itself primarily into the exclusivity of a homogeneous group. In educational assistance, 'girls' and boys' work' must especially build more on situational content, rather than rely on the tacit agreement that boys and girls are primarily defined by their gender and contribute their gender specific interests and experiences.

The digression of a narrow definition of 'girls' and boys' work' points out that also heterogeneous offers, which are not explicitly related to gender role behaviour, can contain an important aid for boys and girls on their way to their gender identity.

The living environment of boys and girls continuously approach each other. There are commonly shared experiences that seem as important as gender identity (e.g., migration background, family situation, housing allowance). Therefore, mixed groups correspond to the interests and needs of boys and girls. This makes it clear that women find tasks in the field of 'boys' work' and men find tasks in the field of 'girls' work' as well. A distinction could be made between "girls' and boys' work" (for homogenous offers) and "gender-reflective work with girls and boys" (for heterogeneous offers).

An opening up of the term 'girls' and boys' work' towards a gender-reflective qualification of coeducational offers is especially relevant for work fields of education aids, in which professionals are integrated into the daily lives of adolescents. For sessions such as in youth work, practically no resources and jobs are available. The establishment of 'girls' and boys' work' in the educational assistance will therefore not be able to prove itself in homogeneous seminar situations, but should prove itself in everyday situations.

Gender-conscious co-education does not mean "the end of gender-homogenous work" (Bothmer, 2001: 462), it should supplement it. A juxtaposition of gender heterogeneous and homogeneous services is needed. For one, the latter should not be reduced because they are quantitatively converted only marginal. There, they offer opportunities to address sensitive issues more easily. The subject of sexuality can, in gender-homogenous boys' groups, be treated with less pressure of self-expression than in mixed-gender groups. Fears and self-doubt can be formulated more easily. In gender-homogeneous groups of girls, it may be easier, for example, to address fears of sexual assault or to talk about weight problems.

A co-operation and networking of boys' work and girls' work is a possible factor that can contribute to further development and establishment of gender education in educational assistance.

### 3. The field of tension between theory and practice

#### 3.1 Gender-sensitive approaches and intercultural education

In the context of gender specific and intercultural education, the heterogeneity of all stakeholders should be pointed out. There is no such thing as *the girls*, *the boys*, *the male migrants*, *the female migrants*, *the male teachers*, *the female teachers*, *the workers' sons*, or *the academics' daughters*. On the other hand, many interdependencies and intersections between gender, ethnicity and societal levels and further, 'axes of inequality' (Klinner; Knapp, 2005) are to be observed. This makes gender specific and intercultural education prerequisite to full and highly complex 'enterprises'. An education, genuinely based on gender, does not make sense (anymore). However, research that is based on social constructivism, thus consider gender and ethnicity as social constructions, is still relatively rare in the educational sector (Bruhns, 2004); promising ethnographic work can be found in the field of education research (Breidenstein, Kelle, 1998; Faulstich-Wieland; Weber, Willems, 2004), but rarely in the field of child and youth services.

Hereafter, there is firstly outlined briefly what is meant by gender specific and intercultural education. Secondly follows the presentation of access to a (winning on current importance) cross-cultural gender specific education, or a gender specific intercultural education. As an introductory remark, it should be pointed out that many of the presented pedagogical ideas, concepts and approaches are characterized by an implicitly normative orientation; they cannot exist without them, but they must be critically analyzed (Diehm, Kuhn, Machold, 2007). Akka and Pohl Kamp (2007) also show that young people with a migration background relate to elements of their culture of origin for their construction of identity, but also on the representation of identity markers and repertoire of pop culture (especially hip-hop). Young people continue to recognize other affiliations, such as membership to a district or a generation, therefore these memberships can co-exist or can be relevant in different contexts. Ethnicity and gender do not always have to stand in the foreground (Spot, 2007).

#### 3.2 Gender specific education

In Education/educational science, the term 'gender justice' is hardly discussed anymore (Budde; Faulstich-Wieland; Scholand, 2007). Often, however, terms such



as “gender-conscious” and “gender sensitive” education are found. This first of all means to “be aware of the fact that children and young people are boys and girls, and educational staff are women and men. What significance this fact has and which personal, educational and political objectives are associated with this fact, is not defined yet” (Rohrmann, 2007: 146).

The starting point for gender specific education is that gender differences lead to structural disadvantages, although gender relations/structures for children and young people have become more complex, more open and contradictory (Flessner, Flaake, 2004) and there is spoken of heterogeneity of gender in the course of social modernization processes (Westphal, 2005a). Flessner and Flaake (2004) define gender-neutral/correct or gender-conscious education as theoretical and practical educational efforts and concepts, which focus on the social category ‘gender’ and are aimed at the democratization of gender relations. Two central tasks of gender-conscious education are formulated; the first observes the importance of gender in social interactions and social structures in which children and adolescents grow up (Flessner, 2005). The second, suggests that critically commenting on gender-hierarchical and male-dominated structures in the dominant two-gender-culture can help people to identify perspectives of a gender-democratic culture and create more effective learning environments (Flessner, 2005).

Flessner and Flaake (2004) make a distinction between gender separate coeducational work. The work with girls has its origins in the 1960s, since which the discrimination against girls in key sectors of society has been criticized. It focuses primarily on a provision of opportunities and spaces for girls. Their strengths should be the focus, ability to articulate and self-awareness should be enhanced and room for the discussion of devaluation experiences should be created. Demands for gender differences within the group for girls’ work (Bruhns, 2004) were made because of the development of concepts for working with young female migrants.

Youth and educational work with boys, does not have the same history as working with girls and is currently experiencing a rapid growth. It is for example described as particularly important in youth service programmes and in official guidelines for youth work, but often the theory is not reflected in practice (Puchert; Höyng, 2004). One of the starting points of (Social) educational work with boys was the knowledge that “gender relations change only when both sexes are involved in these changes. A second starting point was (...) the finding that youth violence in society and school, especially occurs from boys to boys. Only recently the public thinking started on why boys fail more often at school than average”(Flessner, Flake, 2004: 383).

Boys’ work involves on the one hand, targeted offers for reduction of violence (but not for those affected by violence boys, Jantz, 2004), and on the other hand, focuses on the reflexive examination of the male role, in which restricting foreign and self-attributions are to be overcome in an active manner (Flessner, Flaake, 2004). This refers in particular to overcome the devaluation/debasement of femininity,



weakness and homosexuality. It may also be that boys are set against the boundaries of their own interests (Puchert; Höyng, 2004). The first two aspects can be found in the third point again: Boys' work represents a specific support/promotion for boys, this implies a reduction of their deficits, picking up on their resources and the expansion of opportunities for action.

Girls' and boys' work are until now unconnected. There is no common discourse, neither on a political nor on a pedagogical or on an institutional level (Bruhns, 2004). In both areas especially socio-economic-specific, ethnicity-specific and environment-specific differences have been taken into account within gender groups. Largely under-exposed are the needs of bi, homo and trans sexual young people. In terms of boys' and girls' work the gender of the teachers has often been discussed (Rohrmann, 2007). It is seen as self-evidence that girls' work is organized/performed by women and boys' work by men. However, this claim is not based on scientific evidence, since empirical studies are lacking the examination of whether women are actually better suited to support the needs of girls, and men those of boys. Rohrmann however, assumes that it is not the teacher's gender that is the key factor, but that they have a critical perspective on gender relationships and that they are aware of "their own meaning as caregivers of the same or of the opposite sex" (Rohrmann, 2007: 147). This means that men can successfully work with (groups of) women and women with (groups of) boys in relation to gender. Criticism in relation to the gender of teachers often affects the surplus female staff. They are sometimes held responsible (particularly with respect at the primary school level) for the problems of certain groups of boys (Flaake, 2006).

When the gender specific pedagogy refers to and is applied to mixed-sex groups, the aim is that boys and girls capture and work out gender-related issues and problems. This may for example relate to current situations in school and class but also to gender-related societal expectations and images (Flessner, Flaake, 2004). In particular, the opposite-sex behaviour in children and adolescents becomes the focus of attention of the gender education work with heterogeneous groups (Jantz, Brandes, 2006). Generally seen in the literature on gender-neutral or gender-conscious children's/youth's work, there is a clear surplus of gender-homogeneous approaches and projects. Interest in gender-conscious coeducational work has and does exist, however, especially in school settings, even though in this environment, gender segregation is often not realizable (Puchert; Höyng, 2004).

In this context, the so-called reflexive co-education (also called "gender-neutral/correct co-education") is important. This approach follows a well-designed structure, based on equal rights and non-hierarchical encounters between boys and girls. It aims to create negotiating space between the sexes to make room for recognition towards each other, the discovery of similarities and the creative encounter.

Another approach focuses on the opposite-sex activity in terms of (social) educational work. "Cross work" or "gender crossing" refers to a new approach in the

so-called “cross over” situations – in which men occur in the girls’ work and women in the boys’ work (Voigt Kehlenbeck, 2009: 119)

### 3.3 Problem areas of gender-sensitive work

According to Flessner and Flaake (2004), the following problems occur, in terms of gender-focused work with boys and girls: The now consistent emphasis on the strengths of girls has the drawback that certain risks, needs and ambivalent experiences of girls are faded out. With regard to the boys’ work, the focus on the development of new images of masculinity and the emphasis on supporting the emotional development of boys is often associated with a deficit perspective – in this perspective, boys are rejected or can only connect with difficulty.

A major criticism of the gender-conscious education is the question whether it really makes sense, to perceive boys and girls as two separate groups, since such approaches revive assumptions with regard to difference, over and over again (Weber, 2006). It is important for gender specific pedagogy, that stereotypes about *the* boys and *the* girls, are not reproduced in everyday pedagogical action. Instead, the heterogeneity within the groups should be recognized and considered. The heterogeneity is based inter alia on the entanglement of the category of gender with other social categories such as class and ethnicity (Flessner, Flaake, 2004).

Following this knowledge, initial projects for the realization of gender-conscious cross-cultural work has been developed (Flessner, 2005), these are mainly found in working with girls. Flessner believes that this focus is not random, since cross-cultural references has been developed most in gender-conscious work with girls and young women in recent years. This is also, in connection with theoretical developments in women’s and gender studies, which were stimulated first in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States and later in Europe, a criticism that women’s studies concentrated on white western-oriented middle-class women and their problems (Bednarz-Braun, 2004). In the following years women’s and gender researchers developed their attention to the epistemological shortcomings in terms of ethnicity/ race, layer and environment. Even today, many writers who devote themselves to this issue are feminists.

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### Suggestions for further independent study of the topic

1. Check your own state of knowledge in terms of “gender mainstreaming”? Run the following on-line self-test (accessed 04/12/2012): [http://elearn.provinz.bz.it/data/copernicus/lm\\_data/lm\\_9874/selbsttest.html](http://elearn.provinz.bz.it/data/copernicus/lm_data/lm_9874/selbsttest.html)
2. Consult in a school of your choice/your access, if and how gender sensitive/correct approaches in everyday educational life (school management, teachers, pupils) is considered or met and what goals are pursued.
3. Based on your educational experience, what possibilities do you see that can specifically promote the reflection/presentation of the gender roles of boys and girls?



# Gender research in Estonia against the background of traditional education

*Meeli Väljaots, University of Tartu, Estonia*

*This paper examines gender-specific trends in the Estonian education system and the Estonian society. The gender issue in Estonia is still in its infancy, gender equality is met with considerable resistance. As an introduction, we take a look from a gender-specific perspective at the history of the Estonian education system since the birth of Estonia in 1918. Subsequently an analysis of the objectives and tasks of gender-specific action is given. Thereby reference is also made to non-school organizations in which the gender aspect receives more attention than in education itself. In the third part of this paper an analysis of the gender research is carried out and the results of new studies on gender issues are discussed.*

## 1. Schools in Estonia – a historical outline

The Republic of Estonia can look back on an eventful history. The alternating allegiances of this small country in northeastern Europe has shaped its people in many ways. Influences of the Tsarist era, of Sweden and the former Soviet Union can be found even today – more than 20 years after the fall of the socialist regime – in Estonia. Reference is made to the large share of Russian-speaking girls and boys, women and men. These influences are reflected in the school system of the country. Although in most schools classes are taught in Estonian, there are many schools with Russian as the language of instruction. A look into the past and the development of the Estonian school will sketch out – even on gender-specific aspects – the path to the present system. Reference may be made to the developments in Europe in the past centuries regarding gender-specific aspects. As opposed to most European countries – where education was reserved in the first instance to boys and girls, if at all, were exclusively prepared for their future role as wife and mother – this phenomenon cannot be found in Estonia. The historical excursion starts in the year 1918 when Estonia became independent and a republic.

The government of the new Estonian Republic adopted a new school law in 1919. With this law, the four-year compulsory education was established. This development lay in the general trend of the emergence of compulsory education for children of primary school, usually called ‘commoners’ school (Volksschule). Parallels of these developments can be found especially in Sweden and Finland. The government ostensibly intended with this extended compulsory education to educate all children in order to become “tolerant, physically healthy, independently thinking, honest and hardworking citizens” (Väljaots, 2008: 85). There were 1,218



elementary schools in Estonia during the school year of 1933/34 of which 1,106 elementary schools in rural areas; 112 in bigger cities like Tallinn, Tartu and Narva. During the same school year (1933/34), 115,291 pupils (51.3 % boys and 48.7 % girls) went to one of these elementary schools. There were about 4,000 elementary school teachers. Contrary to the current feminization in educational professions, half of the teachers at that time were men (Andresen, 1995: 170).

During this time, reference was made for the first time on the educational role of the school. Both the active child appropriate activities and the qualified supervision and guidance by teachers was met with attention. Pöld in this context describes the gender-specific (work) education (Pöld, 1993), wherein boys should learn to work i.a. with wood and metal.

In regards to general education boys and girls were taught in the same way. The integral education of children determined the educational process at this time. From a gender perspective, there were – as indicated above – subjects such as physical education, handwork, crafts lessons, in which instruction was differentiated. Gender-specific aspects received more attention outside the school. Various organizations presented special offers for children, including for boys more sportive and competitive, for girls more domestic activities. One of these organizations for boys was for example the in 1930 founded “Young Eagles” (*Junge Adler*), which was forbidden under the Soviet regime.

The annexation of Estonia resulted from 1940 onwards in fundamental changes for the population. The Government of the USSR launched immediately after the “takeover” reformational and restructuring processes in all areas of life. The school as an institution followed the Marxist-Leninist ideology where teachers were encouraged to teach accordingly to imprinted educational content. From then onwards there was no longer talk of boys and girls but only of men and women. There was only an “asexual” Soviet citizens, who stood for the socialist ideal and the corresponding moral. Teaching materials – such as textbooks – followed this development. At the centerpiece, there always was the collective or the society. The individuality of people went completely into the background and was even partly despised. The educational picture also changed accordingly: the individual education had to give way to collective education. To reduce external differences school uniforms were introduced. Without exception, all children and young people had to become members of the Communist children’s and youth organization. A badge and a red bandana marked this membership.

In the postwar period, the proportion of women in the school system grew considerably. In 1976 the percentage of women was 83.2 %. The educational objectives described in this period in Estonia are much more “male-specific oriented and focused on an artisanal employment”. Even girls and young women had to get accustomed to the daily work life in factories in the country. They had to be capable, for example in rural areas, to control tractors or trucks. Also the political propaganda



suggested that in everyday Estonian life, the enemy lurked “beyond the borders of the Soviet fatherland”. The result was that all boys and girls needed to participate in exercises of civil defense and military education. For example playfully (during outdoor games) the handling of a gun had to be learnt.

The Soviet era has left deep marks on Estonia. A fact that should not be underestimated, and therefore should not go unmentioned is the Russification, which was supposed to end in the 1990s, so that the national language would be replaced in all areas of life by Russian. This took the form of a gradual process and began with the settlement in the Estonian cities of Russians and Russian-speaking people from other nations from all over the Soviet Union. These settlers were primarily soldiers and officers of the Soviet Army and industrial workers. The settlers were promptly given housing and their families were to follow (family reunification). This means that to this day a significant part of the Estonian population are still Russians: 69 % Estonians, 26 % Russians and 5 % other ethnic groups make up the total population of Estonia. (cfr Väljaots, 2008: 86)

In 1991 Estonia gained its independence back. Since that time, the entire Estonian education has been reformed and improved. Increasingly, a differentiation in terms of teaching and learning content, various teaching strategies and target group-specific approaches can be seen. Every 7 to 17 year old girl or boys in Estonia are required to attend school. The Estonian Republic has a unified school system:

- Primary school (grades 1 to 4),
- Secondary School (grades 5 through 9) and
- Gymnasium and Junior High (grades 10 to 12).

The Russian-speaking minority has its own public schools, which are now in a transitional phase, gradually Estonian is introduced as the language of instruction.

From a gender-specific point of view, it can be stated that the number of boys who do not complete secondary school are dangerously increasing. As for example, in the school year 1993/94, 389 girls and 901 boys aborted secondary school. In the academic year 1998/99, there were 343 girls and 1,051 boys (Nassar 2002). In the school year 2003/04, 74 % of early school leavers were boys. Consequently, more male adolescents and men in the future, are expected to have a lower quality of life. Russian-speaking boys and men are more often affected in this respect than the Estonians. Studies also show that the changes in society, the desire for a richer and better life for children seem to (can) have serious consequences. Boys are more affected than girls.

The stereotypical, in the Estonian society widespread attitudes towards boys and girls are summarized by Kuurme (2011: 238): “In school, all children are treated equally”. They learn under similar circumstances. Girls are good, they are praised, they get good grades, finish school with good results and then take on a degree. Later, they disappear from the intellectual scene. One hears at most that highly edu-

cated women have difficulty getting married. However, “normal” boys do not like to go to school, make no homework, have mediocre grades and have disciplinary problems, etc. In addition, they are interested in totally different things, but are (in fact) much more talented than the girls in many subjects. The women have now conquered the entire educational sector, thereby schools turned into a stranger than life, rigid, women-centered system, where boys are constantly compared with girls, and which generates as a result into a low self-esteem for boys.

Kuurme (2011) confirms the assumption that academic success does not consistently guarantee success in life. However, society is facing already, because of ignoring gender issues, severe social problems, influencing social structures, the division of labor and the professional reputation .

## 2. Objectives and content of gender-specific action

### 2.1 Objectives in the school curriculum

As in the past decade no major changes were noted regarding gender-specific action in Estonia, reference should be made to an article by the author published in 2008 under the title “Historical development and current status of boys’ education in Estonia”.

The entire school system is currently subject to government control. This includes the governmental guidance and management documents, including the national curriculum. In the first part of this curriculum general competencies are listed which boys and girls should develop during secondary school in three levels (Grades 1 to 3, Grade 4 to 6, Grade 7 to 9).

However, an important linguistic feature must be mentioned. Gender-words do not exist in Estonian. The nouns “students” (*õpilane*) or “teachers” (*õpetaja*) describe simultaneously both male and female persons. If one wants to emphasize, however, that they are talking about male students or female students, more nouns like man (*mees*) or women (*naine*) and/or the adjectives male (*meessoost*) or female (*naissoost*) have to be used. In the curriculum of the secondary school these are not used. The conclusion is obvious that all students should be treated equally regardless of their gender according to the national school curriculum.

Some exceptions are made in the curricula for the education of sports and crafts. In these subjects, particularly those of physical education, it is repeatedly pointed out which gender-related activities should be carried out. In general, physical education is carried out in the first phase of school (grades 1 to 3 and 1 to 4) by the teacher or the class teacher in class groups. Depending on the individual possibilities in schools, only from the fifth grade onwards separate sports classes are being taught. This also applies to the crafts and the technical classes. In general, boys do not take “male jobs”, but rather learn sewing and embroidery, as there is a lack of

appropriate workshops for the technical training and also of male teachers (who shape technical classes) .

## 2.2 Child and Youth Organisations

In addition to the schools, there are many youth organizations that pursue educational goals. These organizations can be distinguished in political, religious, education-oriented and athletic / military groups. Statistics on these groups are usually incomplete and deficient of content, so they will not be listed at this point. It can be shown, however, that these organisations are mostly centered on youngsters and less centered around children. Examples of such organizations are inter alia:

- Eesti Evangeelse Luterliku Kiriku Laste- ja Noorsootöö Ühendus (Children and Youth Association of the Estonian Evangelical Church);
- Eesti 4H (Estland 4 H), a non-political club-like youth club;
- Eesti Skautide Ühing (Estonian Scouts);
- ELO – Eesti Laste Organisation (Estonian children's club);
- Falk Noorteklubi (Falcon youth club);
- Noored Kotkad (Young Eagles) or
- Kodutütred (House Daughters).

Of these above clubs and organizations, the majority is available to both boys and girls. This justifies the very general objectives of these organizations:

- contribute to educating tolerant and loyal citizens;
- contribute to the development of honest, intelligent, and creative boys and girls who are able to work independently and in groups;
- to offer meaningful leisure activities and maintain contacts with other clubs (including foreign).

Besides the clubs and organizations directed to both girls and boys, mention should be made, from a gender-based perspective, of the existence of gender-specific organizations, namely for girls, the organization *Kodutütred* (House Daughters) by the Estonian Defence Association (*Kaitseliit*) and for boys the association *Noored Kotkad* (Young Eagles) (founded in 1930, banned from 1940 to 1989 and again established in 1989).

The Young Eagles are a military/sports organization. The smallest internal group consists of 6 to 8 like-minded boys of the same age. Like in the military, platoons and companies are formed, which are under the supervision and guidance of older “comrades” ( from 16 years of age onwards). The educational aims and objectives of this organization are written in a statute. Under this Statute, a young eagle is neat and polite and obeys commands. He takes care of his body and pays attention to his health, is athletic and fit, has no weaknesses and helps others. The young eagle does

well in school, is not allowed to smoke or consume alcohol. The watchword of the young eagle is: "Always ready for his country!". Their motto is: "The man belongs in the ranks of men!".

To date, the Young Eagles count more than 3,000 boys. Increasingly, they also present themselves in public. Every year various military sports camps are organized by this organization. These involve a kind of ERNA Raid (one of the most difficult international military competitions). The so-called mini-ERNA, which is carried out, is very popular in Estonia.

In addition to the children's and youth organizations, hobby, music, arts and sports schools offer different activities to children and young people. In total there are in Estonia 11 hobby schools, including 5 in the capital Tallinn. These offer very specific technical and sporting recreational activities for boys. There are also 80 official music schools for children in Estonia and about 20 children's art schools and sports schools. The formation at the non-school level is controlled by a corresponding law in which the content of education, children's rights, the duties of the parents and organizers as well as the educational level of teachers are determined. Gender-specific differences in these laws are not especially highlighted or emphasized.

Studies show that more girls than boys participate in the activities of hobby schools. However, not all families can afford (financially) the participation of their children at the above-mentioned schools. Not forgetting in this respect also, that the interests and hobbies of boys are often more expensive than those of girls, because certain workshops, equipment and crafting materials are needed. The problem of insufficient and of too expensive leisure activities for children and young people are known at governmental level. A start has been made with the development of strategies to reduce this problem.

### **3. Gender research in Estonia 2012**

Gender research is in the Estonian context, a still fairly young field (Marling, 2011: 13), the beginnings go back to the nineties of the last century. A key reason for the delayed interest lay in the above mentioned equality between the sexes or better in the "asexuality" of the Soviet people. Thus gender research could only develop and unfold after the restoration of Estonian sovereignty. The first steps in this direction were hesitant. One did not want to abandon the illusion that the re-establishment of the "new-old" independent Estonian republic (as before World War II) was possible. National-romantic emotions shaped the worldview and attitudes on gender issues: traditional gender roles identified the ideal of a patriarchal family. Thus until 1993 politics ruled in the Estonian society, and in the media conservative attitudes defined gender research. "Feminism" is even explained in a very renowned Estonian reference book (ENE 1987: 676) as a medical term. This "Western" phenomenon was seen as something "useless". Some even made fun about it. Although gender

equality has been an issue following the example of Western countries since the restoration of sovereignty, the fundamental questions, principles and goals of gender equality remained unclear and alien to both lawyers and civil servants, as well as to ordinary citizens (Raitviir, 2011).

Academic interest in gender issues grew only gradually. In 1995, an Estonian delegation took part for the first time in the – at that time the 4th – World Conference on Women in Beijing. As the Estonian contribution to this conference was prepared, one saw for the first time after independence from the Soviet Union, in which areas of society gender-specific aspects were not taken seriously and were disregarded. At governmental level, the Ministry of Social Affairs had to deal with questions on gender equality. From 1996 to 2004, there was, for this purpose, a “special office”, which operates today as the “Department of equality”.

In 1995 at the University of Tartu and a few years later at the Pedagogical University in Tallinn, a gender research center was established. Even at the Art Academy in Tallinn and at other former higher education and research centers, initial scientific papers were written and maintained initial context related lectures were held. Decidedly, several new international relationships and contacts have also contributed. According to Raitviir (2011), it was precisely this period, that had a serious significance on the change of public opinion with regard to equality and gender equality.

Important steps in this direction were associated with the establishment of research groups and the broad education of the population. It was in 1995 at the University of Tartu, thanks to an initiative of Anu Laas, that a gender research group was founded and which one is still active today. Laas herself can look back on an interesting career: she studied firstly business management, then history and eventually sociology, before she immersed herself into the area of gender studies. Already at the time of the social upheaval of 1989/90, she participated in the project “Everyday Life of Estonian Family”.

In 1997 the Estonian Women Research and Information Centre “ENUT” (Eesti Naisuurimus-yes Teabekeskus) was founded, which is nowadays based at the University of Tallinn. ENUT has an extensive library, maintains a comprehensive database on gender research, networks researchers from various institutions, is committed to the education of broad social classes and since 2000 publishes the interdisciplinary academic journal *Ariadne Long* (Ariadne’s thread). In addition, since 1999, the Estonian/English digital newsletter *ENUTi uudised* (ENUT news) is published. Although the name of this organization only suggests at women’s studies, research projects and publications give the two sexes the same amount of attention.

Before Estonia joined the European Union in 2004, the Estonian Parliament passed a law on gender equality. Before this was the case, there was much discussion whether Estonia needed such a law at all, or if it was only passed because the EU required it. Are Estonians not treated equally, even without such a law? Particularly right-wing radicals and employers protested very loudly. Despite these negative

trends also positive aspects can be found, namely, that women's organizations were able to develop further within this period, their self-esteem grew, collaboration was better and broad sections of the population were exposed to gender-specific issues.

Over the last decades, women have become more active and have communicated their problems to the public. With the opening of European borders and those of the world, new and previously unknown problems in the lives of women have arisen, such as trafficking of women and girls, forced prostitution, domestic violence and so on. According to Raitviir (2011), political organizations and the business community are not interested in the development of gender equality. For politicians, it represents an unattractive and uncomfortable topic. For entrepreneurs, the growing gender equality means additional spending, as women and men should receive equal pay for equal work. At present there are no study results that show how much financial expenditure is implicated by these new laws and the accompanying inspections. A realistic cost estimate is not yet possible.

To this day, gender research is primarily concerned with traditional issues in other domains. Marling (2011: 14) states that this fact should be regarded positively, because gender research is in close dialogue with other disciplines and research sectors and is not an isolated or hardly tolerant scientific field. A significant disadvantage involves the fragmentation of and dissolution of the discipline and the disposal of experts by various universities and faculties. In research, often the role and place of women in society, in professional life and within the family is being analyzed. Often, these are comparative analyzes. The studies cited *inter alia* are: Raitviir (1996), "Election in Estonia during the transition period: A comparative study (1989-1993)"; Eespere (2004), "Combating Trafficking in Persons in Estonia: Experts Opinions about Problems and Solutions"; Hansson Naine (2001), "Perekond Töö yes" (women, family and work); or Kunst et al. (2002), "Social inequalities in health in Estonia".

The first major opinion polls on the subject of "gender equality" were conducted for the first time after the turn of the millennium. Thus as an example selected socially dominant settings were analyzed. For instance one of the questions looked into. was the predominant opinion on women which prevails either in business or in politics. According to Raitviir (2011), there is however a lack of studies on women in politics, although in public debates increasingly voices are heard that in order for democratic decisions of Parliament to be taken in the context of equal rights for both sexes, more women's voices are needed.

As mentioned earlier, women have used the democratization of society also to help draw the attention to themselves. Whereas men stayed for long loyal to the old stereotypes (the man as provider, protector and breadwinner). Only in May 2011, the Estonian Centre for Men "Eesti Meestekeskus" was founded. The founders postulate with the establishment of the Centre that it is *inter alia* also their goal to finally hear the opinion of men in the gender equality debate. The topics dealt with

by this Centre, for example, are the different roles of men (sexuality, relationships, being a father, violent behavior in society, etc.). The centre offers various classes and counseling for men. Interesting in this context is the low number of magazines for the target group of males (Piltre, 2011). The media researcher tries to explain this with the fact that men may be more difficult to identify as “a group”. Men do not identify themselves on the basis of gender, such as women do, but rather on the grounds of other characteristics, such as work or hobbies. It is therefore a difficult task for printed media to publish a “universal” magazine that appeals to all men alike. The stereotypical opinions entail that “a real man” is not concerned with his (gender) identity, his health or his appearance, but rather with *a thing or an object in itself*. At Estonian newspaper stands primarily some translated magazines like Playboy can be found. From 1995 to 1997, the local magazine Mees (The Man) was published. Most men have to settle for internet publications through electronics or printed magazines about cars, sports or fishing.

This gives on the one hand the impression that women in recent decades have been more active in public and today have a greater influence in making decisions; on the other hand men seem to have trouble with the effeminate education in Estonia. A citation of Kuurme even says that “one has come, in regards to education, at a phase in which the male gender is damaged”. Boys are no longer prepared for life, a life in which you cannot get along without flexibility and empathy, where you have to recognize your own weaknesses, in which you not always experience success, but where you still can remain honest and strong.

Schools contribute decidedly to changing society. These changes affect both class differences, gender differences and gender structures. Traditionally in society “men call the shots”, however in the school of the present, it is women. The extent to which gender-appropriate education can be established in the Estonian education system remains to be seen.

#### 4. Developmental tendencies

Since the school year 2010/11, a new curriculum applies to secondary schools (Põhikooli Riiklik õppekava). Among the many (fundamental) changes in comparison to the curriculum from 2002 to 2010, for the first time also references to gender-specific issues can be found, for instance during the previous curricula, “people” and “citizens” were being addressed. In the third chapter of the curriculum, in which the teaching principles and the design of the learning environment are formulated, there is a provision in the educational planning that one has to take into consideration the skills, the language, the cultural background and the gender of the students. Paragraph 6 of the twelfth chapter, in connection with the design of everyday school life, highlights principles that refer to elements such as nationality, race and gender equality. Another positive change is seen in the assessment of students.



To promote the personal development of students, recently individual feedback is expected, where the results of each student are to be considered in the context of his / her individual progress. Developmental interviews are held, where the parents must be present.

The new high school curriculum (Gümnaasiumi Riiklik õppekava) wants amongst others, to educate students, in compliance with the equality of the sexes, into happy people who will be able in their future lives to consciously perceive the role of their partner.

These passages of the new curriculum in which gender-specific aspects receive more attention, are likely to have been included because of the fact that Estonia is since 2004 a member of the European Union. Estonia must observe relevant European directives, which to date – as shown by different studies that have been conducted in business, as well as in the media and in literature, have been considered as a necessary evil. It can be expected for Estonia that it will take one or more generations, until the elucidation of the general public is so far advanced that clear awareness of gender-friendly action and thinking exists.

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## Suggestions for further independent study of the topic

1. What role do the media have in accordance with gender-specific aspects in your country? What newspapers and magazines are published for men? What do men read?



2. What role do women play in your country's politics? Are elections also open to women? Is there a right to vote for women? Can women be elected to parliament? What is the proportion of women in politics in your country?



# Education for gender equity in Spain, a socio-cultural and historical analysis

Víctor Pérez-Samaniego, University of Valencia, Spain

Carmen Santamaría-García, University of Alcalá, Spain

*This chapter analyses the socio-historical evolution of gender education in Spain in the pre and post democratic periods. In accordance with the ideology of Franco's Regime, the period of dictatorship (1939-1975) is characterized by the education of a heroic masculinity to the service of the defense of the country and the catholic faith, while women are expected to fulfill the role of housewives and mothers. In the last period of Francoism and the beginning of democracy, a model of mixed education with a common curriculum for boys and girls is established. In fact, it translates into a masculine model of education that women must assimilate. With the General Organic Law for the Educational System (LOGSE) law (1990) Spain sees the first model of equal education. However, the hegemony of the model of heroic masculinity based on competitiveness, aggressiveness and individualism, has long survived in the professional culture and in teacher training, especially in the training of physical education teachers, even when physical education seems a most adequate field for the development of gender-equity education, as the LOGSE law has been explicitly mentioning since 1990, when it was passed, to these days. For this reason, this study pays special consideration to physical education and the influence of this subject in the embodiment of masculinity.*

## 1. Socio-cultural and historical perspective of gender education in Spain

Gender education for equality makes reference to a series of practices and pedagogic proposals that try to give a response to the need for social equality between men and women in the fields of teaching and learning (Bonal, 1997). The interest in gender education for equality is a consequence of the changes in the social role of women, which took place at the end of the nineteenth century. However, in Spain, the results of this process were weakened during the period of Franco's regime (1939-1975), when a traditional character, in which the social construction of masculine and feminine was identified with the biological sexes of man and woman, marked a two-pole system of sex and gender. School and educational practices play an important role during this period in the definition and maintenance of this two-pole conception of sex and gender. School in Franco times creates and reflects the distance and opposition between the roles and education of men and women, who must get trained to fulfill their social roles adequately and accordingly to the social functions assumed for their sex.

In order to gain understanding for the development of gender education in Spain, it is necessary to go back to the first period of Franco's dictatorship (1939-1960), when the essential role of school was to teach reading and writing together with the ideology of the regime. Regarding education outside school walls, boys and girls were separated into two different sex groups in youth associations, which were under direct control of the regime by means of vertical structures. The ideology of the "Women's Section" (*Sección Femenina*) of the political party *Falange Española* together with the "Youth Front" (*Frente de Juventudes*) serve to illustrate the deep roots of the two pole sex/gender system in Spain at that time. The *Sección Femenina* (SF) was the women's branch of the Spanish fascist party *Falange Española*. The party was founded in 1933 by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the eldest son of the former Spanish dictator General Primo de Rivera. SF, in turn, was founded by José Antonio's younger sister Pilar Primo de Rivera. SF encouraged those activities, knowledge and skills that were considered intrinsically feminine and were linked to raising children, domestic chores and pleasing men, as was reported by her founder, Pilar Primo de Rivera, in her speech of 15<sup>th</sup> January, 1945, while addressing the trainers of the movement:

You must realize that our comrades in the Women's Section must be trained in our doctrine without being distracted away from the essential mission that they have as women in life. Their authentic duty for their Nation is to educate families with a fair balance of austerity and happiness, where tradition is encouraged (...) Then, together with sport and university education they will have what is essential for them to be the perfect complement of men. What we will never do is to have them competing against men, because they will never be equal to them and however, they would lose the elegance and grace which are needed for such competence. And you will see how these women, trained within Christian doctrine and National Syndical style, will become useful for the family, the town and the Syndicate.

This ideology of the SF makes it explicit that a woman's role is ancillary to the man's and she "will never equal him". Therefore, the qualities of a woman that must be developed are, firstly, those that guarantee a healthy body for pregnancy and nurturing (efficiency for reproduction) and those that may attract men such, as elegance, grace and beauty. These beliefs worked as a biological justification of the passive role of women (concept developed by Wolf, 1991). Due to her reproductive role, beauty is directly related to fertility, and becomes a must-have quality for women. On the other side, men, who fight each other to get the most beautiful and fertile women, represent strength and good physical condition.

The Frente de Juventudes (FJ) was the masculine equivalent to the Women's Section. Following the same ideals of the Falange Party, the role of the man is characterized by virtues like sacrifice, loyalty and need to serve the nation. Young people were taught how to obey the authority and follow the regime's ideals. General José Moscardó, one of the ideologists of the period, declared that the education of the

youth “has become a government’s weapon” (Moscardó 1941: 23). The virtues that according to Moscardó must characterize the education of pupils are “discipline, subordination, obedience to the authority and to the law, loyalty, sacrifice, spirit of fight, tenacity, resistance and trusting oneself” (Moscardó 1941: 28), essential virtues to educate men who in the future “succeed in their holy mission to serve the destiny of the Nation” (Moscardó 1941: 31). This list of virtues matches the ideal of masculinity described by Connell (1995) as *hegemonic*, by reference to a set of practices (not only in matters related to identity or gender education) that make it possible for men to control women. These practices rested on a system that valued masculinity and its behaviour and that subordinated women to men’s power.

The origin and development of teacher training in Spain runs parallel to the social and historical events above-mentioned. From 1940 the Youth Front was in charge of political, physical and pre-military education of the youth. This was to provoke the separation of physical education teachers from the rest (Vázquez, 1989). More important than the education in the subject, was the deep catholic faith, good manners and patriotism (Beltrán, 1991). In this context, and as a consequence of a process of training leaders for the youth, initiated in the 1938’s and 1939’s in the so called “national zone”, two training centres emerged in 1941: the National Academy of Leaders and Instructors *José Antonio* for men, and the School *Isabel la Católica* for women, both under the auspices of the Youth Front and the Feminine Section respectively (Fernández Nares, 1993). Their study plans (1945 and 1950) reflect the clear ideologic orientation akin to the principles of the Regime, as reported in Pérez-Samaniego and Santamaría-García (2008: 89).

Physical education, under the denomination *Educación Física y su Metodología*, would be taught for three years and included the obligation to attend a camp of the Youth Front, for male teachers, or the Feminine Section, for females. Sex segregation also reached contents, as only male teachers were provided with lessons in anatomy, physiology, sport techniques and activities in the nature (Romero-Cerezo, 1995).

Therefore, while women’s movements in Europe and the western world were claiming changes in education, Spanish SF and FJ were giving structure to men and women’s education in the period between the 1940’s and 1970’s. However, in the last period of dictatorship, we can see social changes that have an influence in gender education in Spain. Together with the decadence of the regime, we can observe several factors that involve a quick transformation in the role of women such as an increasing permeability to the external political influence and an increase in tourism and in the number and size of urban areas. These factors stimulate the appearance of women movements at the end of the 1960’s, which incorporate the discourse of women liberation together with the movements that claim for democracy. When democracy arrives in 1975, the situation of education for gender equity in Spain is behind other western European countries. However, we can find a political vindication for equity, as liberal groups see female discrimination as a consequence of

the dictatorial political regime. Democracy and women's liberation are frequently presented as linked together by the desire to make changes in politics and society. The political and social tensions motivated by the difficulties to match the transition from dictatorship and oligarchy to a participative democracy are reflected in the social role given to women, who were mainly adopting a traditional role of subordination to men while, at the same time, they were gaining awareness of the cultural and social dimensions of such roles, and therefore, of the possibilities to have them transformed.

The transformation of a patriarchal model of state meant progressive transformations in education. The Law of Basic General Education from 1970 established the obligatory character of education for children till the age of 14 and is the first law in education that organizes a common curriculum for boys and girls. This first initiative for gender equity is inspired by a model of assimilation: a masculine model of education is generalized and given to women, leaving aside the values which were included in the model imposed by SF. Female students must adopt a model of education planned for men and by men.

A new law passed in 1991, "Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo, (LOGSE)" (*General Organic Law for the Educational System*), means a valuable step forward in this process. It is the first time that an educational law observes the need to reconsider education under the light of the principles of equal social opportunities for both sexes- In its introduction, LOGSE claims:

"The main objective of education is to give boys and girls of both sexes, a thorough education that allows them to confirm their own and essential identity..." In the preliminary title, it makes reference to equal rights for both sexes, rejecting any kind of discrimination and claiming respect for every culture (LOGSE, article 2, section c).

Breaking the educational principles of the previous regime, the new tendencies show an egalitarian character, which translates into an educational system that allows girls to do the same as boys. The curriculum avoids references, which could imply any type of discrimination for women. As a reaction to the separation of boys from girls in Franco times, any differentiation between boys and girls is perceived as discrimination. Within this background, feminism is oriented to prepare women to reach the places that were previously reserved for men. This spirit serves as inspiration for several movements of pedagogic renovation of feminist character in the 1990s.

Another step in the legal recognition of the rights of men and women comes with the Law for the Effective Equity between Men and Women (Ley para la Igualdad Efectiva de Hombres y Mujeres, 3/2007), passed in March 2007, which meant not only a significant step forward towards the legal recognition of rights and responsibilities of men and women but also a stimulus for public policies oriented to their equity, which make an explicit mention to coeducation. In the second chapter

of the second title we can find these as goals of the educational system: “education fostering respect in the rights, fundamental liberties and equity” and in the framework of the principle of quality we find “the elimination of the obstacles which hinder the effective equity among men and women and the fostering of total equity among them”. It is also claimed that educational administration guarantees the right to education in conditions of equity, avoiding any trace of discrimination related to sexist behaviour by means of these principles:

- The incorporation of the principle of equal opportunities in the curriculum and at all the educational stages.
- The revision of behaviour, contents and sexist stereotypes in the educational process, especially in educational materials.
- The integration of the study and application of the principle of equity in the courses and programmes for initial and permanent teacher training.
- Promotion of balance between both sexes in the bodies of control and government of educational centres.
- Cooperation among educational administrations in order to foster knowledge and spreading of the principles of coeducation and equity between men and women.
- The establishment of educational measures aimed at the recognition and education of women’s roles in history.

This evolution in the education for equity has contributed to improve the situation in Spain and to make it similar to the situation in other European countries. As Bonal (1997) observes, women in Spain occupy the same social space as men do, although it is still harder for women to reach that social space. Some social policies for equity, such as the quotas, have succeeded in the promotion of women to posts of social and political relevance. Men have been forced to face a change, as the supremacy of their role is facing its end.

This crisis of masculinity in Spain can be interpreted by means of three ideas described by Connell (2000), which serve to explain masculinity nowadays. Firstly, he notes that masculinity cannot be understood by reference to an only *hegemonic* pattern in a global world, and it is more appropriate to talk about the “dynamics of masculinities” Connell (2000: 849), which are created by interaction. Secondly, he underlines the relational character of gender construction: each masculinity is opposed by an “emphasized femininity” (Connell 2000: 851), which keeps both real and imaginary distinctions between masculine and feminine. Finally he stresses the importance of physical and emotional consequences of the construction of masculinity, Hegemonic masculinity affects negatively to both women and men. Its conceptualization “should explicitly accept the possibility to have democracy in gender relations, to abolish power differences and hierarchies” (Connell 2000: 853).

One of the sad results from the tensions created by the social transformation undergone in Spain, is the problem of gender violence. During 2011, a total of 61 women were murdered by their partners or ex-partners and many more feel or have even been threatened. As one of the causes of this problem, we can observe the obsolescence of the role that some men still want to assume, unaware of its inadequacy in our present world. Education for gender equity has to face the challenge and contribute to solve this situation.

## 2. Tasks, objectives and contents of gender-equity in and outside school

The concepts of *co-education* or *education for equity* can be seen as umbrella terms which make reference to the education of men together with women but also to the joint education of different social or ethnical groups. In this text we use the terms to refer to the education of individuals of different sex with the main objective of achieving their equity.

The first educational activities of the kind in Spain date back to the period between 1970 and 1980. The priority then was that boys and girls had equal opportunities to access the same education, being unaware of the implicit messages in their learning process. When it is evident that the results from the education of boys and girls differ, a reflection process starts. It is found that the contents taught and the approach followed start from masculine assumptions which do not take into consideration women's values. School is not a neutral field and the questions related to co-education belong, to a greater extent, to the hidden agenda (Apple, 1991; Jackson, 1968; Salinas, 1991). It is not only explicit content but the implicit messages conveyed by the selection of the contents and the teaching methods that contribute to education. A main goal of gender equity is to unveil this hidden agenda and to challenge its assumptions.

The programmes for co-education assume the need to expand beyond the school walls into the educational context: teachers' assumptions and families' beliefs will have a strong influence in the students' education and must, therefore, be also addressed by co-educational processes. Values such as tolerance, dialogue, communication or conflict resolution must permeate from school to different contexts in society if we want to achieve a truly equal education. The main objective is to transform the ways men and women relate to each other, leaving aside gender hierarchy and abolishing stereotyped roles in a bipolar system sex/gender.

From this perspective, an effective co-education must assume different and complex tasks and strategies. LOGSE law, claims for the first time in Spain, a co-educational transversality, i.e., a pedagogical practice that permeates to the different subjects and the curriculum. This transversality guarantees the possibility for action in different fields and time slots and allows reinforcement of results by means of specific actions. Educational law makes it compulsory to have an educational



project in each school, which details a plan for co-education. Beyond legal requirements, co-education needs the involvement of the whole school, as all the teachers must put the program into practice. Therefore, teacher training is an essential part of co-education.

Outside school, co-education is also developed in other spaces for socialization. The family has an essential role to play, and it is very important that the family members give support to the values transmitted at the school. Social media, especially television, should pay special consideration to the values portrayed in advertising, as a powerful means to disseminate an image of gender roles. The “gender observatory” is a helpful institution which takes care that gender equity is respected. The media has also an important role in the diffusion of different awareness campaigns which claim for an equal distribution of domestic responsibilities, equal job opportunities, etc.

### 3. Seeking solutions to gender equity

From a sociological perspective, several authors have analyzed the relation between the body and its socio-cultural and historical context (Fallon, 1994; Freund and McGuire 1991; Shilling, 1993; Starobinsky, 1991). According to Freund and McGuire (1991), the socio-cultural context determines the meaning and importance of the body and body matters. Referring to the concept of the social construction of the body, these authors suggest that society and culture have an influence in *shaping* their members, surgery being an up-to-date example. Therefore, the most powerful social influence on our bodies is that which shapes *ideas concerning human bodies*, ideas which differ from culture to culture.

The conception of the body ranks highly among the different issues that are of importance for co-education, because it is closely linked to masculinity and femininity. The body has both a biological and an experiential dimension. Gender is embodied, i.e. it is lived by a body and for a body that is, at the same time the receiver and the producer of gender meanings. An education for gender equity will not be effective if it is only theoretical. It must also be experiential and even embodied. Among the several socio-cultural aspects related to gender education, those concerning the body are essential as the main framework supporting our gender identity as males or females.

Physical education at school can be singled out from the rest of courses for its special use of body and movement as educational tools, which can contribute very especially to the experiential treatment of students' bodies and the building of positive experiences. It must also pay special care to avoid negative experiences and sexist behaviours. While students play a game or sport they are not only learning their rules but also learning how to respect each other, to dialogue, to collaborate in achieving different goals, etc. As the transmission of values is a fundamental

component of co-education, a subject like physical education can benefit from different methodological approaches for the teaching of gender equity. Mixed-gender cooperative groups, non-sexist language and materials, body awareness tasks and the practice by everybody of sports or activities that were traditionally reserved to either males or females, are widening the scope for proposals linked to gender-equity education.

From LOGSE law to these days, educational legislation has made explicit mention to physical education as a very adequate field for the development of gender-equity education. The organic law 3/2007, 22nd March, (chapter 2) claims that education and sport should be related for the effective implementation of equity between men and women.

Some initiatives, such as the criticism of a traditional approach to physical education based on masculine sports, the use of alternative activities which are not advantageous, a priori for either boys or girls, the use of cooperative or traditional games which reduce or even eliminate competition or aggressiveness, can be all interpreted as attempts to construct equality and as a reflection of the line followed towards such equality by physical education. It is also worth mentioning that there are a few groups attempting more radical pedagogical innovation by means of practice, whereby those activities traditionally associated to girls, such as dancing or body expression are undertaken by boys.

It is important to note that the minimization or denial of gender differences may result, paradoxically, in a process of devaluation of gender values and the transmission of a masculine model of power. Gender-denial approaches also ignore what can be considered as typical problems for each of the groups. Masculinity means power but also potential difficulties to express feelings which often results in an increase of emotional tension or aggressiveness in the process of socialization. Actual trends in feminism of difference claim that boys and girls are treated the same in those aspects in which they are equal but differently regarding those aspects in which differences can be found. Mixed groups are not the solution to gender equity and both girl-education and boy-education are necessary.

Sports are an example of how sex specific groups do not necessarily translate into sex discrimination. In most sports we can find male and female groups and categories without an opposition by resistance movements claiming that they should play together. Sex groups in sports give equal opportunities for competition to both men and women. However, competition does not seem to be a general value to be fostered in different educational fields, while participation and cooperation seem to be the priorities instead.

Co-educational physical education should be the basis for the co-education for respect between men and women, providing the playground on which gender social conflicts are understood and challenged. For this reason, it is necessary to abandon a model of physical education based on *ad hoc* activities, artificially created for

mixed groups and detached from a real social context, on the proviso that they give equal opportunities to boys and girls. Working with separate groups seems now a good resource to develop gender specific skills and foster co-education.

It is also essential to reflect on the different relationships established among gender and sports, health, or the *fitness* business in order to understand the implications of physical education in our society. Several studies, such as Brown (1999, 2002) and Brown and Rich (2000) are emphasizing the importance of physical education in the transmission of the hegemonic conception of masculinity of a prototypical heterosexual, white man of medium social class with a tendency to competitiveness and physical dominance. This dominance situates the rest of identities in different positions of complicity, subordination or marginality, in reference to it. Teacher training can contribute to either perpetuate the hegemonic character or challenge the conception on which it is sustained. These studies have a practical application in gender education, as they contain life stories by teachers who do not represent hegemonic identities. Through these stories, students and teacher trainees can learn about different types of identities and become aware of different realities.

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### **Suggestions for further independent study of the topic**

1. Leisure activities and games are both a reflection and a powerful tool for the construction of gender differences. Analyse the distinctive features which make them gender-specific.
2. Think of stereotypes of masculinity and femininity reflected in popular stories and films which characterize adolescents, such as “High School Musical”. What is the role of sport and physical education in these stories? Are gender related values and behaviours associated with certain types of appearance and performance?
3. Brainstorm a list of common sports and discuss which of them are male or female dominated. Consider the influences that are responsible for male or female dominated sports.

# Gender-equitable education and training in Hungary

Erika Grossmann, University of Szeged, Hungary

*The first part of the study text presents important historical milestones concerning gender mainstreaming in the Hungarian education system, followed by the analysis of possible reasons why gender-equitable pedagogy could not take root in Hungary so far. The second part deals with selected relevant documents of educational policy and legal texts relating to the Hungarian educational system amended and revised in 2012 (e.g. National Curriculum). In addition, an extracurricular gender-mainstreaming project will be presented. Certain gender aspects in the tertiary field of education will be revealed in the third part to illustrate that the implementation of gender-equitable education and training in Hungary is still in the very early stages of development*

## 1. Milestones on the way to equality for girls and boys

### 1.1 The Habsburg era

In the course of the extremely turbulent history of Hungary we cannot speak about a strategic educational policy or about an elaborated, more or less unique educational system up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Maria Theresias *Ratio Educationis* (1775 and 1779) was the starting point of the modernisation of primary education both in Austria and in Hungary. For the first time it was the state, not the church, taking over the responsibility and decision-making power over the institutionalised education and training. For children aged five to twelve the so-called *Népnyelvű iskola* (a vernacular school) was introduced as compulsory school. There, all children were educated in their national language (that is to say exclusively in *Hungarian*, regardless of the fact that Hungary was a multinational country with numerous national minorities). This was a significant first step towards a gender-equitable educational system, since it was the first time that both boys and girls in heterogeneous groups were offered the same teaching and learning contents.

This approach of a 'gender-equitable' educational ideology can be observed in the same period in the works of other European educational researchers as well. At this point Jean-Jacques Rousseau should be mentioned: in his book *Émile* (1762/1978) the education of a boy is described although the fact that girls need different treatment and education is expressed explicitly in this work as well (Pukánszky 2006).

The Habsburg Joseph II also highlighted the necessity of an equal basic, primary education both for all boys and girls, irrespectively to their social origin or background.

## 1.2 Education of girls and women in the puzzling context of social expectations of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the call of the Bourgeoisie for an adequate education of girls and women became louder and louder. The reason was certainly not the quest for girls' education and qualification due to emancipatory reasons. The complex and well-balanced education was rather – similarly to Rousseau – a tool for the training of girls to 'dignified' wives (Pukánszky 2006).

In the 1820s there was a wide discussion among the bourgeois and aristocrats in Hungary concerning the issue that stated: women are definitely able to take part and absolve successfully higher education studies. Examples from other countries showed that talented women have evidently the ability to bring remarkable achievements both in artistic and in different scientific fields as well (Fehér 2003). In the so-called 'reform-era' Hungary's (at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) intellectuals have realized that the education of girls and women plays an immense role both in the social, political and cultural development of the country and in the improvement of the country's economy (Fáy 1841, quoted after Pukánszky 2006).

In 1828 the Hungarian countess Teréz Brunswick founded the first kindergarden as pre-school institution. This enabled mothers with young children to follow up professional life (of course according to the understanding of female occupation at that historical time). Girls and boys were transmitted knowledge, competencies and skills in the heterogenous groups of the kindergarden enabling them to overcome everyday tasks (counting, reading, drawing, religion, physical and health education, etc.). Brunswick always stressed the importance of learning especially for girls and this statement is close to the issue of equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming according to our understanding nowadays.

Countess Teréz Brunswick was also a defender for the training of kindergarden pedagogues. As a consequence of this, the training of female kindergarden pedagogues was primarily institutionally introduced in 1837. Brunswick also supported intensively early education for boys and girls and concentrated on their individual, gender-specific needs and requirements. For this reason, Brunswick can be considered both as enthusiastic fighter for girls' and women's education and as the founder of young children's training and education. Together with countess Blanka Teleki she founded several training institutions for girls, schools of domestic science and associations supporting, moreover strengthening the rights of girls and women in Hungary (Pukánszky 2006, Brunsvik 1962).

## 2. Tasks, objectives and content of gender-equitable education

### 2.1 Education policy in the context of gender-equitable action after the political transformation (1990 onwards)

Aim of this study text is not to give a complete survey on the historical development or to present a detailed outline about the present situation of gender-equitable education and training in Hungary. Therefore another important milestone in the history of Hungary will be depicted and analysed from the gender-specific point of view. This historical period is referred as the post-communistic era or ‘the years after the political transformation in 1990’. For this reason, the period from 1990 until the present day will be outlined and analysed.

Shortly after the first free, democratic parliamentary elections in Hungary several laws have been passed by the Parliament concerning gender mainstreaming. The most important of these laws are the followings:

- The Basic Law (passed in 1949, amended in 1989; amended and modified in 2012)
- The Education Act (passed in 1993 and 2012)
- The Higher Education Act (passed in 2005 and 2012)
- The National Curriculum (passed in 2003 and 2007, last modified and amended in 2012).

This overview illustrates that the Parliament elected in 2010 (represented by a 2/3 majority of representatives from the Conservative and Christian-Democratic Party) has passed crucial modifications related to all important laws and education policy documents regarding gender mainstreaming.

The new Education Act (2012) declares among other regulations that all compulsory schools in Hungary have to be centralised again and should be under state control and state administration. The main aspect of this law is primarily the structural change in education, while its content (task, aims, content of education) is only a secondary matter.

The National Curriculum (2003 and 2007) “forms a very generally formulated framework for the 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grades (...). Educators have a great deal of latitude both in their choice of textbooks and syllabuses” (Grossmann, 2008: 102). The new National Curriculum (2012) prescribes again specific and concrete contents and methods centrally; this means that teachers will scarcely have freedom for the structuring and organisation of their lessons.

Regarding the consideration and improvement of gender aspects and gender-equitable aims in education, it can be stated that compared to the former versions of the National Curriculum, there is hardly any or even no progress at all. The new version of the National Curriculum formulates again so-called ‘common requirements’, meaning that interdisciplinary competencies are to be developed and promoted.



The document however does not extensively deal with the term ‘gender’, so that the aspects of gender-specific action are not being explicitly explained (Grossmann 2008, *Gender differences in educational outcomes: A Study on the measures taken and the current situation in Europe – Hungary* 2010).

## 2.2 Projects outside school: “Gender mainstreaming at government level”

Similarly to several European countries the statistics for Hungary show that the proportion of women with high school or university degrees accounted for far more than 50 %, yet the positions with a high social prestige are marginally filled by women. In the Hungarian Parliament – mostly consisting of conservative representatives since 2010 – there are 20 % less women than before. Among the 386 parliament representatives the number of women sank from 43 (before 2010) to 35. In the present government (with 11 ministers) there is only one woman (Lévai 2009, Nagy 2009, [http://www.mkogy.hu/pairhelp/ogy\\_magyar.htm](http://www.mkogy.hu/pairhelp/ogy_magyar.htm)).

During the legislative period of the former socialist-liberal coalition (until 2010) a gender-mainstreaming project was initiated to foster the equality of genders. Participants of the project were mainly state employees (civil servants in ministries, legislative institutions, state and government authorities, etc.). The project results and outcomes were published in the ‘Gender Mainstreaming Handbook 2009’ (Betlen et al) with the aim of showing strategies that can prevent gender-specific discriminations and promote gender mainstreaming. Sad to say that the statistics presented above concerning the proportion of women in Hungarian parliament reflect the situation one year after the end of the project and also 12 months after the publication of the book. This fact clarifies the present status of gender-specific issues in Hungary.

## 3. The puzzling context of theory and practice in further and higher education

### 3.1 Gender Studies as part of teacher training in Hungary

Éva Thun (2006) focusses in a paper about gender aspects in educational science and pedagogy on the following question: should gender-equitable contents become an integrative part of teacher training in Hungary in form of specific courses, classes and modules? Thun (2006: 117) emphasizes that today gender-studies “are definitely not an institutional or scientifically legitimate topic of pedagogy” (translated by the author). Although gender aspects (e.g. theories of gender-specific action) are subject in several humanistic, liberal arts and social science studies and therefore the ‘new paradigmatic’ point of view of traditional theories, structures implicated,



we nevertheless cannot talk about a critical discourse concerning gender-specific action in teacher training. According to Thun this fact is so much the worse since especially in study field of social and human science, for example in teacher training programmes (compared to science) women are strongly overrepresented.

As to the question why this form of interdisciplinarity is nevertheless neither present in education science nor in the practical module of teacher training curriculum, Thun (2006), Weiner and Kallos (2000) explain the following: gender is often interpreted and explained as 'anti-male', and as a consequence it is moreover considered as a desoputed, controversial issue at Hungarian universities.

Hollingsworth (1995) lists various hypotheses for the lack of integration of gender aspects in teacher training. According to one of her assumptions the amount of obligatory topics in the curriculum of teacher training is a possible obstacle for it. For this reason, there is 'no space' for gender aspects. Other opinions declare that gender-equitable aspects are already dealt with and discussed in the framework of topics like 'diversity' or 'multiculturalism'. As another possible explanation it is assumed that there is no need to further discussions or investigations of gender topics because the existing pedagogic surveys and research work already done are sufficient. Hollingsworth's (1995) next hypothesis is that gender as a topic for discussion or debate in teacher training is still 'taboo' and therefore a very sensitive and controversial issue, so that it cannot be approached in a 'neutral' and/or 'objective' way.

### 3.2 Objectives and content of gender-equitable education in the tertiary field of education

Zsolnai (1998) analyses theoretical approaches and contents in teacher education. He states that teacher training curriculum in Hungary is mainly based on conservative concepts and perceptions of already existing academic and science fields. Zsolnai (1998) explains the example that for instance the history of pedagogy completely ignores the education of females. For this reason an idealised education is being reconstructed again and again through this approach, which can be described as universalizing, generalising and stereotypical, while disregarding all gender-specific aspects. The gender-equitable, partly feminist interpretation is hardly or not at all considered in applied education science.

A study text by the European Commission (2010) concerning the relationship between gender and teacher training in Hungary emphasises the lack of sufficient relevant publications to the topics 'gender' and 'gender mainstreaming'. It is also stated that the literature on 'gender' and 'gender mainstreaming' is hardly or not at all dealt with in teacher training courses. As a consequence, the students of teacher training programmes do not have the chance to promote or to develop their gender-specific competencies during the training and therefore will probably be insufficiently able to act professionally in gender-sensitive issues. This assumption was

confirmed by an empiric research carried out in all member states of the European Union. According to the results, there were no projects on the tertiary level of education focussing on gender issues and gender mainstreaming in the years between 2008-2009 in Portugal, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary.

### 3.3 A gender-equitable curriculum in teacher training

Thun (2006) adds to the issue above that in Hungary there is an imperative necessity for the fundamental paradigm change: instead of normative and traditional pedagogic approach there is an urgent need for critical and reflecting analysis of gender topics. This would undoubtedly mean that gender-equitable theories will become an integrative part of curriculum for future teachers. The integration of gender-equitable education strategies into the theory and practice of pedagogy would – according to Thun (2006) – probably cause personal and professional conflicts which would be difficult to handle or solve at the moment. She goes even further in her hypothesis: in the mainly ‘female sphere of education system’ the identification or even a critical analysis of gender-equitable aspects and topics could have the effect that the institutionalised balance of power of genders would be destroyed and hence the maintenance of the Hungarian education system could be endangered critically.

A further reason for the lack of gender-equitable content in teacher training points out Ildikó Hrubos (2000) with the fact that the Bologna-process in Hungary has been realised insufficiently on the tertiary education level. European efforts and initiatives towards diversity, mobility and practise orientation are opposed to the homogenisation of study programmes which was strongly supported by the Hungarian Higher Education Accreditation Organ.

However, there is probably a light at the end of the tunnel: Éva Thun mentions her own practise carried out in the academic year 1995-1996. At the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest a pilot project with the title ‘Gender in educational system and in education science’ was introduced for students of English studies. It is emphasised that in this elective course the subjective teaching experience of the students were considered and incorporated so that the participants had the possibility to make use of their own social competencies. In this way, the focus of the course curriculum was both on the theoretical and the practical aspects of gender issues.

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(Internet sources accessed June 2012)

### **Suggestions for further independent study of the topic**

Research governmental guidelines regarding gender in your country; consider how these apply to your own experiences in the classroom.

# Girls ignite education

Kristof De Witte, University of Maastricht, Netherlands

Ferry Haan, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

*The Dutch education system has a high amount of 'ability tracking'. Boys might be at a disadvantage because of their later cognitive development. Recently, much attention has been given to the performance differences between boys and girls. This article discusses this recent debate and the historical and future developments of same-sex education in The Netherlands.*

## 1. Historical development of same-sex education

The Netherlands has a long tradition of mixed-sex elementary education. Up until the end of the 19th century only boys were allowed in secondary education. About half of the Dutch schools have a religious foundation: Catholic, Protestant and more recently: Islamic.

Since 1920, private and religiously inspired education is financially equated to public education. This equation is set in article 23 of the Dutch Constitution. Until the sixties of the previous century this organization mattered significantly to the education of boys and girls. Many religious schools taught boys and girls separately. From the 19th century onwards new schools were founded that offered specialized subject areas for girls. After World War II the Netherlands had MULO (Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs, extended elementary education), MMS (Middelbare Meisjesschool, secondary education for girls) and HBS (Hogere Burgersschool, higher education for citizens). MMS was accessible for boys, but in reality only girls attended this type of education. In 1968 the *Mammoetwet* (literally: Mammoth Law) was established. MULO, MMS and HBS were replaced by MAVO (middelbaar algemeen voortgezet onderwijs; literally: secondary general continued education), HAVO (hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs; literally: higher general continued education) and VWO (voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs; literally: preparatory scientific education). The *lagere beroepsopleidingen* (lower vocational training) became LBO. Because of the *Mammoetwet* (operating since the first of August 1968) mixed education was established everywhere. Gender did not play a part anymore since the *Mammoetwet* came into effect. At the end of the 1990s the most recent change happened in Dutch education, the Second Phase was implemented.

LBO and MAVO were joined together to become VMBO (voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs; literally: preparatory middle-level applied education). After some minor alterations this Second Phase was converted into the Renewed Second Phase that still applies today (since 1998). Coincidence or not, since 1998

the performances of girls and boys have taken a different fork in the road. Since 1998 girls score better than boys in VWO and HAVO. The aspects of educational reform are presented in Table 1.,

Figure 1: Boys' and Girls' performance in VWO and HAVO since 1951



Black line: Boys (HBS & gymnasium until 1974) VWO

Grey line: Girls (HBS & gymnasium until 1974) VWO

Bron: CBS Statline

Recently, a debate ensued in the Netherlands about coeducation. The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) wants to study the poor academic performance of boys. Boys do not score as well as girls on centralized final examinations and school exams.

In the report *'School success of boys and girls in HAVO and VWO: why girls outperform boys'* Coenen, Meng and Van der Velden from the University of Maastricht conclude that the Renewed Second Phase has worked to the advantage of girls. In 8 out of 13 of the researched competences girls perform better than boys. Working independently, cooperation and planning are examples of competencies where girls do better. Since the implementation of the Renewed Second Phase the amount of pupils in VWO and HAVO increased significantly. However, the number of girls increased far more than the number of boys. Coenen, Meng and Van der Velden conclude that girls profited most from this recent education reform.

From this and other academic literature we see that girls have faster language and planning abilities which allows them to gain a head start in learning. Boys get worse results at the end of primary education because the Dutch curriculum (since 1998) attaches a greater importance to skills that require language and planning abilities. As a result they end up in lower education levels. (In the Netherlands pupils do a test at the end of primary education that determines the assignment of pupils into a certain education level: ability tracking.)

Table 1: Skills and the implementation of the Second Phase in Secondary Education

Skills	Difference between boys and girls		Difference bigger or smaller after the implementation of the Second Phase		General Effect Second Phase	
	HAVO	VWO	HAVO	VWO	HAVO	VWO
Working independently	++	++	+	0	Positive	Positive, only for girls
Cooperation	+	+	0	+	Positive	Positive, only for girls
Initiative	++	+	+	+	Positive, only for girls	Positive, only for girls
Communicative skills	+	0	0	+	Positive	Positive
Study planning	++	++	+	+	None	Positive, only for girls
Collecting and processing information	+	++	+	0	Positive	Positive
Creativity	++	0	+	0	Positive, only for girls	None
Language skills	++	+	0	0	Positive	Positive
Math skills	--	--	0	0	Negative	Negative, especially for boys
Computer skills	--	--	-	0	Positive, only for girls	Positive
Analytic skills	-	--	0	0	None	None

Source: "Success of boys and girls in HAVO and VWO: why girls present better", ROA, UniMaas (++ = significant changes after the 'second phase', + = changes after the 'second phase', 0 = no changes, -- = negative changes after the 'second phase', -- = significant negative changes')

Commissioned by the Ministry of OCW, Driessen and Van Lange (2010) studied the causes, scale and interventions of the education deficit in boys. The study reached the following important conclusions:

(1) "In terms of cognitive competences in the Netherlands there is no systematic trailing by boys in comparison to girls; not in primary education, nor in the first four years of secondary education. The ascertained gender differences in performances are on the one hand quite limited, and on the other hand alternately beneficial to girls (language and reading) or boys (arithmetic and mathematics)." (Driessen and Van Lange, 2010: 10-11). This conclusion is also confirmed by the numbers. Based upon the OECD PISA data that measures the performances of 15 year-old pupils, the differences in the performance of boys and girls for 'mathematics' are relatively limited, but these differences are far greater for 'language'. These data are depicted in Figure 1 and compared to other countries. At age 15 girls score significantly higher than boys. When it comes to mathematics boys perform slightly better than girls.

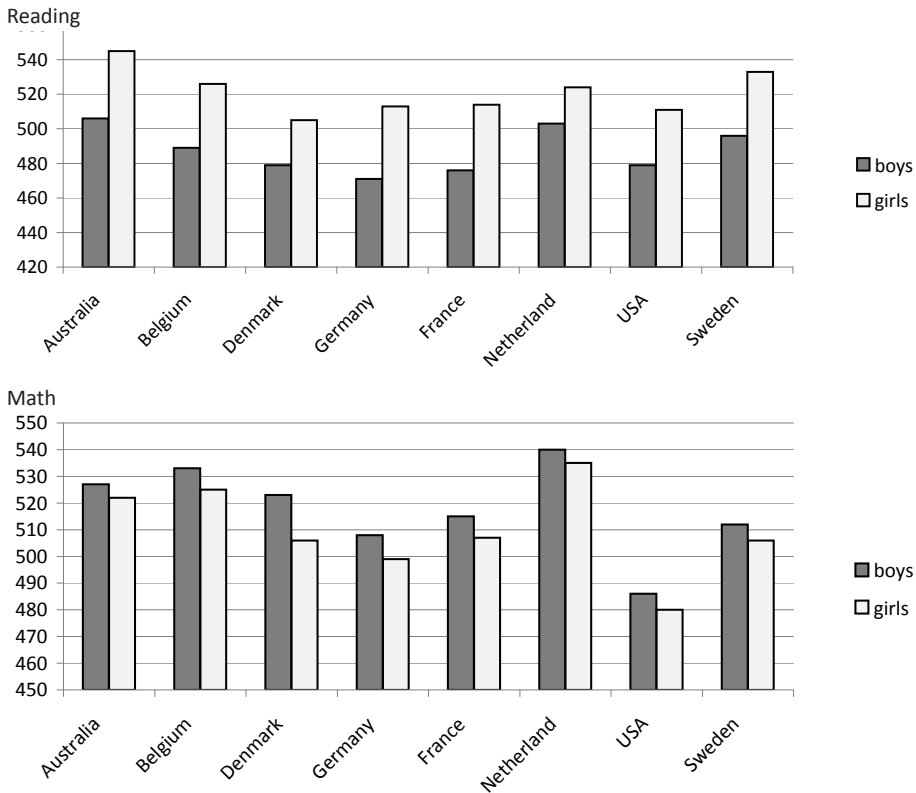


Figure 2: Test performances for reading and mathematics in 15 year-olds based upon country and gender – PISA 2003. Source: Van Lange and Driessen (2006: 38).

(2) The gender differences for non-cognitive competences are sometimes quite considerable. Furthermore, they suggest at times a less favourable educational position for boys than girls. In elementary education boys are graded less well on work attitude and social behaviour; in group 8 more so than in group 2 (note: a pupil in group 2 is about six and a pupil in group 8 about twelve). Among special needs children in regular education and special needs education, boys exhibit far more behavioural problems and attitude problems. It is less clear what the effects on the education position of other determined gender differences in non-cognitive competences are. Boys in secondary education see themselves as more violent than girls; they tend not to avoid conflicts and confrontations. Boys see themselves as emotionally more stable and also think they possess greater self-confidence, even in their education possibilities. An interesting find to possibly take into account in education practice is that boys are more motivated by competition, whereas girls are more socially motivated.

(3) “The school careers of boys are less favourable than those of girls in almost all researched counts when determining the eventual education level. To begin with, a



far larger share of them are in special needs education. Furthermore, in secondary education boys are kept back a year more often, drop out sooner and more often, or drop down to a lower education level. In all of these aspects of the secondary education school career, the gender differences are rarely more than a few percent, yet in absolute numbers we are talking about thousands of pupils" (Driessen and Van Lange, 2010: 10-11). Some authors point out that an early selection in education levels can negatively influence the differences in school careers of boys and girls. From group 8 onwards (i.e. 12-year-olds) children split up towards VMBO, HAVO and VWO. For boys this split may come too soon. Psychological literature indicates that boys mature at a later age than girls do. In many countries surrounding the Netherlands this split takes place only later on.

The OECD has repeatedly criticised the Dutch selection system. Especially 'achterstandsleerlingen' (pupils with poorly educated parents and/or pupils with a non-western background) would be the victims of early selection. The *Onderwijsraad* (Education Council) reacted to this criticism of the OECD in 2010. This consultative education council concluded that the criticism of parts of early selection was justified. However, the obligatory postponement of the selection was a bridge too far for the council. The council proposed to "improve" the current system by implementing better transfer provisions and to be critical of 'gymnasiumbrugklassen' (transitional classes between primary and secondary education) for example.

Later selection had been tried in the Netherlands with the Middenschool-initiative in the sixties and seventies. This initiative was judged as too ideologically charged and was put to rest with the other education reform failures. The traumatic consequences of this failure is that selection at a later age has become almost a taboo, even though the Dutch education system keeps getting criticized year after year by the OECD. The OECD keeps on insisting in its report 'Education at a glance' that the Netherlands is selecting too soon.

(4) Finally, there are also differences in the profile choice of pupils. A part of the Renewed Second Phase is that pupils in class 3 have to choose a certain profile. Figure 2 shows the different profiles for boys and girls in VMBO, HAVO and VWO. It turns out that boys choose 'economics and society' profiles significantly more than girls, whereas girls opt far more for 'culture and society'. In VWO we notice a similar difference. In VMBO the differences between the genders are even more visible than in HAVO. Whereas half of the boys in VMBO choose 'technology', the same is true for only 1.7 % of the girls. 57 % of the girls choose 'care/well-being', where only 4.3 % of the boys choose this.

Recent cerebral research (Jolles 2010) seems to indicate that pupils in class 3 cannot make a responsible profile choice yet. The early profile choice is at risk of being influenced by group processes. Pupils tend to choose what their peers choose. The result is that both boys and girls end up in stereotypical profile choices.

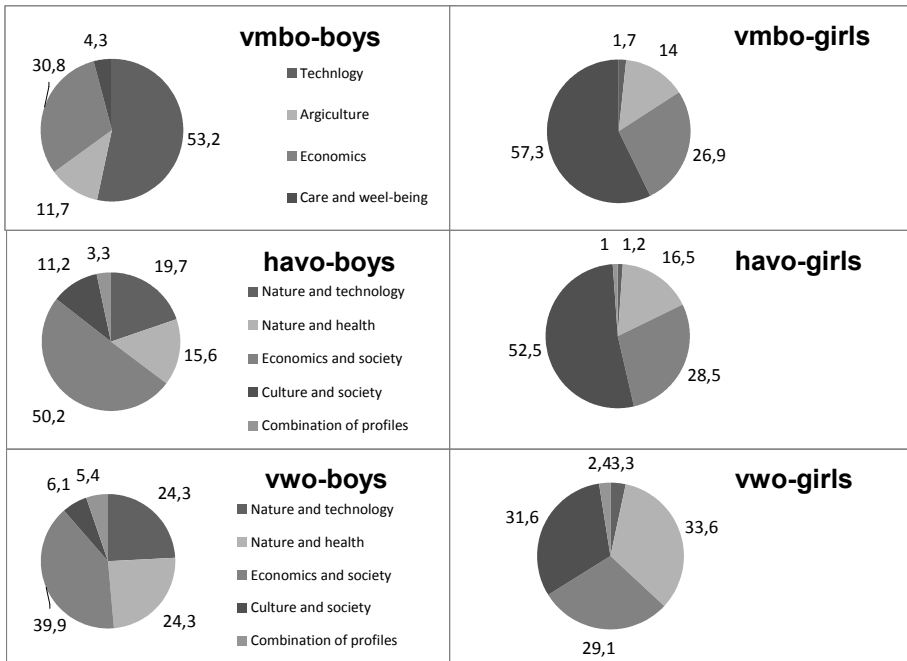


Figure 3: Sector and profile choices of examination candidates in VMBO, HAVO and VWO per gender. Rural population, exam year 2003/2004. Source: Van Lange and Driessen (2006: 10).

Despite this study there is a perception in the Netherlands that boys possess lower cognitive developments. One of the measures to get rid of learning deficits in boys is to teach boys and girls separately once again, according to the chairperson of the Besturenraad (a centre for Christian education) (Volkskrant, 2011). The Minister of Education is not unfavourable towards this proposal. In five Dutch schools single-sex education is being experimented with at this very moment. Especially the organization that looks after the interests of Christian education in the Netherlands is a staunch advocate of this.

## 2. Tasks, objectives and content of same-sex education in and outside schools

Just like in other European countries both sexes are treated equally by law anno 2012. This is what Article 7 of the General Dutch Equal Treatment Law states: ‘Discrimination on the grounds of sex is permitted solely if the distinctive nature of the establishment so requires and if equivalent facilities are available for pupils or students of both sexes.’

In the current Dutch education system there is no distinction made for the gender of the pupil. Therefore, the objective is complete equality for both sexes.

Yet, there are (non-)cognitive performance differences noted, as well as differences in subject choice.

There is a lot of descriptive material available about the performance differences in Dutch education (e.g. Van Lange and Driessen, 2006). These studies describe the performance differences between boys and girls throughout their entire school career based upon existing cohort-studies. Besides this descriptive literature, there is no view on content-based differences in education, because there is no difference. Boys attend the same classes girls do, in the same classroom and are treated completely equal (same lesson method, same tests, same learning activities).

Outside of education there is a decreasing difference between the sexes. Female football for instance has seen a fierce development. Many clubs now have a serious female division. Boys and girls do sports or leisure activities together. Perhaps scouting is an exception, but that organization now leads a fringe existence. Remarkable is the position of korfbal (only a serious sport in The Netherlands and Belgium). In this sport both boys and girls play together on a team. The relative popularity of this sport provides an insight in emancipation.

### **3. All girls education, all boys education and mixed education: between theory and practice.**

In a historical overview of female education Van Essen (1990) indicates this was not always the case.

- In the sixties of the nineteenth century there was a huge discussion about the type of education and its content for middle class girls. In this debate there were two distinct extreme points of view. The most moderate point of view said that in education for girls preparing them for their household tasks should have a pivotal role. (...)
- The other point of view was that of the radical promoters of emancipation. They wanted, assuming both genders had the same kind of cognitive capabilities, that women participated in society just as men did. This point of view was only sporadically heard and almost only by women. (...)
- In the Netherlands both points of view were challenged. Complete emancipation went way too far for most people, but only focusing on a household role in female education also encountered staunch opposition. These challengers assumed a position in the center. All forms of female education had to serve two goals: preparing them both for a household role and a profession. (...)
- In the second half of the nineteenth century new educational possibilities developed for girls, partly thanks to this discussion. Secondary education for girls slowly shaped into its definitive form. Equal rights advocates had some success in education: both the universities and the HBS allowed girls to attend since 1871, 10 years later the gymnasium did the same (Van Essen, 1990).

#### 4. Future developments: excellence

At the end of May in 2011 the Minister of Education presented the Actieplan Beter Presteren (Action Plan Performing Better). Because of this plan the focus in Dutch education shifts from taking care of the weaker pupils to having attention for the ones that excel. The performances in reading, mathematics and science need to improve. It is not a coincidence that these are also the subjects in the PISA-ranking. The education in secondary education (VMBO TL, HAVO and VWO) needs to create a return on investment ('opbrengstgericht') from now on. Generally speaking, the Minister of Education wants a 'more ambitious learning culture' in secondary schools.

The Actieplan Beter Presteren does not have a separate gender-paragraph, yet this plan might have consequences for the relative performances of boys and girls. By putting the spotlight on the core subjects Dutch, English and Mathematics, the focus within education shifts. Earlier, the Minister of Education decided to intensify the examination demands in HAVO and VWO. A pupil must not fail in more than one of these three core subjects. At the same time, the average of the exam results cannot be lower than 5.5. This is also an intensification of examination demands.

Because of the Actieplan Beter Presteren the focus will be on the cognitive performances of pupils. The difference in non-cognitive skills between boys and girls, as mentioned earlier, may have a smaller role, depending on how the action plan is executed.

The Minister of Education has forced schools to participate by implementing the Performance Box (PrestatieBox). When schools show that they are trying to be an 'excellent school' for their excellent pupils, this will help their school finances enormously. On top of the lump sum financing, an excellent school will receive an amount of 66 euro per pupil in the 4th, 5th and 6th grade of the VWO (Year 10, 11 and 12). This amount is on top of the 110,26 euro per pupil that a school usually gets. The 66 euro extra is for the 20 % best pupils in VWO (in all Years).

To summarise, the Minister of Education wants to see more ambition in secondary education. The Netherlands needs to be higher up in the PISA-ranking. The focus shifts from the pupil that needs care, to the pupil that excels.

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### **Suggestions for further independent study of the topic**

There are several possibilities for further research. Firstly, cost effective measures to promote gender education are missing in academic literature. The motivation and effectiveness to influence motivation often depends on the gender of young people. Experimental research can provide us with an insight into ‘what works’ to motivate the sexes in an effective way.

Research into the effects of mixed education is necessary. Almost all schools have mixed education, yet there are no insights on its contribution to development, motivation and the study performances of pupils. In what way does mixed education contribute to the development, motivation and the study performances of pupils?

A third area of research is focusing on the choices young people make and the time when those choices are being made. Boys choose technical subjects more often, whereas girls tend to choose social subjects. We do not sufficiently know what influences those choices, and how the government can achieve an equal spread of the sexes in those different profiles. Which elements influence the choice of pupils? How can the government balance the differences in the profile choice between boys and girls?

A fourth area of research is about the early selection of pupils. There is an early selection of pupils for different school levels unlike in other countries. It would be interesting to find out in what way this affects the performances of pupils later on. Does an early school choice influence performance later on?

A fifth area of research is studying the gender effects of the new policy of the Minister of Education. Does an ambitious school culture decrease the gap in school performance between boys and girls or is the exact opposite the case?

Finally, interdisciplinary research is necessary to equalise the learning performances between genders. Neuropsychologists, neurobiologists, development

psychologists, pedagogues, sociologists and economists have to find solutions for the 'grand challenges' together. By removing the blinkers a deeper insight into the motives will be created.

# **“Gender equality is no longer the big issue ...”**

## **Gender specific education in Norway**

*Herbert Zoglowek, University College Finnmark, Norway*

*The overall picture of “gender equality in Norway” is rather inconsistent and ambiguous. On the one hand, Norway considers itself – and is also usually seen as such – as a virtual forerunner and exemplary on the front of “gender equality” (kjønns likestilling), although completely different arising imbalances come into the picture. On the other hand there are still examples and complaints that the statutory equality is not being implemented or has not been achieved in many areas.*

*In the same way that gender equality is not a big public issue (anymore), it is considered rather casually in schools. As a general constant principle of education, gender equality contributes to the personality and identity development, all according to its importance opposite of gender education, but gender equality nowadays is rather seldom mentioned in any lesson plan. Does that mean that Norway is still a forerunner or does it find itself rather on a sidetrack?*

### **1. Introduction**

The citation mentioned in the title comes from a study (Støren, Waagene, Arnesen & Hovdhaugen 2010) on the situation and implementation of equality duty in Norwegian schools, published in 2010. This assessment may contradict the statement of Gro H. Brundtland, the first female prime minister of Norway, who once said that Norway in the field of gender equality is one of the leading nations. Or, is in the end, the politician and equality campaigner Ingunn Yssen right when she says: “The biggest danger to equality is the myth that we have it” (Yssen, 2010). The fact is that many nations look to Norway for information and inspiration on how they can tackle or improve equality and equivalence between the sexes. Indeed, very early on, Norway has not only propagated equality and equivalence, but has also actively pursued the policy of gender equality in many areas.

The activism and the demands of the second wave of women’s movement or Feminism (Eurydice, 2010: 17) fell in Norway, which was in the 20th century, almost entirely ruled by social democrats, in very fertile ground: Norway appointed in 1978 as the first country in the world an Equality Attorney (*Ombud*); in all governments since the eighties the proportion of female ministers was and is about 50 %; the president of Parliament, the rector of the University of Oslo, the chief of Police in Oslo, the governor of Svalbard, which is the most northern province of Norway, and political leaders of all Norwegian parties have once been or are, women. In 1993 the first female bishop in Norway was appointed and in 1976 the games of women’s

football were officially included within the Norwegian Football Association. Can equality thus still be an issue in Norway?

Of course this status and position was not given to Norwegian women naturally. Also in Norway they had to fight against discrimination and oppression and for equality and equal rights. And that goes up especially for equal opportunities where formation, education and development of identity are concerned. However, due to certain social, cultural and political conditions, the situation in especially Norway during the 19th and 20th century, was a bit easier, so that Norwegian women were more likely to find a listening ear for their demands.

Until about the middle of the 19th century, the role of a woman was still almost completely subordinated and subservient to that of men. In 1845 for example, an unmarried woman had about as much to say as a minor male. Only with the attainment of the right to inherit (1854) and the right to independently practice a craft (1866), changes slowly came about and possibilities to lead a life of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency arose for women. Albeit in a modest fashion, the emergence of industrialisation in Norway offered women chances to work and to have an income in the cities. Already since 1860, women were allowed to work as teachers in rural public primary schools, albeit untrained. Towards the end of the century, about one third of employable women were working primarily as secretaries, teachers or factory workers. The first women's movements initially recruited almost exclusively from the liberal bourgeoisie. They were concerned primarily with equal educational opportunities, the right to vote and equal civil rights. By the end of the century about one third of employable women were working primarily as secretaries, teachers or factory workers. The first women's movements initially recruited almost exclusively from the liberal bourgeoisie. They were concerned primarily with equal educational opportunities, the right to vote and equal civil rights. At the beginning of the 20th century, women working in factories organized themselves in order to fight for better working conditions, better working hours and better wages. In 1913 women received the general right to vote, 15 years later than men did (LDO: n.d.).

And today, in 2012, women have joined up with men in various positions and have also conquered positions of their own. However, women still earn about 15 % less than men and the statistics show that in general, women continue to take on the housework and take care of child rearing and that women almost exclusively take the legal parental leave (Enger & Hagen, 2009). What purpose and which significances are there still today for Equality duty?

## **2. On the history of schools and formation**

Until well into the 18th century, most of Norway's inhabitants, who were at that time under Danish rule and administration, were illiterate. Relatively few families



of the urban nobility and wealthy bourgeoisie could afford a private tutor and thus read and write. In the course of the Lutheranisation of Norway, it was actually the Church who came as first with the idea of a “general religious” basic formation going beyond the cathedral teachings in the cities. This idea found however little agreement in the countryside. It was not until over one hundred years later, with the growth of the state’s power and especially the budding religious pietism in the 18th century, that in turn the state’s interest in a public formation and education grew. So Norway adopted already in 1732, its first Education Act, which referred especially to school attendance in the predominantly rural areas. The main justification for publicly regulated schooling was that in order to turn to and have contact with God, one had to be able to read the Bible. The main courses, and in the beginning the only ones available at the first Norwegian public primary schools (*allmueskole*) were in fact Christian teaching and reading. Some schools also taught writing and arithmetic, but participation in these subjects was voluntary (Befring 2004). So in reality nothing much had changed in the illiteracy of the rural population until the beginning of the 19th century. However in cities and larger towns, the significance of elementary schools had been growing and here the years of public primary school could be extended with a three-year secondary school that prepared for practical life. All the previously mentioned schools were only compulsory for men; girls and young women could, but did not have to, attend classes at these rural schools.

In 1811 Norway got its first own University of Oslo. Subsequently, the “Education Policy” received new wind. The entire education and formation system got modified, primarily to give the basic education at public primary schools a new and better basis. The new Education Act of 1827 wanted foremost to improve the situation in rural areas and it was determined that an elementary school should be established wherever there was a Church centre or wherever lived and worked at least 30 workers. All other, less densely populated areas, were being schooled by out-sourced priests. Compulsory education started at the age of seven and lasted until confirmation. This compulsory education comprised at least two months per year, mainly during winter, when children were not needed that much as a workforce at home. The subjects taught at elementary school were still Christian teaching, reading and writing, basic arithmetic and singing.

The budding national romanticism of the mid 19th century with the aim and the desire for independence from the Danish government was also reflected in the idea for a general national public education. A huge influence was the Danish pedagogue Grundtvig, who publicly criticised the two-tier education system of Denmark and who propagated his idea that all people had the right to a general basic education. In the course of the great political reforms of 1884, during which Norway adopted the system of a democratic parliament, the foundation for the Norwegian school system still existing today, the “unified school” (*enhetsskole*) (*Unity School*) was made. All democratically minded political parties were basically in agreement and

condemned the unjust unequal educational conditions and opportunities. Their vision of an educational policy was that of a uniform, “just” education – and formation system: “a common school for all children regardless of social differences, geographical conditions, gender, ethnicity or any other individual needs they may have” (quote Østerud/Johnsen 2003: 149); as was stated in 1884 by Johan Sverdrup, the first Norwegian prime minister after the introduction of parliament. The “unified school”, which still today determines the Norwegian school system, was created towards the end of the 19th century out of the basic educational policy battles. In this “unified school” all children in elementary school go to school together until the age of 10.

## 2.1 Unity = Equality?

However, it would still take several decades until the idea of a “unified school”, with an actual formal equality or equality in the education- and formation system, became indeed a reality. Until late in the middle of the 20th century, publicly proclaimed intentions for equality were actually followed by inequalities: rural and urban schools still had different school legislations with different school hours, lessons and teaching contents; children from different social backgrounds still had different opportunities regarding further education and advancement; and still girls and boys had different opportunities, obligations and options.

Nevertheless one could say that at the time girls and young women were able to take a big leap towards equality. Since 1870 women were already allowed to work as teachers at rural primary schools, albeit without any special formation or preparation and rather as a caregiver or an assistant. In 1882, female students were allowed in higher educational institutions to take the “examen atriurn” and thus obtain the permission to attend university. In 1884 women were given access to all state exams. With the ever-increasing expansion of public primary schools, so grew also the need for qualified male and female teachers. Because of this, in 1890 women were allowed to enter teacher-training courses to become future primary school teachers. The Education Act of 1896 reformed all secondary schools to community schools for boys and girls; the until hitherto existing girls’ schools gradually disappeared at the beginning of the last century. In 1903, two decades after the admission to all studies, the first woman received her doctorate from the university of Oslo. In 1912 the first female professor of Norway was appointed.

In 1936 Norway introduced an overall seven-year compulsory education for all children, regardless of where they lived. This compulsory education was extended to nine years in 1969 and to ten years in 1997. And only since 1959, the first united school legislation was established for all public primary schools, renaming them “elementary schools” both in urban and rural areas. All legal changes made after the Second World War, meant in the first place always a strengthening of the rural

schools and their female students. In addition to the equalisation of the elementary school education, also the increasing construction and expansion of vocational and technical schools in the sixties and seventies needs to be mentioned. These schools opened up especially for girls, new possibilities to choose other career directions, in addition to the household and sewing schools existing at that time.

## 2.2 Equality Act

One important date, for education, career development and lifestyle for girls and women, is June 9, 1978, at which the Norwegian government drafted the Equality Act. Herein the same opportunities for both sexes in society, in the family, in education and in professional work are explicitly found. It was specifically emphasized that this act aimed at improving the position of women in society. This act also gave some form of female quotation to the educational institutions as especially reflected in the area of higher education. There are now many more women enrolled in courses that previously were almost entirely reserved for men, or they became interested in studies that traditionally only had a small percentage of women. Overall, the proportion of female students grew steadily, and for about ten years, the statistics show more female than male Norwegian students. The preferred choice in the various courses however still show traditional gender-specific differences: when choosing majors in secondary school, girls chose mostly courses in family, helping and education-related subjects, as for the choice of studies, humanistic studies and social sciences seem to be preferred.

## 2.3 Gender equality in the curriculum

The differences that systematically existed since the first school legislations and curricula, between the urban and rural schools and between girls and boys were slowly but surely reduced. But it actually took until 1959, before a general school legislation equalized the differences between urban and rural schools, between boys and girls that the unified (community) school became reality. However, the contents were still made up with regard to gender differences. With the extension of compulsory education to 9 years (1969) and the newly adapted school curricula, the lessons, which were until now mainly co-instructive, were permeated with the principles of co-education. In all school policy documents since the end of 1970s, equality and equivalence of the sexes are mentioned over and over. In the curriculum of 1974, for the first time ever, the idea of gender equality was explicitly mentioned as content and subject of classes. In all grade levels, gender equality should principally be addressed in the classroom and during different subjects and gender-discriminating notions should be actively counteracted. Particularly, attention was paid and effort

was put into providing textbooks and other literature where women were portrayed as equal in social and cultural life (Myhre, 1998:106). The curriculum of 1987 devoted a separate chapter to gender equality (KUD, 1987). Equality as a fundamental principle has been formally pursued on the one hand through equal options, equal rights and obligations; but also through direct opinion-forming and awareness-raising employment, in order to highlight traditional gender roles, to break, and to counteract them. Causes and various forms of sex discrimination in education should be clarified and addressed. Hence equality should be handled thematically in the most diverse subjects taught, textbooks should be aligned and designed and equality should be promoted offensively at the time of career orientation (30).

Later curricula are not as explicit and detailed about gender equality. However, in the preambles of every curriculum and in the general principles of education, the fundamental importance is still emphasized. As often happened in the past, the meaning and the linguistic usage of the term “equality” changed in recent times even more. When gender equality, equality and equivalence are mentioned today as general educational goals, we are talking about a general equality of individuals, thus not explicitly equality of the sexes, but for all; regardless of gender, social or ethnic background or any other preconditions and prerequisites. Equivalence, inclusion and individually adapted teaching and learning are today the key superior principles of the Norwegian unified school. Basically it can be said that equality and equalization found its most profound onset in the early concept of the unified school over one hundred years ago.

The main intention has always been, to abolish alternative school types that could be excluding students in any way or to make sure that such schools could not arise. A common school for all children, according to the idea, might significantly contribute more to balance random inequalities based on gender, social and ethnic backgrounds. “In addition to general skills, it does not matter with what preconditions students arrive at school, but what matters is what the school does with the students” (NOU 2004: 24 f.; original translation).

## 2.4 What is the goal of gender equality duty in school?

The goal of equality has always led to discussions about what form of equality is actually meant. Should boys and girls be as equal as possible, as if they are gender neutral? Should the gender differences, such as the feminine and masculine side, be regarded as an important part of the personality, i.e. thus equality through emphasizing inequality? Or should typical gender stereotypes be actively opposed towards where boys become slightly feminine and girls slightly masculine? But what could then have been the goal of girls’ education and boys’ education? The image and role of women and men are subject to frequent changes in society, so it’s not quite that

easy to describe what constitutes the desired or sought female culture or masculine culture.

Even when the principle and the ideal of equality has been undisputed for where education, socialization and identity duty in schools are concerned; in order to achieve equality, it still should be constantly reflected upon and what forms of inequality between the sexes can be accepted as equal and what measures are reasonable and correct should be taken into consideration (Imsen, 2009).

An interesting recent point of view and objective can be cited here by referring to the action plan mentioned in the next chapter “Equality in Schools”. The more formal main objectives of this action plan, talk primarily about “equilibrium” or “balance of the sexes”. Such position or claim is also referred to in critical debates on gender equality as “balance-feminism” (balancefeminisme) (Holst, 2007) and is at the same time criticized as inadequate. Justice – as a basic argument for equality – means participation on equal terms. But participation on equal terms does not necessarily require a gender-equilibrium. In respect to the choices made in school, in training and in professions, the focus on equality has to be shifted accordingly, so that what is chosen is not of the most importance, but the conditions and circumstances, under which can be chosen, are.

### 3. Action plan “Equality in School”

Against the background of the discussion mentioned in the previous chapter, but also in response to the national results of the international PISA comparative studies, and ultimately also due to the increasing multi-cultural development of Norwegian society, the issue of equality has again gained relevance in the last few years. The Action Plan “Equality in School” published by the Ministry of Education (KD, 2008) indicates the continuing relevance, documents the continual work on the subject, and also provides areas for action and specific instructions for gender equality duty in kindergarten and elementary school. In the preface of the Action Plan for the period 2008-2010, the Ministry of Education explains the duty primarily by the following perspective: “Gender-specific selection of training and career is one of the leading causes of systematic differences between men and women in professional life and social life in general. In such a social equality perspective, this is one of the biggest educational challenges” (p. 3, original translation by the author). Three overall formal core objectives are stated:

- (1) The teaching-learning environment in kindergarten and elementary school should be beneficial to the equality and equity between boys and girls;
- (2) a gender balance should be sought in the selection of optional courses and professions and especially girls should be encouraged to select courses;
- (3) a gender equilibrium should be achieved amongst the teachers of kindergartens and elementary schools (p. 8).

In addition to these rather formal educational objectives, the following challenges are also identified as particularly relevant:

- Gender differences in grading
- Development of gender identity in elementary school
- Gender differences in dropping out of secondary school
- Gender specific mobbing and sexual harassment.

It is clear that the legislators were aware of gender issues in different regards and tried to provide concrete guidelines for action. However, the reality in school and education is somewhat different, particularly in regard to the deliberate educational equality duty. Since the first major review of equality duty in schools (Imsen, 1996) all regional and national researches show that gender equality is not really a significant issue (anymore) (e.g. Støren and Arnesen, 2003; Vogt, 2008; Imsen, 1996, 2005, 2009; Helseth, 2009; Yssen and Simonsen, 2010; Støren, Waagene, Arnesen and Hovdhaugen, 2010).

Figure 1 shows a list of 12 prioritized objectives for elementary school. The field of equality duty is assigned the lowest priority in a 2009 survey as well as previously in a similar study done in 1996.

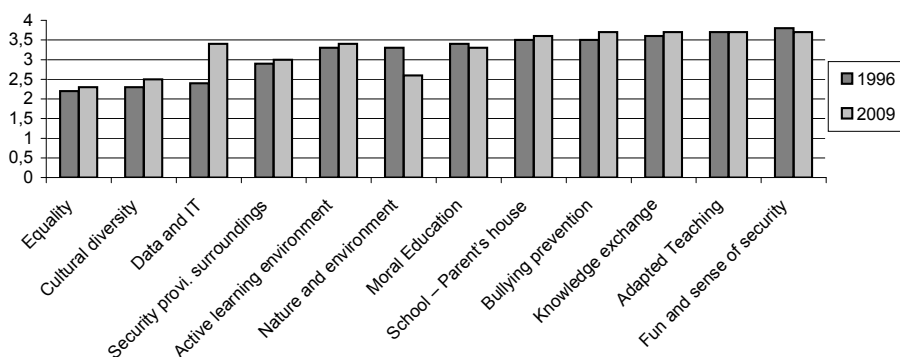


Figure 1: Prioritization of objectives in elementary school. (Støren et al., 2010: 45)

As a justification, it is believed that gender equality has advanced so far and is managed generally and implicitly in everyday school life, so that it no longer needs to be treated explicitly. Except perhaps for gender specific bullying, which is also frequently placed in the context of ethnic and migration issues. This will be discussed further.

Despite the educational anchoring through the Curriculum and detailed Action Plans, only less than 50 % of Norwegian school principals answer to the question “How important is the perspective of Gender Equality in general in lessons taught at their school? (for example through the practice of non traditional gender examples in teaching, through taking into account gender equilibrium in practical tasks and

the distribution of responsibilities in the classroom i.e.), that it is greatly or very greatly important (Støren, i.e. 2010: 60; original translation by the author). Table 1 highlights this. Just a little over one third of all surveyed schools, confirmed that they principally are actively working on awareness and a conscious attitude towards gender equality.

Table 1: Do you work in school with the intentions of Gender Equality regardless of the imposed targets and plans? (in %)

	Yes, subject to the year- and work plan	Yes, regardless of the year- and work plan	Gender equality issues are virtually dealt with	Gender equality perspectives hardly are reflected thematically in school work
Average	4	34	54	8

Total of 683 school levels (= 100 %); (Støren et al. 2010: 57)

In conclusion, here are some more findings and comments on specific gender equality policies and projects also taken from Støren, i.e. study (2010) which has already been quoted several times. Although the impression often prevails that on the one hand, the action plan has little known and rather incidental significance for school work, and often the attitude expressed is that equality is seen as something natural, and therefore should no longer be explicitly treated, nevertheless on the other hand, a number of actions are identified which exercise gender equality duty. Table 2 summarizes recent gender-related priorities.

Table 2: What are the gender-related projects / priorities that have been worked on in the past year? (in %)

Increasing the motivation to read and improvement of reading skills among boys	72
Raising awareness of training options and highlighting gender-related, non-traditional choices	22
Motivation for sciences, especially for girls	22
Prevention of gender-specific mobbing	23
Equilibrium between men and women within the teaching staff	25
Equilibrium between men and women within leadership positions	5

(Støren et al. 2010: 84)

Above all, it is interesting to see that it is not the claim to motivate and interest girls in the scientific courses which has been existing for decades, is coming first, but at the top stands rather the reading difficulty for boys that only recently came to the attention and hence those projects to increase the motivation for boys to read. And this is so, by far. In the overall equality work, it seems to be the boys that have come more into focus – at least in those areas relevant to educational policies. One possible reason for this could well be, that this focus coincides with one of the principal educational tasks and therefore does not necessarily require additional resources or other means.



As a provisional summary it may be stated that, formally speaking, equality has been achieved to its best advantage in Norway, in all areas of society, including the educational and formational sector. Therefore, in daily work and discussion, the issue has hardly any significance. In the scholastic and educational area, equality has become a lesson topic, which is usually treated in a historical and cross-cultural comparison, but not with examples or out of reference to the current situation in the Norwegian society – with two exceptions: gender-related bullying and physical education, where the physical differences between boys and girls are perfectly referred to as the justification for – temporary and content based – separate classes.

#### **4. Physical education: ‘Nature and Open Air Life’ (Friluftsliv)**

The subject Sports that in Norway is still called Physical Education (kroppsøving), is the subject in which gender differentiation existed for the longest time. While almost from the beginning, Physical Education was part of the subjects taught, but at first it was reserved only for boys. Up to about the time of the pedagogical reform, Physical Education was strongly militarily oriented with the idea that boys should be trained physically to defend their country. At this time the contents of the Physical Education were very much influenced by Ling’s “Swedish Gymnastics” discipline-oriented, command-oriented, militaristic, gymnastic exercises. Only at the beginning of the 20th century, as the concept of educational reform in Norway was being considered, the subject of Physical Education was given a special content for girls by adopting the ideas and practices of Finnish dance teacher Bjørksten. For content, this meant two quite different conceptions and implementations of physical education. In the curriculum of the city schools, “gymnastics, games and sports” were indeed the main content of the physical exercises. But this meant “military gymnastics” for boys, “dance gymnastics” for girls, free play for all and gender-separated sports in terms of gymnastics, athletics and gymnastic games, just like various sports were being presented at that time in society.

The curriculum of 1939 and particularly the revisions after the Second World War were in their intentions much more pedagogically reformed and integrative oriented. However, the teachers were hardly prepared and trained, so that until way into the fifties Swedish gymnastics and gender-separated gymnastic games dominated. By taking over the ideas of the English Sports educators, Laban and Jordan, eventually the intentional direction of physical exercise changed into a real training and bodily exercise, as part of a total persona education. The curriculum of 1959 made, for the first time, within physical education no difference between urban and rural schools, and also not between boys and girls activities. In 1964 the first common textbook for physical education “Gymnastics for boys and girls” (Ruud & Ørving, 1964) was published. Until the 1970s, male sports and female sports remained socially and culturally two different arenas. Primarily because of biological



or aesthetic reasons, women and girls were approved or ruled out of certain sporting activities. This attitude also influenced hitherto the supply and the methods used in physical education.

The legally required formal equality of the sexes led finally to an enormous mobilization of women with some “revolutionary” changes within the sport and the sports movement as a whole. This meant first of all that women gained a foothold in male-dominated sports, but that they were also able to perform these on their own premises. In school sports, this has helped to change the contents and forms of physical education, by reversing for the most part the sportification of physical education again towards an objective of emphasizing physical education through making health education, identity- and life style development, the central orientations. The situation today is that physical education remains the subject most popular for all students up to eighth grade (Dowling Næss et al., 2000), that co-education is taking place, that the curriculum is an appropriate framework for individualized and identity-promoting education, but that in reality it is still the boys and their claims and demands that dominate the subject, and that rivalry and competition continue to determine the way the activity is orientated (Brekke, 2007). In other words, co-education is supposed to be different.

However within the range of Norwegian physical education, there are also reports of other perspectives and experiences. Since forever in Norway, the focus has always been that physical education should take place mostly outdoors. This vast country with relatively few people could and can almost everywhere provide an infinite-to-use nature to all its residents. Until the 1950s, the outdoor-physical education was also largely based on the fact that most schools did not have specific sports halls, gyms or swimming pools readily available. This situation has completely changed since the seventies and eighties. There are now hardly any schools without their own sports accommodations. The attitude towards nature and to exercising in nature, however, has not changed, it may have become even a more conscious one. The Norwegians express their behaviour and their active attitude towards nature, their nature-related lifestyle, with the term “friluftsliv”. Friluftsliv can literally be translated with “outdoor living”, but is much more than just being in free nature. It is for many Norwegians a deeper emotional, philosophical and ecosophical relationship to nature. Over the last fifty or sixty years, the herewith related activities, psychomotoric and development-defining experiences are also becoming an increasingly important content of physical education. Mentioned in the curriculum of 1939 for the first time, and rather as a general principle, Friluftsliv received, in each subsequent new curriculum, a larger role in the contents of physical education. In the current curriculum K’06 (UD, 2006) the range of Friluftsliv makes out half of the physical education in the first four years of schooling and one third in that of all subsequent school years. This alignment asserts itself also very positively in all gender-shared classes within physical education.

The often used arguments of diverse physical, motivational or performance opportunities have no meaning in Friluftsliv, although – at least in the early years – you could also speak of gender-differentiated ways of Friluftsliv. Studies on understanding Friluftsliv among men and women, showed that women preferred more nature-related activities in their local area, often with the family or at least the children; while men however specified primarily physically strenuous, adventurous, and in some cases even risk-laden undertakings, some lasting several days, as their preferred Friluftsliv activities (e.g. Pedersen Gurholt 1999; Skille 2000). Here not in the least, Friluftsliv lessons within physical education in schools have contributed largely to the levelling out of gender specific differences. Today one can find as many girls and women who understand Friluftsliv as an adventure-activity, and undertake exactly the same efforts and challenges. Meanwhile, more female than male students choose Friluftsliv as a subject, both in teacher training as well as an independent course subject.

## 5. Bullying

Indeed, there are only a very few studies (Helseth 2007; Roland and Auestad 2009; Støren et al., 2010), which address the problem of gender-based bullying. These confirm however, that verbal sexual harassment is also relatively wide spread in Norwegian schools. Therefore, this is an issue that – as already mentioned at the beginning – belongs to the current core activities of equality in school work. The qualitative study of Støren i.e. (2010) however, also comes to the conclusion that this is a very sensitive issue. While problematic situations are being perceived, specifically in the language of boys with an immigrant background, or with girls who are also increasingly recognized in albeit, more often a hidden or indirect bullying-perpetrator role, there is however very little being reported of specific preventive measures. In general, there are certain actions against students or student groups in response to aggressive bullying attacks. If it is at all treated in a general or preventive manner, the problem is usually dealt with under the aspect of “inclusion” or “co-education” just like “good school or classroom climate”.

## 6. Individual-adapted education (needs education)

An already aforementioned, not new, but extremely important pedagogical principle is that of individual-adapted or individual-oriented teaching and learning (*tilpasset opplæring* = *adapted education*). In principle, it is one of the pillars of the unified school, namely that all have the statutory right to get an education that is appropriate for them, matching preconditions and socio-cultural starting points.

Although the term “adapted education” can be construed and interpreted quite differently, there is definitely the agreement, that four key equality principles are pursued: firstly, a formal equality of access; secondly, a resource equality, with which individual preconditions can be dealt with and equal treatment can be achieved; thirdly, an equality of results, with which is meant a differential treatment which is designed to make sure that individual differences in results are not automatically because of social or other backgrounds; fourthly and finally social equality. A look into the curricula since the seventies clarifies diverse orientations and ideological models of “adapted education”: in the period 1975-1990 adapted education was understood as integration. Individuals should become members of a social community, therefore, they must adapt to the needs of the community. In case of difficulties, this means for example extra- or special education in order to pass the hurdle of integration. In the period of 1990 until 1996, adapted education was understood as Inclusion according to the understanding of the UNESCO Salamanca declaration (1994), in other words the focus shifted from students to the school. Subsequently, adapted education posed a challenge to ordinary education in order to create a sense of school community. This relocation became even clearer in the period 1997 to 2005, during which adapted education was understood as individualized education. Individual-adapted education should be based on individual needs and wishes. Hence the choice of students, parents and teachers is being strengthened and the principle of result equality is being nullified in so far as individual education and education meeting the expectations of an individual can lead to very different results. Since 2006 a certain turnaround can finally be observed in which adapted education once again changed back more into a teaching and learning community. Former key concepts like freedom, flexibility and individuality are replaced with equality, community and solidarity.

In the discussion and justification of adapted education, it is striking that gender differences are not seen as such, when talking about given differences. Indeed, in the description of individuality it is merely underlined that all men are born unequal: firstly in their preconditions and secondly in their social background. To these differences, the school has to be considerate and has to respond: firstly by ensuring that each individual is optimally promoted, so that his capacities are recognized and that he can exploit fully his opportunities; and secondly by attempting to even out social inequalities, precisely in order to be able to achieve the former. Gender is not regarded as a separate factor of inequality, but merely as a biological feature, which cannot be evened out. Adapted education is in so far considered to be a “gender neutral” principle, even if the reality of practice and teaching shows that this is often not the case. An educational desirable principle that still encounters its limits in gender-reality.

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### **Suggestions for further independent study of the topic**

Sports play a very important role in Norwegian society. On the field of active sports, girls and women have achieved, in these last two decades, an equalisation where not only have they overtaken traditionally male sports, but they also added feminine aspects to sports activities.

At the same time women are very active in gym studios, not only to make their bodies more attractive but also to uptake a healthy life style.

Nevertheless, there is still a very large imbalance concerning the attention given by the media to men and women who practice sports.

Observe how in sports the genders in your country's media are portrayed and discuss possible reasons for the often rather sexist portrayal of female athletes, together with possibilities to reverse this portrayal.



# From history to the present – faces of gender in Poland

Małgorzata Jarecka-Żyłuk and Justyna Ratkowska-Pasikowska  
Akademia Pomorska w, Słupsku, Poland

*“Women and men in the Polish Republic have equal rights in family, politics, society and economics. Women and men have equal rights, in particular to education, employment and promotion, equal pay for work of equal value, to social security, to hold offices, and to receive public honours and decorations. No one shall be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason.”*

Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, art. 32.2, 33.1/2

## 1. Introduction

Holistic education is perceived as a starting point for understanding the category of *Gender* in the institutional, social and economic area. Thus, taking this idea into account it is becoming a leading mainstream perception of gender (female-male) that as a category, men and women are in fact different, but equal to each other (Vidala, 2008). Occasionally we reinforce rather restrictive semantics of *Gender*, what is really at the outset puts us in a whirl of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. The openness of the citizens of Europe should open us to the multi-dimensional and multi-faced perception of gender issues, a critical attitude to it would be a salvation for future generations.

Presumably, Poland is not the only country in Europe, where a patriarchal model dominates the social structure. This model is related to a specific style of education, including thinking. In fact, it is as previously mentioned, the so-called ‘male eye’, in the patriarchal world that dominates women. So where is this equality, we all fight? The answer is: the mentality, the mind, and the so-called *social nucleus*. Sex then, on this assumption, should be equal, and thus different. Contemporary women and men are products of society, “kneaded” by time and the system is trained by society.

The education process, and so-called gender socialization (remark 1) starts from early childhood. The first memories revolve around issues related to a sense of self-identity of both gender and sex. In practice this belief and behavioural experience of the world asks ‘Am I a boy or a girl?’ Category Gender equality implies an approach to the female-male relationships (and therefore the girl-boy) on the social scene and more. Thus, both socially and culturally “accepted is that of women (in the biological sense) expect to implement a different set of characteristics (other socio-cultural gender) than from men” (Rutkowska, 2008). Gender roles are such sets of sexual characteristics identified in society and culture.

Since 1999, Poland still applies educational standards relating to enlightenment and is constantly evaluating education standards relating to the rules of formation and development of textbooks for students, whether primary, secondary and high schools, in particular, the content contained therein. Their main objective is the dissemination of both gender equality and sexual rights. Programmes should be compatible and based on the Convention on Human Rights and the Constitution of the country concerned (op.cit.).

Currently, Poland is involved in a social discourse. How many departments for guidelines for authors curricula and textbooks include the recommendations of the Convention, particularly Article 5, which asserts that "State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to: change the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of men and women in order to eliminate prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women" (Wołosik: 2). Taking this into account means that guided classes, workshops and lessons in schools should include elements of equality education and an outline of the content, regardless of the level of education. Simple topics that students can talk about should be woven into the everyday life of ordinary schools (op.cit) on areas such as women's rights, the rights of men, or, for example, how one would react to violence inside or outside school. Gender is a social priority now.

## **2. Historical development of gender-equitable education in Poland until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

Polish historians most frequently perceive the issue of relations between people of different genders as 'mild patriarchy'. According to many of them women were already particularly respected by men as early as the Middle Ages (Pietrow-Enker, 1992: 13). In Polish society there was a common conviction that women played a significant role only as wives. Her own qualities and faults, her intellect and ambitions bore no significance. Women's social class position was always lower than men's. The Church, using its power, aimed at making women focus on their penance and abstinence, showing humility instead of pride and weakness instead of strength. Only women from upper classes possessed a relatively stronger social position: from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the 14<sup>th</sup> century the value of their dowry increased and as a consequence they retained the right to decide about their dowry along with their husbands. In the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in magnates and wealthy gentry courts as well as in urban patricians' houses people started to take an interest in culture. The world of books was no longer forbidden for women. Some of them took an interest in philosophy, nature and even science. However, these phenomena cannot be overestimated.



Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century well-educated women were isolated cases. A lot of women were involved in national and political activities in the age of the Polish partitions. A lot of them participated in the independence movement, they nursed wounded rebels, worked as couriers, took care of widows, orphans and captives, they also supported the resistance movement with guns in their hands. The heroic and patriotic images of women gave up their place to a different kind of activity by women, which was rapidly gaining popularity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and had a crucial influence on the dissemination of emancipation tendencies. This activity was education. One should not be deluded that the scope of education was very wide. On average it was sufficient to teach young women to read, write and play a musical instrument. They usually gained knowledge at home being educated by hired governesses. At that time in Poland girls' boarding schools were operated. They were usually run by laypersons (rarely by convents) and provided the upper class ladies with general education in the areas that were believed to be significant such as housekeeping, foreign languages or music. In 1775 the Commission of National Education (CEN) attempted to introduce specific teaching standards for the first time in girls' boarding schools. The Commission imposed on them an obligation to provide them with sound knowledge and instil appropriate views and traditions into them so that 'as prospective wives and mothers they could nurture our characters and behaviour as well as be a bastion for fortitude and good governing' (Kołłątaj, 1954: 93).

## 2.1 Education in Poland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

The next document, after CEN regulations, was a normative act called 'The regulation of girls boarding schools and schools for girls', which regulated the issues connected with the education of girls. It was prepared in 1810 by the Chamber of Education. The act introduced a clear division of girls' educational establishments into girls' boarding schools and schools for girls, it also established their organisational structure, curricula and teaching goals. Boarding schools became 4-form establishments (I-IV). The curriculum included the following subjects and areas of knowledge: Polish language, French language, German language, arithmetic, book-keeping, history and history of Poland, how to maintain health and raise children with physical and moral aspects, introduction to astronomy, classes on useful and harmful plants, drawing, women's jobs, classes on prices and kinds of food and ways of preparing it as well as classes on furniture, services and payment for servants (Winiarz, 1992: 8). 'The regulation of girls' boarding schools and schools for girls provided the possibility of opening lower schools with two or three forms and higher schools with four forms.

In 1824 67 girls boarding schools and private schools for girls operated with 1126 female students studying at them (Winiarz 1992: 13). A lack of well-trained

governesses was a formidable obstacle, which affected proper operation of these establishments. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1825 in Warsaw, on the initiative of girls' boarding schools and schools for girls, the Governesses' Institute was opened, which was later transformed into the State Institute for Female Education and was subsequently nationalised. In 1840 women's emancipation pioneer Julia Molińska opened the first secondary school for girls. Although this initiative did not last long, it had many followers and soon it was possible to send one's daughter to such schools, which were opened in major Polish cities.

It is important to remember that the beginnings of formal education of women coincided with a difficult period in Polish history. It was the time of partitions and Poland disappeared from the maps of Europe for over 125 years. It was also a period of incessant fight for freedom, which was eventually regained in 1918 towards the end of World War I. Various changes in the system of education were connected with the fight for the retention of Polish language and culture. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the first state schools for girls were opened, mainly due to political reason. Russian tsar Aleksander II, who reigned over a vast territory of Poland, was particularly interested in rooting out Polish language and culture, which is why he carefully controlled the curricula. He initially introduced Russian language into the schools and later demanded all subjects to be taught in Russian. At the same time, steps were taken to reduce the number of schools run by private entities or church institutions (Winiarz 1992: 19). Paradoxically the new state schools meant better educational opportunities for girls from lower social classes.

In Galicia, in the Austrian partition, there were schools for girls: departmental – preparing them for work in commerce with the possibility of adding two or three higher forms, whose curriculum included, *inter alia*, French language, the history of mother tongue literature, hygiene and household and secondary schools for girls usually consisting of six forms. Having taken the school leaving examination and complementary entrance examination the graduates could be allowed to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Teachers' Seminary. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the access to basic education in rural areas increased dramatically. Many schools were opened, usually very small with one teacher who taught children in the system of joined classes. These rural schools were, by necessity, coeducational, admitting both boys and girls. Secondary schools for girls both state and private were oriented towards providing their female students with general knowledge but were unable to equip their students with more practical knowledge. In order to provide female students with such knowledge vocational schools were opened, training students in the following crafts: bookkeeping, bookbinding, sewing, typesetting and commerce (Winiarz 1992: 21). Not only did girls receive instruction at schools but also in the 80s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they started to obtain vocational qualifications by serving traditional apprenticeships, e.g. having completed a five-year apprenticeship at pharmacies or as dentists' assistants they were able to take a practical and theoretic-

cal examination confirming their vocational qualification. In 1891 The State Dental School for Women was opened in Warsaw (Winiarz 1992: 21).

The Interwar period is a very important period for Polish pedagogy. The education of girls, which followed a completely different educational path during the years of Polish partition, was fundamentally different from the education in schools for boys in terms of curricula and organisational aspects, was now undergoing a dramatic transformation. The Education Programme for Secondary Schools, published in 1919, gave a solid basis for the reconstruction of Polish secondary education. The aim of this programme was to close down classical gymnasiums (secondary schools where pupils were taught Greek, Latin and other languages), gymnasiums (secondary school) and 'real schools' (a type of Polish secondary school) as well as secondary schools for girls. The aforementioned schools were to be replaced by 8-form secondary schools providing their students with general knowledge. The programme of these new schools aimed at modernising secondary school through limiting curriculum and implementing formal goals such as, *inter alia*, independent reasoning, shaping creativity and aesthetic taste, acquisition of academic notions and historical thinking into the teaching process (Miąso 1992: 74).

New curricula were the same in schools for boys and in schools for girls. Therefore, for the first time in the Polish system of education a school for girls was on equal terms with a school for boys. In the school year 1922/1923 in the Republic of Poland there were 762 gymnasia of general education with 137 024 male students and 90 105 female students. At that time the state ran 260 schools (180 schools for boys, 34 schools for girls and 46 coeducational). According to the educational authorities at the end of the 1920s teaching standards were very high, which was reflected in the quality of school leaving examination (*matura*) (Miąso 1992: 78). In 1935 9,565 men and 5,377 women took the school leaving examination. 8,171 men and 4,649 women received school leaving diplomas (Miąso 1992: 78).

## 2.2 Education of women at university level

Women first gained the right to study at university level at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a gradual process, achieved after years of countless efforts. Take for example this: since the mid 1880s Polish women, who were studying abroad, were applying for admission to the Jagiellonian University – initially unsuccessfully. The 1894/1895 was a major breakthrough when on the virtue of the right for observation first women: Stanisława Dowgiałło, Janina Kosmowska and Jadwiga Sikorska started their studies in Cracow. They went down in the history of the university as well as in the history of the feminist movement. At first women were not actually students, since they did not have the right to take exams or graduate. In the following year a further five women were allowed to study at the Department of Philoso-

phy under the same conditions and the Faculty of Medicine opened its doors for women in 1900.

At the University of Warsaw, which established the guidelines for studying in renascent Poland, women's right to study was not questioned (Halbersztadt, 1996: 23). The situation was conducive to women as they already studied at other universities and illegal or semi-legal forms of education in partitions (organized by, *inter alia*, Flying University or the Society for Educational Courses). The Faculty of Humanities of the Society for Educational Courses constituted 80 % of students and its statute stated that 'everyone can be a student regardless of their gender'. Thus the barriers of coeducational education had already been broken down.

In the first year that women studied at university (1915), women constituted 9 % of all students of the University of Warsaw, in 1918 – 20 %, in 1923/1924 – 35 %, the highest percentage was recorded in 1932/1933 and amounted to 41 %. In the following years this percentage dropped slightly and just before the outbreak of the World War II reached 40 % again. Since the beginning, the ratio of male students to female students was different at various departments. The Department of Philosophy with its humanities and natural science sections appeared to be the most popular among women – they constituted approximately two-thirds of all students. There were considerably fewer students at The Faculty of Medicine – initially 8 %, during World War I the percentage increased to 30 % only to stabilise at 20 % later on. At the Faculty of Law of the University of Warsaw, where women had studied since the very beginning, (earlier than at, *inter alia*, the Jagiellonian University) initially women constituted 3,6 % and later 15-20 % of all students. And finally, there were such faculties at which women had not studied until the World War II – these were three theological specialisations. Women in other countries were admitted into universities earlier than in Poland and this is where Polish female students who wished to study headed for. It is difficult to provide an exact number of Polish female students studying abroad during the partition period because they were registered as citizens of Austria, Russia and Prussia.

The analysis of the files of the University of Zurich, which granted women the right to study already in 1867, reveals that the number of Polish female students was considerable. The first Polish female students started studying there in the academic year 1870/1871. Polish students defended 237 dissertations in total, 104 of which were defended by women at the Faculty of Medicine at this university from 1880 to 1914. The majority of the dissertations were defended by female students towards the end of the aforementioned period (Hulewicz, 1939: 32).

Women who were able to start their studies earlier were also able to start their scientific careers earlier as well. There were the most famous ones among them, who could not study in Poland and afterwards find employment there. They usually decided to stay and work abroad. Everyone knows the example of Maria Skłodowska, who, because of her gender was unable to study at a Polish university. She then

decided to study at The Sorbonne. She was the first woman ever to head a faculty at the Sorbonne and the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, unfortunately, not as a Polish scientist.

### 2.3 Post-war and contemporary education

During World War II education at all levels was eliminated by German and Soviet invaders. Teachers were arrested, sent to concentration camps or made to live in exile. Only some schools remained open. These were usually primary and vocational schools. The rest of the teachers, along with students' parents, created secret organisations, risking their lives. In October of 1939, a Secret Teaching Organisation was created and later, during the summer of 1940, the Department of Education and Culture of the Government Delegation for Poland, which was a direct subordinate to the Ministry of Education of the Government of the Republic of Poland in exile based in London. These bodies organised secret classes at all levels including university level under the German occupation. They operated throughout the war. Teaching was conducted in accordance with previously established principles, most frequently using the method called secret sets. Such sets (a group of children, older students or university students) could not consist of more than 5-6 people. Students could not meet in the same flat more often than twice a week; they could not change the venue during that day. Teachers went from one location to another teaching their subject.

Thanks to this rigorous and well-controlled system the exams and qualifications gained during the period of underground education were respected by the post-war government, which enabled the students to continue their education after the war. This underground education was coeducational. During the German occupation, in various political circles of Polish society, new concepts of Polish education started emerging. They were different than those from the pre-war period. Groups of lefties aimed at creating a fully democratic system, unlike the other groups which wanted to retain the system from the inter-war period (1918-1939) (Pecherski, 1978: 61). In spite of the fact that the projects of a unified system of education existed, the reconstruction of the system was initially based on the principles of the pre-war one, dividing educational institutions into male or female ones. State schools provided educational services free of payment. Enlivening the field of education led to the opening of various educational institutions including private, secular or religious. After 1948 as a consequence of 'raising the ideological awareness in schools as well as basing the teaching on Marxism and Leninism ideology' these schools were gradually closed down (Pecherski, 1978: 72). At the peak of Stalinism, schooling was controlled completely by the state. The development of the education system was approved by the act on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1961, this act agreed the political system and organisational structure of schools: schools became uniformed, free, public and

secular. Both this act and later, decrees of the Ministry of Education, were contributing factors to the creation of coeducational schooling. Virtually all the schools were operated by the state with the exception of a few private ones run by convents. This situation lasted until political transformations in 1989. Since 1990 many individuals or organisations have opened schools at all levels. Private schooling is not well developed and constitutes a small percentage of all schools. The percentage of gender division is basically insignificant.

### **3. Girls' education, boys' education and co-educational education**

When we mean the education of girls and boys for the first time we try to embed it in a social space, which most often is the school. Forget about education in the context of family, friends of friends. Education is not the everyday, in return is attributed to its special place. Polish educational reality is set in grey, heavy, thick walls, inside where there are different rules of the game than "freedom". Do you want to survive you must adapt to them. The rules also concern the relationship of girls and boys. Including their education, learning and survival.

Education in Poland is a co-educational system. Today, however, more often hear in the media and the press for the introduction of a more varied, wider education. Scientists, psychologists and educators increasingly support this view, pointing out the advantages of this education, if only for psychological development. Current education "differential" in Poland is not great, not as any alternative, some proportion of Poles believe it is an emergency exit. Some argue that the co-educational system interferes with the development of boys and girls because of revealing differences in cognitive development. Co-educational schooling is also reflected in the relationship between students at different educational levels.

If we were to make a diagnosis and division, which at a certain stage of human life is important because of being in his role as a woman-man, we would refer it to the four planes, the four paradigms of society: education, adolescence, maturity and menopause, bearing in mind that this is strictly stereotypical typification. Thus, the images of descriptions begin by women, and their place in the social context of education. When detail is about this and the types of behaviour preferred in play, the child is reinforced: enjoyment of "caring", permission to cry or other expressions of emotion, expectation of gentleness and nurturance, attitude of receptivity, gentleness and peace. Puberty in the case of women is characterized by a focus on appearance (more than on skill), receiving a very strong message about the obligation to "pleasing" the environment (to be "conquered" and not "conquer"), they are chastised for breaking down the schemes. In turn, this period of maturity is characterized by: the expectation to meet their reproductive role (attitude to motherhood), the expectation of welfare, gentleness, self-sacrifice, the implementation of the two spaces: the civil and professional.

Menopause is characterized by: a strong stereotype of menopause, the expectation of sexual abandon, devotion. For boys, it looks completely different. The context of education is embedded in entertainment aimed at capturing, growing and governance and competition, lack of tolerance for crying and expression of emotion, expectation of bravery and independence, to accentuate their presence, praising breaking out of the schemes, a period of aging: focus on skills (to a much greater extent than appearance), the development strategy of “gain” (including: achievements and partners), the affirmation of breaking out of patterns, a period of maturity: focus on keeping families (and the fact that someone – a woman – will care for him), the attitude to conquer and towards their career, sacrificing ease of others, the implementation in one space – a professional (not home), the period of menopause: the lack of stereotyping andropause, the expectation of further sexual activity, continued implementation of their plans.

Embedding a gender category in the home, school, kindergarten and also there is the stereotypical perception of the world and the interactions between women and men (Kopciewicz). Institutions operate from a position of authority, agencies providing permanent socialization patterns of the world to read. The school therefore is a tool of mass education, distribution of social inequality. Besides the school, as they decide the fate of individuals, society girls and boys (op.cit.: 13).

Manifest in the naturalistic differences between boys and girls the belief is reinforced by the most common cognitive structure of the teacher. Meeting students at school is a kind of a meeting of the normative system of do's and don'ts. In addition, it can be noted that the Polish school is a national, conservative, unifying, and the only tribute to the “difference” can be seen in the recognition of sexual difference: school socializes youth to attend because of traditional gender roles (Dzierzgowska, Majewska, 2008). The Polish school is the most important and most effective place for reproduction of patriarchy: girls from “kindergarten” know they have to perform inferior social roles, that their destiny is to motherhood, boys know they are destined to power, prestige and adventure (op.cit.).

In addition, the dominant tools and educational resources in Polish schools is a manual (handbook). The manual affects the body in a way that directly and indirectly, through the content and images that are included in it. As stated by the author of the report (op.cit.), giving as an example, that textbooks will not find the characters of children from different cultural backgrounds. And yet sitting in the seats next to the Polish students are pupils of other nationalities. There are children of the Roma and Vietnamese refugee children from Chechnya. We could be taking advantage of their presence among us, to show other cultures, languages, religions and customs. There is also nothing about children with disabilities, even in the textbooks for classes at school.

The idea is not just a book that promotes equal status for women and men, but also a textbook open to diversity, which would show the world in its complexity, to



teach appreciation and respect for otherness. In the classic textbook approach a girl is sitting quietly, and the boy has ideas. This gives the message that boys are creative, independent, ambitious and competitive, and that girls are diligent, industrious, docile and flexible. The boys are active and engaged, have knowledge, even beyond the curriculum and their own ideas (on the basis of the report).

Space is perceived as the school and classes of students. It looks a little like a strategic game location, in that space, with two so very different genders. For example, the practice of planting students in pairs: a boy-girl, often against the will of the interested parties that aims to improve the learning efficiency of the boys (not girls) (Kopciewicz, 2009: 15; for: Zaidman, 1996: 65.) As further noted by the author “The teachers expect that girls will watch over the correct functioning of the boys, which apparently gives them a stronger position in the class (they occupy part of the control functions available to the teacher)” (ibid: 15). Another way to justify this state of affairs is, therefore, to entrust girls obligation to “civilize” the class (mitigation of morals). This leads to the conclusion that their spatial arrangement is primarily to deploy aggressive boys and girls are used as tools of catalysis (Kopciewicz, 2009: 16; Howe, 1997: 34).

Analyzing further possible examples of co-ed adventure should also pay attention to issues students deal with in the front seats. Addressing the front seats to prove is (pro) szkolności, primarily concerns the orientation of the girls. For boys, the situation is completely different, smaller (pro) szkolność boys is regarded as natural and normal (Kopciewicz, 2009: 16; for: Mosconi, 1994: 31). Another example of victimization on grounds of sex is the physical appearance of the person. In school everyday we can see that the comments about appearance or dress most often girls, can have its reference on the basis of morality. On the following levels of education, for example, in junior high or high schools, we deal in Poland with a greater dose of repression, if it deviates from traditional appearance. Definitely we can see that educators often attack the so-called counterculture masculinity (long hair, dreadlocks, and counterculture costume pieces). For women it is more about the repression of the so-called sexualization image (op.cit.: 16).

#### 4. Tasks and aims of gender-equity in and outside school

Equality is the biggest challenge for present-day Europe and the most efficient tool to implement this notion is education. Neither school nor its reformers are aware of the actual challenges facing European education, nor are they aware of the necessity of making up for the perennial loss that Polish education has in the field of *gender mainstreaming*.

*Platform for Action*, passed in 1995 in Beijing, the final document of Fourth World Conference on Women states the following: ‘Today’s girl is a woman of the future’. Her talents, ideas and energy constitute the foundation for achieving goals



such as equality, development and peace. In order to realize her capabilities she has to develop in a favourable environment enabling her to satisfy her spiritual, intellectual and material needs in the areas of living, protection and development as well as guaranteeing her equal rights' (Beijing Declaration).

During the conference in Beijing the governments of the participating countries, including Poland, committed themselves to 'prepare educational programmes and teaching materials for teachers and form-masters increasing their awareness of the status, role and contribution of both women and men in family, in accordance with what was defined in article 29, as well as in society; in this context propagate equality, co-operation, mutual respect and sharing the duties between the boys and girls' (Beijing Declaration).

#### 4.1 The education system in Poland – some basic information

The right to education is stated in article 70 of The Constitution of The Republic of Poland, in accordance with the constitution, education to 18 years of age is compulsory and free in public schools, public authorities are to ensure universal and equal access to education for citizens. The education system in Poland is a three-stage system introduced by the 1999 education reform act. Children age 7-13 attend six-grade primary school; next they continue their education in a mandatory 3-year lower secondary school (gymnasium) (state examinations are administered upon completing this stage); having completed their education in the lower secondary school (*gymnasium*) students can choose between: 3-year secondary school or profiled secondary schools, at the end of which students take the school leaving examination (*matura*), or 4-year technical secondary school also enabling students to take *matura* or 2/3-year vocational school. Compulsory education is for children and young people aged 7-18. In practice, students usually complete their education at the age of 19-20. In 2004 a new principle was passed which introduced an obligatory 1-year pre-school preparatory period for 6-year-olds. At present the Ministry of National Education is working on a new regulation which will lower the age of compulsory education to 6 years of age.

#### 4.2 Male and female students in various types of schools

Data regarding the structure of both female and male students is included in the reports of Central Statistical Office (*GUS*). According to the 2010/2011 Central Statistical Office report on education: in primary and lower secondary schools boys prevail: in primary schools the average is 95 girls for 100 boys, in junior high schools 92 girls. Primary and lower secondary schools are compulsory, thus they reflect the proportion of both genders in the entire population at a given age.

The most popular type of post-lower secondary school is a secondary school: in the 2010/2011 school year this type was attended by 43 % of all students. The girls have dominated the statistics for years. The average is 160 girls for 100 boys. Over the past few years the interest in vocational schools has been steady. This phenomenon is likely to be connected with the constant demand for workers skilled in a specific profession both on the domestic job market as well as on the gradually expanding European Union market. Although in the 2010/2011 school year, 7800 fewer students in technical secondary schools and 5100 in vocational schools were admitted than in the previous school year, the proportions in comparison to secondary schools have not changed in the last 3 years. It can be inferred that slightly smaller admission to technical secondary schools and vocational schools results from general demographic tendency in the group of 16-18-year-olds.

Approximately 80 % of male students of vocational schools received training in engineering and technical specializations, whereas female students chose mainly economic and administrative courses. In the last school year the number of male students doubled the number of female students in such schools.

Also the number of female students in technical secondary schools is decreasing: currently they constitute approx. 34 % of all students; from the field of economic and administrative as well as civil courses students chose mainly IT courses, engineering and technical. Over the last few years a smaller interest in profiled secondary schools have been observed, in the 2010/2011 school year the number of female students doubled the number of male students. In such schools (generally with small number of students and unpopular) women constitute 56 % of all students. From among 8 existing specializations over half of the students choose economic and administrative specialization (more often chosen by women) as well as engineering and technical (more often chosen by boys).

#### 4.3 Examinations and research

The school reform introduced the external examination system. Both female and male students must take The Competence Test at the end of the sixth form of the primary school which measures students' achievements within the scope of reading, writing, reasoning, using information and applying knowledge. It cannot be failed – it is only used for informational purposes, its results may affect the general school assessment but do not influence a given student. Since 2003 test results have not been included in school reports; The Lower Secondary School (Gymnasium) Test is administered towards the end of the final year, it is mandatory, the score does not affect the graduation, however, it might be taken into consideration during the recruitment process and it is often a criterion affecting student's admission to a particular secondary school. Furthermore, the cumulative results affect the assessment

of the school. The test consists of two parts the humanities and science subjects. In 2008/2009 school year foreign language test was administered.

As far as the graduates of all types of secondary schools, with the exception of vocational school graduates, are concerned they take the school leaving examination (*matura*) (the aforementioned examination measures the level of general education), in vocational schools and technical secondary schools The Examination Confirming Vocational Qualifications in a given profession is administered.

The Central Examination Board prepares the external examination. The Central Examination Board along with The Regional Examination Boards are responsible for the administration of the test. Every year CEB announces the nationwide scores. The Central Examination Board and The Regional Examination Boards conduct research into various aspects of the external examination system. Additional information regarding school achievements is provided through international research projects. Poland is currently participating in two such projects: PIRLS (*Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*; remark 2) and PISA (*Programme for International Student Assessment*; remark 3).

PISA tests allow to compare the results achieved by 15-year-olds in Poland with the results of other OECD countries. The results show that girls in Poland managed reading better than boys by 50 points as well as reasoning in natural science, however, the difference was only 6 points. Boys scored 6 more points than girls in mathematics. Both in state examinations and in PISA test so called *gender gap* is clearly visible. In the humanities part boys regularly score lower than girls: the difference is usually 3-4 points. In the mathematics and science part boys are slightly better; however, the difference is considerably smaller. The review of The Matura Exam report shows once again that the issues associated with gender are perceived as an insignificant factor while reflecting on education. There is too little data, it is provided in an unsystematic manner, official publications lack an attempt to create, on their basis, further and more profound analyses. Data regarding the scores with gender taken into consideration appeared in the reports only in 2004.

#### 4.4 Findings

Official, readily available data collected by Central Statistical Office as well as by The Central Examination Board reveal the existence of areas of vivid inequality in the education system.

Boys examination results are slightly worse (especially in humanities and not only in Poland) and there are fewer boys in secondary schools.

In research on education it is generally emphasised that teachers' expectations influence students' achievements – these referring to a given person (e.g. connected with conviction about students' abilities) as well as those to a specific group. Other

important factors may be peer influence, values and convictions manifested by the students.

Researchers emphasise two different systems of socialization co-exist in schools: this 'official', proposed by teachers and the one resulting from peer pressure. Therefore, there are two ways that may be taken into consideration while attempting to answer the question what the situation of boys and girls in Polish schools is. Firstly, it is necessary to examine children and youths attitudes towards school and their potential influence on results achieved in school. Secondly, it is worth analyzing if or what influence teachers' convictions, for instance, that boys are less disciplined than girls, may have on boys educational failure.

*The state Report on Polish intellectual capital* draws attention to these inequalities. The authors of the report refer to both PISA research and the results of Polish examination. According to the report 'in most highly-developed countries teaching methods seem to be designed for girls'. The report points out that not satisfying children's specific educational needs (which in turn, according to British research, occur more frequently in boys) results in 'their actual discrimination' (The state report on Polish intellectual capital). For apparently the only state report referring to the differences in examination results between boys and girls that is not much. Data regarding the choice of post-junior high schools and examination data suggest that there are two strong beliefs dividing professions in to 'typically male' and 'typically female'. Girls' aspirations appear to be high. At the same time, this is what the reports concerning the situation of women on the job market point out, the success they achieve academically is not necessarily reflected in their professional life. The following hypothesis may be proposed: school expects children to have specific behaviour patterns – different for boys and different for girls. – N.B., especially at very early stages of education, behaviours such as diligence, obedience, politeness in a broad sense, which are usually attributed to girls, are rewarded.

However, 'boyish' characteristics such as individualism, rebelliousness, and wit-tiness are 'rewarded' in 'adult' life. In frequently quoted here book 'Sex and gender in education' the author provides the utterance of a school guidance counselor: 'I have been working all my life to have better relations with girls. Boys are naughty, disobedient, sometimes aggressive but curious [...]; girls rigidly stick to their role, they are very sensitive to criticism [...], there are afraid of failure [...], they are willing, kind but less creative.'

#### 4.5 Core curriculum reform versus gender equality

From April to June of 2008 The Ministry of National Education conducted public consultations regarding the reform of core curricula. The reform assumes, inter alia, more efficient equalisation of educational opportunities, which may be achieved by lowering compulsory schooling age to 6 years of age, better teaching methods

in junior high and post-junior high schools: the reform assumes better correlation between curricula in secondary schools and curricula in junior high schools; more efficient methods of teaching foreign languages; the introduction of a more flexible model of education, well-adjusted to the students' needs: The Ministry of National education anticipates that in secondary schools (most likely in the second form) some subjects will be taught at extended level and some subjects will be limited.

In primary, lower secondary, secondary schools teaching is to, *inter alia*, shape attitudes which 'favour their [students'] further individual and social development such as honesty, credibility, responsibility, persistence, sense of self-worth, cognitive curiosity, creativity, entrepreneurship, readiness to take initiative, team-work, courteousness. In social development it is very important to shape civic attitude, develop respect for tradition and culture of one's own nation as well as respect for other cultures and traditions' (Primary school core curriculum – the preamble).

Neither in documents presenting the reform guidelines nor in the presentation on The Ministry of National Education website, which summarises the process of consultation, nor in the preamble to the respective parts of the core curriculum the need of incorporating issues and principles of gender equality into education system is mentioned.

It is necessary to develop children's social skill in kindergartens, teach them to differentiate good from evil and even teach them that 'they should not boast about wealth and tease underprivileged children, nor should they deride or persecute others' (Kindergarden core curriculum). In other words core curricula include a very specific educational project. However, they can be characterised as 'gender-blind', which is also reflected by education law. As a consequence of disregarding the notion of gender equality there is an absurd example of a new history core curriculum (History and social studies core curriculum), which does not mention any women. In primary school students learn about three women (Queen Jadwiga, Maria Curie-Skłodowska and Helena Modrzejewska). In the lower secondary school core curriculum there is not a single woman name. This 'blindness' is already present in the language of the core curriculum.

The core curricula for kindergartens, primary schools, lower secondary school or secondary schools do not distinguish between male and female students. Little children do not have gender; as far as the older students are concerned the neutral male gender must be sufficient. In the history core curriculum at general and extended level the following were not into account: issues connected with various family models throughout the history of mankind, the role and position of women in social and economic life of early societies. The core curricula lack information about the women's fight for equal rights, about the reforms of election law, about the role of women in 19<sup>th</sup> century labour movement or about actions taken by women in Poland in the field of education. It is worth quoting point 21.1 from the extended history core curriculum: '[student] describes and compares ideologies such as con-

servatism, liberalism, nationalism, utopian socialism, Marxism, anarchism'. There was not enough room for women's movement – in contrast to other -isms feminism is apparently not a serious ideology. Assuming that teachers do not provide students with more facts that are included in the core curriculum students learning history at general and extended level will not be able to learn that the legal and social position of women was different than today.

The situation is slightly different in the core curriculum of the subject called 'history and the society'. The following curriculum has been created for students who choose science subjects at extended level with limited history and social studies. It appears that history for science oriented students allows them to touch upon issues which were not incorporated in curricula for humanities oriented students – e.g. discussion on the role of women throughout history, emancipation of women and changes in the family model. Education authorities, which declare their will and need for equality of educational opportunities, do not notice one of the most significant areas of discrimination and inequality.

#### 4.6 Organisations of extracurricular activity diversified on the grounds of gender

Majority of youth organisations and associations in Poland constitute coeducational organizations. Coeducation was also present in the majority of catholic associations which still operated in Poland after World War II and irregularly during the communist regime. Brought back into existence in 1993 Catholic Youth Association used to function as Catholic Male Youth Association and Catholic Female Youth Association. Among all scouting organisations, which did not succumb to coeducational trends were Scouting Association of the Republic of Poland and Catholic Scout Association 'Zawisza'. Both these organisations have their roots Baden-Powell scouting movement from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They assemble Christians and co-operate with the Catholic Church. Both Scouting Association of the Republic and Catholic Scout Association 'Zawisza' came into existence as a response to Polish Scouting and Guiding Association, which became an ideologised organisation after the World War II. In both organisations the activities are conducted separately for males and females. Their aim is to develop in young people certain qualities and virtues, which are important for both genders, however, they have a slightly different dimension for men and women.

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## Remarks

- (1) “The socialization of gender-is a set of standards and practices for education in the unit specific set of sexual characteristics – gender socialization is a workout, entity to which one is subjected to throughout the period of adolescence and puberty in all spheres of life, which is achieved through specific socio-cultural gender.” (A. Wołosik, *Edukacja do równości czy trening uległości? Internetowa szkoła równości i demokracji*, Raport [http://www.wstronedziewczat.org.pl/downloads/ania\\_genderfair.pdf](http://www.wstronedziewczat.org.pl/downloads/ania_genderfair.pdf))
- (2) PIRLS – research that has been conducted since 1991 on the representative sample of 10-year-olds; currently 40 countries participate in the programme. Poland joined the programme in 2004, in 2006 research was conducted on a representative sample of 5500 male and female students from 150 schools. PIRLS is coordinated in Poland by The Central Examination Board.
- (3) PISA research has been organised in Poland since 1997 by OECD; it mainly concern female and male students who are 15 years of age and older. The first research was conducted in Poland and all over the world in 2000, the second in 2003, the next in 2006 and 2009. PISA test cover three areas reading and reasoning in humanities, mathematics and reasoning in natural sciences. PISA programme is coordinated by Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of The Polish Academy of Sciences.

## Suggestions for further independent study of the topic

1. How can teachers determine the educational preferences of boys and girls, and change educational programmes to avoid occupational segregation in the future?
2. How might gender be most effectively represented in educational resources, materials and text books? How can teachers and pupils challenge false representations?
3. In what ways can teachers ensure they do not reinforce gender stereotypes? And how can they ensure that their pupils do not reinforce stereotypes?
4. In what ways can teachers and pupils work together in a fully inclusive manner, celebrating and recognising diversity at all levels with equal roles and status of men and women?



# Gender and education in Turkey

Nesrin Oruç Ertürk, University of Economics, İzmir, Turkey

*Like in every region of the world, the equal distribution of educational rights among all the citizens of a country has been an issue for Turkey as well. This inequity may sometimes be, for example, regional or may relate to sexuality; however, what cannot be denied is the fact that there is an inequity problem in education in Turkey. Considering the importance of education for the individuals and the future of a country, this paper is an attempt to list the main factors representing the causes of inequity of education in Turkey and the projects and possible solutions recommended.*

## 1. The Historical development of gender education in Turkey

The Turkish Language Association defines the word “education” as “direct or indirect help in or outside the school given to the children and young people to develop their identities with the required knowledge and skills and understandings to have their place in the society that they will live”. This definition in no sense includes the message that one gender needs to be equipped with more knowledge and skills than the other one. Unfortunately, in today’s world, in different regions of different countries, girls still receive less education or are in a disadvantaged position compared to boys, for some country-specific reasons. Kofi Annan, United Nations ex-secretary stated that “millions of girls have never been to school, another million have not been given the chance to complete their education, yet uncountable number of girls have not got the chance to receive quality education. Millions of girls in the same position are thrown to the corners of rough life conditions all over the world. All these little girls with less life skills and therefore less hopes, when they become mothers they are unprepared to add anything to their society in terms of political, social and economic development. The risk of facing poverty, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS etc. will be higher for those women and their children” Annan, in that sense, reminds us that this is not only an issue for Turkey but for the whole world as well.

In order to understand the present situation in Turkey, it is important to study and find out the transformations in education, from the last periods of the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. Akyüz, (2011) states that education was not only contributing to the prevailing lifestyle of the Ottoman society until the end of the 18th century, but it was also affected by that lifestyle. The most common educational institutes of the period were elementary schools and madrassas. He (2011) further goes on to say that:

*“In Ottomans, the function of education as a transformer of the society was preceded by the education itself being transformed. In this process, the military and political events had been influential. To this end, starting with 1776, first the military schools were started to be opened. Until the period which commenced with the proclamation of the Tanzimat in 1839, the view in the Ottoman society toward the child, youngster and their education had a feature of being religious and traditional. For example, in Sultan Mahmut the Second’s edict which made elementary education mandatory, the reason to make elementary education mandatory was cited as children’s need to first learn their religion.”*

During the Tanzimat (Reformation) period which started in 1839, the idea that the families’ and the state’s educational duties are only religious and traditional started to weaken. At that point, it was started to be considered from the aspect of their responsibility toward children and society. This development was mainly because of some statesmen’s, authors’ and educationists’ self-criticism and recognition of society’s lack of knowledge and seeing this traditional view of education as a primary reason for the state’s decline. In a short while, there was the perception among the intellectuals who violently criticized the society as well as themselves, insisting on the idea that education should stop pursuing the goal of developing civil servants; it should instead focus on science, art, technology, trade and produce specialists and entrepreneurs who can be successful in these areas. However, as a result of wars and social tragedies in this period, new regulations in education could not be realized. Despite this, the second Mesrutiyet period, due to various ideological discussions and arguments became a laboratory for the Republic era.

Since the Ottomans, some state administrators have been very influential in transformations in education as well as transformations in society through education. The foremost of these is Atatürk. Having spent his entire educational life in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, he keenly observed the educational roots of the collapse of the Ottoman state. Atatürk attributed this collapse primarily to the education system which trained non-nationalistic, passive individuals, and that which did not aim to develop knowledge and behaviours necessary for life (Akyüz, 2011). His desire was for the Republic to have a completely different system of education and he gave the responsibility of upbringing virtuous, hardworking, active, nationalistic generations to teachers. He wanted education to be national as well as scientific. With the Unification of Education Law in 1924, revolution of the alphabet in 1928, and revolutions of mixed education and women’s rights in those years, very significant transformations transpired in both educational and social life.

Unfortunately, since then, not a great deal has been achieved. Duryea (2007) when stating the importance of equal educational rights for all citizens of a country, emphasized that this is as important as the total literacy rate of a society. Indeed, according to Turkish constitution “Nobody can be deprived from the educational rights. Eight year compulsory education is imperative for every single girl and boy

in Turkey and is free of charge in all state schools. Education is given under the control of government in accordance with Atatürk's Principles, following the principles of contemporary science and education. Government is in charge of supporting the kids who do not have the financial resources with scholarships and/or any other different ways".

Apart from that, according to the Ministry of Education legislation number 1739, basic education is the right of every Turkish citizen. Every member of society either male or female is to be provided with equal educational opportunities. According to legislation number 222, primary education is compulsory for all children and young people between the ages of 6 and 14. It is the main responsibility of the Ministry of Education to create equal educational opportunities for every citizen and to fight against the obstacles that limit the right to education.

## 2. Girl-Boy education and co-education

According to Kaya (2009) over the past few decades, the education system in Turkey, as in some other Western countries, has become progressively coeducational. Germany permitted women to matriculate in 1901, and by 1910, women had been admitted to universities in the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Austria-Hungary, France, and Turkey.

The versatile and comprehensive education reform was established in 1997 in Turkey, to ensure that student-centered education be carried out in all contexts and at all levels of education, in-keeping with the requirements of the times and society, and that no individual be left out of the education process for any reason. Under this education reform, coeducation became the norm in the Turkish education system to ensure that girls and boys receive the same educational opportunities. At present, except for vocational and religious schools, all government and private schools are coeducational.

Atlama and Özsoy (2009) state that gender based inequity presents the biggest obstacle to attaining education and state further that this obstacle should be overcome only with equal educational rights. It is a fact that gender inequity in education can be discussed under a few criterion. The first and maybe the most important is the percentage of schooling.

Table 1: Schooling rate

Schooling rate	Primary Education			Secondary Education			Higher Education		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Gross Value	96,34	99,21	93,37	86,64	96,24	76,66	36,59	41,07	31,89
Net	90,13	92,25	87,93	56,51	60,71	52,16	20,14	21,56	18,66

(Ministry of Education Statistics 2006/2007)

The above data from the Turkish Ministry of Education clearly reveals that schooling rates of boys and girls are not equal in Turkey (See Table 1). According to the data above, the schooling rate in Turkey between 2006-2007 in primary education is 92,25 for boys; whereas, this rate is only 87,93 for girls. This difference continues in secondary education with 60,71 for boys and 52,16 for girls and in higher education with 21,56 for boys and 18,66 for girls.

The same situation can be understood by looking at the World Bank's data between the years 2003-2007. Then, it is possible to comment on the distribution of literacy rates between girls and boys in Turkey. Whereas the literacy rate in 2003 among 15-24 year old was 98 % among boys, this rate was only 93.3 % among girls. When we analyze the same topic in 2007, we see that the number has increased to 98.6 % in boys but unfortunately the increase in girls has reached to 94.3 % with only 1 % increase. The table below from the Turkish Statistics Institute showing the total numbers for boys and girls for literacy can be used as another sign of gender inequity in Turkey. In 2011, the total number of illiterate girls (2,617,566) is almost five times more than the boys (553,704) at the same age.

Table 2: Literacy rate and gender (+14 ages)

Literacy situation	Total	Boys	Girls
Illiterate	3.171.270	553,704	2,617,566
Literate	61.889.739	32,013,033	29,876,706
Unknown	1.984.626	1,035,890	948,736
Total	67.045.635	33,602,627	33,443,008

(Government Institute of Statistics, 2011)

According to an agreement signed between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education between 2001-2005 a campaign named "Haydi Kızlar Okula" (Girls! Let's go to School) began and listed below are some of the key reasons affecting girls' education in Turkey:

- shortage of schools and classrooms;
- schools being far from the living centres of families;
- poverty;
- value judgments of families (considering boys to be more precious than girls);
- the tendency to make children work to support the family budget;
- most families considering their girls' marriage to be more important than their education;
- the rarity of women role models in the rural areas;
- the weak possibility that the children who finish their primary education will continue their secondary education.

When compared to boys, it is clear that a fewer number of girls attend primary education. Even though this discrepancy between boys and girls has decreased in recent years, especially among low level social classes, still drop-outs from primary schools

especially at 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, is very common among girls. When we analyze the numbers given by the World Bank for the years 2003-2006 on the dropout rates both for boys and girls, we come across the following situation. Whereas, in 2003, the total number of dropouts from primary education was 253,968 in total for girls, it was 84,417 for boys in the same period. In 2006, there has been a development for 22.3 % by decreasing the number to 18,860 for boys. However, the percentage for girls has decreased to 50.6 %, which is still 28.3 % less than the average for boys.

UNESCO (1997) lists the general factors hampering the education of girls as:

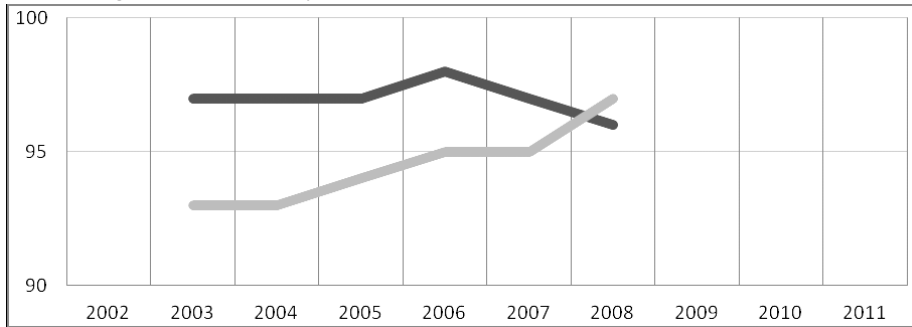
- socio-economic,
- parents and society feel negative about girls' education. Girls are "transient" members of society and have less value than boys,
- poor recognition of the benefits of education,
- girls are kept at home to do housework or earn income for the family. Parents feel that educated girls have smaller chances of marriage and are not adequate as wives and mothers in the traditional sense,
- school-related factors,
- parents are reluctant to send girls to mixed schools,
- parents do not entrust their girls to male teachers,
- absence of schools within reasonable walking distance,
- teachers favour boys in class,
- access to teachers, facilities and equipment is poor,
- curricula and materials reinforce the view of women as dependent and exclusively domestic, marginal and dispensable.

When the reasons above are analyzed it is no surprise that almost all of the same reasons apply to the Turkish context. Families are eager to invest more in their boys' education, since in business life the wages that males earn are higher than females. Therefore, families have the tendency of investing in boys more than girls. What needs to be done in relation to this issue is to enable families and government to work on ways to increase the total literacy level of the country without looking at gender. This will inevitably increase the developmental level of the country as well.

What is clear from all the preceding examples and statistics is that, boys in Turkey are in a more advantageous position than girls and that they receive more education. Study results reveal that there are indicators of this situation. It is understood that when the education level of the father increases, the chances that children have to continue their education increases. On the other hand, the number of children at home is another indicator. It is stated that the more children at home, the less chance for them to continue their education. The father's job is another important factor that affects dropout rates. If the father has a stable job, meaning a stable income of course, it is more likely that the children in that family will continue their education to secondary schools.

Another indicator that shows gender inequity is the progression to secondary school. This number is calculated by the percentage of the total number of students who have graduated from primary school the year before, with the ones who enroll in secondary education. Below are the percentages of progression to secondary school for boys and girls for 2002-2008.

Table 3: Progression to secondary school, male-female (%),



black line: boys

grey line: girls

(UNESCO, Institute for Statistics)

Table 3 indicates how the situation is different for boys and girls in terms of progression to secondary school. In 2008, the number has increased to 97 % from 93 % for girls, which may seem to be a big development; however, when the same situation is analyzed for boys we see that they already start at 97 % and with a decrease of 1 %, they reach 96 % in 2008.

### 3. Results and conclusion

Turkey, as a country in which gender equity in education is a part of its constitution, should do its best to reflect gender equity in real life as well. It is clear that this country and its citizens need to continue to work in the way that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk did in the 1920s, when he took significant steps in the development of a more modern and technological country. Even if there are some other issues related, the Turkish government and society are obliged to take necessary precautions for girls to have the same education opportunities as boys.

Basic education is imperative in increasing the quality of life that one leads. Some of the pathways in increasing the quality of life might include; family health, personal development and social development; all of which directly contribute to a better society in every sense. Education gives the highest rate of return on any social investment. According to the Canadian International Development Agency (2003) nearly two thirds of the world's 113 million out-of-school children are girls.

This number worsens considerably in times of conflict, social crisis, and natural disasters; and girls tend to suffer the most at these times. There are large variations among regions; however, girls generally have higher enrolment rates than boys. The numbers within countries also vary depending on geographical location. In rural areas, for example, the number of out-of-school children is often much higher than in urban areas, with the majority of those children being girls.

As a country in which gender equity is a part of the constitution, Turkey should prove that this equity is not just on paper. The effects should be reflected and observed in real life as well. To that end, gender equality means that women and men enjoy the same status. Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social, and cultural development, and to benefit from the results.

We have to keep in mind that numbers are not enough, but they are essential. All the numbers stated above shed some light on the position of gender equity in Turkey. Maybe at this point, having some positive discrimination towards girls can be considered. Later, a review of policy, media campaigns, education projects and programs that may inexplicitly have an important gender focus include “teacher development”, “curriculum reform”, “education management” and “institutional strengthening” can be done with workshops on gender-based violence and gender sensitization.

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World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org>

(Internet sources accessed May 2012)

### **Suggestions for further independent study of the topic**

1. Compare and contrast girls' education and boys' education in Turkey in the past and present.
2. Further investigate the concept of "co-education" for teachers and parents in Turkey. What do they understand from co-education and how is it different from theory?



# Upsetting the apple cart: Overachieving girls, underachieving boys

Fiona Shelton, University of Derby, United Kingdom

*Despite the fact that girls were once lagging behind boys in most subjects, girls now dominate the exam leagues in all phases and subjects, and in the UK today there are more women enrolled on undergraduate programmes than their male counterparts. However, the frequently expressed moral panic in education that girls' overachievement is a cause for concern is, in itself, a cause for concern. According to Paule (2008) an implication of this is that by 'overachieving' girls are somehow being seen as disrupting a perceived natural order, that this is a social problem and that it is the cause of boys' underachievement. Jackson, Paechter and Renold (2010) propose that although there is a popular sentiment that we are now living in a 'post-feminist' world, gender inequality still exists. What constitutes feminine and masculine ways of being are constantly reinforced in everyday interactions, and the process of "gendering" individuals is ongoing and dynamic. Young people draw on their knowledge of norms and stereotypes to enact their social identities, including their gender identities and therefore essentialist thinking needs challenging to ensure that young people are able to negotiate their personal identity in more fluid ways.*

## 1. How the past informs the present

The emergence of the modern education system in England began mainly in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Obstacles stood in the way of a free national compulsory education reinforced by conflicting groups; the upper classes of society who had no interest in the development of education of the working class and the working class who had little interest in education. Children were required to work and working class families were somewhat reluctant to educate their children due to the loss of the earnings the children brought in. It was not until the introduction of the first Education Act in 1870 that education became a priority.

The Education Act in 1870 (also known as the Forster Act) was therefore a significant milestone in terms of a national education system. This act also introduced a dual system – voluntary denominational schools and nondenominational state schools and required the establishment of elementary schools nationwide which supplemented those already run by the churches, private individuals and guilds.

Education was not free at this time, the school boards that had been established could charge a weekly fee of up to nine pence. For a limited period the school boards could pay the fees if the parents were unable to do so. The Voluntary Schools could also receive such payment of fees from the school boards. Attendance at school was

the responsibility of the school boards (Gillard, 2011). Under the Elementary Education Act in 1880, education became compulsory from the ages of 5 to 10. Elementary education became effectively free with the passing of the 1891 Education Act, which provided for the state payment of school fees up to ten shillings per week. In 1893 the school leaving age was raised to 11 and later to 13 and from April 1900 higher elementary schools were recognised, providing education from the age of 10 to 15. In England then, formal 'gender parity' in education has existed for a number of years. Since the early 1900s, almost all boys and girls aged 5 to 11 received some form of education up to at least 14 years of age (Arnot and Phipps, 2004).

Interestingly though, whilst education was provided for both boys and girls inequalities in the education system prevailed particularly for girls. The school curriculum was essentially established for boys and largely due to the influence of the church, the curriculum therefore developed over a number of centuries. Gillard (2011) traces the history of education in England as far back as 597 AD where education was provided in some manner for boys. It was not until around 1807 that girls were beginning to be seriously considered in education and even then the curriculum was adopted from that which had been developed for boys. The girls' curriculum in its existing form according to Gillard (2011) is only about sixty years old. For many years boys have outperformed girls at school and girls have faced serious obstacles within the education system. When the tripartite system of secondary education was introduced in 1945 the eleven plus examinations 'institutionally discriminated against girls' (neohumanism, 2004: online). Examination pass marks were set higher for girls so there were girls on the borderline of the academic threshold who were denied a grammar school education because of their sex and so more grammar school places were made available to boys.

'Educational feminism,' was central to the post-war era of social democracy, but it was not until the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s that perceptions of girls began to change. Without doubt these movements were significant landmarks for girls' education in England and the outcomes of which are evident in girls' achievements today. Feminists began to focus on female underachievement and the ways in which women were prevented from achieving their full potential. They began to challenge society's stereotypical and patriarchal perceptions and roles of women. This, Wilkinson (1994) argues was the 'genderquake' where fundamental attitudinal shifts occurred towards women. Prominent in this 'genderquake' in the 1960s and 70s were two central feminist movements.

The liberal feminist movement primarily focused on creating equal access for women in the wider legal context by arguing for equal opportunities in all institutions to enable women to have the same rights as men. Women would therefore be able to show and maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. The second being radical feminism which challenged patriarchy by opposing standard gender roles and the oppression of women, and called for a radical reordering of

society. The changes women instigated about life choices, rights and roles in society were substantial. Women have, in the past hundred years, achieved many new rights in terms of property, the vote, employment and education; arguably this shift has helped to reposition women within society.

These movements enabled fundamental shifts in education for girls. Liberal feminists, in their fight for equality created greater opportunities and access for women. Anti-discrimination legislation in the 1970s was important in highlighting discrimination against women. The Equal Pay Act of 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 encouraged equality policies in schools and colleges, and local government. The creation of the welfare state enabled independence for divorced women with children. Additionally they were in a position to work and earn their own money, although there were still expectations that women would fulfil their domestic duties at home. These changes in the workplace began to filter into the education system and create more opportunities for girls.

However despite the transformations for women in terms of the policy, the practice was often different. These laws were less effective in 'tackling indirect forms of sex discrimination in the informal cultures of the school and in tackling prejudices and stereotyping within the content of the curriculum' (Arnot and Phipps, 2004: 6). Radical feminism recognised the flawed education system, with a curriculum articulated from a male perspective and how it disadvantaged girls and hindered their progress at school and in the wider world of work.

This implicit patriarchal organisation of the curriculum continued to reinforce stereotypes. There was still a perception, in and beyond school of traditional male and female roles in society and the deep-rooted notion that boys and girls were somehow different once they reached the age of employment, with boys having greater access to work, apprenticeships and higher education. The curriculum offer was different for boys and girls. From the early 1950s to the late 1960s girls were less likely than boys to be entered for GCE Ordinary Level examinations. In that same time period, the pass rate in GCE Ordinary Level examinations was higher for girls than for boys and girls were less likely than boys to enrol on Advanced Level courses, less likely to achieve two or more Advanced Level passes and less likely to participate in Higher Education from the 1950s up to as far as the 1980s (Haggart, 2009).

The underachievement of girls has been explained in a number of ways. Firstly, spurious arguments relating to IQ theories, which have claimed that females are innately less intelligent than males and secondly, research into gender socialisation throughout society, such as the work of Sue Sharpe, Becky Francis and Fiona Norman. Their research has suggested that in societies such as the UK the socialisation process as it operated, at least up to the 1970s, meant that many parents socialised their daughters to show dependence, obedience, conformity and domesticity. Boys on the other hand were more likely to be encouraged to be dominant, competitive

and self-reliant. Sharpe (1972) argued that girls had been socialised to focus on the importance of romance, being a wife and becoming a mother rather than on the importance of their education and following a career. When Sharpe replicated her study in the 1990s she found girls to be more focused on their education and career prospects, demonstrating a shift in perceptions about their own role in society as well as in their socialisation as young women.

In general, until the 1980s girls were usually offered a curriculum that prepared them for life in the home, for example studying home economics, housewifery, needle craft, cookery etc; whereas boys were offered practical subjects such as woodwork and metal work or were encouraged to study academic subjects (NGFL, 2010). It was not compulsory for girls to study the sciences and their subject choices narrowed their options in the employment market.

The introduction of a common examination system in 1984, a compulsory National Curriculum in the Education Reform Act of 1988 (the National Curriculum) and national targets based on standardized tests of pupils' abilities in core subjects at various ages began to address the problem of gender differentiated subject choices in secondary education. It became compulsory for boys to study modern languages and for girls to study mathematics, science and technology. Interestingly though it 'did not prevent young men and women choosing sex stereotyped subjects and post 16 vocational and academic courses' (Arnot et al, 1999: 21-22). So although education in the UK achieved more formal gender parity in terms of the curriculum offer, the subject areas in which qualifications were gained still reflected gender stereotypes.

Despite the fact that girls were once lagging behind boys in most subjects, girls now dominate the exam leagues in all phases and subjects, and in the UK today there are more women enrolled on undergraduate programmes than their male counterparts. However, the frequently expressed propensity in education that girls' overachievement is a cause for concern is, in itself, a cause for concern. According to Paule (2008) an implication of this is that by 'overachieving' girls are somehow being seen as disrupting a perceived natural order, that this is a social problem and that it is the cause of boys' underachievement. Warrington and Younger (1999) note that the success of girls should be a cause for celebration and congratulation. Instead it is viewed as a 'problem' with concern expressed about how males are 'failing'.

Girls' achievements can be attributed to the changing factors in socialisation and in wider society, with greater opportunities being available to women and to the changing curriculum. Curriculum 2000 opened up greater choice for girls in terms of their subject choices at GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and Advanced Level examinations, which in turn, have created greater opportunities in the workplace. According to the Office for National Statistics (2012) women represent almost half of the workforce in the United Kingdom and increasingly hold influential positions. However, evidence suggests that the labour market is still fail-

ing women, whilst pay levels are improving, they still do not reflect the qualification levels of women and women in some occupations are still fighting for equal pay and positions in the workplace. The double burden experienced by the majority of women would suggest that women's lives are still largely constrained by childcare and domestic responsibilities in addition to paid employment.

The reports on boys' underachievement have dominated educational discussions since the 1990s in the United Kingdom. This worry about boys' underachievement has caused somewhat of a moral panic with politicians and in the media. Faludi (2000) explored this moral panic in her research with men, regarding the underachievement agenda and refers to an old model of masculinity, which she believed showed men how to be part of a larger social system. She states that this model provided men with a context in which they could understand and navigate their masculine role, this context has now changed and men need to reconstruct their understanding of masculine identity. So perhaps the moral panic should be less about boys' underachievement and girls' overachievement, but more about restructuring societal thinking whilst reasserting a patriarchal discourse.

## 2. The complex debate around gender

### 2.1 In school

Surprisingly there has been little literature published since the 1970s and 1980s in terms of what is meant by educational 'work with girls' in contemporary schools. This is not the case when it comes to boys as there is a range of guidance documents which clearly focus on working with boys and ways to raise their achievement (Renold, 2012). Jackson, Paechter and Renold (2010) propose that although there is a popular sentiment that we are now living in a 'post-feminist' world, gender inequality still exists. In particular, they state that many girls' and young women's lives are not reflected in popular stereotypes and efforts to address this are often lost in the continued debate about boys' educational attainment.

According to Mendick (2012) the boys' underachievement debate controls how we understand gender and education, making us focus more on some factors and forget about others. She reminds us that the debate turns achievement into an issue of girls versus boys, and we then overlook the problems girls face in education including amongst others, teenage pregnancy and sexualisation. The debate around boys' and girls' education is complex, it is not as simple as developing female focused programmes and materials for use in schools, because as suggested by Renold, (2012: online):

*"...much of the literature which targets girls' educational needs may be contributing to reinforcing gender stereotypes of what it means to be a girl learner (e.g. hard-working, rule-following, good at languages and literacy) a particular type of 'girl' (e.g.*

*consider the media categories of mean girl, the slut, the laddette) or other aspects of 'femininity' (e.g. bitchiness, internalisation of failure, low self-esteem)."*

The challenge for schools, teachers and those working with young people is to think critically about educational materials, practice and information aimed at working in a non-discriminatory way and to consider how such programmes might unintentionally reinforce and sustain, rather than challenge existing gender stereotypes.

There have been policy moves to address gender inequality in England in recent years. The Equality Act of 2006 amended the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and came into effect in England and Wales on 6 April 2007 (amended again in 2010). This was the biggest change in sex equality legislation in thirty years, since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). This is currently known as the Gender Equality Duty and places a statutory duty on all public authorities to have due regard of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. More responsibility is now in the hands of service providers to think strategically about gender equality, rather than leaving it to individuals to challenge poor practice (Gender Equality Duty Overview, 2007). This has implications for schools and in particular the approaches to the curriculum.

The statutory National Curriculum for compulsory education (pupils aged 5 to 16) aims to secure an entitlement for all pupils, irrespective of factors such as gender, class and social background. There is a statutory inclusion statement in the National Curriculum that sets out expectations for teachers in terms of their approaches to teaching, the expectations they have of pupils and explains the need to meet diverse needs in the classroom so that all children and young people are given every opportunity to succeed on school.

There is further non-statutory guidance for schools on how they can fulfil the gender equality duty. The guidance discusses ways in which gender stereotypes can be challenged across the curriculum and highlights ways in which schools can adapt subjects traditionally perceived as male or female subjects to make them more inclusive to either sex. The Gender Equality Duty applies to all areas of schools including the selection of texts, educational materials and the ways in which gender is represented within them (Eurydice, 2010).

However, most curriculum areas are associated with one gender or the other. Paechter (2012) states that in most western countries, mathematics, science and technology are seen as masculine subject areas, whereas humanities and languages tend to be associated with femininity, though she states that this is less strong as the link between mathematics, science and technology with masculinity. She further goes on to say that it is important to remember that

*"...gender marking is not hard and fast, and is mediated by society. It tends to be high status areas that are seen as masculine, lower status ones as feminine. So, for*

*example, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the masculine-labelled subjects were the then high status classical languages*" (Paechter, 2012: online).

The result is that young people often feel uncomfortable studying a gender-aligned subject when they are not of that assigned gender or they do not choose subjects they feel are not assigned to them. In other cases young people often find themselves in inadvertent single-sex classes simply because of the implicit nature of gender marking of subjects. The ensuing problem is that girls are less likely to study the higher status subjects of mathematics, science and technology, and therefore they are not in a position to pursue high-status and better-paid careers later on. Similarly, boys are more likely to opt out of the humanities and modern foreign languages, closing down other options which may be more beneficial to them. Holden's research discusses children's 'avowed commitment to gender conformity' (2002: 107), which means that encouraging children to make specific curriculum choices may not work.

## 2.2 Beyond School

Whilst it is perceived that most activities outside school are intended for both boys and girls there are rules in place in certain organisations that challenge this system. For example the Football Association allows mixed teams in the under 7s to 11s, but once children reach the age of 12 the Football Association states that players in a match must be of the same gender. The Sex Discrimination Act (1975, section 44) says:

*"Nothing in Parts II to IV shall, in relation to any sport, game or other activity of a competitive nature where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average woman puts her at a disadvantage to the average man, render unlawful any act related to the participation of a person as a competitor in events involving that activity which are confined to competitors of one sex."*

The Football Association believes that the physical strength, stamina and physique of the average female footballer puts her at a disadvantage compared to the average male footballer, so according to Lines (2006), there is nothing illegal or discriminatory in the Football Associations' ruling. Section 44 would also allow schools to have separate boys' and girls' sports teams for some sports. Lessons could also be separated into single-sex classes if the sports were of a competitive nature and staff thought that there was a risk of injury through mismatching.

Out-of-school activities are often open to both boys and girls but the implicit gender marked activities often prevent boys and girls from joining in with activities which are aligned to the opposite sex. This relates to the previous discussion around how comfortable girls and boys feel in participating in gender marked activities and how they themselves conform to gender specific activities.



In the UK, The Scout Association, (formerly the Boys Scout Association) and the Girl Guide Association are probably the most popular groups that children and young people join outside of school. Until 2007 only boys could join the Scout Association and only girls, the guides. Girls were first admitted in 1976 to the Scouts through the Venture Scouts, a section for older children, and the rest of the sections on an optional basis in 1991. In 2007 when ruling changed 'Scouting' became co-educational and all Scout Groups in Britain must accept girls as well as boys.

The aim of The Scout Association is to "promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potential, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities" (The Scout Association Mission Statement 2007: online). The Scout Association provides a programme to help achieve this aim for young people from the age of 6 to 25. Scouting is the largest co-educational youth movement in the UK with a combined adult/young person membership of over half a million people. More girls than boys became Scouts in 2011, a first in the movement's history. Some 4,330 girls and 3,796 boys joined between January 2010 and January 2011 (BBC, 2011: online). Despite this growth, boys in the Scouts still outnumber girls by over five to one.

Girl Guiding UK is a separate organisation, it has about half a million members, including about 100,000 adult volunteers. It is for girls and young women only and has come under condemnation for maintaining a single-sex group, many people have criticised the Girl Guide Association accusing the organisers of being sexist. Whilst girls have been invited to join Scouts, boys are still prohibited from joining the Guides. The main reason according to some Girl Guides (Saner, 2009) is that girls want to be part of a girl only group. It could be argued however that whilst Girl Guides conduct research to highlight the issues girls and young women face, the association sustains and contributes to gender stereotyping and reinforces gender assigned activities and subjects, whilst Scouting has taken steps to embrace both genders. Intriguingly, there are only small numbers of boys reported who wish to join Guides, but becoming a Scout seems very appealing to girls. Although in its publication, the State of the World's Children, UNICEF (2011) identified that involvement in girls' organisations over extended periods has a positive impact on girls' civic participation and counteracts societal pressures, which can undermine self-esteem and self-confidence.

Organisations working with young people need greater support and training to engage with the concept of gender and to reflect and appreciate the many ways gender inequality is reinforced at so many levels throughout our social organisation and structure. There is a need to continue to challenge stereotypical understandings of what it means to be male and female across the whole community to ensure that young people think more widely about masculinity and femininity and contemplate other ways of being (Fraser, 1997).



### 3. How theory is reflected in practice

In the last 40 years the number of single-sex schools in the UK has fallen sharply, whilst in school it is becoming increasingly popular to separate boys and girls for some subjects (Archer, 2004). The merits and limits of single-sex and co-educational schooling have a long debated history in the UK with discussions related primarily to secondary as opposed to primary schools. According to the DCSF (2009a) it is a myth that single-sex classes are the best means to improve boys' and girls' achievement. Single-sex classes have mixed results, and as proposed by Warrington and Younger (2001) have not been shown to be the decisive ingredient in lifting boys' achievement, but have, in some cases, improved girls' achievement.

Single-sex schools are largely private schools, consequently the discussion around achievement in these settings is more complex than gender alone, the debate of social class and private schooling would also need to be considered. Smithers (2006) suggests that single-sex schools are perceived to be better because they do well in league tables. He states further that they are generally independent, grammar or former grammar schools and do well because of the ability and social background of the pupils. Using success in these settings as a factor for gender achievement is therefore not a strong enough argument to separate boys and girls.

There is no evidence that boys' exam performance is enhanced in single-sex schools, although there is some evidence that boys may be more prepared to study arts and humanities subjects in this setting (Ivinson and Murphy, 2007). So whilst it may not be possible to extricate gender and attainment in single-sex schools, perhaps they have gone some way to breaking gender stereotyping of subject choices.

Research (Howe, 1997 and Younger et al, 1999) suggests that in co-educational schools boys tend to dominate classrooms. They ask more questions and teachers tend to direct more questions to boys than girls. Swann (1992) argues that both teachers and female students contribute to male dominance in the classroom by giving more attention to the male students. Schools which attempt to alter the curriculum to provide a 'gender friendly' curriculum exacerbate gender stereotypes and reinforce the idea that some activities are gender appropriate and limit rather than enhance engagement with the curriculum (Francis et al, 2008). The construction of gender made by young people fit social norms in the peer group and wider society (Jackson, 2006; Francis, 2000; Alloway et al, 2002). These gender constructs are deep rooted and young people act them out unconsciously (Skelton, Francis and Valkanova, 2007), hence young people should be encouraged to recognise and challenge these underlying positions that have been established over a period of time. The gender gap in achievement can be removed, it is argued, by challenging notions of gender itself (Jackson, 2006; Francis, 2000; Alloway et al, 2002).

According to Swann (2003), educationalists requested to explain boys' underachievement, have blamed a range of factors including a 'Laddish' culture created

by boys that fails to place any value on academic achievement. In addition there is a lack of male teachers and thus appropriate role models, particularly in primary education and finally the effects of 'girl-friendly' schooling due to earlier equal opportunities policies, following studies which demonstrated male dominance and female disadvantage. Swann (2003) also argues that although exam results point to boys being at a disadvantage, once males enter the workplace, this no longer seems to be the case as they are presented with greater job opportunities and do not encounter the barrier of the 'glass ceiling' that women face.

Little research exists relating to the long-term social consequences of single-sex and co-educational schooling. Many proponents of co-education contend that mixed schools are essential so that girls and boys can learn to live and work together. Their argument is that schools should reflect 'real' life and as society is mixed, schools should also be mixed (Jackson, 2012). However there are those who suggest that as girls' schools do not mirror real life this makes them more crucial. They argue that 'western societies are male-dominated and women are frequently second place to men in terms of, amongst other things, opportunities, pay and power' (Jackson, 2012: online). So in a girls' only setting, individuals are responsible and free to learn without being constrained by sexual stereotypes. Girls can pursue science and mathematics. Talent can flow more naturally to those subjects in which it will be best expressed. Girls will experience at least one community in which girls and women participate, decision-make and lead in all its functions.

In practice, examples of strategies offered to schools recommended by The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2009) include:

- Commitment to valuing diversity through curriculum content with zero tolerance to any forms of harassment or discrimination (Warrington et al, 2005);
- Creation of a gender equitable school culture where the expectations and perceptions of masculinities and femininities are explored in terms of the structure of the school framework, including the resources used, responsibilities delegated to pupils and the depiction of boys and girls around the school environment (Keddie and Mills, 2007);
- Expectations of high achievement for all pupils regardless of gender. The emphasis on boys' underachievement can marginalise and downgrade the achievements of girls. Instead teachers should identify strategies that help all pupils to formulate high expectations for themselves and in turn, value their learning, understand how they make progress and celebrate achievement (Murphy and Renold, 2007 in DCSF, 2009);
- Reviewing, exploring and challenging gender stereotypical expectations and attitudes in curriculum subjects. Talking to pupils openly about gender stereotyping, discussing and questioning teachers' and pupils' essentialist and traditional attitudes towards gender.

Gender is one of the most interesting dimensions of social change (Ruspini, 2007); but it is also currently less investigated and a shroud of silence has fallen over discussions around gender identity construction in recent years. In early childhood, children tend to have rigid perceptions of gender, which shape their initial ideas of what it means to be a boy or a girl. The different ways in which gender identity is constructed are actively maintained and re-constructed throughout life. Francis (1997, 1998) highlights that gender-appropriate identities and behaviours are fluid, and some children challenge or ignore them. She further suggests that children work hard in constructing and maintaining their gender identities; and that children recognise that the behaviours typical of masculine and feminine roles are not binding, and that there is opportunity for diversity. Because many factors interact in the construction of identity, 'there can be no single masculinity or femininity; there must instead be a diversity of masculinities and femininities' (Woodward, 2004: 60).

What constitutes feminine and masculine ways of being are constantly reinforced in everyday interactions, and the process of "gendering" individuals is ongoing and dynamic. Young people draw on their knowledge of norms and stereotypes to enact their social identities, including their gender identities, and therefore essentialist thinking needs challenging to ensure that young people are able to negotiate their personal identity in more fluid ways.

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### Suggestions for further independent study of the topic

1. You might like to think further about how the curriculum in schools is gender marked and how different subjects are associated with masculinity and femininity.
2. You could investigate how teachers teach different material, or treat it differently, according to whether they are teaching girls or boys.
3. You could critically explore the dominant notions of what it means to be a girl or young woman and how these notions impact on girls' everyday lives, social interactions and aspirations and expectations. Do dominant images of 'femininity' influence the ways that girls think about and plan for their futures?



# **Gender specific education in 12 European countries – a comparison**

*Kristof De Witte, University of Maastricht, Netherlands*

*Oliver Holz, University College Brussels, Belgium*

*Because of differing levels of performance among boys and girls, gender adequate education and upbringing is becoming increasingly significant in various European countries. Earlier investigations demonstrate that there are distinct differences between boys and girls regarding their motivation. This comparative study investigates the opinion on gender adequate teaching among school children and teachers of both sexes through surveys in twelve European countries. The results show clear differences between individual countries. Teachers point out that girl can be motivated in different ways to boys.*

The study is divided into the following sections

1. Introduction and aim of the analysis
2. Description of the sample and countries
  - 2.1 Pupils' survey
  - 2.2 Teachers' survey
3. Results of the pupils' survey
  - 3.1 National groups
  - 3.2 Comparison boys – girls
  - 3.3 Results of the regression analysis
4. Results of the teachers' survey
  - 4.1 Cross national comparison
  - 4.2 What motivates boys and girls
5. Conclusions

## **1. Introduction and aim of the analysis**

According to OECD investigations, boys aged between 13 and 15 years old perform less well than girls in the same age group. The cause for this lagging behind in learning is often put down to a decline in cognitive development in boys.

This explorative study aims to look into the differences in opinion between boys and girls regarding matters of identity, sexuality, school, motivation and intercultural aspects. Furthermore, the results of the pupils' survey will be compared to those of the teachers' survey.

The study aims to provide answers to the following three questions:

1. Do boys and girls have different views on selected aspects of identity, sexuality, school, motivation and intercultural topics?
2. Do boys and girls have different views in the countries investigated?
3. Do teachers employ different forms of motivation for boys and girls?

By drawing up a specific questionnaire for both male and female pupils on the one hand and male and female teachers on the other, as well as carrying out this written survey in 12 European countries, the investigation enriches the specialised literature on gender adequate education and upbringing. The countries participating in this study are Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Norway, the United Kingdom, Spain and Turkey. Although the survey is not representative and only a limited number of participants (2086 pupils, 280 teachers) could be included, interesting conclusions can be drawn with the appropriate level of caution.

Firstly there is a differentiation by national groups on the basis of opinions held by pupils. In this way, it is possible for instance to investigate whether pupils in eastern European countries share the same ideas on gender, identity and intercultural matters. On the other hand it is also possible to investigate to what extent Turkish pupils differ from western European pupils of the same age.

Secondly, the answers given by pupils on different issues are analysed specifically for each country and compared. In this way differences and similarities between boys and girls can be determined regarding content, opinion, statement. This in turn permits a gender specific discussion on differing interests and performance.

Thirdly, data on age difference, education and gender are corrected through regression analysis. The aim is to discover whether there are significant differences between the nations taking part in the study.

Finally the teachers' answers are subjected to a close examination. These provide information on how differently teachers deal with boys and girls. Furthermore, the differences between the countries become apparent through descriptive statistics.

The present comparison is set up as follows: The second section describes the sample. The third section contains the results of the pupils' survey. This is followed by an analysis of the teachers' survey in section four. Section five finally sums up the most important insights.

## **2. Description of the sample and nations**

The collection of data took place in the course of the COMENIUS project EDGE: EDucation & GEndEr. The survey among pupils and teachers was carried out in 12 countries by the partner organisations taking part in the project. As the survey was not a random survey the possibility of selection effects occurring cannot be



excluded. The results which are described in this section must therefore be seen in an exploratory light rather than considered causally.

The survey was carried out in all countries by EDGE project institutions. Some team members encountered difficulties when carrying out the survey. This can be put down to a multitude of investigations which for many schools are part of their daily routine. Schools are often asked to participate in surveys and studies, which detracts from precious lesson time. In order to spare schools from having to reserve computer rooms too, the project management decided to provide each teacher and each pupil with a paper version (hard copy). In addition, the use of a written survey on paper reduces selective dropping out, which in turn benefits the validity of the results.

Besides personal details, the questionnaire consisted of five blocks of questions on the subject themes previously mentioned above. In some countries the integration of the block on sexuality proved problematic. In the United Kingdom for instance, headmasters wished to know why these questions were being asked, since there are no discernable differences between boys and girls. The Turkish pupils attend a private school. The reason that this school was selected, was that permission has to be obtained officially for surveys carried out in public schools. Since several questions on ethnical matters were included, it could be assumed that granting the application would be a time consuming matter. Permission of the Ministry of Education is not required in Hungary. Here however, parents have to give their permission. This was denied in some cases. There were no problems whatsoever in carrying out the survey in Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and Austria. In some countries, personal contacts contributed towards a straight forward handling of the survey.

## 2.1 Pupils' survey

A total of 2806 pupils were interviewed. The pupils were to give their opinion on a great number of items (see below). They could indicate their opinion on a 6 point Likert scale. The lower the mark on the scale, the less the pupils identified with the given statement.

The majority of surveys were collected in the Netherlands, where 607 pupils filled in the questionnaires. This was followed by Belgium with 525 and Germany with 522 pupils. The least number of surveys were conducted in Austria (99), Turkey (95) and the Czech Republic (84). The random character in the countries of the survey becomes evident in the descriptive statistics (see table 1). More boys than girls participated in the survey in Belgium, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The opposite was the case in Estonia, Norway and Spain. Details on the area of residence, i.e. whether the boys and girls live in urban or rural areas, were left to the pupils. The terms 'urban' and 'rural' were not subjected to further analysis regarding

their significance or for individual countries. This variable does however provide a good idea of the pupils' area of residence. More pupils living in urban areas were interviewed particularly in Poland, Norway, Turkey and Great Britain. In Estonia, Spain and Austria, the participants originated more from rural areas. A very good comparison can be drawn between the age groups in the different countries, with the exception of Norway, Germany and Turkey, where the participants were somewhat younger.

It must furthermore be noted that more information was available for some countries than for others. Because of the larger number of results available for Belgium or the Netherlands, the possibility of uncovering significant differences rises dramatically.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics pupils

	<b>number of pupils</b>	<b>%-boys</b>	<b>%-girls</b>	<b>%-urban</b>	<b>13 years old</b>	<b>14 years old</b>	<b>15 years old</b>
BE	525	60,76	39,24	41,90	13,52	39,43	37,71
PL	149	47,65	52,35	87,25	16,78	48,32	34,90
AT	99	57,58	42,42	34,34	23,23	38,38	36,36
DE	522	48,85	51,15	50,77	35,82	33,52	21,46
NO	338	43,49	56,51	86,39	42,01	30,47	22,49
CZ	84	58,33	41,67	61,90	36,90	22,62	38,10
UK	208	52,88	47,12	96,63	14,90	32,69	48,56
TR	95	46,32	53,68	97,89	33,68	52,63	8,42
NL	607	53,21	46,79	41,85	32,29	47,61	16,97
ES	60	45,00	55,00	20,00	33,33	31,67	20,00
EE	4	25,00	75,00	25,00	25,00	25,00	50,00
HU	115	61,74	38,26	78,26	44,35	45,22	7,83

Abbreviations: Belgium (BE), Poland (PL), Austria (AT), Germany (DE), Norway (NO), Czech Republic (CZ), United Kingdom (UK), Turkey (TR), Netherlands (NL), Spain (ES), Estonia (EE), Hungary (HU)

## 2.2 Teachers' survey

In most countries, surveys among teaching staff took place at the same schools as the pupils' surveys. This ensured good comparability between results. Due to organisational difficulties on the part of the project partner it was not possible to conduct teaching staff surveys in the United Kingdom. There are a total number of 280 valid, completed questionnaires available. The greatest number of completed questionnaires comes from the Netherlands (80), from Germany (47) and from Belgium (37). The countries with the lowest number of participants among teachers in the survey are Turkey (6), the Czech Republic (7) and Austria (8). Consequentially, these results do not provide meaningful information and must be interpreted very carefully. A generalisation of results is therefore difficult. As with the pupils, the opinions voiced by teachers on a number of items are rated on a 6 point Likert scale.

The number of women taking part in this survey was greater than men. Men are represented to a greater extent only in Turkey (83 %), Norway (55 %) and in the Netherlands (56 %). The teachers' place of residence coincides to a great extent with that of the pupils. The teachers are aged between 40 to 49 years on average. The youngest teachers on average come from Hungary and Turkey. The oldest teachers are from Germany and Poland.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics: Teachers

	count	%- man	%-female	%-urban	< 30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	> 50 years
BE	37	13,51	86,49	27,03	32,43	18,92	35,14	10,81
PL	17	5,88	94,12	94,12	5,88	35,29	52,94	5,88
AT	7	14,29	85,71	100,00	0,00	42,86	0,00	57,14
DE	47	27,66	72,34	78,72	0,00	27,66	8,51	61,70
NO	20	55,00	45,00	85,00	15,00	20,00	40,00	25,00
CZ	8	12,50	87,50	75,00	12,50	25,00	62,50	0,00
TR	6	83,33	16,67	100,00	33,33	0,00	50,00	0,00
NL	80	56,25	43,75	73,75	21,25	10,00	38,75	28,75
ES	10	30,00	70,00	10,00	10,00	40,00	40,00	10,00
EE	25	0,00	100,00	92,00	16,00	20,00	36,00	28,00
HU	23	8,70	91,30	100,00	8,70	60,87	21,74	8,70

### 3. Results of pupils' survey

#### 3.1 National groups

The calculated mean values indicate two extreme groups of nations. The first group comprises Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Diversity in opinion among boys and girls occurs more frequently in these three countries than in other countries. The other extreme group comprises Poland, the Czech Republic and Spain. In these three countries, distinct differences in opinion between boys and girls are much rarer. A reason behind this could be a less advanced stage of emancipation.

This is also confirmed by correlation calculations among individual nations. Correlations are presented in table 3. The table shows that opinions held by boys and girls in Belgium, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands correlate strongly. Opinions held by pupils in Spain, Turkey, Czech Republic and Poland however, correlate to a lesser extent with other countries, indicating a different way of thinking.

Table 3: Correlation between the opinions of girls and boys in the different countries

	BE	PL	AT	DE	NO	CZ	UK	TR	NL	ES
BE	1									
PL	0.3041*	1								
AT	0.3708*	0.0075	1							
DE	0.4286*	0.1797*	0.5307*	1						
NO	0.5494*	0.1875*	0.5233*	0.5293*	1					
CZ	0.3175*	0.1406	0.1994*	0.2469*	0.3257*	1				
UK	0.2978*	0.1744	0.3626*	0.5595*	0.5973*	0.3128*	1			
TR	0.3106*	0.2470*	0.3874*	0.1536	0.2616*	0.1726	0.1105	1		
NL	0.4744*	0.0511	0.4981*	0.5692*	0.5688*	0.1744	0.3684*	0.1183	1	
ES	0.1016	-0.0028	0.1693	0.1192	0.1907*	0.1975*	0.1792*	-0.159	0.1378	1

### 3.2 Comparison boys – girls

The results in table 4 show how pupils are positioned regarding the listed items. It was determined for each country whether there was a significant difference (at 10 % level) between the answers given by boys and girls. A cross marks whether the boys or girls hold the opinion that the given statement applies fully. This reflects on the one hand the differences between individual countries and on the other between genders. The project partners are fully aware of the fact that a comparison between nations is not always clear cut due to varying sample size. For countries with a larger sample size, it is far more likely that significant differences will occur than for countries with fewer participants participating in the survey. Estonia was not taken into account in the table because of the small number of pupils.

It is immediately noticeable that there are considerable differences in the answers given by boys and girls. Girls answer some questions entirely differently to boys. Regarding their own identity and personality development, it is evident that girls in all countries – with the exception of Spain – frequently question their parents on their childhood. Girls also observe themselves more carefully than boys and try harder than boys to develop their own identity. The exceptions here are Belgium, Spain and Turkey, where girls tend to think more about the future. In most countries, boys have more self-confidence. It is possible that the interpretation of this question had an effect on the way in which it was answered. Posing the question differently may have achieved a more affirmative response from female participants.

Regarding the second category (theme block ‘sexuality’), boys and girls voice similar views on sex education lessons in school. It also seems that boys have a greater interest in sexuality than girls, and are also able to discuss the subject better in public. This statement applies to all countries except for the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom, where boys and girls hold approximately the same views. Girls find trust between sexual partners more important than boys in some countries – except in Turkey, the Czech Republic, Poland, Spain and Austria.



		BE	PL	AT	DE	NO	CZ	UK	TR	NL	ES	HU
6. There are fundamental differences in roles and sexual motives of girls and boys towards sexual activity.	Boys	x	x						x			
	Girls											
7. Trust between sexual partners is important.	Boys											
	Girls	x			x	x		x		x		x
8. Male adolescents have limited knowledge of their female peers.	Boys											
	Girls	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x
<b>3. Interculturality</b>												
1. I like it that pupils from other countries study in my class.	Boys											
	Girls	x		x	x	x				x	x	x
2. It's exiting if I get information about other countries and cultures.	Boys											
	Girls	x		x	x			x	x	x		
3. I can't imagine to live abroad when I am growing up.	Boys			x	x					x		
	Girls	x					x					
4. I could learn many interesting things from a teacher from another country.	Boys											
	Girls	x		x	x	x			x	x		
5. Sometimes I think people from other counties are different.	Boys				x			x		x		
	Girls								x			
6. A student exchange or school visit abroad is more exiting than in my own country.	Boys											
	Girls			x	x	x		x		x	x	
7. I would like to have contact with pupils from another country/ another culture.	Boys											
	Girls	x		x	x	x		x		x	x	x
8. I think people from other countries or cultures have as much good characteristics as I have.	Boys											
	Girls	x			x	x	x	x		x	x	
<b>4. In and outside school</b>												
1. I would appreciate to discuss topics and questions of "being a boy"/ "being a girl" during the lessons.	Boys											
	Girls	x				x		x		x		
2. Gender ("being a boy"/ "being a girl") is important for a good social co-operation at school.	Boys				x							
	Girls		x							x		
3. Gender ("being a boy"/ "being a girl") is important for a good social co-operation at school.	Boys				x							
	Girls											
4. For me it makes a difference being taught by a male or a female teacher.	Boys	x			x					x		
	Girls										x	
5. I would like to learn more and discuss the topic "being a boy"/ "being a girl" in youth centres, youth camps for example (to a deeper extend).	Boys											
	Girls							x			x	

		BE	PL	AT	DE	NO	CZ	UK	TR	NL	ES	HU
6. Outside school it is more convenient to think and talk of me as a girl or a boy.	Boys	x										
	Girls								x			
7. I discuss girls topics and boys topics with my mother.	Boys											
	Girls	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
8. I discuss girls topics and boys topics with my father.	Boys		x		x			x				
	Girls									x		
9. I discuss girls topics and boys topics with my friends.	Boys										x	
	Girls	x			x	x	x	x		x		
10. Things I'm interested in I can experience while surfing on the internet, reading books, watching videos. I don't need anybody else.	Boys	x	x		x	x		x				
	Girls								x			
<b>5. Motivation</b>												
1. It is important for me to learn what is being taught at school.	Boys		x									
	Girls	x				x				x		
2. I like what I am learning at school.	Boys				x							
	Girls	x								x		
3. Compared with others in my class, I think I'm a good student.	Boys											
	Girls											
4. Working hard for school makes my parents happy.	Boys				x					x		
	Girls											
5. Even when study materials are dull and uninteresting, I keep working until I finish.	Boys							x				
	Girls	x				x						
6. I often find that I have been reading for school but don't know what it is all about.	Boys											
	Girls			x	x	x	x	x	x			x
7. I often find that when the teacher is talking I think of other things and don't really listen to what is being said.	Boys											
	Girls							x				x
8. My parents expect good study results from me.	Boys									x		
	Girls					x		x				
9. I work hard to get a good grade even when I don't like a class.	Boys											x
	Girls	x		x					x			

Note: an x marks a significant difference at 10 % level

### 3.3 Results of the regression analysis

In a further step, differences between countries were evaluated under the following aspects: (1) gender of participants (2) age of pupils (3) critical attitude. The latter is measured according to the frequency with which boys and girls question their parents. The results of the regression analysis are presented in tables 1 to 5. The straight lines represent the confidence intervals and the dots the regression coefficient. If the regression interval is below or above 0, the effect is significantly different from

0. Presentation of all regression coefficients are relative – with the Belgian pupils as reference group.

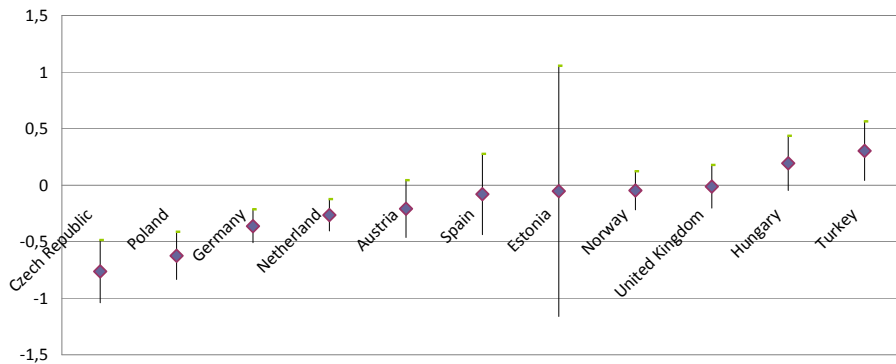
Graph 1 describes the results on ‘working hard for school makes my parents happy’. In relation to Belgian pupils, controlled according to age, gender and critical attitude, pupils from the Czech Republic, Poland, Germany and the Netherlands do not agree with this. Pupils from Hungary and Turkey on the other hand are motivated to a greater extent by their parents.

The attitude towards sex in adolescents hardly differs among the participating pupils. The regression results are presented in table 2. Turkey is the only country where pupils are less able to discuss sex in public. By contrast, adolescents in Germany speak distinctly more about sex.

Graph no. 3 demonstrates how open minded adolescents are towards other cultures. This is evaluated by the statement ‘I like it that pupils from other countries study in my class’. Again, compared to Belgian pupils and controlled according to the above mentioned variables, it is shown that Czech pupils are the least open minded. This is followed by pupils from Spain, Norway and Hungary. It is remarkable that Turkish and German pupils are most tolerant towards migrant peers.

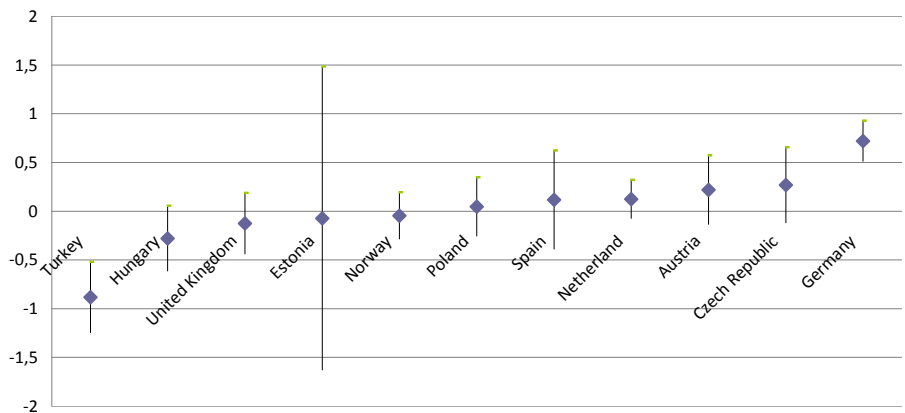
Reactions to the statement that there is a difference whether you are taught by a man or a woman are positive by pupils from Estonia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Germany (Graph 4). This is of no significance for pupils from the other countries, as is confirmed for instance by the Flemish study text in this book.

Finally, interest in other cultures can be estimated by means of the statement ‘A student exchange or school visit abroad is more exciting than in my own country’. Surprisingly, pupils from Spain, the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom react negatively to this. Pupils from Hungary, Turkey and Norway are more open towards a stay in a foreign country.

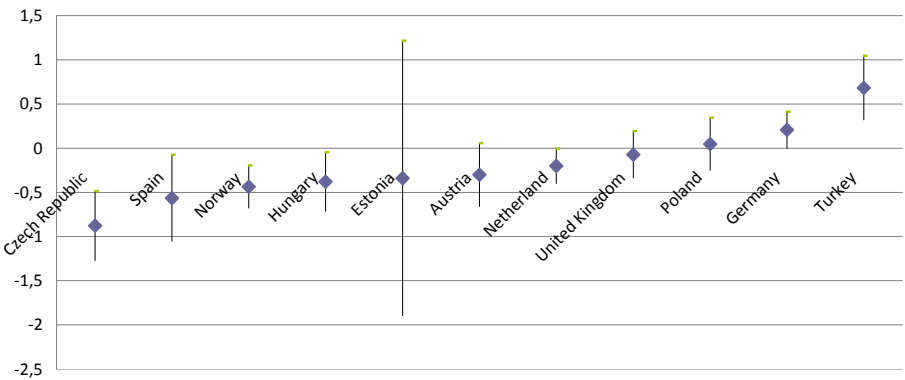


Graph 1: Regression result “Working hard at school makes my parents happy”

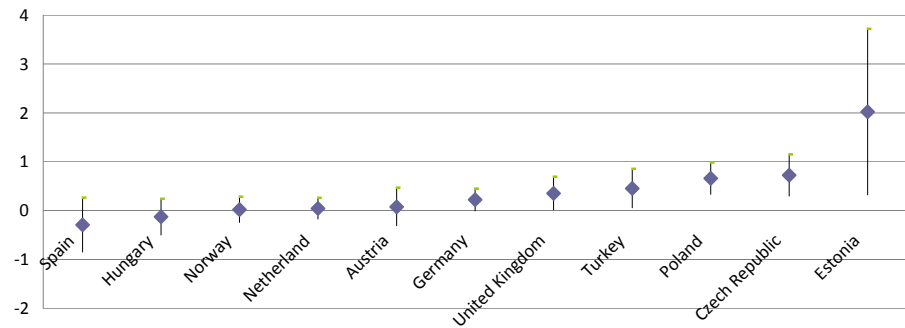




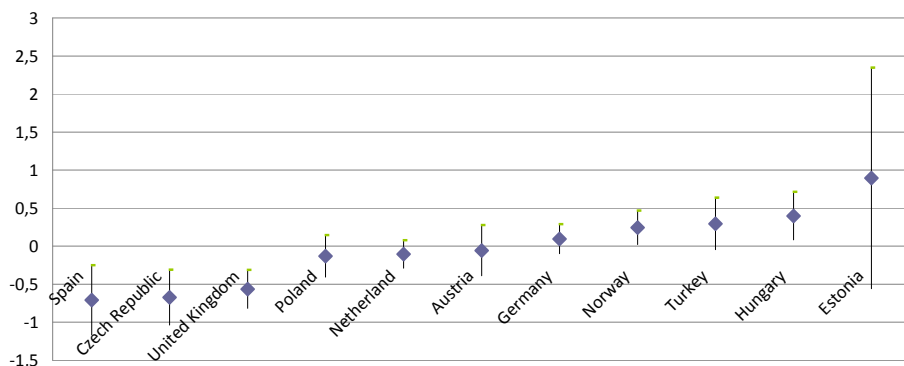
Graph 2: Regression result “I can talk openly about sex”



Graph 3: Regression result “I like it that pupils from other countries study in my class”



Graph 4: Regression result “For me it makes a difference being taught by a male or a female teacher”



Graph 5: Regression result "A student exchange or school visit abroad is more exiting than in my own country"

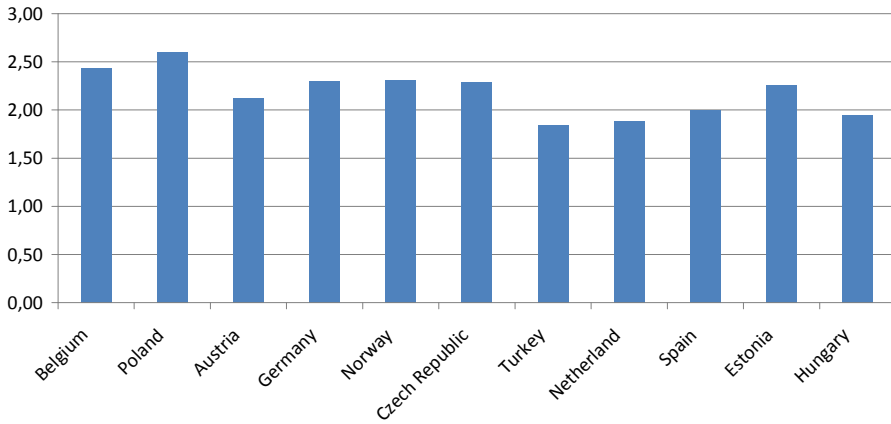
## 4. Results of the teachers' survey

### 4.1 Cross national comparison

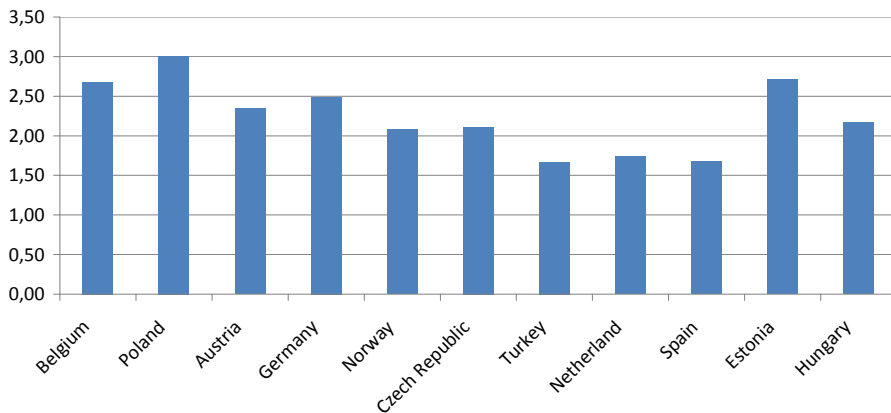
The results of the teachers' survey are presented in graphs 6 – 10. The answers given by teachers regarding the composition of a class agree throughout the different countries. The greater the number of participants per country, the greater the agreement with the statement. The mean value related to the different countries remains below 3, which in turn states that the average teacher cannot identify with the formulation of the statement. In Turkey and the Netherlands in particular teachers feel that gender specific teaching has no effect on the pupils' performance. This is made even clearer in graph 7, which reflects the answers given to the statement 'I think that students in single gender classes pay better attention.' This statement is rejected above all in Turkey, the Netherlands and in Spain.

Graph 8 shows to what extent teachers from the different countries use stereotypes in their lessons. A heterogenic pattern can be discerned in all participating countries. Teachers in Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Estonia use markedly more stereotypes than is the case in Germany and Hungary. This is also confirmed in graph 9, which shows up how differently migrant students are taught to their native counterparts. A clear deviation compared to the other European countries when answering this question is evident in the Czech Republic and Turkey.

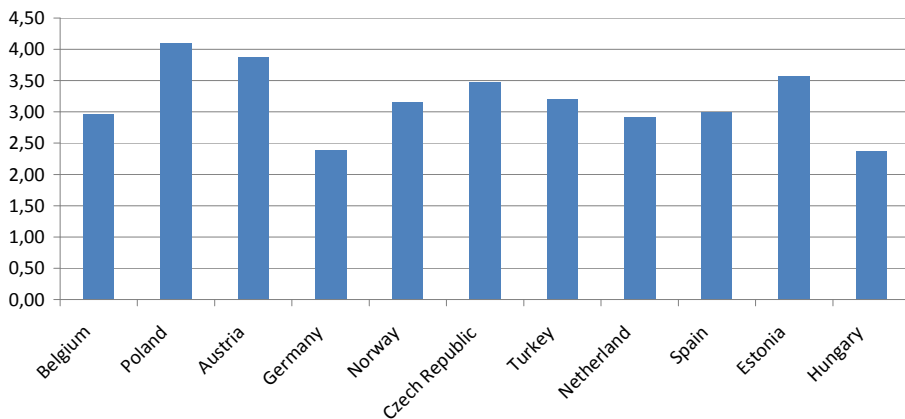
Teachers' attitudes towards homosexuality in school vary greatly in the individual countries (graph 10). Outing seems to be problematic particularly in Hungary and Germany. Teachers in Norway, Turkey, the Netherlands, Spain and Estonia also indicate that outing on the part of a student could lead to problems. Only Belgium, Poland and Austria state explicitly that this problem does not exist.



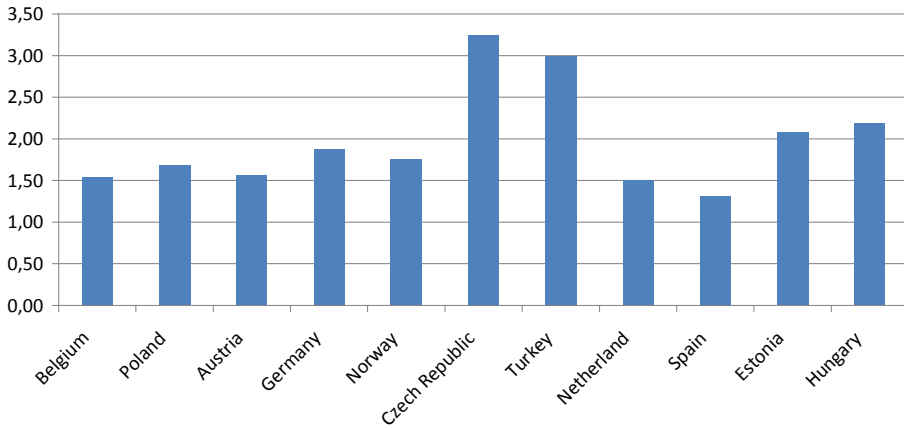
Graph 6: "I think that single gender classes learn better"



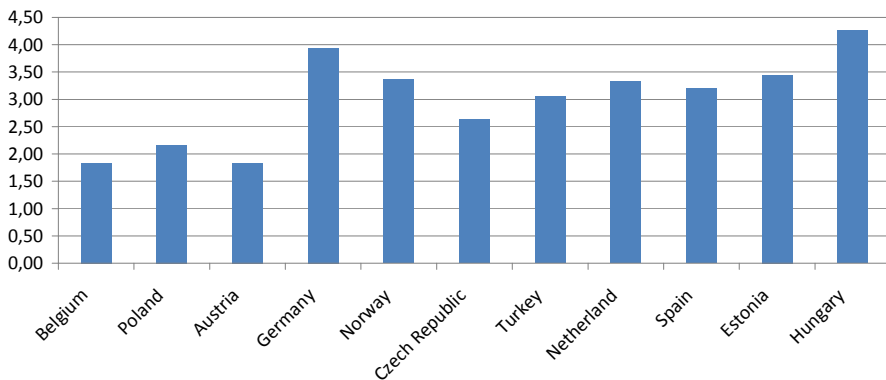
Graph 7: "I think that students in single gender classes pay better attention"



Graph 8: "I make use of stereotypes in my lessons to explain issues"



Graph 9: "I teach migrants differently to natives"



Graph 10: "I think that a student outing himself/herself as homosexual would be problematic at our school"

## 4.2 What motivates boys and girls

A final investigation deals with what, in the teachers' opinion, most motivates boys and girls. Teachers were confronted with a list of different forms of motivation in the questionnaire. Each motivation was accompanied by the question of whether it would apply 'not at all', 'seldom', 'medium', 'frequently', or 'very frequently' to boys or girls. The results are summarised in table 5. The crosses indicate whether teachers maintain that there is a significant difference (at 10 % level) between motivation among boys and girls. Because of the extremely limited number of participants (teaching personnel) in some countries, there is no point in including the names for all the countries. The results are comparable with the results in table 5 for Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany (those countries with the most participants)

Interest in the subject itself equally motivates boys and girls. The same can be said for the motives 'desire to prove oneself', 'recognition by the teacher', 'praise'. 'Money and gifts as an incentive' is a different matter. Teachers emphasise, that this is far more attractive as motivation for boys than to girls. This also applies to 'judgement by peers', 'competition among peers' and 'activities involving movement'. Furthermore, 'simpler activities', 'stricter controls', and the 'threat of punishment' are a greater stimulus to perform for boys. The opposite is the case for activities which require 'social contact'. Motivation here is higher among girls than boys. This is also true for 'difficult and challenging activities', the 'desire to please others' and 'not wanting to disappoint others'.

Table 5: Motivation among boys and girls. (The cross marks which gender is most motivated by the measure in question.)

What motivates boys and girls	Boys	Girls
1 Interest in the subject		
2 An incentive of money or a gift	x	
3 Desire to prove something to oneself		
4 Judgment of peers	x	
5 Recognition from a female teacher		
6 Recognition from a male teacher		
7 Praise		
8 Competition among peers	x	
9 An activity involving social contact		x
10 An activity involving movement	x	
11 A simple activity, easy to understand	x	
12 A difficult, challenging activity		x
13 Persuasion		
14 Strict control	x	
15 Threat of punishment	x	
16 Desire to please others		x
17 Not wanting to disappoint others		x

Note: 'x' marks a significant difference (at 10 % level) between boys and girls

## 5. Conclusions

The comparative study reflects the results of an investigation conducted in 12 European countries. The survey, which was carried out among pupils aged between 13 and 15 years old as well as male and female teaching staff, focussed on questions of identity, sexuality, school and motivation as well as aspects of multicultural coexistence. The following conclusions can be drawn from this study:

- (1) There is strong correlation between opinions among boys and girls in Belgium, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. Pupils from Spain, Poland, Czech Republic and Turkey often have views which do not show the same correlation.
- (2) Clear differences become apparent among individual European countries regarding open dealing with the subject 'other cultures', 'sexuality' and 'identity'.
- (3) Teachers' views on homosexuality in schools vary greatly in the countries under investigation.
- (4) Teaching personnel prefer a variety of methods to motivate boys and girls. Boys are easier to motivate through stricter controls, threat of punishment and simpler tasks. Higher motivation among girls is achieved through more challenging tasks, the desire to please others and activities which are associated with social contact.

The investigation opens up new perspectives in research. The survey could for instance be repeated with a larger sample of participants, to provide representative cross national results. Because of the small number of teachers, it is hardly possible to adequately link pupil – and teacher surveys. A further study could fill this gap. This contribution would also stimulate a more in depth investigation into the differences between the participating countries and others. Lastly, further investigations into the differences in motivation between boys and girls and how to deal with them could be carried out on the basis of this contribution.

## Authors

Bosman, Luk: vzw Leer-kracht Antwerpen, Belgium

Mail: luk.bosman@telenet.be

De Witte, Kristof: Universiteit Maastricht, Netherlands

Mail: k.dewitte@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Drägestein, Bernd: mannigfaltig – Institut für Jungen- und Männerarbeit, Germany

Mail: bernd.draegestein@mannigfaltig-sued.de

Fleischmann, Otakar: Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic

Mail: otakar.fleischmann@ujep.cz

Göttel, Johann: Europahaus Burgenland, Austria

Mail: europahaus@bibliotheken.at

Grossmann, Erika: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Juhász Gyula, Hungary

Mail: grossmannerika@hotmail.com

Haan, Ferry: Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands

Mail: f.h.g.haan@uva.nl

Holz, Oliver: Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Mail: oliver.holz@hubrussel.be

Jarecka-Żyluk, Małgorzata: Akademia Pomorska w Słupsku, Poland

Mail: zyluk\_mam@poczta.onet.pl

Oruç, Nesrin: İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi, Turkey

Mail: nesrin.oruc@ieu.edu.tr

Pérez-Samaniego, Víctor: Universitat de València, Spain

Mail: victor.m.perez@uv.es

Ratkowska-Pasikowska, Justyna: Akademia Pomorska w Słupsku, Poland

Mail: j.pasikowska@interia.pl

Santamaría-García, Carmen: Universidad de Alcalá, Spain

Mail: mcarmen.santamaria@uah.es

Schwarze, Olaf: Münchner Waisenhaus, Germany  
Mail: [olaf.schwarze@muenchen.de](mailto:olaf.schwarze@muenchen.de)

Seebauer, Renate: Europahaus Burgenland, Austria  
Mail: [renate.seebauer@utanet.at](mailto:renate.seebauer@utanet.at)

Shelton, Fiona: University of Derby, England  
Mail: [f.shelton@derby.ac.uk](mailto:f.shelton@derby.ac.uk)

Väljaots, Meeli: Tartu Ülikool, Estonia  
Mail: [meeli.valjaots@ut.ee](mailto:meeli.valjaots@ut.ee)

Zoglowek, Herbert: Høgskolen i Finnmark, Norway  
Mail: [herbert.zoglowek@hifm.no](mailto:herbert.zoglowek@hifm.no)