



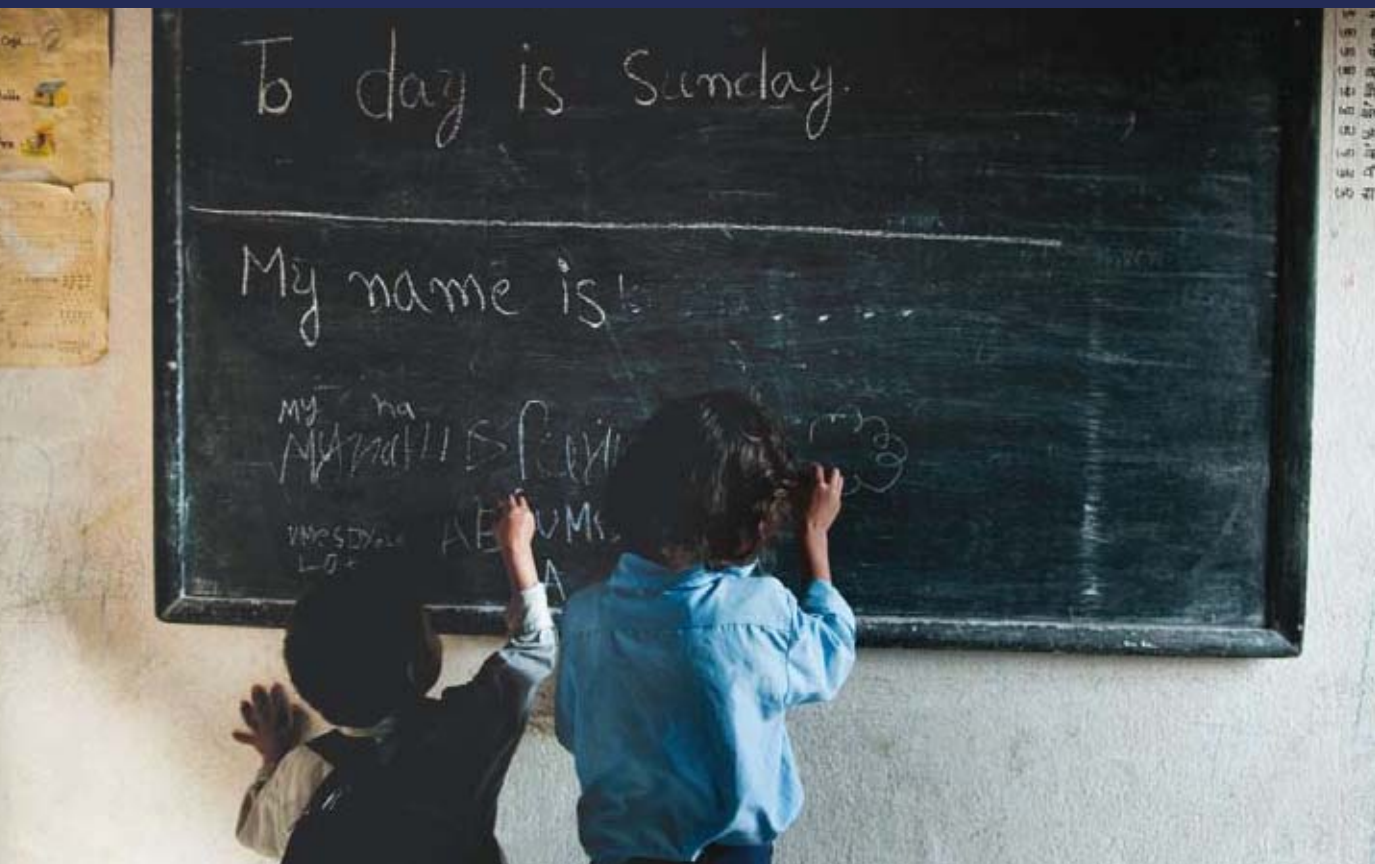
United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Japan  
Funds-in-Trust

# Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development: Guidelines and Tools

## Gender Sensitizing



**Reorienting Teacher Education to Address  
Sustainable Development:  
Guidelines and Tools**

# **Gender Sensitizing**

**Chan Lean Heng**

Published by UNESCO Bangkok  
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education  
Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building  
920 Sukhumvit Road, Prakanong, Klongtoey  
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

© UNESCO 2010  
All rights reserved

ISBN 978-92-9223-333-4 (Print Version)  
ISBN 978-92-9223-334-1 (Electronic version)

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this book and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

Design/Layout: Sirisak Chaiyasook  
Photo credit: © Ruedee Arunkhajohnsak  
Printed by Phonphanish printing  
Printed in Thailand

APE/10/OS/007-300

# Contents

Preface . . . . .	iv
Introduction . . . . .	1
Objectives . . . . .	2
Methodology . . . . .	2
Overview of the Module . . . . .	2
Outline of the Module . . . . .	3
Part One: Building Community and Understanding Gender . . . . .	3
Part Two: Gender Relations in the Classroom and Beyond. . . . .	8
Resources . . . . .	10
Annex 1: PowerPoint for the Module with the Respective Inputs . . . . .	11
Annex 2: Pre-session Questionnaire . . . . .	15
Annex 3: Glossary of Related Terms . . . . .	16
Annex 4: Statements about Women and Men . . . . .	24
Annex 5: Checklist on “Examining My Own Educational Practice”. . . . .	25
Annex 6: Gender and Education . . . . .	27
Annex 7: UNESCO Gender Lens . . . . .	30

## Preface

In March 2005, the United Nations declared 2005 to 2014 as the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and UNESCO has been tasked to lead the Decade.

To contribute to this initiative, the Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) in UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok, Thailand, has organized several meetings to identify and conceptualize key content areas for ESD, and to recommend guidelines for reorienting existing education programmes in these areas, under the Mobile Training Team project with the support of the Japanese Funds-in-Trust.

A key outcome of the meetings is the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Regional Network of Teacher Education Institutes for ESD (ESD-Net) to coordinate efforts to incorporate ESD concepts, principles and values into their pre-service teacher education curricula, and to develop relevant teaching and learning materials. Based on requests from Member States in the Asia-Pacific region, some thematic issues were identified as priority areas, including climate change, natural disaster preparedness, environmental protection, human and food security, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender sensitizing, peace education and inter-cultural understanding.

Subsequently, regional and national-level capacity building workshops were conducted to share good practices and lessons learned in incorporating these ESD-related themes into two specific school subjects – science and social studies. More importantly, the workshop participants found the materials, pedagogies and processes developed and used in the training workshops to be valuable, relevant and practical.

Representing the collective effort of facilitators, deans and directors of teacher education institutions, teacher educators and teachers, these teaching and learning materials are now available in this series of publications, *Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development: Guidelines and Tools*. We hope that they will be a useful reference for educators and teachers seeking to instil and inculcate sustainable development concepts, principles and values into the minds of their students.



Gwang-Jo Kim

Director  
UNESCO Bangkok

## Introduction

Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes. It helps them determine which assumptions in matters of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalizations. Gender awareness requires not only intellectual understanding and effort but also sensitivity and open-mindedness to change one's views and limited perspectives and values. It opens up the widest possible range of life options for both women and men and builds their capacities to be more wholesome and humane.

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is the educational process of achieving human and humane development in an inclusive, equitable and secure manner. It therefore includes education for gender awareness, gender equality, poverty alleviation, human rights, cultural diversity, intercultural and international understanding, peace and much else. The vision for ESD is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. The critical role of education, particularly formal education, in attaining sustainable development cannot be underestimated.

The concern for gender equality in and through education, especially in classroom spaces, is critical because of the negative and far-reaching implications that gender disparities and inequities (reflected through biases, stereotypes and discriminatory practices) have for educational interventions. Education is a major force that will help trigger change but this will occur only when teachers and learners are assisted in adopting classroom initiatives that reflect new images based on a positive gender equity ideology. Gender equality as a strategy has great potential to create desired change because it has the capacity to address both the practical and strategic needs of boys and girls, of nations and the world at large.

In this regard, teachers are strategically positioned to act as agents of change in order to achieve gender equality, especially through what they teach, how they teach and how they role model their own attitudes, beliefs and practices in the classroom and beyond. Indeed, teachers do not come into classrooms as gender-neutral persons. They are likely to have internalized a patriarchal gender ideology through their upbringing and years of socialization in both formal and informal settings. Teachers' patriarchal worldviews impact on the hidden curriculum that is often as influential in classrooms as the official curriculum. Frequently it is the hidden curriculum which ensures that gender differentiated practices, procedures and processes occur in classroom spaces and school structures even where gender-friendly policies and curricula already exist.

## Objectives

This module is designed to sensitize teachers to the meaning and classroom practice implications of gender consciousness so that teachers can adopt a gender perspective in their everyday lives and in their teaching functions. Specifically, the objectives of this module are to:

- Clarify the meaning of gender
- Foster gender awareness and gender sensitivity in our everyday lives and classroom practices
- Create gender literacy among teachers
- Unravel the interplay of gender relations and gender issues in classroom spaces
- Underscore the importance of a gender perspective among teachers
- Delineate some guidelines for “gender-sensitive educational practice”

## Methodology

The methodology used in this module is experiential, interactive, participatory and reflective. It follows the principles of popular education which engages the “heads, hearts and hands” of participants to reflect their lived experiences in a fun, meaningful manner before investigating new ideas and knowledge, including experiences of fellow participants. It is largely based on group work and discussion that acknowledges and respects the knowledge and experience of participants, while additional inputs, conceptual tools and analysis are presented and synthesized to develop a set of guidelines for “a gender-sensitive educational practice”.

## Overview of the Module

The designed module takes more than seven hours to conduct but certain sessions have been trimmed for a seven-hour programme. Essentially, there are two parts to the programme. The first part focuses on building an unthreatening environment conducive to experiential learning and spontaneous, candid participation; participants explore their perceptions and understandings pertaining to gender and collectively clarify the meaning of gender, especially our stereotypes, biases and misperceptions pertaining to gender. The various sessions include:

- unpacking the meaning of gender versus sex,
- examining our perceptions of men and women, including their gender roles and needs, and

- sharing our own lived experiences of gender, especially in the context of our work situations.

Due to time constraints, the last session has been incorporated into an energizing activity with elaborations on the session here so that it can be adapted for use if and when applicable or needed.

The second part of the module examines gender relations in the classroom and beyond. The various sessions include:

- mapping gender issues in the classroom,
- examining how teachers/educators perpetuate gender disparity/inequity,
- identifying things that teachers/educators can do to make education, especially co-education, more equal, and
- analyzing what girls and boys are being taught about who they are.

Again, the time factor allows for deliberation only on three aspects, namely mapping gender issues in classrooms and schools, what gender sensitivity means for our educational practice and a final wrap-up on guidelines delineated from participants' experiences and suggestions, with a final input and synthesis from the resource person.

Various articles are recommended for further reading on related topics like gender bias in education, gender and silence, and gender equitable curricula. Two Internet videos ("Sex and Gender" and "Gender Equality") are also shown during the tea breaks as examples of resources to generate further discussion of issues arising from discussion on the first day. Relevant handouts are made available to participants.

## Outline of the Module

### Part One: Building Community and Understanding Gender

Introductions and expectations

#### 1. Welcome and warm-up

- a). Making music together, leading to a collective hum at the end.
- b). Group profiling

**Procedure** (give creative instructions)

- Do you teach women and men, only women, only men?
- Have you attended a gender training workshop before? What kind of training is it? For whom?
- Have you ever been ridiculed?



- Have you ever been ridiculed by the opposite sex? How did you feel?
- Do you know students who have been sexually harassed?
- Do you know someone personally who was raped?
- Do you know someone personally who experienced domestic violence?
- Have you researched on gender and education? What about?
- Are you a classroom teacher? Administrator? Or are you both?

c). Qualities/strengths that you see in yourself

*(A note taker jots down men's and women's responses in separate columns on a big sheet of paper)*

d). A listening activity if there is time: admiring the opposite sex

## 2. Building bonds, building a learning community

In small groups of three:

a). Share life histories, focusing particularly on when the storytellers first became aware of themselves as a girl/boy, man/woman

### Objectives

- Enable participants to know each other more deeply
- Foster mutual understanding and a learning community
- Start thinking about gender issues

### Procedures

- Form small groups of three or four consisting of those who do not know each other well.
- Have individuals draw the trajectories of their lives, particularly focusing on how each person realized they were male or female. What was the key experience and/or insight connected with this realization?
- In the large group, ask each person to relate one point that he/she found important.

b). What do you hope to get out of this module?

c). What are your fears and concerns about this module?

### 3. Overview of module: Part One and Part Two (what, why and how)

#### Procedures

- Buzz in pairs: Why take a gender conscious approach to ESD?
- Why is it IMPORTANT to be gender conscious?
  - ✓ in ESD
  - ✓ in all our educational practice
  - ✓ in our personal and professional lives
- Synthesis input: interrelationship of gender (equality) and ESD
- Overview of programme agenda

### 4. Sex versus gender: what is the difference?

(Commonalities, differences, stereotypes and socio-cultural constructions)

#### Objectives

- Understand the different meanings of the English words “sex” and “gender”
- Explore social and cultural expectations for males and females
- Illustrate the differences between those expectations based on sex and those based on gender
- Clarify and reinforce the meaning of gender

#### Procedures: gender skip/race

- In pairs, blindfolded, feet together, list characteristics, roles and traits of men and women.
- Whole group discussion
  - ✓ Examine characteristics listed to see whether the characteristics and roles apply to both men and women alike.
  - ✓ Discuss whether there are differences between men and women. What then is common to man and woman, what is different?
  - ✓ Mind map meaning of sex and gender: on a flip chart, write the word “sex” on the left side and “gender” on the right. Ask participants to explain the meaning of these two words. Write their responses under the appropriate heading.
  - ✓ Ask what the two words mean in their mother tongue (in groups that include people who speak English as a second language). Are there separate words that specifically mean “sex” and “gender” in the local language?

## 5. Gender roles, activities and needs

### Objectives

- Help participants clarify their personal beliefs about the roles and needs of women and men
- Question societal views regarding the roles of men and women in society
- Examine and compare the lives of men and women

### Procedures

- Divide into six groups:
  - ✓ Group A: recall certain experiences of childhood and act out individually what you did as a child because you were a girl/boy
  - ✓ Group B: act out an activity you have to do because you are a woman/man
  - ✓ Group C: think of an activity you dream of and want to do because you are a woman/man
  - ✓ Group D: things you like to do that are considered typical of your gender
  - ✓ Group E: act out an activity you hate doing that is typical for your gender
  - ✓ Group F: identify an activity you like doing that is considered non-traditional for your gender
  - ✓ Group G: share an activity that you really wish you could do that is non-traditional

(While doing the activity, think of the dialogue that goes with it. What were you thinking/saying while doing it?)

- Discuss the factors that dictated the above roles.
- On a blank flipchart, write "social/cultural expectations" and divide the sheet into two columns: one for men/boys and one for women/girls.
- Ask participants to tell the group what people expect in regard to men and boys in their society.
- Ask them to do the same for women and girls.
- For each expectation noted, discuss with participants if this expectation is based on sex or gender. For example, the expectation for women to have children is based on sex but the expectation for women to do the cooking for a family is based on gender.

- Introduce stereotypes. Who reinforces the stereotypes and myths, and where do they come from? How do these stereotypes and myths affect our views of ourselves, and of other women and men?
- Has this discussion brought to light any of your own assumptions and stereotypes about men and women?

## 6. Sharing our experiences of gender, sharing our work experience (adapted from ‘The Oxfam Gender Training Manual’)

### Objectives

- Explore gender relations in participants’ own lives and workplaces
- Give participants an opportunity to talk about themselves and how they feel
- Expose participants to gender issues in other people’s work
- Know about the contexts/kinds of groups and activities people work in and with

### Procedures

- In small single-sex groups, discuss the following:
    - ✓ What issues pertaining to gender are found in your work spaces/situation?
    - ✓ How does being a woman/man/transsexual/bisexual/gay/lesbian affect my life and work?
    - ✓ What changes would help me make use of my full potential?
    - ✓ What are your frustrations working with men, women in general?
  - In mixed-sex groups, ask the men and women to share with each other the experiences and comments from the first discussion groups.
7. Explain the definitions of sex and gender, including the PowerPoint inputs, using answers of participants to illustrate.
  8. To clarify gender, refer to the exercise on “Statements about Men and Women” (see Annex 4).
  9. Synthesis: Gender Sensitivity, Gender and Education and Gender Perspective (refer to PowerPoint input Annex 1 and Annexes 3, 6 and 7).

## Part Two: Gender Relations in the Classroom and Beyond

### 1. Warm-up and overview of Part Two

- Sculpture activity
- Comments, questions/issues from Part One
- Overview of Part Two

### 2. Mapping gender issues in the classrooms, schools

#### Objectives

- Familiarize participants with the diverse range of gender-related issues in schools and classroom spaces
- Start a discussion and analysis of why such issues exist and how they can be addressed
- Sensitize participants to their own potential gender biases/discrimination as educators
- Initiate a conscious process of engendering gender equality among participants

#### Procedure

In small groups of three (from different countries, if possible), identify with concrete examples and discuss the following:

- Common gender-related issues that exist in class and/or in school
- Other gender issues that may not be so visible
- Reasons why these issues exist (what causes them?)
- Ways that teachers/educators perpetuate gender disparity/inequality
- What teachers can do to make co-education and formal schooling more equal

### 3. Examining our own educational practice

#### Objective

- Delineate appropriate guidelines for teachers to be gender sensitive

#### Procedure

- In small groups of three, discuss the following:
  - ✓ What does gender sensitivity mean in the context of your educational practice?
  - ✓ How can teachers be gender sensitive?

#### 4. Taking this back to our classrooms

Synthesize on how we can be gender sensitive and address gender inequality in our classrooms with reference to handout on the checklist, "Examining My Own Educational Practice" (see Annex 5).

## Resources

Chan, L.H. 1998. Understanding gender and experienced subordination through popular education. In Jimenes-Tan, M. and Khoo, A. (eds.), *A resource book for training and organising work among Asian women workers*. Hong Kong, Committee for Asian Women.

Chapman, A. undated. *Gender bias in education*. <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/genderbias.html> (accessed 20 May 2009).

Gallos, J. 1995. Gender and silence: implications of women's ways of knowing. *College teaching*, Vol. 43, No. 3.

Haffejee, S. 2006. *Waiting opportunities: adolescent girls' experiences of gender-based violence at schools*. <http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/gender/waitingopportunities.pdf> (accessed 20 May 2009).

Joerger, C. and Taylor, E. 2004. *Gender sensitivity: a training manual*. Paris: UNESCO.

OXFAM. 2005. *Gender equality in schools*. (Education and Gender Equality Series. [http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/oxfam\\_edPaper2.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/oxfam_edPaper2.pdf) (accessed 20 May 2009).

OXFAM-GB. 2004. *Pedagogic strategies for gender equality* (A Beyond Access Project Policy Paper) [http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/issues/education/downloads/ba\\_strategies.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/issues/education/downloads/ba_strategies.pdf) (accessed 20 May 2009).

UNESCO. undated. *Definitions of gender concepts and terms* <http://www.unescobkk.org/en/education/appeal/programme-themes/gender/what-is-gender-equality-in-education/definitions-of-gender-concepts/> (accessed 20 May 2009).

UNESCO's Gender Equality Quiz. [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=37284&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=37284&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

Williams, S., Seed, J. and Mwau, A. 1994. *The Oxfam gender training manual*. UK/Ireland, Oxfam.

Yates, L. 2006. Does curriculum matter? Revisiting women's access and rights to education in the context of the UN Millennium Development Targets. *Theory and Research in Education*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 85-99.

## Videos

GenderVision's video on "Sex and Gender" (2007) [http://www.archive.org/details/GenderVision\\_Sex\\_and\\_Gender](http://www.archive.org/details/GenderVision_Sex_and_Gender) (accessed 20 May 2009).

UNESCO's video on "Gender Equality." [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=3160&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3160&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (accessed 20 May 2009).

# Annex 1: PowerPoint for the Module with the Respective Inputs

**Gender Sensitising: Putting Gender and a Gender Perspective on the ESD Agenda**

ms. CHAN Iean heng, PhD  
 Popular Educator  
 Assoc. Professor  
 School of Social Sciences  
 University Science of Malaysia

Regional Workshop on the Thematic Issues in ESD under the Mobile Training Team (MTT) Project  
 1 - 5 June 2009  
 Nakan Prathom, Thailand

Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes. It helps them determine which assumptions in matters of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalisations. Gender awareness requires not only intellectual understanding and effort but also sensitivity and open-mindedness to change one's views and limited perspectives and values. It opens up the widest possible range of life options for both women and men and build their capacities to be more wholesome and humane.

What is gender ?  
 Why is it IMPORTANT to be gender conscious ?

- in ESD
- in all our educational practice
- in our personal and professional life

**Objectives**

- To be gender sensitive/aware
- To be gender literate
- To understand gender relations in classroom spaces
- To have a gender perspective

**methodology**

participatory ..interactive .. experiential .. analytical

**HEAD, HEART & HANDS**

- Active participation
- No right or wrong ..
- Everyone's contribution
- Not to be inhibited .. Openly share
- Respect and value each other
- Listen attentively to each other ... Importance of listening and listening to the person's perspective. No judgement.
- Agree to disagree
- Receptive
- Feelings may emerge – give recognition and address accordingly

**Groundrules:** ingredients for yummy tom yam kung

refer to the whole group's listing

- Respect time - punctuality
- Be respectful of other participants and the facilitators
- Listen to the speaker's standpoint
- Talk loud enough for all to hear
- Talk one at a time
- Maintain confidentiality
- Participate!
- Open and receptive to learn

**PROGRAM: day one**

- 1 Warm up and welcome
- 2 Overview of Program (day one)
- 3 Sex vs Gender: Commonalities, Differences and Stereotypes and Social Cultural Constructions?
- 4 Gender Roles
  - Gender stereotypes
  - Gender bias
  - Gender discrimination
  - Gender oppression
  - the impacts of these

**PROGRAM: day two**

- what does it mean to be gender sensitive as teachers?
- how does this relate to ESD?



## SEX

- Refers to the physical/biological differences between males and females
- Determined by biology
- Does not change (without surgical intervention)

## GENDER

- Gender = neutral term, neither good nor bad, right nor wrong
- for some, word "gender" has become associated with women's issues and women's programs, feminists, for some, gender has become a negative word that connotes exclusion or hatred of men. In fact, "gender" refers to both males & females
- term "gender" is widely used .. its meaning not fully understood.

## GENDER

- Refers to the social differences between males and females
- Determined by social factors—history, culture, tradition, societal norms, religion (socially constructed)
- "Gender" in any given society involves the socialization for boys and girls, men & women that determines roles, responsibilities, opportunities, privileges, limitations, & expectations
- Gender definitions can change

## Understanding the application of Gender Roles

- Gender: How being female or male defines personal opportunities, roles, responsibilities and relationships
- Gender Roles/Identity: Learned behaviour and attitudes, roles and activities, expectations and desires

## Learning Gender Roles

- Where do we learn our gender roles?
- What people teach us these stereotypes? Entertainment? Sports? Media? (ask for specific example to list.)
- Where do women learn these messages? (put "mothers" on the paper and ask for answers)
- What other people influence our learning of gender roles?
- Where else in society do we find these messages? (Ask for specific example if general comments are made like "TV" or "magazines.")

## How Stereotypes are Reinforced

- What names or put-downs are boys called when they don't fit the box?
- What names are women called if they step out of the stereotype box?

## Evaluating Gender Stereotypes

- How do these labels and names reinforce the stereotype box?
- How does it feel when we are called these names?
- What do you think the person who is using these put-downs is feeling? Why is he/she doing this?

## Dimensions of Gender

- ⊕ gender bias
- ⊕ gender discrimination
- ⊕ gender gaps
- ⊕ gender disparity
- ⊕ gender equality
- ⊕ gender equity
- ⊕ gender perspective
- ⊕ gender mainstreaming vs women's empowerment

## Gender

**Gender** describes the roles of women and men that are determined by political, economic, social and cultural factors rather than by biology. In other words, people are born female or male and then learn to be girls and boys, women and men. We are taught 'appropriate' behaviour and attitudes, roles and activities, expectations and desires. It is this learned behaviour that forms gender identity and determines gender roles. Gender roles are not necessarily the same all over the world, or even within a country or region. Many social, religious and cultural factors modify and regulate the roles of men and women in communities. But even though gender norms vary according to cultures and communities, women are subject to the dominant influence of men at every level of society. This imbalance of power in gender relations has negative consequences for women in all areas of their lives including sexuality, sexual relations and reproductive health.

## Gender perspective

- examines female and male roles, responsibilities, opportunities & resources within the context of the distribution of power between women and men
- issues are analysed and elucidated from the perspective of *both* women & men - focus on the perspective of both genders, not just one of them. A central dimension is the question of the distribution of power between women and men
- draw attention to & taking action to rectify the uneven, gender-based distribution of power and influence in society
- looks at the impact of *gender* on people's opportunities, social roles and interactions

- not a neutral instrument nor does it seek to exchange the places of dominance and subordination.
- promotes equality, and comprehensive human development.
- women's empowerment is a key objective of any gender-oriented development process, esp in SD
- gender equality, empowerment & the advancement of women and girls are both gender & human rights goals. Combining gender & rights in the areas of sexuality & reproduction is critical
- gender & rights approach highlights the importance of economic, cultural, and social rights to overcome women's subordination at all stages of their lives. Women/girls require the social, cultural, and econ conditions to empower themselves, participate, & gain access & control of resources
- central issue from a gender perspective is the redistribution of resources & power towards women & therefore towards more equal distribution of power & resources for all. For this to happen, the roles of men and boys must be considered.

## Mainstreaming

is about changing gender relationships between men and women in order to achieve more equal sharing of power and responsibility which will benefit both men and women and society as a whole. It is about promoting the full and equal participation of women in decision making in all areas and at all levels. It is not only about changes in women's gender roles and capacities. Mainstreaming also promote and support changes in men's gender roles, attitudes and behaviours as well. It uses gender analysis to identify the differential access to and impacts on women and men of all concerned areas. The analysis is then used to devise measures to bring about equal participation and equal benefits for women and men. To meet women's specific gender needs special programs or/and policies to address the areas of special needs for women may be needed.

## Gender analysis: GENDER TREE



**Gender equity** is the process of being fair to women and men. It refers to treating men and women differently, or the same when appropriate, to achieve outcomes that satisfy the needs of both. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

**Gender equality** means that women and men enjoy the same status and are in the same position to access resources and opportunities. Men and women have equal conditions for realizing their full human right and potential to contribute to national political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results. It is the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between women and men and the varying roles they play. Where gender inequality exists, it is generally women who are excluded or disadvantaged in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources. Therefore a critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own.

## PROGRAM: day two

- Warm up activity and summary of day one
- Overview of day two Program
- Input (to frame day's agenda)

Break: video on sex and gender

- Mapping gender issues in classroom, schools
- What does gender sensitivity mean for our educational practice?
- Wrap up and Feedback

Video on GENDER EQUALITY by UNESCO

## Recap

### Important points re Gender

- Is about and for **men** as well, including the various transgenders – intersexes
  - Not just the differences but implications fr the differences which have differential impacts – unequal differential conditions and position of men & women
  - Social relations between men and women .. Power relations - Gender relations
  - Related issues/concepts .. stereotypes, gender bias, gender discrimination (IMPACTS – refer to examples given fr experiences) gender sensitivity, gender awareness/ consciousness (refer to glossary) .. NOT ENOUGH
- CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS: HOW, WHAT, WHO**

## Input

- 1 The **current contexts** of society, schooling and classrooms
- 2 Urgent need for gender consciousness and **gender equality**
- 3 What is gender equality
  - Why are we referring largely to girls and boys
- 4 **Role of education** .. edu for sustainable development
- 5 Role of teacher educators
- 6 **What can/should be done**
  - In classroom – classroom dynamics
  - In subject areas
  - In our social relations with colleagues and students

*Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes. It helps them determine which assumptions in matters of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalisations. Gender awareness requires not only intellectual understanding and effort but also sensitivity and open-mindedness to change one's views and limited perspectives and values. It opens up the widest possible range of life options for both women and men.*

## Current Contexts

SCHOOLS  
(Structure & Culture)  
&  
SCHOOLING

CLASSROOMS  
  
TEACHERS

### SOCIETY

Poverty, gender discrimination/oppression, inequities, inequality  
Sexism, gender biases, gender gaps, ....gender related issues

## Key facts & figures

- ✘ approximately 100 million school-age children worldwide who are not in school. Of these, 55 per cent are girls
- ✘ almost 800 million people aged 15 and above living without basic literacy skills worldwide, of whom 64 per cent are women.
- ✘ of 180 countries that have been monitoring progress towards gender parity in education, 76 have not yet achieved equal numbers of girls and boys in primary school, and the gender disparities are nearly always at the expense of girls
- ✘ in some countries, girls outperform boys in school, but later fail to gain equality in work or political participation. In the poorest countries it is girls who face barriers to equality of opportunity, and do not achieve equal outcomes from education
- ✘ education is a right. Girls who are not in school and women who are illiterate are being denied their right to an education.

## Gender biases in teaching & learning settings: subject, materials used,

### teacher-pupils interaction

- the lesson core, through the curriculum, the textbooks or the examples used by the teachers
- the questioning (questions asked by boys & girls, questions asked to boys or girls, level/type of questions asked to boys and girls – recall questions, open-ended questions - time allocated to boys & girls to answer a question, etc)
- the feedback given to boys & girls by the teacher (positive or negative, judgmental, neutral, or enabling),
- the tasks & responsibilities allocated to boys & girls
- the discipline towards boys & girls
- the language used by the teachers or the pupils (inclusive or not, free of gender biases or not)
- the utilization of materials & tools such as books, computers, calculators by boys & girls

## subject areas

- Most learning achievement studies from the Asian region show that boys perform better than girls in math and science and girls perform equally well, or sometimes better than boys, in languages and social sciences.
- The most child-damaging gender disparities are in the maths and sciences. However, the performance of boys and girls, and the environmental conditions supporting good performance, also vary in other subject areas. The [Gender and Science Digital Library](#) is a good source of more information. It is a new online collection of "gender-fair resources" in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

## Small Group Discussion

- 1 How do we as teachers/educators perpetuate gender disparity, inequities?
- 2 What can we as teachers do to make learning spaces more gender sensitive and equal?

Kindly acknowledge if you want to use any of these slides

thank you

## Annex 2: Pre-session Questionnaire

Dear friend

A warm welcome to the gender sensitization module – I look forward to some joyful learning with you

I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to fill in the following questions.

What do you hope to get out of the gender sensitizing module?

.....  
.....  
.....

What are your worries, or anxieties and/or fears (if any?) about participating in this module?

.....  
.....  
.....

Have you participated in any gender training before? If yes describe them.

.....  
.....  
.....

What do you see as the main gender issues related to your work?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Annex 3: Glossary of Related Terms

### Empowerment

Empowerment is about people – both women and men – taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills, building self-confidence, solving problems and developing self-reliance.

### Femininity (also called womanliness)

Femininity refers to qualities and behaviors judged by a particular culture to be ideally associated with or especially appropriate to women and girls.

Distinct from femaleness, which is a biological and physiological classification concerned with the reproductive system, femininity principally refers to secondary sex characteristics and other behaviors and features generally regarded as being more prevalent and better suited to women, whether inborn or socialized. In traditional Western culture, such features include gentleness, patience, and kindness.

Femininity should not be confused with feminism, which is the belief that women deserve political and economic rights equal to men.

### Gender

Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). It refers to the relationship between men and women, boys and girls.

These roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. The concept is vital because it facilitates gender analysis revealing how women's subordination is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever (*source: ABC of Women Worker's Rights and Gender Equality, ILO, Geneva, 2000*).

### Gender analysis

Gender analysis is the methodology for collecting and processing information about gender. It provides disaggregated data separated by sex, and an understanding of the social construction of gender roles, how labour is divided and valued. Gender analysis is the process of analysing information in order to ensure development benefits and resources are effectively and equitably targeted to both women and men, and to successfully anticipate and avoid any negative impacts development may have on women or on gender relations.

## **Gender awareness**

Gender awareness is an understanding that there are socially determined differences between women & men based on learned behaviour, which affect their ability to access and control resources. This awareness needs to be applied through gender analysis into projects, programmes and policies.

## **Gender blindness**

Gender blindness is the failure to recognise that gender is an essential determinant of social outcomes impacting on projects and policies. A gender blind approach assumes gender is not an influencing factor.

## **Gender equality and gender equity**

There is no consensus as to the precise difference between these two terms, exactly what they mean, or how they should be used. They are often used interchangeably. However, it is generally agreed that to achieve gender equity/equality, there is a need to remove deep-seated barriers to equality of opportunity for both sexes – such as discriminatory laws, customs, practices, and institutional processes. It also entails developing the freedoms of all individuals, irrespective of gender, to choose outcomes they value.

Gender equality is the result of the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities and the allocation of resources or benefits or in access to services. Gender equity entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men.

## **Gender equality**

Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. It is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, their community and their society. Gender equality starts with equal valuing of girls and boys.

## **Gender equity**

Gender equity recognises that women and men have different needs and powers, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalances between the sexes. It means "fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs, including the equal treatment or treatment considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities". To ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field.

## Gender lens

Think of a gender lens as putting on spectacles. Out of one lens of the spectacles, you see the participation, needs and realities of women. Out of the other lens, you see the participation, needs and realities of men. Your sight or vision is the combination of what each eye sees. A gender lens often has these characteristics:

- It is a list of questions, a checklist or a list of criteria.
- It is routinely used.
- It is created in a participatory manner by those who will use it.

## Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is an approach used to integrate women's and men's needs and experiences into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, religious and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

Organizations that most effectively mainstream gender into their activities have a gender-responsive organizational culture. This is a culture in which everyone responds positively to the organization's requirement that they actively demonstrate their commitment to advance gender equality in their daily work and in their interaction with others.

## Gender needs

Leading on from the fact that women and men have differing roles based on their gender, they will also have differing gender needs. These needs can be classified as either strategic or practical.

## Gender parity

Gender parity in education is a rather narrow aspiration, simply entailing equal numbers of girls and boys being present in schools. Many countries are making progress on gender parity, but the limited nature of the concept means that more challenging dimensions of gender equality and equity are not being monitored, measured or discussed.

## Gender roles

Gender roles are learned behaviours in a given society/community, or other special group, that condition which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as male and female. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and by the geographical, economic and political environment. Changes in gender roles often occur in response to changing economic, natural or political circumstances, including development efforts.

Both men and women play multiple roles in society. The gender roles of women can be identified as reproductive, productive and community managing roles, while men's are

categorized as either productive or community politics. Men are able to focus on a particular productive role, and play their multiple roles sequentially. Women, in contrast to men, must play their roles simultaneously, and balance competing claims on time for each of them.

Traditional gender roles and norms can affect what, and how, their children learn.

### **Gender sensitivity**

Gender sensitivity encompasses the ability to acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities and incorporate these into strategies and actions.

### **Gender stereotypes**

Gender stereotypes are beliefs held about characteristics, traits, and activity-domains that are “deemed” appropriate for men and women as socially constructed categories. The term is often used with a negative connotation when referring to an oversimplified, with the gender due to his or her membership in it. Stereotypes often form the basis of prejudice and are usually employed to explain real or imaginary differences due to race, gender, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic class, disability, occupation, etc. They are forms of social consensus rather than individual judgments. They can be a conventional and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image based on the belief that there are attitudes, appearances, or behaviors shared by all members of a group. Stereotypes can be used to deny individuals respect or legitimacy based on their membership in that group.

### **Masculinity**

Masculinity is manly character. It specifically describes men and boys, that is personal and human, unlike male which can also be used to describe animals, or masculine which can also be used to describe noun classes. When *masculine* is used to describe men, it can have degrees of comparison – *more masculine, most masculine*. The opposite can be expressed by terms such as *unmanly, epicene* or *effeminate*. A typical near-synonym of masculinity is *virility* (from Latin *vir*, man), and the usual complement is *femininity*.

### **Practical gender needs**

Practical gender needs (PGN) are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. PGNs do not challenge, although they arise out of, gender divisions of labour and women’s subordinate position in society. PGNs are the responses to immediate and perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often concern inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment.



## Sex

Sex is determined at birth. It identifies the biological differences between men and women, such as women can give birth, and men provide sperm. These sex roles are universal.

## Sexism

Sexism refers to the belief or attitude that one gender or sex is inferior to, less competent, or less valuable than the other. It can also refer to hatred of, or prejudice towards, either sex as a whole, or the application of stereotypes of masculinity in relation to men, or of femininity in relation to women. It is also called male and female chauvinism. It is commonly considered to be discrimination and/or hatred against people based on their sex rather than their individual merits, but can also refer to any and all systemic differentiations based on the sex of the individuals. Historically and across many cultures, sexism has resulted in the subjugation of women to men. Sexism results in discrimination in all areas of life and acts as a limiting factor in educational, professional, and psychological development.

Sexism can refer to subtly different beliefs or attitudes:

- the belief that one gender or sex is inferior to or more valuable than the other;
- female or male chauvinism;
- the attitude of misogyny (hatred of females) or misandry (hatred of males);
- the attitude of imposing a limited and/or false notion of masculinity on males and a limited and/or false notion of femininity on females, or vice versa; and
- a feeling of distrust towards the opposite or same sex, most frequently operating at unconscious level.

## Sexism in education

Women in the past have been excluded from higher education. When women were admitted to higher education, they were encouraged to major in subjects that were considered less intellectual; the study of English literature in English and U.S. colleges and universities was in fact instituted as a field of study considered suitable to women's "lesser intellects." Research studies have found that discrimination continues today: boys receive more attention and praise in the classroom in grade school, and "this pattern of more active teacher attention directed at male students continues at the post-secondary level". Over time, female students speak less and less in classroom settings.

## Sexist language and gender-neutral language

Nearing the end of the 20th century, there is a rise in the use of gender-neutral language in Western worlds. This is often attributed to the rise of feminism. Gender-neutral language, as a part of political correctness, is the avoidance of gender-specific job titles, non-parallel usage, and other usage that is felt by some to be sexist. Supporters feel that having gender-

specific titles and gender-specific pronouns implies a system bias to exclude individuals based on their sex.

### **Sexism against men**

The view that women are superior to men is another form of sexism, and when expressed by a woman may be called female chauvinism or femdom. The hatred of men is called misandry, while androphobia refers to the fear of men or masculinity.

### **Sexism against intersexes**

Sexism against intersexes has only been recently identified, and the general public remains mostly unaware of it. Historically, most cultures (with a few exceptions) hold that males and females are separate and distinct entities with separate gender roles and responsibilities. Infants that are born with ambiguous genitalia are either killed or receive surgical alteration of their genitalia to disambiguate their sex. The unnecessary surgery has often been carried out without the knowledge or consent of the parents and some view this as genital mutilation and criticized the perceived need by modern Western medicine to correct the occurrences of intersexuality, which is just a natural probability. Cosmetic alteration of the genitalia should not be confused with consensual medical removal of non-functional, or undesirable sexual characteristics as a preventative step against cancers, or other diseases, e.g. removal of the testes in a woman with Androgen-Insensitivity Syndrome.

'Intersexuality' refers to the condition of being intersexed and the LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning) movement has actively fought sexism against intersexes. From birth, intersexed individuals are neither in the male "box" or the female "box" and the classification used by most policies and laws of government fails to reflect this. Intersexed people are also often the target of hate crimes since the traditional notion of male (XY) and female (XX) is perceived to be threatened by the existence of atypical sexes such as Turner (X0), Metafemale (XXX), Klinefelter (XXY), de la Chapelle (XX male), Swyer (XY female), and Androgen-Insensitivity (XY male and XY female) syndrome.

### **Sexual differences**

Socially, sexual differences have been used to justify different roles for men and women, in some cases giving rise to claims of primary and secondary roles.

### **Sexual discrimination**

What constitutes sex discrimination varies between countries. The essence is that it is an adverse action taken by one person against another person that would not have occurred had the person been of another sex. Discrimination of that nature in certain enumerated circumstances is illegal in many countries. Sexual discrimination can arise in different contexts. In an educational setting there could be claims that a student was excluded from an educational institution, program, opportunity, loan, student group, or scholarship on account of his or her gender.

## Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome harassment of a sexual nature, or based upon the receiving party's sex or gender. In some contexts or circumstances, sexual harassment may be illegal. It includes a range of behaviour from seemingly mild transgressions and annoyances to actual sexual abuse or sexual assault. Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and a form of abuse (sexual and psychological) and bullying. Many scholars complain that sexual harassment in education remains a "forgotten secret," with educators and administrators refusing to admit that the problem exists in their schools, or accept their legal and ethical responsibilities to deal with it.

## Strategic gender needs

Strategic gender needs (SGN) are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society. They vary according to particular contexts, related to gender divisions of labour, power and control, and may include issues such as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies. Meeting SGN assists women to achieve greater equality and change existing roles, thereby challenging women's subordinate position. They are more long term and less visible than practical gender needs.

## Strategic interests

Within a gender context, strategic interests are usually about getting more choices, more options or more voice. They focus on fundamental issues related to women's (or less often men's) subordination and gender inequities. Strategic interests are long-term and rarely material which differ from practical needs which are immediate and often focus on acquiring essential material goods. Structural change such as legislation for equal rights or reproductive choice and laws setting quotas for women in elected positions, aim to help the disadvantaged sex fulfil strategic interests. In striving to meet their personal strategic interests, individuals are often seeking to increase their own capacity or their ability to take control of their own lives.

## Sources

ECOSOC Agreed conclusions (E/1997/100) <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4652c9fc2.html>.

ILO. 2007. *ABC of Women Worker's Rights and Gender Equality*. 2nd edition. ILO, Geneva. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms\\_087314.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_087314.pdf)

UNDP. undated. *Guide to Developing a UNDP: Country Gender Briefing Kit*. [http://www.undp.org/women/docs/UNDP\\_Gender\\_Briefing\\_Kit.pdf](http://www.undp.org/women/docs/UNDP_Gender_Briefing_Kit.pdf).

UNESCO Gender Lens in the Toolkit for Promoting Gender Equality in Education [http://unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/appeal/gender/](http://unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/appeal/gender/).

UNESCO. 2000. *Gender Equality and Equity*. UNESCO, Paris. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121145e.pdf>

UNESCO. 2009. *Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit: Promoting Gender Equality in Education*. UNESCO, Bangkok. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001864/186495e.pdf>.

## Annex 4: Statements about Women and Men

Instructions: Write "G" for Gender; "S" for Sex

- \_\_\_\_\_ Women give birth to babies; men do not.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Little girls are gentle; boys are rough.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When a certain child brought up as a girl learned the he was actually a boy, his school marks improved dramatically.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Among India's agricultural workers, women are paid 40-60% of men's wages.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Women can breast-feed babies; men can bottle-feed babies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most construction workers in Asia are men.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most domestic helps in Malaysia are women.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In ancient Egypt, men stayed at home and did weaving. Women handled family business. Women inherited property; men did not.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In one study of 224 cultures, men did all the cooking in five cultures, and women did all the house building in 36 cultures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ According to UN statistics, women do 67% of the world's work, yet their earning for it amount to only 10% of the world's income.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Why does a girl get expelled from school for being pregnant while the boy who impregnated her is neither judged nor expelled?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Boys learn to do the same work or job as their fathers, and girls learn to do the same work as their mothers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Women are more vulnerable to contracting HIV/AIDS.

## Annex 5: Checklist on “Examining My Own Educational Practice”

Examining my own educational practice: checklist (adapted from <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/cwse/inclusive/contents.htm>)

- What biases have I brought to the classroom?
- What potential biases can I bring to the classroom?
- Are there any forms of bias in the classroom activities that I plan, the resources or references that I used?
- What groups/individuals are omitted?
- What is/can be the impact of the bias?
- Is different language being used/permitted to describe the same idea or experience for various groups? (hut/cottage, assertive/aggressive)
- Do students have the opportunity to challenge inappropriate language?
- Will the planned activities encourage students to be conscious of bias in their own lives?
- Do the learning activities that you plan challenge stereotypes?
- Whose perspectives, experiences, viewpoints or voices are included in my teaching?
- Are there multiple perspectives, a variety of voices in the materials/activities I use?
- Do the learning activities promote the values of different groups?
- Whose contributions are included/excluded?
- Is anyone being left out?
- Do your students see themselves reflected in material/activities?
- Are there activities within a unit relevant/real to all students based on their own social and cultural experiences?
- Do the planned activities encourage students to appreciate diversity?
- Is the language inclusive?
- Are all learning styles supported?
- Do any of the activities exclude learners of certain cultural learning styles, e.g., role play?
- Does the unit include a range of activities which appeal to different groups?
- Is reference made to a wide variety of learning materials, texts, examples, illustrations?
- Is there a balance between the affective and the cognitive dimension and the importance of each? Is the perspective of inclusion itself valued?

- Will the learning lead to a growth in social skills (cooperation, respect, empathy, sharing, leadership)?
- Does the context for learning promote interaction on an equal basis for all participants?
- Does the learning promote effective communication including assertiveness and conflict resolution?
- Does the learning foster collaboration and cooperative learning strategies?
- Is the social skill validated in relation to the knowledge/skill?
- Does the learning include opportunities to model a healthy attitude towards relationships based on equality and respect free from violence and harassment?
- Would any student feel left out/singled out?
- Are the experiences and backgrounds of all students valued?
- Are there obvious inequities resulting from the situation or activity?
- Are there opportunities for the student to reflect, express and value issues of equality?
- Does the activity reflect the balance of teacher/learner relationship?
- Does the learning recognize the rights and responsibilities of individuals?
- Does the material recognize injustices in our society?
- Are issues of power and privilege identified and discussed?

## Annex 6: Gender and Education

*By Dr. Shahid Siddiqui*

*Gender* is a construct that owes its creation to a number of social institutions. Some of these include family, educational institutions, judiciary, religion, etc. In recent times, the media has emerged as a powerful constitutive agent of gender-related ideas and notions.

Before we look at the process of how gender is constructed let us briefly focus on the term 'gender'. Gender, unlike sex which is based on biological division and is specific in character, is more amorphous in nature and is subject to change with reference to context and time. That is why the concept of gender varies from context to context.

Gender is a political view of sex that is based on the binary division of male and female. This binary division apparently looks natural. The problem with this division, however, starts when one thing is considered inferior to the other which is regarded as superior. Meanings are assigned arbitrarily to objects and concepts.

Apart from the literal or dictionary meaning of words, each word has certain connotations or associated meanings. These are constructed by society. The dominant groups in society assign positive meanings to what they do and negative meanings to what 'others' do.

The construction of gender is largely done by dominant groups who assign roles and responsibilities and give opportunities to, and have expectations of, males and females — separately. For instance, it is society that suggests that girls should play with dolls and boys cannot and should not do so.

In this process of socialisation, education and educational institutions play a central role. For instance, stereotypes pertaining to responsibilities, roles and opportunities, to which we are initially exposed in family settings, are endorsed at educational institutions. So schools are places where the socialising process is reinforced and given legitimacy and authenticity. The social knowledge relating to gender is constructed, validated and perpetuated by schools through textbooks, pedagogy skills, assessment and the academic milieu.

A considerable amount of research has been done on textbooks that represent female characters as weak, dependent and stereotypically shy, and confined to the home whereas the male characters are shown as strong, independent, innovative, outgoing and responsible for the outer world.

The 'authenticity' of the printed word in the shape of a textbook is further enhanced when these stereotypes are backed up and legitimised by the teacher in class. The assessment system approves of certain agreed upon answers and disapproves of non-conformity with fixed stereotypes. The school milieu also plays an important role in the formation of certain gender stereotypes. Thus schools are disseminating stereotypes favouring the patriarchal system in society.



A large number of families in the subcontinent still believe that there is no need to send girls to schools. Similarly, a sizable proportion of the population believes that girls should only be exposed to primary education. The argument given in favour of this, in our society, is that since girls need to be married off there is no need to send them for higher education. This attitude is changing somewhat though and we see a growing number of girls going to school.

One problem still exists: a number of female professionals, i.e., medical doctors, engineers etc., after successful completion of their professional education do not work. One major reason is marriage which makes it difficult for them to pursue their profession. In most cases, it is because they are not allowed by their husbands to take up jobs. This goes back to our earlier discussion where women and men are viewed by society through the lens of gender where man is considered as responsible for the world outside and where the woman's role has been confined to the home.

Education, which has a strong link with power, has traditionally been a rare commodity for women. In Pakistan, we have seen long periods of silencing women and excluding them from modern education. That is why women have had to struggle hard to compete with men and create space for themselves in public life.

In some parts of the subcontinent, the exposure of girls to learning is still confined to religious education. Modern education, which is the key to economic independence, is denied to them. The control and hegemony enjoyed by men is largely linked to their role as breadwinners of the family. Economic independence is generally ensured by the acquisition of modern education.

Educational institutions have been engaged in perpetuating the existing social structures of power through the construction and legitimisation of a skewed view of women. Even female students are led to internalise gender-biased views in schools. Thus education, that is supposed to emancipate human beings, is performing the opposite function by creating a tunnel vision among students. This tunnel vision is designed to favour the powerful and discredit marginalised groups. If we are serious about reducing the gender gap in society we need to revisit some popular stereotypes about women. For this, social institutions in general and schools in particular have to play their due role. We need to have a thorough review of textbooks, pedagogy skills, an assessment system and the school milieu, and address areas where improvement is needed.

While we strategise to reduce gender gaps in society, it is crucial to keep in view that gender is not just an idea and concept which should be dealt with only at a theoretical level. Besides being a concept, gender is a tangible factor in our behaviour. We make gender something real in our social interaction, through our attitudes and in practice. So the strategy should not be confined to theory alone, it should also be reflected in our daily life.

For instance, it is not sufficient to include concepts of gender equality in the curriculum, it is also crucial that teachers and head teachers show by example that they genuinely

believe in gender equality. The fact is that a majority of educational institutions perpetuate gender-biased stereotypes. But it is these same institutions that can encourage students to challenge the stereotypes and resist the hegemonic designs of dominant groups.

The writer is director of Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences at the Lahore School of Economics and author of Rethinking Education in Pakistan.

Email: shahidsiddiqui@yahoo.com

Extract from DAWN, internet edition: <http://www.dawn.com/2008/05/19/ed.htm#5> (accessed May 2009).

## Annex 7: UNESCO Gender Lens

### Gender Lens – Measuring the Child-Friendliness of Schools

- Are community leaders and parents equally supportive of boys and girls attending this school?
- Do community leaders and parents value female and male teachers equally?
- Does the principal treat male and female teachers the same?
- Is the school close enough for all school-age boys and girls to walk safely to it?
- Do girls and boys feel safe from bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment in this school?
- Does each boy and each girl have essential schoolbooks and materials?
- Do teachers encourage girls and boys to speak and contribute equally? Do teachers value the views of boys and girls equally?
- If the school has more than one teacher, are there female teachers who can be role models for girls and male teachers who can be role models for boys?
- Does the curriculum reflect the lives of boys and girls?
- Does the class go into the community? Or, are community women and men with special knowledge or skills brought into the class as resources?
- Do boys and girls feel confident in making subject choices that may not be traditionally male or female subjects?
- Do girls participate and achieve equally with boys in maths and sciences, in literature and history?
- Does the curriculum promote peace and equality for boys and girls regardless of their race, class, caste, religious or ethnic background?
- Do teacher and learner materials portray girls and boys of varying socio-economic backgrounds with equal prominence, potential and respect?
- Do extra-curricular activities equally attract participation of boys and girls?
- Do teachers have relevant training and support to girls and boys on reproductive health?
- Are there activities organized by teachers or children that will create a gender-friendly culture of peace in the school (sports, culture events, etc.)?
- Will girls who get pregnant and boys or girls who are affected by HIV/AIDS be supported by the system?
- Are there well-maintained latrines for girls and boys?

\*Each question opens the door for exploring 'why' there are gender differences.

Taken from: [http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/appeal/gender](http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/appeal/gender) (accessed May 2009)



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

**UNESCO Bangkok**

Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

- Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building
- 920 Sukhumvit Road, Prakanong, Klongtoey
- Bangkok 10110, Thailand
- E-mail: [apeid.bgk@unesco.org](mailto:apeid.bgk@unesco.org)
- Website: [www.unescobkk.org/education/apeid](http://www.unescobkk.org/education/apeid)
- Tel: +66-2-3910577 Fax: +66-2-3910866