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Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in Literacy Materials



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Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EFA	Education For All
GAD	Gender and Development
GENIA	Gender in Education Network in Asia
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HDI	Human Development Index
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right for all people, women and men, of all ages. Basic education, including literacy skills, should therefore be provided to all children, youth and adults, including girls and women.

In order to achieve gender equality in education, the culture, policies and practices of education need to be reviewed and revised. One of the factors that must be addressed is that current educational materials contain stereotyped depictions of males and females, which reinforce negative attitudes about women and perpetuate inequality. Thus, there is a need for changes in teaching and learning materials for basic education and literacy, to remove stereotypes and gender bias.

This booklet provides guidelines for mainstreaming gender in literacy materials. It is intended for the orientation of literacy managers, writers of teaching and learning materials, policy-makers, curriculum developers, media professionals, teachers of adult literacy centres, adult learners and the general public.

The particular objectives of this publication are:

- To sensitize literacy managers and authors of literacy materials on the need for gender-sensitive literacy materials.
- To guide writers of literacy materials about the principles for mainstreaming gender in literacy materials and the necessity to represent gender fairly in literacy and other basic education materials.

This booklet begins by defining key concepts of basic education, literacy and gender, and then discusses the importance of having a balanced depiction of genders in teaching-learning materials. The results of a review of existing educational materials in Pakistan are then presented. In the following section, guidelines for ensuring gender-neutral teaching and learning materials are described, and a checklist is provided for authors of literacy materials to ensure such materials are gender-neutral.

Key Concepts and Definitions

Basic education

While an agreed definition has yet to be confirmed, the concept of “basic education” can be understood to mean education that meets basic learning needs, and can be considered equivalent to the level of education covered up to the end of primary or lower-secondary school.¹

Literacy

Literacy skills are a core component of basic education. While no standard definition exists, literacy can be understood as “a context-bound continuum of reading, writing and numeracy skills.”² Thus there is not a simple division between “literate” and “illiterate”, but there is instead a range of levels of skills, which differ according to the context.

The concept of literacy is understood in four main ways, as listed below.

- Literacy as skills: is focused on the idea that literacy is a set of skills that learners can apply to their lives.
- Literacy as tasks (often known as functional literacy): links literacy with its contexts and applications in everyday life.
- Literacy as social practice: provides an understanding of literacy in particular social contexts and draws attention to the many ways in which literacy material varies depending on who is reading or writing, for what purposes, and in what settings.
- Literacy as critical reflection: involves enabling participants to analyze and reflect critically on their society and their place within it, and in doing so, to address directly the roots of power inequalities.

Gender

Gender is a social and cultural construct. The concept of gender includes the expectations held about the roles and behaviours of women and men (femininity and masculinity). These expectations are learned. Gender-based roles and other attributes change over time and vary with different cultural contexts.³

“Gender” does not mean the same thing as “sex”, which refers to the biological differences

1 UNESCO. 2007. *Thematic Framework: Operational Definition of Basic Education*, <http://www.unesco.org/education/framework.pdf>

2 UNESCO. 2006. *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*.

3 UNESCO. 2009, *Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit: Promoting Gender Equality in Education*, Bangkok, UNESCO.

between men and women. These differences are universal and do not change between cultures.⁴

The meaning of the term “gender” can be understood by comparing the following two statements. The statement, “women are good at cooking; men are good at farming” refers to a perceived expectation about the roles and behaviours of women and men, and therefore refers to gender, while the statement, “women give birth to babies; men do not” refers to biological differences between women and men.⁵

Gender equality

When gender equality exists, women and men have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefiting from) development. Gender equality can therefore be defined as “the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play.”⁶ It does not mean women and men are the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female.⁷

Gender equity

Gender equity is the fair treatment of women and men. This involves compensating for historical and social factors that have prevented women and men from operating on a level playing field in the past. Gender equity is a means of achieving gender equality.

Gender equity measures address the policies, laws, procedures, norms, beliefs, practices and attitudes that maintain gender inequality. One example of a gender equity measure is the provision of leadership training for women, so as to increase the number of women who are leaders in society, thus leading to greater gender equality in governance structures.

Promoting the equal participation of women as agents of change in economic, social and political processes is an essential gender equity measure for achieving gender equality. Equal participation means women should be given the right to articulate their needs and interests and the right to contribute and work towards their vision of an ideal society.

4 ILO 2007. ABC of women workers’ rights and gender equality, 2nd edition, Geneva, ILO.

5 UNESCO. 2009, Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit: Promoting Gender Equality in Education, Bangkok, UNESCO.

6 Ibid.

7 ILO. 2007, ABC of women workers’ rights and gender equality, International Labour Organization, 2nd edition, Geneva, ILO.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis is a tool used to identify how public policy affects men and women differently. Gender analysis requires collecting sex-disaggregated data and information about the population concerned.

Information is collected about:

- Differences between women and men in terms of their circumstances, social relationships and consequent status.
- The different perspectives, roles, needs and interests of women and men in an area, country, region or institution.
- Relations between women and men pertaining to their access to and control over resources, benefits and decision-making processes.
- The potential differing impacts of policy or programme interventions on women and men.
- Socio-cultural opportunities and constraints for reducing gender inequalities and promoting more equal relations between women and men.

Gender analysis examines the local gender roles of a country or community and aids in the understanding of these relationships. This understanding allows programmes to be tailored to meet the local needs of men and women and ensure programmes and policies become more gender-neutral and no longer perpetuate inequality.

Gender lens

A gender lens is a tool that helps focus attention on the different interests, level of participation and realities of each gender. The purpose of a gender lens is to highlight these differences, and find ways of changing the situation so that true equality can be attained between men and women.

A gender lens is a list of questions, a checklist or a list of criteria. These questions or criteria are designed to help to reflect on whether existing policies and practices are gender-neutral or not, and how to change them.

For example, one of the questions in a gender lens could be: "Are the writers and illustrators of the teaching and learning materials gender-sensitive?" This question raises the issue of whether the writers and artists are aware of gender issues, believe in gender equality, and are supporting gender stereotyping or not.⁸ Thinking about this question, requires looking at teaching and learning materials in a new way, through a new "lens".

⁸ UNESCO. 2009. Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit: Promoting Gender Equality in Education, Bangkok, UNESCO.

There are various types of gender lenses, depending on the situation and needs. For example, a gender lens for training programmes would be used every time you develop a training programme. This kind of lens would ask questions such as, “Is there an equal number of male and female trainees?” and “Is the training material gender-neutral?” A gender lens for monitoring the gender sensitivity of communication tools (posters, flyers, etc.) would ask questions such as, “Is there an equal number of males and females displayed on the posters?” and “Are the roles of women and men portrayed on the posters stereotypical or gender-neutral?”

Gender mainstreaming in education

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to make the experiences and concerns of women and men an integral dimension of policy formulation and programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, so that such policies and programmes do not perpetuate gender inequality.⁹

In practice, gender mainstreaming means adopting a gender-balanced perspective in all activities and procedures, and requires taking practical steps. Such steps include ensuring women are equipped with the necessary skills to influence policy, enabling women to participate in decision-making, and ensuring all men and women are committed to the achievement of gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming of education materials is a process of ensuring that learning materials are not biased in favour of one gender and do not perpetuate any gender inequalities that may exist. Gender-sensitive learning materials allow both girls and boys (women and men) become equally equipped with the life skills and attitudes that they need to achieve their full potential.

Gender-equal teaching and learning aids are free of gender-based barriers, so that both girls and boys can learn equally.

Gender audit

A gender audit is a tool for evaluating the gender-responsiveness of a government agency or organization’s culture, and how well that agency or organization is integrating a gender perspective into its work. The audit recommendations aim to assist the organization to become more gender neutral.

9 UNESCO. 2009, Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit: Promoting Gender Equality in Education, Bangkok, UNESCO.

Empowerment

Empowerment occurs when people, women and men, take control of their own lives. Empowered people set their own agendas, gain skills, build self-confidence, solve problems and develop self-reliance. Women's empowerment is when women develop confidence in their own capacities and gain political, social or economic strength.

No one can empower another but it is possible to support processes that nurture the self-empowerment of individuals and groups.

The Importance of Basic Education, Literacy and Gender Equality in Education

Education for all members of society is vital for a successful and productive future and for the development of our countries. Basic education is essential in providing the tools and knowledge needed to understand and participate in day-to-day activities in today's world. Basic education inspires confidence and empowers people by giving them independence of thought and awareness of the opportunities and rights available to them.

Acquisition of literacy skills is a key component of basic education. Literacy enables more effective communication between people, opens up new horizons of opportunity for peaceful dialogue, and facilitates towards finding better solutions to the problems. Through enabling people to independently gain greater knowledge in regard to health, nutrition and hygiene, literacy leads to greater awareness of methods for disease prevention, and facilitates improvements in the quality of life. Literacy is important in decreasing fertility and child mortality, increasing life expectancy, and contributes to the processes of poverty eradication. With an increase in literacy comes an increase in political awareness and therefore opportunities for improvement in the quality of public policies. Furthermore, literate and educated people are more likely to vote and tend to voice more tolerant attitudes and more democratic values.

Achieving gender equality in education is necessary so as to ensure the enrolment, participation and achievement of both girls and boys (women and men) in learning environments and to meet the learning needs of both girls and boys (women and men). High quality, relevant basic education that is equally accessible to all regardless of their gender and that provides girls and boys alike with knowledge and life skills contributes to the development of society as a whole and enhances resilience to difficulties and crises.

The Importance of Ensuring a Balanced Depiction of Genders in Teaching and Learning Materials

The report of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women notes that one of the factors contributing to the persistence of discrimination against women and gender inequality in many societies is that curricula and educational materials are often gender-biased and reinforce traditional female and male roles.¹⁰

In gender biased teaching-learning materials men are generally depicted as breadwinners, in authoritative positions and as the financial backbone of families, while women are generally depicted as being merely the servers of men either doing domestic chores or, in cases where women are shown working outside of the home, depicted in more subordinate or nurturing positions such as secretarial work, nursing and teaching. While men are generally portrayed as being intelligent, skilful, brave, and determined, women are portrayed as being subservient, passive, and dependent. Constant exposure to such representation of genders can lead to children adopting and internalizing these messages as being true and natural, with the result that both boys and girls grow up socialized to the idea that women are incompetent and undeserving of being granted opportunities outside the home or being given a voice in important matters. These stereotypes have the power of making girls and women censor their own ambitions and limit their goals in order to conform to society's expectations.

Stereotypical depictions are not only detrimental to the development of girls and women. Stereotypes such as “boys are strong” and “boys don't cry” can have the effect of cutting boys and men off from their emotions and their natural feelings of compassion, leading to societies in which there is excessive insensitivity, aggressiveness and competitiveness.¹¹

According to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women), “creation of education in which women and men, girls and boys are treated equally and encouraged to achieve their full potential, and where educational resources promote non-stereotyped images of women and men, would be effective in the elimination of the causes of discrimination against women and inequalities between women and men.”¹² Similarly, the World Declaration on Education for All states that “the most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated.”¹³

10 United Nations. 1996, Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-5 September 1995.

11 Falconnet, G. and Lefaucheur, N. 1975. *La fabrication des males*, Paris, Seuil.

12 Beijing Platform for Action - Strategic Objectives and Actions, Chapter IV, Education and training of women, B.72. (URL <http://www.un-documents.net/bpa-4-b.htm>.)

13 World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs adopted by the World Conference on education for All Meeting Basic Learning Needs Jomtien, Thailand March, 1990 Article 3. (URL:http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/background/jomtien_declaration.shtml).

Educational material should reflect a balanced view of the world; in which women can and do succeed in non-traditional professions such as farming and engineering, and men can and do succeed in professions such as nursing and teaching. Likewise, the contribution of women to the development of society must be recognized and reflected in educational materials.

A balanced depiction of both genders in textual materials and teaching and learning aids is vital in changing the customs, attitudes, and practices towards women and men, on all social and political levels. It also helps to empower women by ensuring that they do not see themselves as being subordinate to men and by encouraging them to challenge unfair discrimination they may experience in society.

To this purpose, many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Viet Nam have taken steps to examine the extent of gender biases and sex stereotyping in existing educational materials, and have produced gender-sensitive materials.

Steps in this direction are also being taken in Pakistan, but the development of gender-sensitive educational materials is still rare. It is therefore important to increase awareness of the need for educational materials which are free of gender biases and stereotypes. It is also essential to establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure that gender sensitivity continues as a guiding principle at the implementation level.

Review of Existing Teaching and Learning Materials in Pakistan

Research by various Pakistani Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and educational institutions indicates that educational materials being used in basic education and literacy classes in Pakistan are presenting gender stereotypes and are thereby perpetuating gender inequality in the country. Writers of such materials discriminate against females by under-playing their creative and intellectual capabilities. This is especially apparent in primary school materials and reflects the socialization of the writers, who have internalized stereotypes about women.

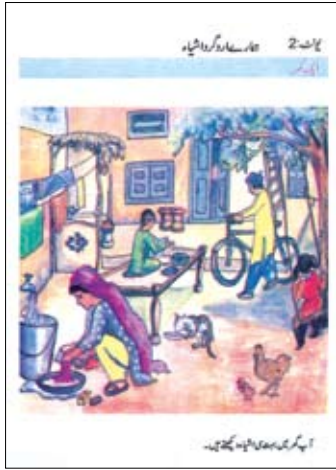
In Pakistan today, a large percentage of the female population is actively participating in the formal economic sector, with women leading firms and organizations in both agriculture and industry. Women today are also involved in politics and in the country's defence force, making key political and military decisions. Nevertheless, women and girls are still being presented in learning materials in stereotypical roles, mainly as domestic workers. Primary-level textbooks often praise women for their subservience and devotion to domestic duties. Such textbooks also often portray women as manipulative, jealous creatures, as weak or irrational, or as superstitious or despicable. Men, on the contrary, are depicted in occupations in which they wield power and can exert it to exhibit their potential, for example, as *sardars* or heads of state. Analysis of the gender roles depicted in many learning materials shows that males are portrayed as "masters" in their homes. They don't consult females, even on household-management issues such as child-raising or household budgeting. In some learning materials, females are chastised for disagreeing with males. Often, the motivation attributed to women for maintaining a household to a high standard is to make their husbands happy. Furthermore, according to textbooks, modern farming technology is taught to men, through men. The important role of women in agriculture is often ignored.

In many educational materials women who deviate from traditional, stereotypically proper roles, are physically punished. Moreover, some "textbooks imply that women should tolerate an abusive male, accepting his violence as natural...the female's silent suffering is highlighted as an inherently good female quality."

Illustrations are integral to literacy teaching-learning materials because the audience does not need to be literate to understand them and they appeal to children and adults alike. In adult literacy material, illustrations have even greater importance because discussions on social issues are often initiated with the help of illustrations. Educational materials are often illustrated with stereotypical images, however, which perpetuate gender biased attitudes. Furthermore, teaching and learning materials often include pictures of boys and men only, even when the material applies to males and females alike.

Female stereotypes

In the below illustration, women are shown in a stereotypical role. This type of image: women washing clothes, husband coming home after work, boy reading and girl swinging reinforces gender stereotypes.



Men and women should instead be shown as sharing domestic work and girls should be shown as capable of engaging in learning activities. For example: an image of a man washing clothes along with his wife, or an image of girls studying together with their brother.

The picture below shows boys with technical expertise and girls in a traditional helper role. Hamid is shown to be studying agriculture and he has technical expertise of how to grow various kinds of plants and vegetables. On the other hand, Rabia is presented as having no interest and expertise in technical work.

Source: Science (Urdu) for Class 1 by Prof Muhammad Tahir Hassan, page 4, Code No. STU 344, edition 2008, National Book Foundation Islamabad

کاشت کی جاتی ہیں۔ کیسے بچ بوئے جاتے ہیں اور ان کی دیکھ بھال کیسے کی جاتی ہے۔
 حامد نے سب سے پہلے کشتی سے زمین کو اچھی طرح کھود ڈالا۔ اس طرح نیچے کی مٹی اوپر
 آگئی۔
 رابعہ کھڑپے سے مٹی کے بڑے بڑے ڈھیلوں کو توڑ کر زمین ہموار کرتی رہی۔
 دوسرے دن دونوں نے اسی مٹی میں کھاد ملا دی اور چھوٹی چھوٹی کیا ریاں بنا دیں۔ حامد
 دکان سے سبزیوں کے اچھی قسم کے بچ لے آیا تھا۔ ان میں مکڑوہ کر لیے، گلیا توری، ٹماٹر،
 بیٹکن، بکیرے اور پیٹلی کے بچ شامل تھے۔ انھوں نے ہر سبزی کے لیے الگ الگ جگہ
 معزوری اور قطاریں بنا کر بچ بو دیئے۔ بیٹوں میں مناسب فاصلہ بھی رکھا تاکہ پودے بہت
 قریب قریب نہ ہوں۔ رابعہ کو لوبیے کی پھلیاں بے حد پسند تھیں۔ اس نے حامد سے نظر بچا
 کر ایک طرف لوبیے کے کچھ بچ بھی بو دیئے۔ انھوں نے کیا ریاں کو مناسب مقدار میں

میت کا پھل
 حامد اور رابعہ کو پھلانی
 جودہ پھل ہے۔ انھوں نے جودہ
 کے گہنے میں پانچ جاکھا ہے کہ
 میں جودہ سے پھل ہوا ہے۔
 جودہ۔ ایسے پھل کی کاشت سے پودے
 گرنے لگتے ہیں۔
 ان سے گہنی کی کھلی طرف سے کھدائی
 انھوں نے جودہ کی کاشت کی ہے۔
 جودہ کھلی سے لے کر کھدائی کے بعد

Source: Urdu Third Teaching (Darsi) Book – Part II for Class 3, page 85-86, Code No. STU 354, Edition 2009, National Book Foundation, Islamabad.

A more gender-equal representation would be that both genders are shown to have equal capacities i.e. Hamid and Rabia are both keen to study agriculture and both have technical expertise in how to grow plants.

In the following illustrations, titled “highly qualified (*aa’la talim yafta*) people,” women are presented as nurses and school teachers whereas men are depicted as engineers, scientists and doctors. Such material represents the patriarchal nature of Pakistani society in which lower status professions are considered to be the domain of women while higher status positions are a male domain only.



Source: Social Studies (Moashrati Uloom) for Class 3 by Mrs. Misbah Ul Nisa Naagra, Page 27-28, Code No. STU 352, edition 2009, National Book Foundation, Islamabad.



True and equitable representation would present women and men in both traditional and non-traditional roles e.g. women as both scientists and teachers, and men as both nurses and engineers.

Images portraying males, but no females, playing football and swimming create an image in the reader's mind that only men can participate in such games or sports.

To change attitudes and prevent the perpetuation of stereotypes, girls must also be shown participating in games and sports which were traditionally only played by men.

Source: My English Reader, (Class 3) by Shaheen Ajmal, page 54, Code No. STE 446, Edition 2009, National Book Foundation, Islamabad.

Guidelines



This section provides guiding principles for writers of literacy materials, to assist in ensuring literacy materials are free of gender biases and stereotypes.

Understand the concept of gender and related concepts

Gender stereotypes present an inaccurate view of the world and limit both females and males. Such misrepresentations are internalized and acted out by the people that have been exposed to them. For the development of gender sensitive literacy materials, it is necessary that writers of such materials understand the concept of gender and how society creates gender stereotypes which then become self-perpetuating. Writers of literacy materials should refer to the “Concepts and definitions” section of this publication and to the UNESCO Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit to gain a better understanding of concepts relating to gender equality.

Undertake gender analysis of literacy material



Analysis of literacy materials from a gender perspective is important in order to remove or minimize the biases and stereotypes in literacy material. Authors of literacy materials need to analyze and then revise existing literacy material (text and illustrations) to ensure male and female characters are represented in equal numbers and that male and female characters are attributed with unbiased characteristics.

Authors of literacy materials should examine the following aspects of the materials to identify and remove any stereotypes or biases:

- The social reference and behavioural roles of male and female characters in the activities described in the teaching-learning materials. The social reference refers to the static traits attributed to male and female characters such as status, level of income and occupation.
- The actions undertaken by male and female characters, including domestic tasks carried out in the home, contributions to the education of children, professional activities, political or social activities and leisure activities (sport, art, hobbies, etc.).
- The social and emotional behaviour of male and female characters. This includes emotions, independence versus dependence, and weakness versus strength.

Ensure teaching-learning materials are appropriate for the context

It is important to know for whom the literacy material is being developed for, so that the materials are relevant and useful to the learners. Context includes local culture, traditions, employment opportunities, government infrastructure and policies. It may be necessary to conduct a field survey or context study of the area and of the target groups to identify the problems and constraints faced by learners and to understand specific social, economic and cultural factors that influence the learners and their capacity to learn. Knowing the unique situation of the target group will ensure the learning materials are not only suitable but at the same time do not reinforce any existing gender inequalities that may exist.

Understand the link between power and access to education

Disparities in power are often linked to differences in access to education. One's gender, ethnicity and language affect one's power and therefore one's access to school. Among those least likely to be literate are women, poor people, minority groups, or people living in rural or underdeveloped districts.

Authors of literacy materials should be aware of the difficulties some groups face in accessing literacy education and tailor materials to ensure they meet the needs of those which are most in need of empowerment. Writers of literacy materials should consider how marginalized or weaker groups will respond to the material. Material must be prepared in such a way that it empowers such groups instead of reinforcing unfair conditions and roles.

Seek feedback from learners and teachers

Receiving feedback from learners helps writers of literacy materials to understand the needs of the readers better, and allows them to tailor the literacy material specifically to the readers' needs. Feedback can be attained in several ways, for example through sessions in which readers are asked to read the material out loud so that any areas of difficulty can be identified. Additionally, literacy teachers could be asked to offer their comments on the suitability of draft materials and make suggestions for improvements.

Check the language used in the literacy materials

Language is a powerful tool in representing gender. Certain vocabulary strengthens gender biases and stereotypes. Likewise, gender-sensitive and gender-neutral vocabulary can minimize gender biases. By changing our language, we can change perceptions.

Using words like mailman, chairman or headmaster, perpetuates the idea that only men can do certain kinds of jobs. Use gender neutral nouns such as chairperson or school master instead. Similarly, it is unnecessary to use special forms to indicate women's positions, for example, actress, stewardess or waitress. Replace these with gender-neutral words such as actor, flight attendant and waiter. Avoid terms such as "male nurse," "woman professor" or

“lady detective” that imply that normally the job is gender-specific. Ask yourself if you would use it in describing that occupation for the opposite gender. For example if you use the words “female doctor,” would you also write “male doctor?” Likewise, avoid words such as “mankind;” instead use words such as humanity, human beings, and people.

Similarly, avoid expressions such as “Act like a gentleman,” “the best man for the job” or “the feminine touch” which reinforce stereotypes about gender.

Using singular pronouns like “he” and “she” biases text in favour of one gender over another. Where possible, use the gender-neutral plural “they” instead.

When describing the same characteristic in men and women, use the same adjective. Don’t use “compassionate” to describe a man’s behaviour but “weak” to describe a woman’s behaviour in the same situation.

When citing from texts that are gender-biased, paraphrase the text to make it gender-neutral rather than directly quoting the text.

In countries or areas with numerous languages and dialects, the language understood by the majority should be used in the educational materials, even if it is not the official language of the state.

Checklist

This section provides a step-by-step checklist for ensuring gender issues are considered when preparing literacy materials. It includes material from a variety of sources.¹⁴



Step 1: Selection of authors

When selecting authors to write or prepare the literacy materials, the following questions should be considered:

- Are the writers and artists gender sensitive? Have they received gender-awareness training?
- Is there an appropriate gender balance (both men and women) among the authors and artists?
- Are these authors and artists prepared to make conscious choices to remain gender-neutral while producing material, instead of following their own experiences?

Step 2: Target group identification and analysis

An important step in the process of material development is the identification of the target group, whether it is rural women, urban children, or members of a minority group. The target group's values, culture, needs, interests, expectations and availability of time should be assessed and analyzed so that the literacy materials that are developed are relevant to their needs. Some aspects to be considered are:

- Will the needs assessment equally involve boys and girls (men and women) so that needs and interests of both are identified?
- Are the needs of women taken into account while assessing the needs of a target group?

¹⁴ Leach, F. 2003, *Practicing gender analysis in education*, Oxfam Skills and Practice Series, Oxfam, London; UNESCO, 2004, *Gender Sensitivity: A training manual for sensitizing education managers, curriculum and materials developers and media professional to gender concerns*, UNESCO, Paris; UNESCO, 2009, *Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit: Promoting Gender Equality in Education*, Bangkok, UNESCO; UNESCO, 2007, *Guide to Develop Gender Responsive Literacy Programmes*, Islamabad, UNESCO.

Step 3: Gender analysis of existing literacy materials

When examining existing literacy materials, the following questions should be considered:

3.1. Analysis of gender biases and stereotypes in content and illustrations¹⁵

- Does the content and illustrations depict the material statuses of both men and women equally?
- Do the pictures show women in authoritative positions?
- What activities/occupations are both sexes depicted in?
- How many pictures of each of the sexes are shown in the various levels of employment?
- Do the materials reinforce gender stereotypes? If so, in what way? How can the materials be changed to remove stereotypes?
- Are inequalities based on gender, race, class, disability and sexual orientation explored and analyzed?
- How many times does the text mention males versus females?
- Does the literacy and educational material promote women's self-reliance? Are the following issues prominent?
 - The multiple roles of women, and women's non-traditional employment.
 - Women questioning their life conditions and women taking initiative Control their own lives.
 - Women leaders, and women as equal partners of men
- Are significant contributions of women or men omitted?
- What does the order of appearance of female and male characters (the page and their place on the page and in a sentence) imply about their relative statuses? How can this be changed to give women and men more equal status?
- Are the activities and roles of people listed, categorized and counted by gender?
- Are people with disabilities represented? If so, how are they represented? Are they represented fairly or in a biased way?
- Are teaching and learning methods appropriate for both male and female learners?

3.2. Analysis of gender biases and stereotypes in language

- Are gender-neutral pronouns used? Is there an equal balance of gender-specific, singular pronouns? Are gender-neutral nouns substituted for gender-specific pronouns?

¹⁵ Leach, F. 2003, Practicing gender analysis in education, Oxfam Skills and Practice Series, Oxfam, London, p. 102.

- Does the language perpetuate biases? For example, are men described as ambitious while women in the same position are described as aggressive?
- Does the language contain gender-specific expressions? (e.g. “Act like a gentleman”)
- How are nouns and pronouns used as a means of identifying characters? Which characters are designated by gender and which are not?

Step 4: Research, design and planning for new literacy materials

When conducting research, design and planning for the preparation of literacy materials, the following questions should be considered:

- Do the research, design and planning teams include both men and women? Are these people gender-sensitive? Is gender training provided to them?
- Has sex-disaggregated data about literacy needs been collected and is it available?
- Has the design of the literacy materials considered the literacy needs of both men and women?

Step 5: Counteracting stereotypes in content and illustrations

The following actions should be taken to counteract stereotypes in content and illustrations:

- Deliberately portray women and girls in a wide range of positive roles and portray males and females in atypical roles (e.g. men doing household work and women driving cars). This will instil an alternative idea to the stereotyped roles of women and girls and help to remove stereotypes.
- Ensure there is a balance of male and females in certain roles (e.g. portray both male and female teachers; both male and female nurses; etc.).
- Increase the number of named female characters and female descriptions in teaching and learning materials.
- Increase the portrayal of women leadership roles and in the public sphere; in economic and political roles as well as social roles.
- Give examples of female role models in atypical roles, such as women in professions relating to science, technology, computer sciences and leadership.
- Portray women with positive traits like resourcefulness, responsibility, creativity and intelligence.
- Place greater emphasis on sharing of domestic duties by males (boys and men). Portraying males in family roles, sharing domestic responsibilities will help to dispel the idea that such activities are not undertaken by men and the impression that only women are intended for nurturing and caring roles.

- An equal balance of gender-specific, singular pronouns (he and she) should be used. Gender-free, plural pronouns like we, they and you should be used instead, when possible.
- References to physical appearance should be used only when there is a legitimate reason for the reference.
- Avoid portraying stereotypes such as boys being engaged in active occupations, such as sport, and girls being engaged in passive occupations such as sewing. Likewise, avoid showing girls playing only with dolls and boys with playing bricks or cars.
- Avoid illustrations of stereotypes. Depict female pilots and engineers, and male nurses and teachers.
- Provide an equal balance of female and male characters in the foreground: the males should not always be shown in a controlling position at front of the picture, with the women to the side or at the back. Women should also be placed in central positions to suggest that they are also central and strong. Portraying females as well as males in strong, central leadership roles can have a powerful, positive effect on a girl's aspirations.
- Issues of prejudice and discrimination should be displayed so that they can be discussed and addressed.

Step 6: Considering gender in proofreading and editing

When proofreading or editing the text of teaching-learning material, consider the following questions:

- Are the titles, language and pictures gender-neutral?
- Do the exercises and stories feature girls and boys equally?
- Do the roles, responsibilities and activities of girls and boys reflect equal empowerment and decision-making?
- Are occupations shown as being open to all? Are females and males portrayed in non-traditional careers e.g. a female pilot, a male nurse etc.?
- Is there the same number of females and males in the text and illustrations?
- Are females and males portrayed in the same number of active and passive roles?

Step 7: Monitoring, evaluation and feedback

After teaching and learning materials have been prepared, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the material and get feedback from teachers and learners. During this process, the following questions should be considered:

- Does the monitoring and evaluation system have specific gender equality indicators?
- Do monitoring teams have both male and female members? Are all members trained in gender-awareness and gender mainstreaming?
- Are both men and women consulted in measuring indicators and collecting feedback?

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