

EIGE takes an in-depth look at gender equality in the classroom



This year, EIGE is putting the spotlight on gender equality in education. With three new studies already underway, EIGE is delving into the classroom to unearth some of the gender related challenges in education.

“Education and gender equality are very closely connected, with the classroom providing an ideal place to break-down gender stereotypes early on. However, educational settings can also reinforce them. For example, through textbooks which show women working in traditional roles, such as nurses and teachers and men working as engineers and scientists,” said Jolanta Reingarde, senior researcher at EIGE.

A better understanding of these challenges, including higher dropout rates for boys and gender segregation in study fields is needed to promote gender equality in European societies – through the education systems themselves.

What are gender stereotypes?

They are predetermined ideas that attribute specific characteristics, roles and behaviours to women and men according to their gender. Gender stereotypes can limit the development of natural talents of girls and boys, women and men, as well as their educational and professional experiences.

For the complete definition see EIGE's [Glossary and Thesaurus](#).

Roles start forming at school

Gender inequality in education is one of the top three challenges for gender equality in the EU (together with imbalances in decision-making roles and uneven distribution of time, e.g. hours spent on domestic tasks), according to EIGE's Gender Equality Index. On average in the EU, there are twice as many women as men studying education, health and welfare, humanities and arts.

Gender stereotypes are a big challenge that can influence the subject choices girls and boys make when they are young, which can determine their future career aspirations. As a result of different educational choices between girls and boys, there is also a division in the type of work they choose.

More boys end up in engineering and IT jobs, while girls dominate teaching and caring professions. These job choices will also affect their future prospects, and many women will be worse off financially as the type of jobs they go into are usually valued less and paid less, e.g. child-care workers.

EIGE's study on **gender related challenges in education** will map the situation in each EU Member State. It will give a full picture of the overall challenges facing EU education systems and provide recommendations on the best ways to address them.

From study to working life

To find out more about the gender split in subject and career choices, EIGE will be looking into **gender segregation in tertiary education, training and the labour market**. This new study will examine the trends and reasons for women's and men's subject choices in education and training. It will then look at the pathways into jobs for women and men who study in fields that are uncommon for their gender, e.g. men who study nursing. The study will also analyse the pay gap between occupations characterised as 'masculine' and which pay more, such as engineering, compared to 'feminine' jobs which pay less, for example teaching.

Education as a way to improve life

This spring, EIGE will publish a research note on **gender, skills and precarious jobs in the EU**. It will look at how improving the skills of women and men could help their situation in the job market. Special focus will be on people who work less than 10 hours a week, earn a low salary or have a contract for less than a year – otherwise known as precarious jobs. The study will also consider the different challenges women and men face – and the opportunities they have to adapt their skills. Women and men also tend to be segregated in precarious work, with women working as domestic, hotel, office cleaners or helpers and men working in transport, storage and agriculture.

The three studies in a nutshell

1. Gender related challenges in education: To find out the main challenges, EIGE is consulting with experts and policy makers in all EU Member States. The aim is to provide policy and decision makers with guidelines and recommendations on how to strengthen the value of gender equality in and through education systems.

The results will be published in October 2017. A further study on the integration of migrants in education is planned for 2018.

For more information please contact Maurizio Mosca, maurizio.mosca@eige.europa.eu

2. Gender segregation in tertiary education, training and the labour market: This study is being prepared at the request of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU (2017) and the results will be available in November 2017.

For more information please contact Lina Salanauskaite, lina.salanauskaite@eige.europa.eu

3. Gender, skills and precarious jobs in the EU: Research note for the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU (2017). It will be available in May 2017.

For more information please contact Zuzana Madarova, zuzana.madarova@eige.europa.eu

If you're looking for more information on gender and education:

See the education section on EIGE's [Gender Mainstreaming Platform](#)

Explore the domain of knowledge in EIGE's [Gender Equality Index](#)

Discover interesting facts in EIGE's [Gender Statistics Database](#)

Search online resources in EIGE's [Research and Documentation Centre](#)

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