The relevance of gender in education

Education is a catalyst for social change and necessary to build societies that respect human rights. Education is needed to give women and men the skills to secure steady, well-paid jobs to avoid social exclusion. Gender equality in education is focused on gender-based choices across study fields, gender stereotypes and gender differences in educational achievements.

Grey literature in EIGE’s library

EIGE’s library hosts one of the largest collections on gender-related literature related to education. The collection presents good practices of current policies throughout Europe as well as gender indicators aimed at assessing gender equality in education. Several resources focus on the ways in which the EU has mainstreamed gender into policy processes for education. You will also find research reports and statistical documents providing data on key gender issues related to education.

Gender differences in study fields and educational attainments

Different choices across study fields between women and men are a key component of gender differences in education patterns in the EU-28. Within the library you will find resources showing how women are under-represented in certain fields of study and over-represented in others. In science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) fields, men dominate. In the social sciences and humanities, women are much more present. One of the reasons for this is the persistent labelling of study areas and work as either ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’. Within the library you will find resources explaining how young people are expected to choose subjects that match their identities as women or men. You will also find resources highlighting that gender segregation in the labour market is a result of different educational and professional choices in school and university.

The library also includes several resources focusing on gender differences in educational performance. These show that girls outperform boys in literacy across all Member States, and that boys have increasing problems in terms of educational attainment.

Reading list

‘Gender Differences in Education’;
‘Gender differences in the formation of a field of study choice set’;
‘Gender segregation in occupational expectations and in the labour market: international variation and the role of education and training systems’;
‘Gender gaps in PISA test scores: the impact of social norms and the mother’s transmission of role attitudes’;
Boys and school: a background paper on the ‘boy crisis’.
Achieving gender equality through education

Gender equality in education can also be achieved through adapting national school curricula with a gender perspective in mind. This can include modules on women’s sexual and reproductive rights, for example. Textbooks and other teaching materials should also be modified to eliminate gender bias. Within the library, you will find several resources tackling these issues. Besides the development of gender-sensitive teaching materials, gender-responsive teaching is also crucial. In the library you will find toolkits and practical guidelines that outline how to promote gender equality through education.

Education and gender-based violence

Gender-based violence also happens at school. Within the library, you will find several resources outlining ways to combat and prevent gender-based violence in an educational setting. Library resources provide practical examples and recommendations, as well as toolkits for teachers. A bulk of resources also deal with bullying, where there are also gender differences among perpetrators and victims.

Reading list

* Pedagogy and student change in the women’s and gender studies classroom;*
* Guidelines on Human Rights Education — For human rights activists;*
* Guidelines on Sexuality and Relationships Education in Maltese Schools;*
* Sexes & Manuels — Promouvoir l’égalité dans les manuels scolaires;*
* Online training courses: ‘coeducation — two sexes in one world’: Gender training in education, Portugal, 18-19 October 2012: discussion paper.

Reading list

* Effective responses for gender-based violence: gender-based violence in schools;*
* Updated ETUCE action plan on: preventing and tackling violence in schools;*
* Teaching Against Violence Reassessing the Toolbox — Teaching with gender. European women’s studies in international and interdisciplinary classrooms;*
* ‘Gender, bullying, victimization, and education’.

About EIGE

The European Institute for Gender Equality is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans and beyond, by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable information on gender equality in Europe. With over 800 000 items, EIGE’s Resource and Documentation Centre is a one-stop shop for gender knowledge. Access our collection of policy documents, books, articles, studies, specialised databases and more at www.eige.europa.eu
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