

The Gender- Responsive School

AN ACTION GUIDE

CATHERINE ATTHILL
JYOTSNA JHA



COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARIAT

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Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
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Catherine Atthill
Jyotsna Jha

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Foreword

Education plays a critical role in the shaping of gender identity and gender relations. There is a need therefore to ensure that those involved in schooling do not perpetuate processes that promote inequity and restrict the potential of girls and boys. Rather, schools should be supported in adopting practices that challenge stereotypical views of masculine and feminine behaviour and identities. Secondary education takes place when girls and boys are between childhood and adulthood and as such at a critical stage of identity formation. It is therefore a key opportunity to effectively address issues related to empowerment and relationships.

The starting point for this Action Guide was a research study, 'Gender Analysis of Classroom and Other Schooling Processes in Secondary Schools', conducted in a small number of sample secondary schools in seven countries (India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Samoa, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago) in 2007-2008. The findings of this study are available as a book, Jha, J and Page, E (eds) (2009 forthcoming) *Exploring the Bias: Gender and Stereotyping in Secondary Schools*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London. The research looked at various classrooms in selected secondary schools and clearly revealed that schools can reinforce, rather than question, prevalent gender notions and learning experiences. Those involved in the study agreed that a pilot action project was required in order to address the recommendations that emerged.

The Action Guide is based on the experiences of secondary teachers and schools who participated in the action pilot project, which was supported by the Education Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The project aimed to explore ways of helping secondary schools become more gender-responsive and to document their experiences in the process and determine the lessons learned. It included examples of action research initiated by teachers and of whole school activities initiated by both principals and teachers. Some of the approaches adopted to developing understanding of gender aspects and perspectives are described in the guide.

The guide therefore responds to the expressed needs of many professionals working in education for support in ensuring that classrooms and schooling processes are more informed by and responsive to gender. It offers practical solutions drawn from diverse contexts facing different challenges: from Rajasthan (India) and Sindh (Pakistan) in Asia to Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean and Seychelles in Africa.

We sincerely hope that teachers, principals, educational administrators, teacher trainers, policy planners and others working in the field of education will find this guide useful. We welcome feedback and encourage readers to provide comments and suggestions to help steer our future work.

Dr Caroline Pontefract Director, Social Transformation Programmes
Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Introduction

'...education is not just an arrangement for training to develop skills (important as that is), it is also a recognition of the nature of the world, with its diversity and richness, and an appreciation of the importance of freedom and reasoning as well as friendship. The need for that understanding – that vision – has never been

stronger'. AMARTYA SEN, SPEECH TO THE COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION CONFERENCE, EDINBURGH, 2003

What is a gender-responsive school? It is a school that is aware of existing gender inequalities and equips its students with appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes to deal with these and to make changes that lead to greater equality and respect for diversity.

The issue of gender equality occupies a central place in global policy discourse on education and human and social development. Gender equality in education not only implies that both girls and boys have equal access to schooling; it also means that the process of education is empowering and geared towards changing stereotypical expectations of girls and boys, and thus in turn towards transforming gender relations and the relative unequal positioning of the sexes in society.

This raises certain important questions regarding the role of school and everything that happens there. For example, are schooling processes geared towards questioning prevalent stereotypes? Are teachers well equipped to organise teaching and learning processes in a manner that helps a school become a gender-responsive institution? There cannot be just one answer to these questions, as the situation in every single school will be different, but in general the situation in most countries does not appear to be encouraging.

A Commonwealth Secretariat study on 'Gender Analysis of Classroom and Other Schooling Processes in Secondary Schools', carried out in seven countries in 2007–2008, found that schools in most cases reinforced the existing gender ideology, stereotypes, norms and expectations. These seven countries – representing a wide spectrum of economic, geographical, social, cultural and educational contexts – were India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Samoa, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago (see APPENDIX I). The fact that this feedback came from diverse countries reflects the need for intervention at the level of schools and teachers. That is where this Action Guide comes in.

Aims

The purpose of the Action Guide is to provide effective tools for teachers, principals and school administrators and managers to help them make schools effective change institutions. It aims to provide ideas and mechanisms to make classrooms and other schooling activities more gender-responsive so that established norms are questioned and students become capable of fostering a new kind of gender relations. This will ultimately be reflected in fuller development of their personalities and learning levels. Gender-responsive schools are important in all kinds of situations: where girls continue to remain behind boys as well as where boys are relatively underachieving in education; and in countries that are yet to achieve gender parity and those that already have. The guide is based on research, pilot projects and trialling in secondary schools and is therefore largely valid for that level, but many of its ideas can equally be tried at primary level as well.

Audience

The main intended users of the Action Guide are classroom teachers, principals, school administrators and managers from all Commonwealth countries. Other audiences include people from the school community, including children themselves and parents, trainers who may wish to use the guide as a training resource, and others involved in similar work such as researchers or ministry representatives.

Developing the Action Guide

The guide is mainly based on the seven-country study on gender analysis of classroom and other processes mentioned above and on a pilot action project titled 'Action Gender in School' undertaken in a selected number of schools in four of these countries: India, Malaysia, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago. We organised a series of workshops to facilitate sharing and the exchange of ideas among country teams. In addition, a trialling workshop was organised with four southern African countries (Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa) to test activities and collect further material (see APPENDIX II). Two Mozambique schools also carried out selected activities and shared their experiences. In addition, the Action Guide draws from some other examples and experiences – for example, implementation of the Social Learning Package in India (see APPENDIX III).

The very purpose of starting the 'Action Gender in School' projects was to gather evidence of different ways of turning a school into a gender-responsive institution. The guide is the result of collaboration among several players, particularly the team leaders and other researchers, teachers and other staff of the schools participating in the pilot projects, and participants at the workshops. From their reports and personal accounts, and through feedback in the workshops, those involved have contributed their ideas about what should go into the guide, what works,

what doesn't work, what the problems are and what the successes are. Thus rather than being just an information manual, the guide's focus is on action and changing things.

There are many books about gender in education but little available that offers practical and tested solutions for action at different levels, especially in schools. What makes this guide distinct is that it is based on real experiences and not merely ideas. It draws on the wealth of practical, well-documented experience in a variety of styles – reflection and analysis, workshop materials, action checklists, summaries of findings and experiences – to provide lively and engaging content with real life examples and voices.

Gender: conceptual frame

The guide focuses on making schooling processes gender-responsive. By 'schooling processes' we mean all that happens in a school: how teachers treat their children; the language that is used; the methods of teaching that are practised; how responsibilities are distributed in classrooms and outside classrooms; and how sports and other outside-classroom activities are organised. In sum, we mean all the practices that lead to knowledge and learning of skills and that shape attitudes and beliefs among the learners.

If schooling processes and opportunities within education are not geared to question unequal gender relations and established notions of femininity and masculinity, inequalities will continue to exist. Even when both girls and boys have equal access to education, there is no guarantee of equality in treatment (though of course unequal treatment is likely to be more prevalent in situations where there is disparity in access).

Gender is not only a women's issue; it is a people's issue. Femininity does not exist in isolation from masculinity. The construction and power of one determines the construction and power of the other. Gender relations are neither 'natural' nor given. They are constructed to make unequal relations seem 'natural'. There is undue pressure on both boys and girls to live up to the established norms of masculinity and femininity. Girls and women are not only primarily responsible for all the major care responsibilities at home, they are also over-represented in care-related professions the world over. While girls face social control, discrimination and domination in most societies, boys too suffer from the stereotyping that exists in a patriarchal culture. Discouraged from being emotional, gentle or fearful, they are thrust into the role of breadwinners, protectors and warriors. The notion of masculinity takes extreme forms when education itself is seen as being feminine or anti-masculine and therefore undesirable for boys and men. Unequal gender relations, therefore, stunt the freedom of both girls and boys to develop their human capacities to their fullest. The guide seeks to question the norms and practices that reflect and reinforce such notions.

Gender inequality cannot be viewed in isolation from other forms of inequalities that exist in various societies and systems. It is often embedded, for example, in inequalities of caste, class, race, religion or location. The impact of gender differentiated norms and practices are often sharper and more complex for groups that also face other forms of marginalisation and vulnerability. It is important to understand and acknowledge this phenomenon and to appreciate the linkages and implications in the context of education.

Approach

In its general approach, the guide:

- Aims to capture the core issues of gender, while recognising that there are national and regional issues and differences
- Covers issues relating to both boys and girls, masculine and feminine identities, and addresses both men and women
- Includes case studies and examples from a number of Commonwealth Secretariat studies and pilot action projects to emphasise successes and challenges and how solutions have been found to address those challenges
- Draws on users' own experiences and situations and encourages reflection
- Includes a range of activities for different users, allowing them to work through the guide in different ways to meet particular needs
- Illustrates changes in teachers' thinking and how such changes can take place
- Adopts an active-learning, enjoyable, self-study approach that leads users towards practical action and change

Overview

Introduction

Using the Action Guide
Action plan

UNIT 1 The basics

- 1.1 Gender concepts
- 1.2 Stereotypes
- 1.3 Gender and education

UNIT 2 The wider context

- 2.1 The big picture
- 2.2 The national education context

UNIT 3 A whole school approach

- 3.1 School ethos
- 3.2 Across the school
- 3.3 Staff development
- 3.4 Involving the wider community
- 3.5 School gender policy

UNIT 4 Teaching and learning

- 4.1 Entry points
- 4.2 Curriculum
- 4.3 Classroom dynamics
- 4.4 Underachievement
- 4.5 Teaching and learning for change
- 4.6 Making changes last

UNIT 5 Approaches and methods

- 5.1 Action research
- 5.2 Gender analysis
- 5.3 Change management
- 5.4 Evaluation

Action plan
and reflection

Using the Action Guide

This part of the Introduction explains how the Action Guide is organised and includes learning advice. We recommend that you read through it before you start in order to get the most out of the guide.

What's in the Action Guide

As the overview on the facing page shows, the Action Guide is made up of five units. Each unit consists of several topics.

At the start of each unit there is an overview that introduces the unit and its topics and also highlights the links to the other units.

The topics follow a similar pattern. They include:

- A short introduction setting out the learning outcomes – what you can expect to know, understand or do by the end of each topic
- Examples drawn from the initial research studies and/or the action projects
- Activities to apply learning to your own context or experience
- Explanations, definitions and some short readings
- A final review to check what you have learnt

We suggest you spend a few minutes now looking at the overview opposite and the unit overviews. Note the units and topics that seem of most interest to you. Given the range of countries and regions and the diversity of users and roles, everyone will have different needs and interests and you will need to interpret and apply the examples and activities.

You will find you can work through the units in any order. The way units and topics are sequenced and structured makes the Action Guide flexible and practical for users. To give some examples, you could:

- Start with Unit 1 and work through to the end
- Start with the unit that seems most professionally relevant to you and come back to others later (for example, a headteacher might start with Unit 3 A whole school approach and a teacher with Unit 4 Teaching and learning)
- Jump straight into a topic of special interest to you at the moment (for example, Topic 4.4 Underachievement if that is a problem currently facing you, or Topic 5.1 Action research if you are planning an action research project)
- Use activities and ideas as a stimulus for talking to other people and learning from them
- Dip into particular topics and then follow up links to other units
- Skim through the whole guide first and then decide what to focus on

The guide is also flexible in terms of learning style, with its mix of activities, examples and explanations. For example, if you are an active and practical learner you might start on an activity and read the background and examples later. If you are more reflective and theoretical you might like to study examples and draw your conclusions before trying the activities.

And finally the guide is also flexible in terms of users. It can be used for self-study, for studying on your own combined sometimes with discussion and consultation with others, for group learning or as a staff development resource for trainers.

We suggest you now spend a couple of minutes thinking about how you might turn the flexibility to your advantage in terms of the order that would best suit you, your learning style and whether you will work through the units alone or with others. The main point is: there isn't a right or a wrong way to use the guide, just the right way for you.

A note of explanation about the source material: The Action Guide is based on real experiences from schools. As explained earlier, it draws on research studies, action projects and workshops. Almost all the examples come from a range of secondary schools – large, small, rural, urban, single-sex, co-ed. Where this is relevant, some information is given about the kind of school. All secondary school names and names of pupils and teachers have been changed in the text.

Many examples are from the seven initial research studies. If these examples (referred to as [COUNTRY GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]) sometimes seem rather negative, remember that the research phase was about identifying problems and highlighting where intervention was needed. Nigeria, Pakistan and Samoa did not take part in the action projects so these countries have not provided examples of action and solutions. Other examples are drawn from the four action projects that tackled solutions to the problems (referred to as [COUNTRY ACTION PROJECT]). They offer documented experiences of practical action – challenges and successes, models and tools. These projects are still ongoing, so often the examples are in the present tense or describe work in hand. Responses of participants to activities during the developmental workshop are another source of experience (referred to as [SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]).

When you read the examples and activities, you may sometimes feel at first that a particular one is not relevant to you as it is from a quite different context. But if you look more closely, you will probably realise that even examples from dissimilar or unfamiliar contexts can have relevance and can be adapted and applied in varied situations. Therefore, we suggest that you read, and in some cases re-read, and you may find your own responses changing.

In addition, examples often illustrate more than one theme. For example, an account that seems to be about parental attitudes and involving the wider community probably also throws light on stereotypes, career choices and classroom dynamics. So look out for all these other themes – and again constantly compare and contrast with your own experience.

Throughout the Action Guide the user or reader is addressed as ‘you’. Whether you are a teacher, a headteacher, a ministry of education official or someone else, ‘you’ are treated as someone actively involved in learning, not just a passive reader. And who are ‘we’? ‘We’ stands for everyone who has been involved in the research, the action projects, the workshops, and writing the Action Guide. It means not just the authors, but also everyone who took part in what we have enjoyed as a collaborative project. We want to pass on what we have learned to you.

Before you start

One first recommendation: get a notebook you can use as a learning journal. Then, before starting work on the Action Guide, think about these five points.

1 Learning

As explained earlier in the Introduction, you don’t have to start at the beginning of the guide and work through each unit in order. You can adapt materials and activities to suit yourself. How do you like to learn? Do you tend to be more practical or more theoretical? Follow the approach that you will find most effective.

If you have your own copy of the Action Guide, write your responses to the activities in the spaces provided so that you keep all your work together. If you are sharing a copy or using a library copy, keep your written activities together in a learning journal so that you have a complete record of your learning, not just separate scraps of paper.

2 Reflecting

Get into the habit of reflecting as you work through the Action Guide. Think how you can apply what you learn to your work, or what you might do differently in future in the light of what you learn. Use the review at the end of each topic to help you reflect. Try to keep a learning journal to record what you learn and your reflections. Look back at your entries and at your initial action plan from time to time to see how your ideas are changing and log your progress.

3 Timing

It is impossible to say exactly how long each topic will take. Some topics cover more ground than others. And it will depend on you. Do you aim to get a quick overview? Or to study in more depth, doing all the activities and

following them up? In planning your route through the Action Guide, think about how much time you have and plan accordingly. For example, if you are working on your own, you might decide to set aside three hours a week over several weeks. Or you might decide to work more intensively over a short period. If you are working with colleagues, you will probably need to plan in your diaries the times to meet and what work to do in between meetings.



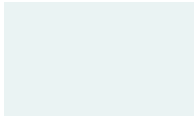

4 Collecting material

Start building up a collection of materials – activities, ideas, experiences – that will be of use in your work. Share them with colleagues.

5 Getting support

Who can you draw on for support as you work through the Action Guide? Possibilities include colleagues, managers, friends and family. Maybe you can network with other schools doing similar work. Take time to get interest and support from management and colleagues.

Key

| | |
|---|----------|
|  | Activity |
|  | Example |
|  | Reading |
|  | Links |

Finally, here is an activity to bring together the questions you have thought about in this introduction and give you a plan for working through the Action Guide.

ACTIVITY Initial action plan

What do you hope to achieve by working through this Action Guide?

Your three main objectives.

1

2

3

Learning In what order do you plan to work through the guide?
What is the most effective learning approach for you?

Timing How much time will you spend working through the guide?

How many weeks?

How much time each week?

Support What resources/ people will you draw on for support?

At the end, how will you know you have succeeded in your objectives?

ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

Now you have completed this action plan, you should have a clearer idea of how you are going to use the Action Guide and where you are going to start. At the end of the guide, you will have a chance to review what you have achieved. **We wish you every success!**

UNIT 1 The basics

What does gender mean? What does it mean for the roles and expectations of women and men generally and for girls and boys in school?

This first unit lays the ground for the rest of Action Guide. You can start with this unit, or you can refer back to it later if you are already familiar with the concepts.

This unit looks at:

- People's understanding and experiences of gender
- Gender stereotypes and identities
- The relationship between gender and schooling and with education more broadly

Topic 1.1 Gender concepts

What does gender mean? How do people experience gender equality or inequality in their lives? How are you aware of gender in your day-to-day life and work? This topic will help you to:

- Relate basic concepts of gender to your own experience
- Define key terms

Topic 1.2 Stereotypes

After you have thought about your own experiences of gender and terms used in discussing it in Topic 1.1, this topic brings us on to stereotypes and identities. It will help you to:

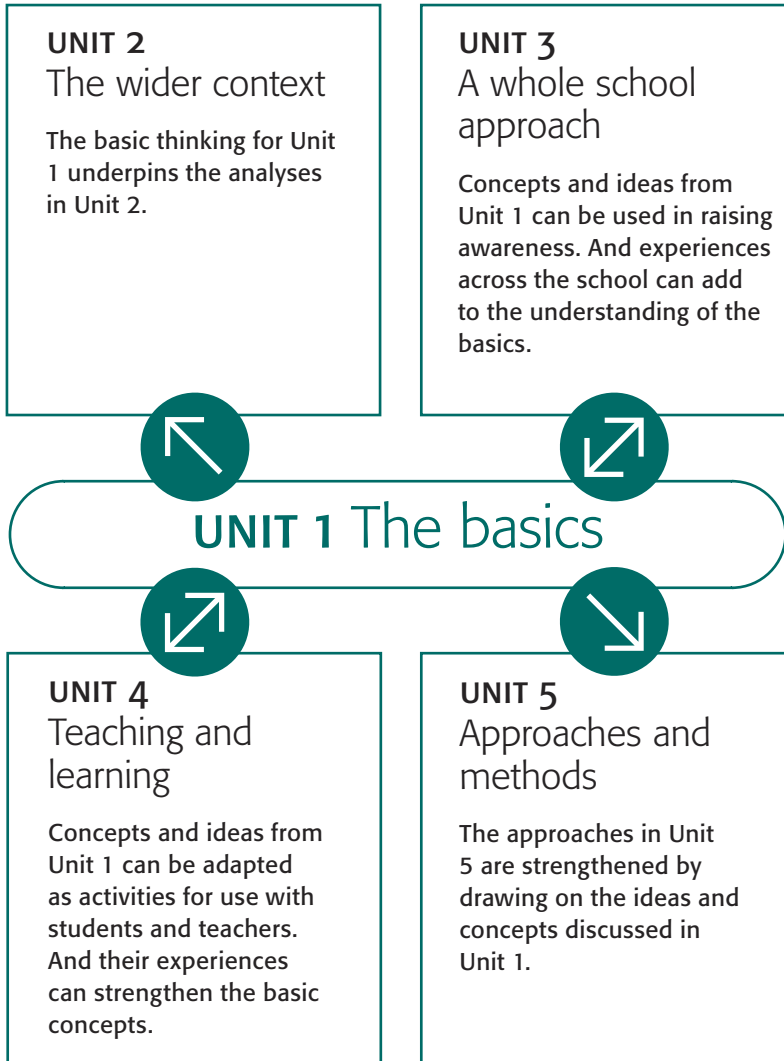
- Question stereotypes of gender roles and expectations
- Relate them to your own experiences and your practice in school

Topic 1.3 Gender and education

Here we look more generally at gender and education. This topic will help you to:

- Explain how education is important for gender equality
- Outline ways in which schools are critical as a force for gender equality

Links



Topic 1.1 Gender concepts

What does gender mean? How do people experience gender equality or inequality in their lives? How are you aware of gender in your day-to-day life and work? These questions are a good starting point.

This topic will help you to:

- Relate basic concepts of gender to your own experience
- Define key terms

First there are some activities to help you reflect on your own experience and understanding. Then there are activities to help you explain key terms. Finally there is an example of a training session used to help teachers think about gender.

Thinking about gender

As a starting point for thinking about gender, it is useful to focus on your own early experiences. This can help you remember the messages, spoken or unspoken, that you received from family, friends and peers. You will become more aware of the influences that shape expectations about women and men: how they should behave, what they can do and what they are like.

This activity asks you to think back to when you first became aware of gender issues in your own life. Spend a few minutes thinking about these questions and make brief notes. Try to think about your own values and attitudes and how they came about.

ACTIVITY Thinking about gender

When did you discover that you were different from the opposite sex?

What messages did you receive as a child about gender – about the roles, qualities and expectations for girls and boys, women and men?

Where did these messages come from (e.g., family, peers, media)?

What messages did you get from your school?

How did this early learning shape your adult values and attitudes?

How you have replied to this activity will depend on your own experiences. If this is the first time you have done an activity like this, how did you find it? For example, you may realise that you make unconscious assumptions about the differences between boys and girls. You may also have thought about other forms of diversity and inequality, such as ethnic, religious or economic ones. You may notice the important part school can play.

Here are some other people's responses to the questions.

Experiencing gender

When did you discover that you were different from the opposite sex?

'When I was four years old, my mother would always buy a dress for me, and shorts and a shirt for my brother. She insisted that I should sit properly because I was a girl. I should kneel down when receiving something and I should always be with her in the kitchen.'

'Traditional names in Botswana communicate the roles we are expected to perform in society. Girls: 'one who fetches water', 'beauty', 'love'. Boys: 'the shepherd has come', 'the leader has come', 'a brave one'. Our roles are constructed through folktales and sayings, which typically associated girls with beauty, domestic work and child care, boys with leading and rearing cattle.'

What messages did you receive as a child about gender – about the roles, qualities and expectations for girls and boys, women and men?

'That girls have certain specific roles that they must stick to in the domestic arena. That to prove I am a good girl, leading into a good woman, I have to be careful about the way I speak, dress, dance, eat, conduct myself in society. I must not use expletives, I must always wear a long dress that covers most of my body, I must not do jumping, waist moving and knee parting dances. I must not eat a lot. I must never refuse to do chores even when I am tired, I have to take care of my young sister and younger nephews during parents' absence.'

'These definitely develop over time into more constraining stereotypes (particularly as a teenager). Only over time have I noticed how constraining gender norms can also be for men. As teenagers men had more fun, less boundaries. As adults less patriarchal-thinking men face enormous challenges.'

Where did these messages come from?

Family, families of friends, church, society at large, school, peers, books, TV, other media

What messages did you get from your school?

'Teachers encouraged boys to work hard because they will have a responsibility to look after their families as compared to girls who are

supposed to marry. Sciences subjects are for boys. Football is for boys. Woodwork is for boys. Home management, food and nutrition are for girls. But I was as intelligent as a boy when doing sciences.'

'I must have beautiful and presentable handwriting. I must look neat in my dressing, the way I wash, and that I must walk in a ladylike posture.'

How did this early learning shape your adult values and attitudes?

'Early socialisation was seen as instilling discipline and moulding children into responsible adults, but the modern age in a way undermines these structures. I tend to differ from the traditional set up and agree with the modern, to say I can also do any work irrespective of sex – and that is why I emerged as one of the ladies' school heads.'

'I am one person torn between two persons! I tend to want other girls to emulate my younger self. I feel I lost some freedom of childhood which nobody can restore now. I do feel embarrassed when women behave in ways that the society does not value.'

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

Has the activity raised any further points for reflection or discussion? If so, note them down. You could also try out the activity with colleagues and then compare and discuss your experiences.

Defining terms

There are a number of key terms in common use when discussing gender.

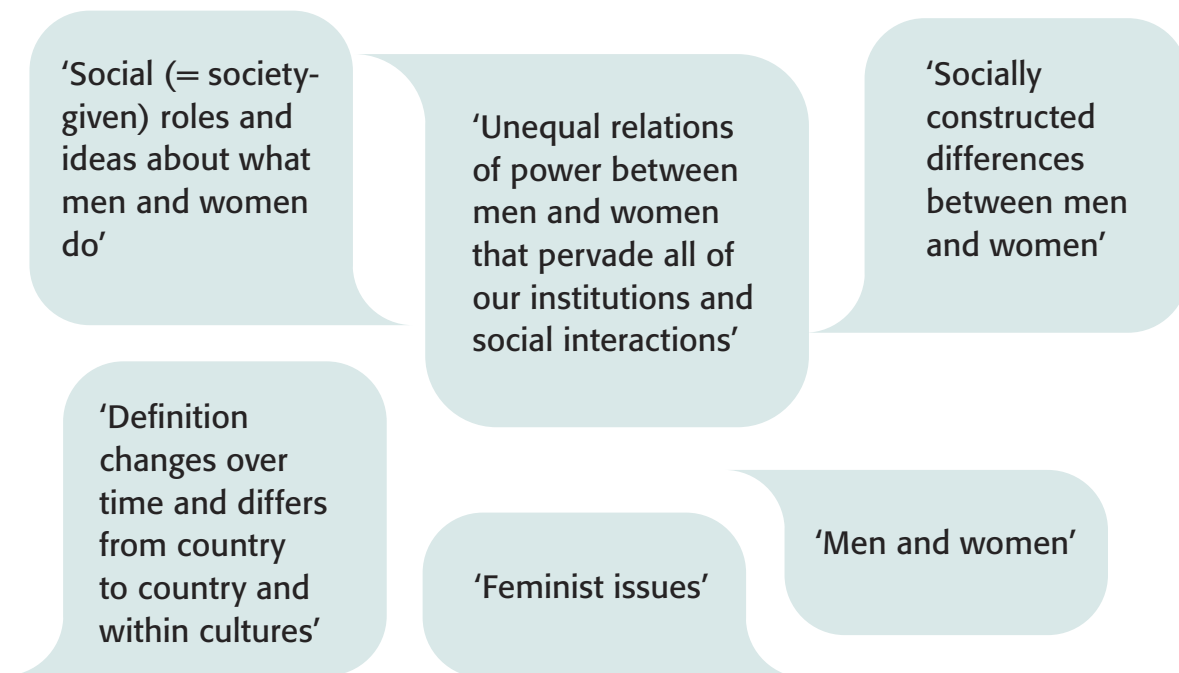
First there is the word 'gender' itself. This can be confusing: often people think it is another word for 'sex' or for 'feminism', or even just for 'women'.

What do you think of when you hear the word 'gender'? How would you explain the term to someone else? Try not to look at the examples that follow before writing your own answer.

ACTIVITY Defining gender

When I hear the word 'gender', I think

Here are some answers people have given. They raise different aspects of gender.



The working definition used in this Action Guide is:

Gender means the socially constructed differences between women and men. They differ from one culture and society to another, change over time and define who has power and influence over what.

Sex means the biological differences between women and men.

Here is a short self-test that was originally used as part of a staff development session in Malaysia. Are the following statements to do with gender or sex? Tick a column. (The answers are given at the end of this topic.)

ACTIVITY Gender or sex?

- 1 Men like football.

- 2 Women breast feed .

- 3 Women give birth, men do not.

- 4 Women are gentle, men are coarse.

- 5 Women in rural sub-Sahara Africa are poorer than men, have lower literacy levels, less access to education, health services and food resources.

- 6 Teaching as a career is for women.

- 7 A lot of women cannot make free and independent decisions, especially on sexual relationship.

- 8 Men’s voices change when they become mature, women’s do not.

- 9 The risk of being infected with HIV for a woman is related to the sexual activity of her partner.

- 10 In ancient Egypt, women inherited property, men did not.

- 11 In Britain, most workers in the construction sector are men.

- 12 Men must have sons to continue their lineage.

- 13 In 1999, male youth in Uganda thought that having children would increase their status and prove that they are men.

- 14 Between 6-7 million people in this world are drug addicts, 80% are males.

Gender ✓

Sex ✓

[MALAYSIA ACTION PROJECT]

ACTIVITY 1.1.3

How did you get on with that activity? The statements can be useful for helping people tell the difference between sex and gender and can be used as a tool in staff development or raising awareness.

There are a number of terms to do with gender that come up often in this Action Guide. They are helpful tools if you understand how they are generally used.

Which of the terms in the glossary are you familiar with already? Write definitions in your own words for those. If there are some you do not know, have a guess at what you think they mean.

ACTIVITY Glossary

gender

.....

gender analysis

.....

**gender-aware
(and gender-sensitive)**

.....

gender balance

.....

gender equality

.....

gender equity

gender-inclusive

.....
gender mainstreaming

.....
gender parity

.....
**gender policy, types of:
gender-blind**

gender-neutral

gender-specific

gender-redistributive

.....
gender relations

.....
gender-responsive

.....
gender roles

.....
gender system

Now look at the short glossary provided at the end of this topic and compare your definitions. At first these terms may seem like jargon, but they are useful tools for analysis and planning. You can refer back to the glossary as you work through the Action Guide – you don't have to memorise the meaning of the terms.

This topic has dealt with gender awareness. Here is an example of a gender-awareness session for teachers used in schools in the Seychelles.

Gender-awareness training for teachers

Topic: Glossary of Gender Terms

Objectives:

- To provide staff with the necessary knowledge and tools to integrate **gender** issues into their work
- To increase awareness and reduce the **gender** bias that informs the actions of individuals

Activity 1: 2.15 – 2.30 pm

Terms and definitions

In groups of four, participants discuss the terms and definitions in the **glossary of gender terms** handout

Activity 2: 2.30 – 2.45 pm

Reflections

- Participants will reflect and share instances of when and where and with whom they have applied some of the terms
- Plenary

Activity 3: 2.45 – 3.00 pm

- Each group to list two classroom or school practices/activities to show understanding and awareness of the terminologies below that will contribute in reducing gender bias
 - Gender-blind
 - Gender awareness
 - Gender sensitivity
 - Gender equality
 - Gender equity

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

The example shows a simple way of planning a staff development session around material from the Action Guide. However, it is worth remembering that this would just be one session in a series. Raising awareness and changing ideas takes more than a single afternoon.

The ideas and activities can be used to raise gender issues with people involved – teachers, students, parents, community representatives and other professionals who will need to understand these concepts for their work.

Review

At the end of each topic there is a review of what you have covered. You can use it to assess your progress. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of this topic. Check if you can now do them. Look through your answers to the activities and see if you want to add to them. You should now be better able to

- Reflect on your own experience of gender
- Use key terms and concepts in raising gender awareness

Answers to activities

ACTIVITY 1.1.3 Gender or Sex?

Statements 2, 3 and 8 are to do with sex.
All the rest are to do with gender.

ACTIVITY 1.1.4 Glossary

gender

The socially constructed differences between women and men. These differ from one culture and society to another, change over time and define who has power and influence over what.

gender analysis

Systematic study of the differences between men's and women's, girls' and boys' roles, positions, privileges and access to resources. Gender analysis involves collecting sex-disaggregated data; in other words data that present information separately for men and women, girls and boys.

gender-aware (and gender-sensitive)

Able to highlight gender differences and issues and incorporate them into strategies and actions.

gender balance

Equal or fair distribution of women and men within an institution or group. It gives equal representation.

gender equality

Means women and men have equal rights. They should have the same entitlements and opportunities. Equality is rights-base.

gender equity

Means justice so that resources are fairly distributed, taking into account different needs. *Note: 'gender equality' and 'gender equity' are sometimes used interchangeably; there is no agreement about the exact difference between them.*

gender-inclusive

Language or behaviour that minimises assumptions regarding gender.

gender mainstreaming

The process of integrating gender into all policies, programmes and activities.

gender parity

In schools, having an equal number of boys and girls.

gender policy, types

gender-blind

Ignores different gender roles and capabilities. Assumes everyone has the same needs and interests.

gender-neutral

Not aimed at either men or women and assumed to affect both sexes equally. However, it may be gender-blind.

gender-specific

Recognises gender difference and targets either men or women within existing roles.

gender-redistributive

Seeks to change the distribution of power and resources in the interest of gender equality.

gender relations

Social relationships between people (women and men, women and women, men and men). They reflect gender difference as constructed in a particular context or society. Gender relations intersect with other social relations based on age, class, ethnicity, race, sexuality and disability.

gender-responsive

Able to respond to and deal with the gender issues that arise from gender analysis.

gender roles

Learned behaviours in a society/community. They condition which activities are seen as male and female. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and by geography, economics and politics. Gender roles often respond to changing circumstances, e.g., development efforts. Both men and women play multiple roles, such as productive, reproductive or community roles. Women often play all three roles at once, hence the terms 'triple role' or 'multiple burden'.

gender system

The socially constructed expectations for male and female behaviour. Prescribes the division of labour and responsibilities between women and men, and gives them different rights and obligations. The gender system defines males and females as different and justifies inequality on that basis.

Topic 1.2 Stereotypes

You have thought about your own experiences of gender and terms used in discussing it as you worked through Topic 1.1 Gender concepts. You reflected on messages about gender and how these affected your values and attitudes.

This brings us on to stereotypes and identities.

This topic will help you to:

- Question stereotypes of gender roles and expectations
- Relate them to your own experiences and your practice in school

So what are stereotypes and why do they matter? Spend a couple of minutes now noting your answers in your own words.

ACTIVITY Defining stereotypes

What are stereotypes?

Why do they matter?

ACTIVITY 1.2.1

A **stereotype** can be defined as a fixed image of a type of person - or set of characteristics that many people believe represents a that type of person. Often this fixed image will be false or oversimplified. For example:

'Girls are caring, gentle, passive, respectful and obedient'

'Boys are strong, noisy, leaders'

Why do stereotypes matter? There are a number of possible reasons:

- Unexamined stereotypes that people may think are 'commonsense' or 'natural' can justify unequal treatment of whole groups.
- They can be used as a reason to prevent people of either sex developing their own potential. So a girl may feel she can't do science and become a scientist, or a boy may feel he has to act tough and can't show caring emotions.
- Set ideas about what is 'natural' can be used to justify different treatment. These differences become accepted as social norms. They underpin the way people understand what it means to be a girl or boy, woman or man – in other words, how they construct their gender identity.
- Stereotypes also affect aspirations – what someone thinks they can do, their ambitions.
- Finally, stereotypes colour other people's expectations – for example, what teachers or parents think a child can achieve.

Gender stereotypes are linked to the idea of gender identity.

Gender identity refers to the set of roles, characteristics and behaviour that is prescribed for a particular sex in each society. It is learned through a socialisation process within the family and in the wider society.

However 'boys' and 'girls' are not uniform categories. Gender identity is not fixed. There is a range of **masculinities** and **femininities** – a variety of ways in any context that men and women, boys and girls understand what it means to be male or female.

So why do people conform to gender stereotypes? A common explanation is that women and men act in accordance with the social roles expected of them. Then they come to accept them as natural and as how they are expected to act.

The next activity asks you to think about how stereotypes have affected you in your own life, both personal and professional.

ACTIVITY Reflecting on stereotypes

Write down your reflections on these questions.

- 1 When you were a child, what stereotypes influenced your view of what you could do?

- 2 Without these stereotypes, how might things have been different for you?

- 3 Now you are an adult, what stereotypes influence your view of what you yourself can do?

- 4 As an adult, what stereotypes do you have about other people?

ACTIVITY 1.2.2

Your answers will be personal to you, but we hope the activity will help you think about how stereotypes can get in the way and can be limiting. Here are some responses from women workshop participants.

Experiencing stereotypes

When you were a child, what stereotypes influenced your view of what you could do?

'All challenging chores were for boys. Sciences subjects were for boys. All whites are rich and clever.'

'Ethnicity influences the assertiveness of most people – for example, a woman from a minority group would not see themselves married to a man from a superior group.'

'Ladies were not seen to teach some subjects, e.g., music was seen as a men's activity, done in the evenings and girls' movement was usually restricted. Spending time with the opposite sex was regarded as bad.'

'Racial stereotypes have been a daily drag! On moving from Zimbabwe to South Africa as a young adult it was impossible to avoid being stereotyped and boxed. Even in Zimbabwe a white person with black friends is seen as "special" and "different" and there are many assumptions attached to this.'

Without these stereotypes, how might things have been different for you?

'It would have been easier to become what we are and what we are good at. I would have done better in science subjects. Things would have been different.'

'You shouldn't have to worry about what you are allowed to do, being embarrassed if you say or do something you shouldn't, being silenced by difference.'

Now you are an adult, what stereotypes influence your view of what you yourself can do?

'I am limited and sometimes lack confidence. I rely on my husband to make important decisions.'

'I am far less influenced by my own stereotypes as an adult, but far more affected by others' stereotypes of who I should be. Gender stereotypes predominate. Cultural assumptions and racial stereotypes are a daily reality in South Africa and stereotypes about lifestyle become more important as you get older – do you work? Do you have children? Are you married? If not why not? Who do you live with? Etc.'

As an adult, what stereotypes do you have about other people?

Stereotypes have caused many internal battles about what I felt important and valued, and what other people wanted me to be. Over time you learn what gender roles you are prepared to take on and keep, those you want to keep, and then those that make no practical sense to your lifestyle or personality. Ultimately as a feminist and gender activist, I have learned to accept my own gender identity as my choice and my uniqueness, within the boundaries I am prepared to work within and the need sometimes for silence.

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

The above responses are by women. The short reading that follows, from a study of Caribbean masculinities, looks at the impact of stereotyping on boys and its implications for education. It also raises the issue of masculinities and homophobia.

Developing boys' identity

In the past, academic excellence was largely, if not entirely, a male domain. However, with education increasingly becoming 'common ground', boys are left with fewer opportunities to establish their gendered identity through education; and academic achievement furnishes those needs less readily.

In contrast, fundamental biological differences mean that physicality has been preserved as a way of asserting masculine difference, and the 'outdoors' remains boys' territory. In the Caribbean and elsewhere, outdoors physicality seems to have gained pre-eminent importance for developing a boy's identity. While this 'retreat to physicality' may well benefit sporting achievements, there are also important negative consequences. Opportunities to prove one's gender identity through physical dominance increasingly take the form of hard, physical, risk-taking, hyper-masculine, sometimes antisocial acts including bullying, harassment, crime and violence.

Meanwhile, boys who do achieve in academic pursuits are at risk of being considered 'suspect' by their peers and of becoming the subject of gender taboos. This includes boys who show a preference for reading, who regularly reported receiving homophobic criticism, perhaps the deepest of all masculine taboos.

The research also sheds light on HIV risk. Through the twin mechanisms of obligation and taboo, a wide range of risks, including sexual risks, have become resiliently embedded in the social fabric and are, as a result, highly resistant to change.

I call this phenomenon 'social embedding'. Social embedding has its impact by way of gender roles, peer group dynamics, stigma and taboo and socioeconomic factors. To address social embedding and to achieve sustained, widespread results, strategies for producing grassroots social change with embedded behavioural outcomes will be required.

.....

Data from the present research adds a further dimension to the analysis of Caribbean boys' educational achievements. The research supports previous findings that boys' affinity with public space and physicality is linked to the development of masculine identity. Moreover, in contemporary Caribbean settings, this identity seems to preferentially elevate hard, aggressive, dominant masculinity as the epitome of manhood – perhaps increasingly so in recent years. Certainly, gang culture and music laced with violent allusions have become more prominent in the Caribbean in the last couple of decades. But the present research also adds data concerning the role of masculine taboos in creating social 'no-go zones' for young men – one of which increasingly seems to be education.

A surprising but important finding that has emerged is the role of homophobia in stigmatising boys who are academically inclined. This

stands out as a consistent and deep-seated phenomenon, not a minor diversionary issue. In the first instance, the role of homophobia seems difficult to account for, but it starts to make sense in the light of recent research that has found that homophobic abuse is a mechanism that is primarily used by male peer groups to police manhood (by stigmatising boy's transgressions from authorised masculinity and 'failed' masculinities) and is only secondarily concerned with sexual practice (Plummer 2005*). In this sense, as a repository for 'failed manhood' and as a mechanism for policing particular forms of masculinity, homophobia is rightly seen as being a gender prejudice – one which weighs heavily on the lives of all men. Gender in development programmes therefore need to take a much more active interest in it – this is no peripheral issue.

*Plummer D (2005) 'Crimes against manhood: homophobia as the penalty for betraying hegemonic masculinity', in Hawkes, G and Scott, J (eds), *Perspectives in Human Sexuality*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Plummer D (2007) 'Has learning become taboo and is risk-taking compulsory for Caribbean boys? Researching the relationship between masculinities, education and HIV', paper based on research commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat, University of the West Indies.

The following short reading discusses gender identity further. It looks at the way gender interacts with other forms of social identity and reminds us that there are other types of diversity and inequality.

What does it mean to be a man or a woman?

The social construction of gender identity, or what it means to be a woman or a man in a given context, is underpinned by prevailing ideas about the roles that are appropriate for men or women and how what is done by women and men is valued, both socially and economically. Most societies observe some gender division of labour within the home, with women taking primary responsibility for caring for the family, while men tend to be associated with work outside the home, often on a paid basis. This division of labour goes some way towards explaining the gender inequalities in human capabilities which can be observed in a number of contexts.

Gender ideologies vary over time and across societies, and gender identities are also influenced by other social identities including religions. The interplay of gender with other forms of social identity gives rise to variations in the inequality experienced by different groups of women. Thus gender equity measures for women who are positioned differently on account of their race, ethnicity, economic class, caste or religion need to take into account both the various constraints on, and opportunities for, their full participation in development.

The 'geography' of gender inequality also shows differences between

countries and regions in the levels of freedom granted to women.

Source: Subrahmanian, R (2007) *Gender in Primary and Secondary Education: A Handbook for Policy-makers and Other Stakeholders*, New Gender Mainstreaming Series on Development Issues, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

In schools stereotyping can have a great impact on expectations of boys and girls – for example, how teachers expect them to behave or perform, or what they allow or encourage them to do. Stereotyping can affect boys quite as much as girls when children are forced to conform to prescribed expectations of what it means to be male or female. The next activity looks at some common stereotypes.

ACTIVITY **Stereotypes in schools**

- Look at the following lists of stereotypes, which have all been expressed by teachers.
- Tick those that are commonly held in your culture.
- Add others not on the list.

GIRLS

Like reading and writing

Are responsible and punctual

Are serious

Are hardworking

Are smarter than boys

Can't do heavy work

Are shy and vulnerable

Are attentive

Concentrate

Others

BOYS

Are competitive

Learn best through practical work

Are good at maths and science

Are rude and ill-disciplined

Are smarter than girls

Are confident

Are domineering

Play around

Shouldn't do home economics

Others

ACTIVITY 1.2.3

From your own careful observation and reflection on school life: Which are true? What are they based on?

Now read this account of stereotyping, which outlines the attitudes of some teachers in the Seychelles.

Stereotypes in schools

The large majority of teachers stated that they did not differentiate between boys and girls in the classroom. They treated both sexes equally and saw them all as 'students'. They enjoyed teaching both genders equally.

Technical teachers said they sometimes treated boys and girls differently. Girls would be given plastic to work with instead of wood because of their inability to handle heavy machines, and in agriculture girls would be made to weed and boys to hoe. The lack of protective clothing and appropriate facilities made the teachers extra protective towards the girls.

In spite of their statements on equal treatment of the genders, teachers held very stereotyped views on how girls and boys differed in their learning styles and their abilities. In one school, teachers were of the view that boys learnt best by discovery, investigation, practical 'hands on' experience, group work and asking a lot of questions. They had more enquiring minds than the girls. They were better at maths and general concepts. They learnt through 'manipulation and visuals'. Girls were more reserved and learnt by rote. They were more organised and self-motivated and liked to copy notes. They were also more independent learners and liked reading and writing. Their preference was for a 'book-based style.' Many teachers said that teaching boys posed more of a challenge and teachers 'had to go that extra mile'. In general they felt girls were better at languages and boys at science.

Teachers in the private school had less polarised views on the learning abilities of boys and girls. They had high expectations of both genders and felt that the boys could be very competitive when challenged. A couple of teachers said they had a marked preference for teaching boys.

With regards to attitude towards work and behaviour, the majority of staff from state schools spoke very highly of girls who they thought were naturally more responsible, serious and mature than the boys. Girls volunteered to do presentations and help out in school. They were punctual and more regular at handing in homework. Boys were playful, although they tended to pick up at post-secondary level. They were disruptive, rude and hard to control. They liked to rebel and challenge authority. Teachers said that these negative attitudes in boys were inculcated and tolerated at home and in families and there was very

little the school could do to combat that. According to one headteacher, the home culture encouraged girls to stay home and study while boys were allowed to run wild. He quoted the example of an Indian boy who was the star student at the school a few years previously. His academic success was attributed to the fact that 'he was brought up the way girls are' in Seychellois society.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

Do these teachers' views reflect your own thinking or that of your colleagues? Have they perhaps made you more aware of stereotypes?

Of course students themselves accept and conform to stereotypes. Look at these student voices from a gender awareness-raising workshop at a secondary school in Rajasthan, India.

Gender roles and responsibilities

Students' responses during student workshop in India

Girls

Cooking food, making tea
 Cleaning utensils (morning/evening)
 Sweeping and mopping floor
 Fetching water from hand pump
 Fetching water on bicycle
 Fetching fuel wood
 Washing clothes
 Feeding livestock
 Working in the field
 Preparing the beds at night
 Taking care of siblings
 Teaching younger siblings/helping them with homework
 Watching TV

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

Boys

Making tea
 Delivering milk at the dairy
 Purchasing food items from the market
 Helping father in the shop
 Feeding and grazing livestock
 Working in the field
 Playing cricket

These responses suggest that these girls see themselves as more confined to domestic life, while boys see themselves as having more extended roles and activities.

Parents too hold stereotypes, as the following example illustrates. It outlines a gender sensitisation session for parents with feedback on their reactions.

GENDER SENSITISATION FOR PARENTS

DATE: 13 March 2008

TIME: 1.30 pm

OBJECTIVES:

- To share results of gender study
- To present objectives and activities of the pilot study at the school
- To increase awareness of how the socialisation process in homes affects boys and girls
- To explore how parents can contribute to the success of the pilot project on gender.

1.30 – 1.35 Welcome and Introduction

1.35 – 1.55 Icebreaker

Short sketch about stereotypes, presented by students, followed by discussion

1.55 – 2.15

Presentation of the main findings of study:
Construction of masculinity and femininity
Discussion on impact in schools

2.15 – 2.25

Purpose of the study

2.25 – 3.00

Share outcome of parents' questionnaire
Group work discussion: How would parents like to participate?

3.00 – 3.05

Evaluation: three things they have learnt

Feedback on gender sensitisation for parents

Parents present participated well and shared concerns when seeing the gap in performance between boys and girls.

From the discussions it came out that some parents could identify themselves in the sketch presented by the students. This means that they are heavily reinforcing gender stereotyping of both boys and girls at home. Since this is a cultural issue, as it is how most of them were raised, it is going to be very challenging to change the perception of some of the parents. However, the encouraging sign is they were able to willingly voice that they reinforce stereotyping, and the gap in the performance of boys really shook them up, especially the parents of boys.

Some results of the gender study carried out in June 2007 were presented to them. The emphasis was placed on the students' notions of masculinity and femininity. It was also pointed out to parents that the boys seem to be comfortable believing that they do not have to work as hard as girls to secure a working place. This really made some parents think as a lot of them do not necessarily keep 'tabs' on their boys as they do girls, and the boys' attitude that they do not need to do much to 'get in' is really a serious one. The boys therefore do not push themselves hard enough (or do not see the reason to work hard) to produce good results. What is sad is that they really have low self-esteem where academic performance is concerned.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

The example shows that though the parents tended to reinforce gender stereotyping, the session helped them become aware of this and see why it matters.

The ideas and activities in this topic can be adapted to raise issues about stereotyping with people involved. This includes teachers and other professionals who need this understanding in their work in schools, as well as students themselves and parents.

ACTIVITY Raising awareness of stereotypes

How can you work with students, colleagues, parents, school governors and others involved to help them question stereotypes? Try to think of three ways.

1

2

3

You may have thought of ways of using activities about stereotyping from this topic, or ways of working the questions raised into staff development or into dealing with parents, guardians and others. There is more about working with students in Units 3 and 4.

Review

Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. Now that you have completed this topic, you should be better able to:

- Explain what is meant by stereotypes and identities
- Question common gender stereotypes and expectations in your own professional and private experience

Topic 1.3 Gender and education

So far in Topics 1.1 and 1.2 you've thought about your own experiences of gender and the impact of stereotypes. Now we look more generally at gender and education.

This topic will help you to:

- Explain why education is important for gender equality
- Outline ways in which schools are critical as a force for gender equality

First, here is a reminder of the importance of education in development.

- Education is universally recognised as playing a key role in development – personal, social and economic. It is always a priority for attention and resources.
- Everyone has a right to education. It has benefits for everyone who undergoes schooling – providing the skills of reading and writing and the ability to communicate and express oneself.
- Education helps people achieve their other rights, such as the right to justice or to political participation.
- The education of women is important given their reproductive role and their traditional role as homemakers and carers. Women who are educated tend to have smaller families, fewer of their children die in infancy, and their children are healthier and better educated.
- Educated women are better prepared to enter the paid labour force, more able to contribute to a country's social, economic and political life and better placed to bring about change.

Yet education is still characterised by extensive gender inequalities.

Why is gender equality important and why are we still mainly talking about girls and women? The facts and figures given in the box on the next page show that it is still girls and women who are the most disadvantaged by gender inequality in education.

Key facts and figures

- Of 75 million primary stage children out of school, 55 per cent are girls. (1)
- There are almost 800 million people aged 15 and above living without basic literacy skills worldwide, of whom 64 per cent are women (2)
- 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 (3)
- 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 education.

(1) UNESCO (2009) 'Education for All', EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris.

(2) UNESCO (2004) 'Education for All', EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005, UNESCO, Paris.

(3) UNESCO (2005) 'Education for All', EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, UNESCO, Paris.

Source (except first bullet): Aikman, S and Unterhalter, E (eds) (2007) *Practising Gender Equality in Education* Oxfam, Oxford, p. 17.

In the next example, the words of students themselves express reasons why education, and specifically literacy, is important for both women and men.

Why is literacy is important for women and men?

(based on responses from an activity in a co-ed Indian secondary school on World Literacy Day, 8 September 2008)

'It is essential for women and men to be literate. Earlier women were not allowed to get out of their homes but now women are working outside their homes, so they need to be literate and educated'

'Literacy is important for men as they contribute to the growth of the country. With literacy men can tackle various problems and evils. Women should be literate as they also contribute to the growth of the country'

'It is important for both women and men to be literate so that they can help in eradicating superstitions and discriminatory practices.'

'If the girl is educated she will take better care of her children and

home, she will also educate her own family as well as society and she will be respected by everyone in the society.'

'If the boy is educated he will serve the nation and will earn an income for his family and will take care of the well being of his family'.

'Literacy is important for women as it helps enhance their status and take responsibility'.

'If women are literate they can get jobs and take care of their health needs as well of their families. They would also be free from social pressures as well as peer pressure'.

'Literate men can get better jobs and fulfill all the needs of their families'.

'Literacy is essential for the development of mental and physical abilities of women. It also helps women take decisions independently'.

'If women are literate they will not be exploited and we would have a civilized society'

'It is important for both women and men to be literate as they can resolve their differences amicably and they will not fight with each other'

'Literacy is important for both women and men as it is their right. Both women and men have a right to education and no one should be denied this right.'

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

These students came up with strong arguments. You might like to think about whether your students could express such clear reasons, and what kind of activity you might do with them to help them think about the importance of education and literacy for both women and men.

The issue is not just about ensuring that boys and girls have equal access to schooling – in other words, about gender parity. It is also a question of gender equality and gender equity. If you are not sure about these terms, use the next activity to remind yourself what they mean.

ACTIVITY Explaining gender terms

Imagine you have to explain the difference between the following terms to a colleague. Write short definitions you could use.

gender parity

gender equality

gender equity

gender-aware

gender-responsive

ACTIVITY 1.3.1

If you had any trouble with your definitions, you can look back at the glossary at the end of Topic 1.1.

In education, gender equality means:

- Acting to change the structures and processes to ensure equal entitlements and opportunities
- Facing up to the ways schools may be maintaining inequalities
- Looking beyond schooling itself to the opportunities and outcomes it opens up
- Providing education that is about social change and transformation, directed towards empowerment and action
- Within the school, areas for action to achieve gender equality are those covered in this Action Guide, such as school processes and organisation, staff development, community links, curriculum and practical arrangements
- Gender equality in education means a quality education – and the other way round. You can't have one without the other.

Schools alone cannot solve all the problems of gender inequality in society, but there is much they can do to contribute to gender equality and combat

inequality. And conversely there is much they can do to reinforce and perpetuate inequalities. In other words, schools can act as a positive force for change and transformation or they can act as a negative force that impedes progress in this area.

Here are two contrasting examples of the impact of schooling. The first example comes from a learning project in India designed to achieve fundamental change for the girls involved, with further impact on their families and communities.

Social Learning in India

The Social Learning Package was first developed in the context of a residential school programme, known as Udaan (the flight), for accelerated learning for girls in rural India. The girls were in the age group of 9–13, had either never been to school or had dropped out after attending for only a few months or a year, and came from deprived social and economic backgrounds where there was no guarantee of continuing their education beyond primary level.

It was felt that these girls needed a structured curriculum not only in language, mathematics and science but also in something extra that was clearly directed at developing them 'into self-confident individuals, who could think critically, visualise their own potentials and be conscious of their social responsibilities'.

The rationale behind taking social learning as a concurrent stream of education was to provide them with the necessary means and exposure for developing a critical faculty of their own. Social learning taking place in the family or community is limited in its scope by the experience, traditional, knowledge and social interactions of that community. There is often an uncritical and unquestioning acceptance of certain world-views. Many a time, these world-views are narrow and parochial. The package was conceived to provide a counter to this form of social education.

Source: Jha, J (2008) 'Social Learning Package: Education for empowerment' in *Commonwealth Education Partnerships 2008/2009*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

The package depends for its success on the dialogue that takes place between the teacher and the student as well as between student and student. Dialogue takes place in conversations, discussions, and questions and answers. The children have to begin to trust the teacher and develop a close relationship with her for an open and honest dialogue to take place.

Source: Care India (2008) 'Guidelines for use for Grades 6, 7 and 8', *Social Learning for Upper Primary Schools: A Reference Manual for Teachers*, Care India, New Delhi, p. 8.

Note: See APPENDIX III for more information on the Social Learning Package.

The second example, by way of contrast, shows how beliefs and practices at policy and school level can block change and reinforce inequalities. It comes from Nigeria.

Gendered micropolitics in school

The only female principal in the schools surveyed happens to head an all-girls school. Her deputies, however, are (all) males, as they are expected to guide her in the running of the school, since women are thought to lack the requisite leadership qualities and skills.

The principal narrated the experience of her former employment as the head of a co-educational school where upon resumption of duty several male teachers resigned their appointments because they could not tolerate a female principal. The Ministry reasoned with the 'protesters' and posted her to a girls' school. She also reported having been intimidated to be sensitive about her actions so that she would not be labelled as a non-performer as a result of being female. This finding is important in the sense that it explains one of the reasons why schools reproduce and transmit gendered beliefs and practices from one set of students to another. Provided that gendered micro-politics persists among teachers and are actively supported by the policy-makers, as shown in this case, there is little hope for redressing and structurally wiping out harmful gendered traditional practices.

[NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Do either of these examples echo your own experiences?

How can schools act as a positive force for change and transformation? This guide draws on the experiences of schools and teachers to try and answer this question. But at the outset, take a fresh look at your school and think about how it could be a positive force.

ACTIVITY School as a force for change

List five ways your school could be a force for change.

1

2

3

4

5

ACTIVITY 1.3.2

You may have identified a whole range of things, which may be at school level or at micro or classroom level. They may be the kind of things mentioned earlier in this topic, and covered in this Action Guide, such as working with children, parents and staff to change attitudes, working on school ethos and policy, classroom organisation and teaching styles. You may already have some clear changes in mind, drawn from your own experiences.

Practical changes may be underpinned by more general activities like creating awareness, gathering information, handling conflicts, creating sustainable change and increasing understanding.

So far in this topic you have looked at the importance of education for gender equality and thought about ways schools can be a force for change and the need for them to be gender-responsive.

Now think about your own objectives and plan for using this Action Guide. If you did the action plan in the Introduction, you may have already thought about this; look back at your plan and see if you want to add to it now. If you haven't already done it, we suggest you look at it now and then think about the questions below.

ACTIVITY First steps

Your objectives?

Your first steps?

When will you take the first step?

ACTIVITY 1.3.3

There will be all kinds of answers to this depending on your context and role. Here are some examples.

A headteacher might have

- a general objective such as: make school more gender-responsive

- a specific objective such as: do something to encourage more girls to stay in school longer

- a first step might be to start planning a preliminary consultation

A teacher might have

- a general objective such as: persuade management and colleagues of need to make school more gender-responsive

- a specific objective such as: solve discipline issues in a mixed class that are preventing both boys and girls in different ways from achieving their potential

- a first step might be to meet with close colleagues to sound out other opinions

Whatever your objectives and planned first steps, think about what you need to do to achieve them and how you can best use this Action Guide to help you.

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic, review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Explain the importance of education for gender equality
- Consider ways schools can help or hinder gender equality
- Plan what action can be taken in your own school to make it more gender-responsive

UNIT 2 The wider context

In Topic 1.3 Gender and education you looked at ways in which your school could be a force for change. But in thinking about this you have perhaps realised that many factors are beyond the scope of individual schools. These factors can help or hinder the action schools can take.

This unit looks at

- Regional, national and global factors
- Factors relating to education in the national context and the role of the state

This will help you to identify these wider factors and relate them to your own context and respond to them.

Topic 2.1 The big picture

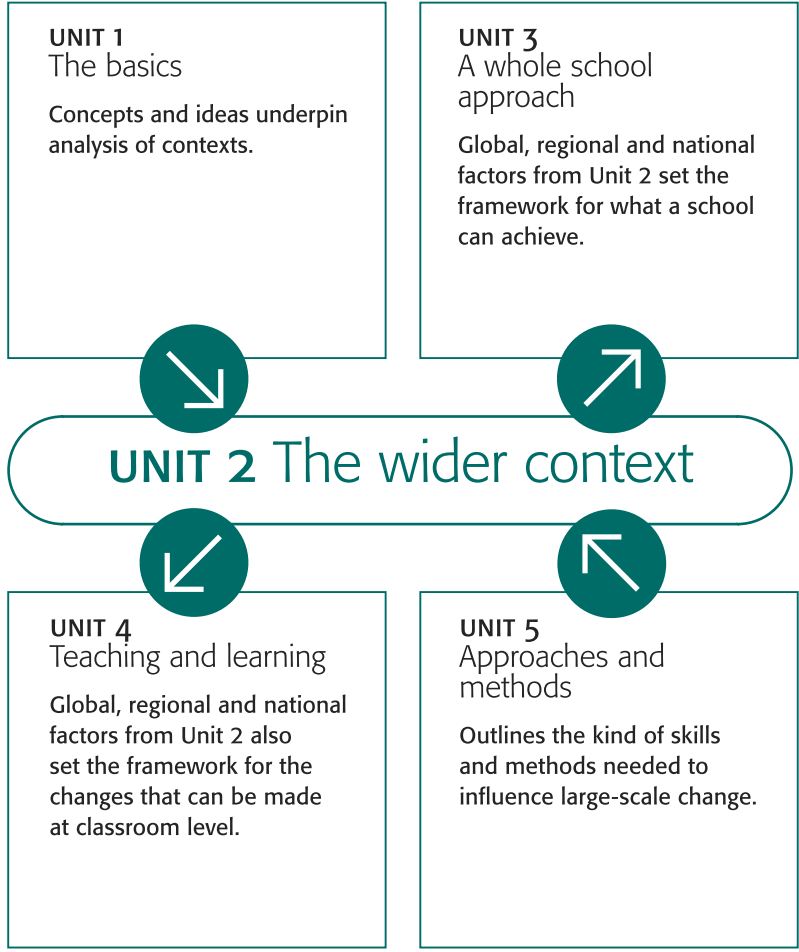
Setting your school in a wider framework can highlight the limits on the action a school can take but can also help you identify openings and opportunities for realistic changes. This topic will help you to:

- Set gender in schools in the context of global education
- Identify the complex interplay of factors that affect gender equality in education

Topic 2.2 The national education context

This topic focuses in from the big picture to examine how the action that schools can take is affected by the national education scene. It will help you to:

- Identify education factors at national level that can help or hinder the action schools take
- Think about ways of influencing these factors



Topic 2.1 The big picture

Setting your school in a wider framework can highlight the limits on the action a school can take but can also help you identify openings and opportunities for realistic changes.

This topic will help you to:

- Set gender in schools in the context of global education
- Identify the complex interplay of factors that affect gender equality in education

To start on a positive note there are strong global messages about gender equality and the importance of education for women. The 1990s were an important turning point with the targets of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which in turn built on earlier declarations on human rights and gender equality.

- 1990 Education for All (EFA) conference, Jomtien, Thailand framed agendas for change in education
- 2000 World Education (WEF) conference, Dakar, Senegal reviewed progress and refined commitments

You may already know about the goals, but it is worth taking another look at them and thinking how they reflect the basic concepts covered in Unit 1.

Education for All Goals (EFA)

- expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
- achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic

education of good quality;

(vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

GOAL 2 **Achieve universal primary education**

- Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

GOAL 3 **Promote gender equality and empower women**

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

Perhaps you have noticed that the two sets of goals have a slightly different emphasis. The EFA goals go further and are more detailed; they stress equality and quality as well as parity. Taken together the two sets of goals present a strong message for progress towards gender equality in education.

The next activity asks you to think about the goals in relation to your country.

ACTIVITY Meeting global targets

What progress has been made in your country towards achieving these goals?

EFA goals

MDG goals

Which have not yet been reached?

EFA goals

MDG goals

If you could add one more goal, what would it be?

You may have a general answer to the questions from what you already know, or you may want to do some research. Note that some of the terms used in the goals are rather relative or vague, for example 'appropriate' or 'equitable'. A gender analysis of a country's education system can produce a great deal of useful data.

For information and comparison, here are statistics from two countries.

| | | Mozambique | Seychelles |
|--|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Youth (15-24 years) literacy rate, 2000-2006* | male | 60 | 99 |
| | female | 37 | 99 |
| Number per 100 population 2005: phones | | 8 | 97 |
| Number per 100 population 2005: Internet users | | 1 | 26 |
| Primary school enrolment ratio 2000-2006*, gross | male | 111 | 115 |
| | female | 94 | 116 |
| Primary school enrolment ratio 2000-2006*, net | male | 81 | 99 |
| | female | 74 | 100 |
| Primary school attendance ratio (2000-2006*) ratio, net | male | 63 | - |
| | female | 57 | - |
| % of primary school entrants reaching grade 5 (2000-2006*), admin. data | | 62 | 99 |
| % of primary school entrants reaching grade 5 (2000-2006*), survey data | | 84 | - |
| Secondary school enrolment ratio (2000-2006*), gross | male | 16 | 106 |
| | female | 11 | 105 |
| Secondary school enrolment ratio (2000-2006*), net | male | 8 | 94 |
| | female | 6 | 100 |
| Secondary school attendance ratio (2000-2006*), net | male | 8 | - |
| | female | 7 | - |

*Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified in the column heading.

These are just two examples. You can find such data at <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/index.html> where this information about Mozambique and Seychelles comes from.

As you have seen, the EFA and MDG goals give powerful messages. Yet there are still wide gender gaps in education. Many factors, such as economic imbalances and power structures, prevent the goals being reached. So gender inequality in society cannot be tackled by education alone.

The following examples illustrate factors beyond education that have an impact on gender equality. As you read them, think about which aspects if any reflect experiences in your country.

The example from Nigeria shows how the principles of a country's

education philosophy can be frustrated by ethnic, religious, geographical and political differences.

The Nigerian context

The Nigerian education philosophy is therefore based on:

- (1) the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen;
- (2) the full integration of the individual into the community; and
- (3) the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all.

The application of this philosophy is, however, complicated by ethno-religious and geopolitical differences in the country, which result in perceptions of marginalisation and mutual mistrust.

Thus, with the population of 117.8 million (as at 2001) (UNDP, 2003*) speaking over 400 languages and belonging to over 250 ethnic groups, coupled with a low Human Development Index (ranked 152 out of 175 according to UNDP, 2003), ethno-religious and regional tensions are high.

The struggle for economic and political dominance leads to high profile assassinations, religious intolerance and ethnic clashes at the slightest provocation. This situation, coupled with political influence of kinship, lack of transparency in government, etc., therefore, allows for corrupt practices and disregard for the rule of law, which consequently paves the way for marginalisation of the less-powerful groups and individuals.

The female sex in particular suffers discrimination in educational opportunities as well as in other spheres of life – economic, political and social.

* United Nations Development Programme (2003) *Human Development Report 2003: Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford.

[NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The example from Samoa highlights the fact that traditional ways and the influence of the church are more integrated into the culture than school and education.

The Samoan context

Samoa is a traditional society seeking to integrate modern ideas and technologies. The village, district and national government political systems are based on *Fa'aSamoa*, and protocols and procedures in all areas of life continue to be governed by the *Fa'aSamoa*. *Fa'a Samoa* means the Samoan Way and is an all encompassing concept that dictates how Samoans are meant to behave. It refers to the obligations that Samoans owe their family, community and church and the individual's sense of Samoan identity.

Each individual within *Fa'aSamoa* can have many roles and responsibilities, which are determined by several factors including locality, holder of *matai* title, age and gender. All of these factors contribute to expectations and roles played by individuals and groups within families and villages.

Locality could arguably be the leading factor in determining roles and responsibilities of individuals and groups. That is, when a spouse is attending a gathering/ceremony at their partner's village/family they have a very specific role to perform that would be different if the gathering was occurring in their own family or village setting. The actual task will be determined by other factors such as age and gender; however, in this regard both male and female individuals have different roles and relationships in different environments that are not solely decided because of their gender.

The arrival in Samoa of the missionaries in the 1830s saw the introduction of a new set of hierarchy in village and family life, where the church minister was given – and in some places replaced – the high *matai* chief's importance and respect. This is of particular significance to the discussion on gender as the church ministers were (and still are today) men as women are not permitted to be appointed as ministers or pastors.

The church has profoundly influenced Samoan life, society and culture to such an extent that it became completely integrated; this is not the same for school. The school's place within village and family life is considered to be the place where *palagi* (European) ways are taught, and the school traditionally was not considered the place to teach children about Samoa or its culture. Today's educators have had to fight very hard to incorporate Samoan and things Samoan into the curriculum. Even with the introduction of things Samoan into the curriculum, the perception is still held by many that the school is a place of foreign knowledge and ideas.

In this regard the school and education have not been integrated into the culture as the church has. By extension the status of the teacher in the village is far inferior to the church pastor. Traditionally schooling and education used to be held in high regard by many Samoans. In recent years, however, there is some evidence that people's perceptions are changing and the high regard for education is becoming eroded.

[SAMOA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The final example shows the impact of the economy and crime and the relationship between them on education.

The Trinidad and Tobago context

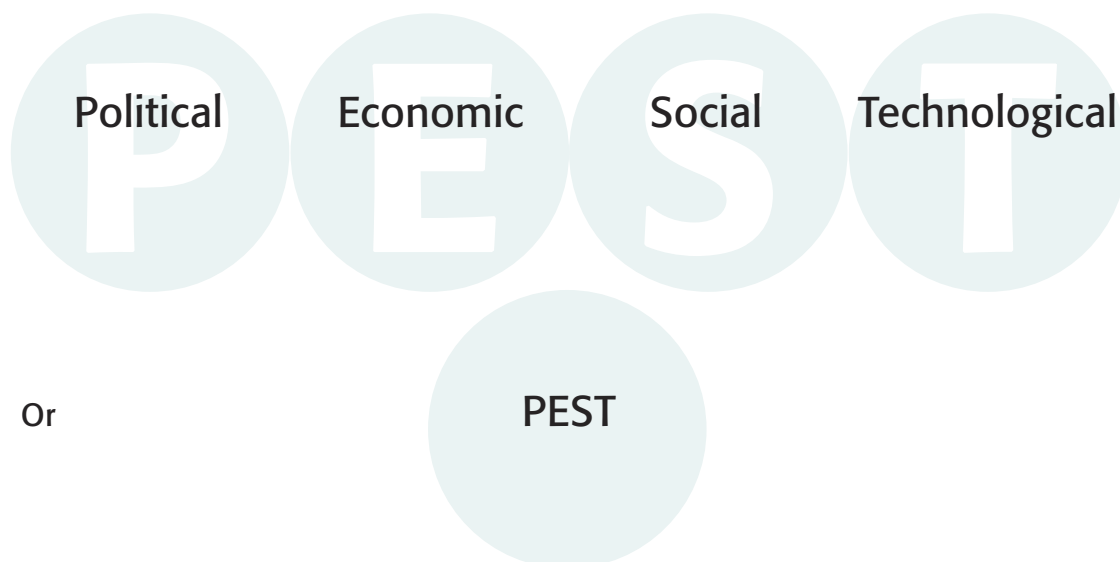
Trinidad and Tobago is one of the most affluent societies in the Caribbean with a buoyant economy very much dependent on oil, gas and petrochemicals.

It is also one where crime has been on the rise for many years, largely as a result of the narcotics trade and gun running. Young men, in particular those who have not been successful at school, are implicated in murders, kidnappings, peddling and smuggling of drugs and ammunition, robberies and the like. There is widespread acknowledgement in the society that young men are not benefiting as they should from their education, especially in terms of social responsibility. For an ethnically charged society, that the young men are mainly of African descent is a sensitive issue.

Some people feel though that the problem extends to both males and females who have left school without or with minimal qualifications – that they will be exploited on the labour market, will not be able to maintain an adequate standard of living and will become a potentially destabilising force in the society. The 2007 Global Peace Index ranks Trinidad and Tobago 94th out of 121 countries.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Whether or not these examples echo your experiences, they show the range of factors that can have an impact on gender equality in education. These factors can be grouped as:



For the next activity, have a go at a PEST analysis. Think about the main factors outside education that have an impact on gender equality in education in your country. If your country is large and you find it difficult to relate to that, do the exercise for your state, province or district. We have suggested some general headings so that you can give specific examples

for your country. (For example, under 'state of national economy' you could make notes about the current position and recent trends.)

ACTIVITY PEST analysis

Political

- Party politics and ideology
- Political will and public opinion
- Gender make up of power structures

Economic

- State of national economy
- Labour force requirements – industrial/ agricultural/ hi-tech
- Poverty and economic inequalities
- Aid delivery

Social

- Family
- Religion
- Social class
- Media messages
- Peer pressures
- Health
- Socio-historical (e.g., colonial past)

Technological

- Access to and availability of technologies
- Environmental and ecological factors
- Communications

Very likely you have mentioned many factors that you cannot change quickly. But being aware of the context and questioning the forces at play helps as a first step.

In thinking about factors that impact on gender equality in education, keep in mind other kinds of inequality – such as ethnicity, class, caste and disability. These cross-cut the issue of gender equality.

Always ask the questions: Which girls? Which boys? Don't take simple data at face value. For example: perhaps boys overall do well but boys of a particular ethnic or social group do worse than girls overall, or worse than girls in the same group, or the other way round. Or perhaps girls do better than boys in education, but this does not apply overall or in the wider society. Girls and boys are not uniform categories, and there are many different masculinities and femininities.

ACTIVITY Reflecting on PEST analysis

From your PEST activity, pick out the five factors you think have the most impact on gender equality in education in your context.

1

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Then reflect on the following questions and make notes.

Why have you chosen these five?

Why do these five continue to have an impact?

How do actions you take (or your school takes) support or oppose these factors?

ACTIVITY 2.1.3

You may find it useful to do this activity with a colleague or group of colleagues so that you can reflect on the questions together and pool your ideas.

Review

Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. Now that you have reached the end of this topic, you should be better able to:

- Relate education in your country to global goals expressed in the EFA and the MDGs
- Identify external factors that influence gender equality in education and the interplay between them.
- Highlight the most important factors in your context

Topic 2.2 The national education context

This topic focuses in from the big picture to examine how the action that schools can take is affected by the national education scene.

This topic will help you to:

- Identify education factors at national level that can help or hinder the action schools take
- Think about ways of influencing these factors

The next activity asks for your first thoughts about your own school in the national context, before you look at the rest of this topic. Again, if you consider it necessary and more relevant, you can do this exercise for the sub-national level or for both national and sub-national levels – just substitute the national in this unit with state/province whenever needed.

ACTIVITY National factors

From your own experience, note down five factors at the national education level which affect your school's effort to become more gender-responsive.

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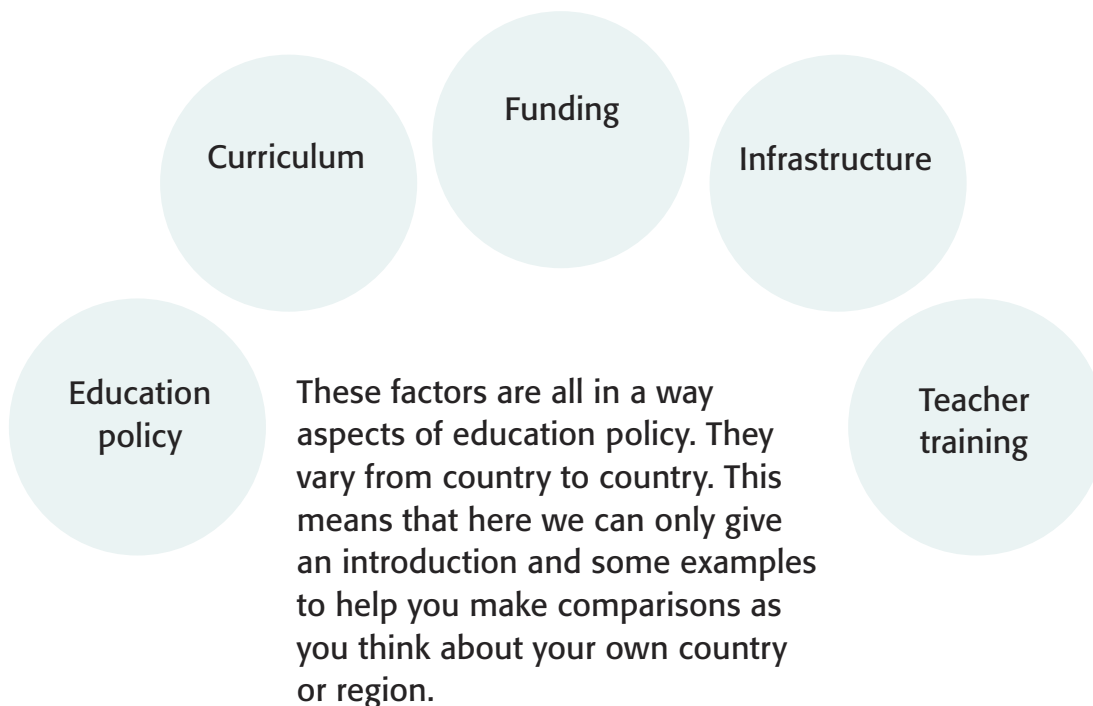
4

5

ACTIVITY 2.2.1

For this topic we have identified the following five factors, though yours may be different. (If you have listed different factors, there is an activity later in this topic to help you think about them further.)

National education context



You may need to do some research or discuss with colleagues to find out more. For each factor we have given examples drawn from the research studies or action reports. As you read these, compare them with what you know about the situation in your country – what is the situation there? Who is responsible? Think how what the examples describe can help or hinder gender-responsiveness. If in the first instance you feel that a particular example is not relevant to your context, look closely to analyse the points of contrast and the lessons that can be learned.

For each factor there is an activity that follows the same pattern. It asks: 'Thinking about what your school can do to be more gender-responsive, which aspects of _____ [the factor] in your country help or hinder?' In other words, which offer opportunities to become more gender-responsive and which are likely to block initiatives?

Finally the topic looks at ways of influencing these factors at national level.

Education policy

What is education policy?

The term 'education policy' may suggest a document or plan of action that a country follows to operate its education system. But really policy is a collection of laws, statements and action plans. These cover all aspects of education as well as the underlying values about its purpose. There may not be a single clear statement of policy; rather, there may be a flood of initiatives, guidelines and reforms that together express the ideas and objectives.

So to define education policy in a country you may need to examine a number of documents and initiatives. A good starting point is probably the website of your ministry of education or equivalent, or an online search for 'education policy' plus 'country name'. Your school may have some of the key documents.

Note down basic information about policies and initiatives that you find in your search or that you already know about. What are the main policy concerns – for example, enrolment and participation, standards, survival rates, gender?

What does the policy say about gender?

What does the education policy have to say about gender, if anything?

Then question what it does say. Question any assumptions and stereotypes. For example:

- Are gender issues a key feature of stated policy, with a commitment to strive for equality?
- Are they scarcely mentioned at all? Aiming to be gender-neutral, policies may be gender-blind
- Are there assumptions about things like the role of women or the different potential of boys and girls?

Who makes policy?

In questioning education policy on gender, ask who makes policy and what influences it. For example, influences might include:

- International mandates and targets
- Broader national policies, e.g., economic
- Party politics or ideology
- Interest groups such as business, employers, religious groups
- Professional bodies, such as teacher unions

Is there scope for participation by local communities, parents or students themselves?

Education policy examples

Here are two examples of education policy. The first is an example of a simple statement of policy. The second gives more information about how a policy agenda can be put into action.

Trinidad and Tobago Education Policy 1993-2003

'As a national community, we are fully committed to the view that all our citizens, regardless of their gender, class, culture, ethnic origin, etc., have the ability to learn and should be provided with the opportunity to develop that potential to the fullest. We also recognise this as the only true guarantee of the kind of personal and social efficacy needed to sustain and improve our democratic way of life in Trinidad and Tobago.'

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Seychelles Ministry of Education's Mission Statement

Seychelles has opted for an inclusive educational agenda, which is clearly defined in its official policy statement 'Education for a Learning Society' published in 2000.

'The mission of the Ministry of Education is to build a coherent and comprehensive system of quality education and training, reflecting shared universal and national values, which will promote the integrated development of the person and empower him/her to participate fully in social and economic development.'

It is based on principles of equity, quality, accountability, education for empowerment, education for productivity, education for social cohesion and education for global participation.

Furthermore, the principle of equity is defined as:

- Equality of access to compulsory education
- Equitable sharing of resources
- Equal opportunity/ creating conditions for optimum achievement according to ability and career aspirations
- Ensuring that the context, content and medium of education are equally favourable to boys and girls
- Catering for special needs/ working towards greater inclusion of the learning disabled

The principle of gender equity is explicit and well defined. The promotion of equity and inclusion to help every student benefit from education is also one of the objectives in the National Development Plan for Education and Human Resources Development.

Until 2002, the Ministry of Education had an active Gender in Education Committee that acted as a watch dog and organised capacity-building workshops and sensitisation sessions for ministry and school staff on gender issues. It was instrumental in getting ministry sections to disaggregate statistics and mainstream gender into policies and

activities. Its current status is unclear.

The Ministry of Education has a Gender Action Plan (2002–2015), produced by the committee to respond to the Education for All Goal No. 5 for eliminating gender disparities and achieving gender equality in education by the year 2015.

[SEYCHELLES GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

ACTIVITY **Help or hinder? Education policy**

Thinking about what your school can do to be more gender-responsive, which aspects of education policy in your country help or hinder?

Help?

Hinder?

ACTIVITY 2.2.2

Curriculum

What's in the curriculum?

In its broad sense, the curriculum is all the experiences that students undergo at school. It includes:

- The official curriculum (the document)
- The enacted curriculum (what is taught)
- The hidden curriculum (the processes by which children learn attitudes and values in schools – this can reflect the school ethos, which we come to in Topic 3.1)

The word 'curriculum' may be used to mean different things in different contexts. For example, it can refer to:

- A syllabus/ a body of knowledge
- A set of objectives or goals
- * The process of teaching and learning
- A commitment to values, e.g., emancipation or transformation

The national curriculum is a curriculum prescribed at national level to ensure uniformity and standards across the system. For federal countries such as India, Nigeria and Pakistan there will be sub-national curricula.

Questions to ask about the curriculum

- What, if anything, does the national (or sub-national) curriculum say about gender issues?
- Is there an assumption that the curriculum is gender-neutral? Or is it really gender-blind?
- What is the unofficial or hidden curriculum? Are there assumptions, for example, that boys will study particular subjects and girls won't? Or that girls are destined for a domestic role and boys for a wage-earning role?
- Do issues of reproductive health (e.g., concerns about contraception, pregnancy, sexual abuse and harassment, HIV and AIDS) figure in the curriculum?
- Is gender integrated into subjects like social studies, life skills and religious studies?

What about the examination and qualifications framework?

As with the curriculum, ask whether there are gender-related impacts. For example, does the method of examination favour boys or girls more? Does the framework reflect the curriculum's approach to gender equality?

Who sets the curriculum?

How is the national curriculum developed and who decides – politicians, civil servants, professional bodies, unions, researchers and academics, advisory bodies, the examination and assessment

bodies? Is there scope for input from NGOs, interest groups and parent and student representatives? What accountability is there? What participatory structures exist?

Curriculum examples

The following example from India shows how there may be a gap between a national curriculum and implementation at state level. The Malaysia example describes a four-tier structure for implementing curriculum.

India

At national level, the National Curriculum Framework, 2005 flags the importance of including and retaining all children in school and enabling all children to experience dignity and confidence to learn. It further draws attention to the importance of school ethos and culture, classroom practices of teachers, learning sites outside the school and learning resources, all issues that are extremely important in relation to reducing gender inequalities in education.

The renewed emphasis on universalising secondary education necessitates that gender equality concerns are brought centre stage, to enable girls to move beyond the elementary stages and access secondary schooling.

However, at state level in Rajasthan, while there have been some efforts towards curriculum reform, the approach adopted has been 'add women and stir'. The curriculum continues to reinforce traditional gender roles and does not offer learners the space to imagine a different future or set of gender relations. The State Government has also resisted the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework, 2005, giving little space for reform.

[INDIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Malaysia

The primary and secondary schools follow the National Integrated Curriculum, which is set by the Ministry of Education. The curricula for post-secondary and higher level education are varied and depend on the educational institutions offering the courses. Colleges and universities are now under a separate ministry, i.e., the Ministry of Higher Education. Private schools do exist and are of two different types – those that teach the National Integrated Curriculum and those that follow the international syllabi according to their country affiliation.

The Ministry of Education develops and monitors the progress of the national school system and curriculum. The guiding policy, as embodied in the National Education Policy, for the integrated curriculum is as follows:

'To prepare an education programme inclusive of the curriculum and co-curricular activities which encompasses all discipline of knowledge, skills, norms, values, cultural elements and beliefs to assist in the full

and holistic development of individuals physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally as well as to inculcate and enhance desirable moral values and to impart knowledge.’ (National Education Policy, p. 4).

The Malaysian Government has put in place a number of enabling factors to assist in the development of the education sector. Some of them are as follows (MDG Malaysia Report, 2005, p. 75):

‘The Malaysian education system, guided by the Educational Development Plan (EDP) 2001–2010, follows a set of processes and procedures. As stated in the plan, there are four tiers in the education management system, and they are as follows (EDP:7-2):

1. Ministry of Education. The Educational Administration System is centralised under the responsibility of the Federal Government. This means all activities concerning policy formulation development planning, curriculum development, public examination administration, and financing are managed and coordinated at the Ministry level. It monitors educational programmes, with support from the state and district education departments.
2. State Education Department. This level is in charge of school management, monitoring and inspection of educational policies and implementation of programmes.
3. District Education Department. This level assists the state in its tasks.
4. School Management. The head/principal manages the finance, students’ academic, and co-curricular activities of their schools. There are two senior assistants to assist the head/principal. The hierarchy in the schools follows a generic management structure

The management of the curriculum and assessment is carried out by several departments/divisions, such as, the Curriculum Development Centre, Technical Education Department, Malaysian Examination Syndicate, Malaysian Examination Council, Special Education Department, and the Islamic and Moral Education Department (EDP:7-3).’

[MALAYSIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

ACTIVITY Help or hinder? Curriculum

Thinking about what your school can do to be more gender-responsive, which aspects of the curriculum in your country help or hinder?
Help?

Hinder?

Funding

How is schooling funded?

How much money is available for education and how is it allocated? This is an important aspect of education policy. What proportion of national expenditure is spent on education? How is it divided between primary, secondary and tertiary levels? The way funding is allocated may be considered gender-neutral, but it may have different impacts on boys and girls. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) will reveal this.

Is funding gender-responsive?

Some countries use a GRB approach. This aims to promote gender equality in education through decisions on educational funding. It covers such activities as:

- Analysing how far current expenditure meets different priorities of boys and girls and how far they benefit
- Evaluating the policies underlying budget allocations to identify their likely impact – will they reduce, increase or leave unchanged gender inequalities?
- Breaking down expenditure into gender-relevant categories

Who provides the funding?

National, regional and local government may all be involved in funding decisions, as may donors or civil society organisations. There may be private schools or schools supported by religious organisations. Local organisations and schools themselves can undertake GRB initiatives.

There may be special funding for gender-related incentive schemes or programmes for which schools can apply. It is important to do research or make inquiries to find out if such funding is available.

Funding example

The South Australian GRB used a simple framework, which has since been adopted and adapted in many other countries.

The South Australian GRB framework distinguishes between three categories of expenditure as follows:

Gender-targeted expenditures, i.e., expenditure directed specifically at improving gender equality. In terms of education, examples would be special scholarships for girls, school stipends paid for girls, quotas or affirmative actions.

Staff-related employment-equity expenditures, i.e., expenditures that promote employment equity among public servants. In education,

they might include expenditures on training for women teachers to help them to progress further in their careers. An analysis of levels of pay of men and women teachers, e.g., differences between primary and secondary and different subjects such as science and maths, might reveal unforeseen gender impacts.

General/ mainstream expenditures analysed for their gender impact, e.g., expenditure on post-compulsory education, sectors that commonly have a high proportion of male students and the provision of early childhood education, because it particularly benefits women and older girls by reducing their burden of child care. General increases in educational spending, particularly when targeted at primary or secondary rather than tertiary education, will usually favour girls. 'The introduction of universal and free primary education into a country is probably the most dramatically obvious application of mainstream education that is likely to contribute to gender equity' (p. 86). In addition there is also scope for gender-related targeting within mainstream expenditure.

Adapted from: Aikman, S and Unterhalter, E (eds) (2007) *Practising Gender Equality in Education*, Oxfam, Oxford.

ACTIVITY **Help or hinder? Funding**

Thinking about what your school can do to be more gender-responsive, which aspects of funding in your country help or hinder?

Help?

Hinder?

ACTIVITY 2.2.4

Infrastructure

What is infrastructure?

Infrastructure means the basic stock of schools and equipment. It also includes the systems to support them such as transport and roads. The kind of questions here are:

- Are there enough schools? Are they the right kind of schools (for example, the appropriate number of primary and secondary schools)? If they are single sex schools, is there equal provision?
- Are they in the right places – available to scattered populations, for example, free of regional bias, accessible?
- Are there boarding schools or residential hostels if needed?
- Are the schools themselves suitable – secure and with basic facilities such as water and toilets as well as privacy?
- Is there supporting infrastructure – are there roads and bridges so that pupils can get to schools? Is there adequate and affordable transport? Does transport cater for mobility/ transport issues for girls?

Who plans and provides?

Who is responsible for planning and providing the infrastructure – and at what level? Is it the national or regional government? Local government? Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or religious bodies? How is supporting infrastructure coordinated with the provision of the schools themselves?

Infrastructure example

This example from India covers both funding and infrastructure.

Rajasthan Government Initiatives to Promote Girls' Education

Several initiatives have been put in place by the State Government to encourage the enrolment of girls in secondary education. These include:

Girls enrolled in Class I to XII are exempted from paying school fees.

All girls studying in government schools are provided free textbooks from Class I to XII.

To encourage enrolment of rural girls at the secondary and higher secondary stages, girls' hostels have been established in six divisional headquarters catering to 50 girls. In addition, 25 girls' hostels have also been established at the district headquarters.

A Balika Shiksha foundation was established in 1994–95 to encourage education among girls. The foundation provides financial assistance to meritorious girls coming from poor families for higher studies. It also addresses the gaps related to infrastructure and basic needs in girls' secondary schools.

Since 1997–98, the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education has been conferring the Gargi Puruskar on all girls who score more than 75 per cent aggregate marks in Class X. A scholarship of Rs.1000/- per annum is provided to pursue education in Class XI and XII. In the year 2006–07, the award was given to 12, 902 girls incurring an expenditure of Rs. 129.02 lakhs.

Several scholarships have also been provided for girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and nomadic families.

Girls studying in Classes IX to XII have also been provided with free transportation facilities.

The Rajasthan State Transport Corporation has been directed to issue free bus passes to girls studying in secondary and senior higher secondary schools to ensure easy access to schools.

An insurance scheme has also been introduced for girls enrolled in the secondary and senior secondary schools.

In addition, the Five Point Programme for Women recently announced by the Chief Minister of Rajasthan focuses on ensuring 100 per cent enrolment of girls in schools.

[INDIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

ACTIVITY **Help or hinder? Infrastructure**

Thinking about what your school can do to be more gender-responsive, which aspects of education policy in your country help or hinder?
Help?

Hinder?

ACTIVITY 2.2.5

Teacher training

Does initial teacher training cover gender issues?

Teacher training should cover gender issues, but this is not always the case. Are gender issues part of initial teacher training in your country?

Think about your own teacher training, or the recent training of colleagues, and whether it covered gender issues. For example, was there just a general commitment to equality or were practical approaches taught? Were there one-off sessions on the topic or was it a theme that ran through the whole programme?

In your experience, did your teacher training help you question your own attitudes?

What about continuing professional development?

What scope is there for continuing professional development, either to fill gaps in initial teacher training or to follow it up as teachers gain further experience?

Who provides teacher training?

The same questions apply. Who provides teacher training? How is it funded? How is the teacher training curriculum drawn up? What scope is there for input by teachers themselves, parents or NGOs?

Teacher training examples

The two examples highlight the need for initial teacher training to cover gender issues.

Nigeria

Very few teacher-training institutions (if any) include gender studies (or the implications of sex differences in schools) in their basic (or in-service) programmes. As producers of teachers, teacher education institutions are the key to perpetuating, as well as to redressing, gender discrimination in the education system, especially in developing countries. Since teachers serve as models to students, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, the gender-prejudiced nature of their training allows for effective inculcation of existing inequities from one generation of pupils to another.

[NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

India

There are no subject-related training programmes organised for secondary school teachers. Some teachers had attended training programmes related to computers, life skills education, HIV/AIDS or

Scouts /Guides. None of the teachers had received any gender training. They felt that introducing gender issues in pre-service and in-service training would only have a partial impact. One of the women teachers who had participated in a training programme on life skills education stated that the male participants during the training were passing comments and laughing. The teachers felt that attitudes needed to undergo a change at the household level.

[INDIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

ACTIVITY **Help or hinder? Teacher training**

Thinking about what your school can do to be more gender-responsive, which aspects of teacher training in your country help or hinder?
Help?

Hinder?

ACTIVITY 2.2.6

In this topic we have looked at education policy, curriculum, funding, infrastructure, and teacher training as factors at the national level that may affect your school's effort to become more gender-responsive.

If you have thought of other factors as well, ask yourself the same questions about them. Then carry out the same activity.

- What is the situation in your country?
- Who is responsible?

ACTIVITY Other factors Help or hinder?

The factor is:

Thinking about what your school can do to be more gender-responsive, which aspects of the factor(s) you have identified in your country help or hinder?

Help?

Hinder?

ACTIVITY 2.2.7

Influencing the situation

For each factor that helps to determine the national education context, you have thought about:

- What the situation is in your country
- Who is responsible
- How the situation helps or hinders action to become more gender-responsive in your school

Look back at your activities from this topic. You should now have a list of opportunities for ('help') and barriers to ('hinder') gender equality.

The final question is how to influence policy. These aspects of policy are not set in stone. They result from interactions between policy and practice. Ideally these interactions happen at all times, with full

participation. But at other times this may only happen through conflict and contestation.

The important thing is to recognise opportunities. The final activity for this topic is to identify entry points for influencing policy.

ACTIVITY **Influencing policy**

Look back at your activities for this topic. For each of the factors note at least one action you or your school could take to influence policy.

Education policy

Funding

Infrastructure

Curriculum

Teacher training

Other

ACTIVITY 2.2.8

Examples might be:

- Find allies for lobbying at national level
- Work with professional bodies on curriculum development
- Find out more about gender-related incentive schemes or funding to apply for

Review

Again, here's a chance to review what you have covered. Look back at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- Analyse education factors at national level that can help or hinder the action schools can take
- Suggest ways of influencing policy

UNIT 3 A whole school approach

This unit looks at a whole school approach to becoming gender-responsive – an approach that involves all aspects of a school and everyone in it. It looks at the opportunities at school level that can lead to changes and it outlines possibilities for action.

The unit starts with the need for the right school ethos to make it easier to be gender-responsive and explores the different steps towards achieving this. It ends with an activity to outline a school gender policy and the processes needed to develop such a policy.

Topic 3.1 School ethos

The first step towards becoming more gender-responsive is to identify where changes are needed across a school. This topic will help you to:

- Reflect on the importance of school ethos to enable the school to become more gender-responsive
- Identify steps needed to develop a favourable ethos
- Start planning a gender analysis of schooling and classroom processes

Topic 3.2 Across the school

As part of the thinking about school ethos, we've identified cross-school organisation as key in developing a gender-responsive school. This topic will help you to:

- Identify these cross-school systems, structures and processes
- Think about what will be involved in changing them
- Think about how they can be incorporated into a school gender policy

Topic 3.3 Staff development

Who are the players in developing a gender-friendly ethos and making whole school changes? All staff are involved, and the topic of staff development is central to the entire guide. This topic will help you to:

- Identify the learning and development needs of staff at different levels and in different roles
- Consider how action research can be used as an approach in staff development
- Outline what is involved in a staff development plan

Topic 3.4 Involving the wider community

The local community also has a part to play, and involving it in the school's efforts is important. This topic will help you to:

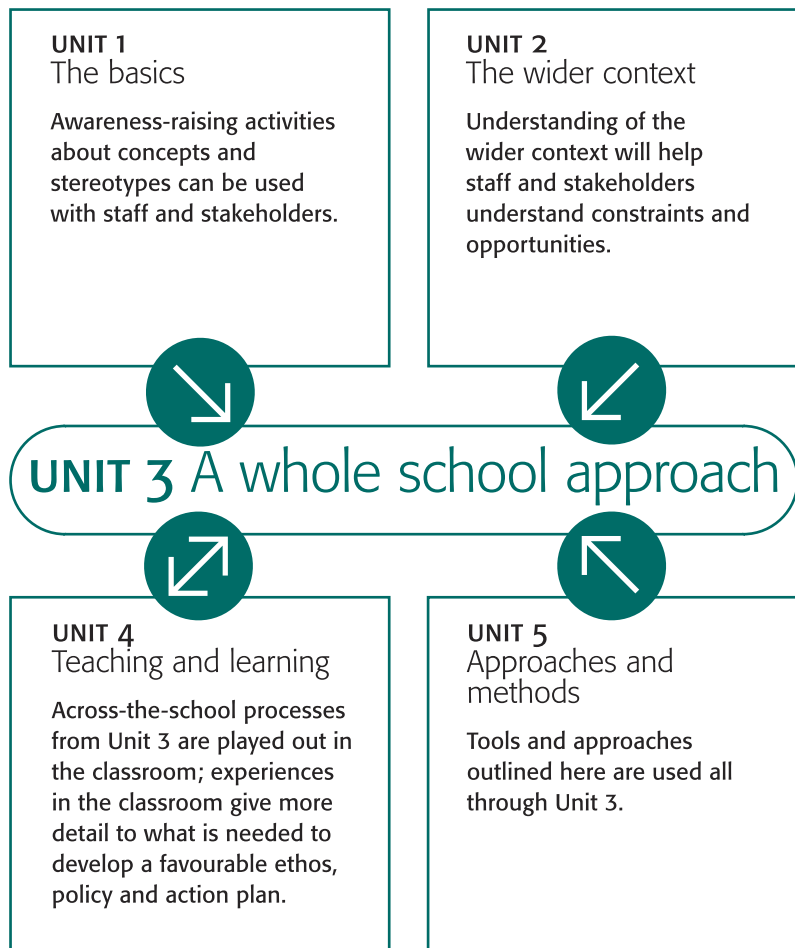
- Explain why it is important to involve the wider community, especially parents
- Identify ways of doing this

Topic 3.5 School gender policy

All aspects of the whole school approach this unit has covered come together in a school gender policy. This topic will help you to:

- Outline a school gender policy
- Outline a school gender action plan

Links



Topic 3.1 School ethos

It is not enough for international mandates or national policies to state that there should be gender equality in schools. Nor is it enough for each teacher to strive for equality in the classroom. The first thing is to identify where changes are needed across a school.

This topic will help you to:

- Reflect on the importance of school ethos to enable the school to become more gender-responsive
- Identify steps needed to develop a favourable ethos
- Start planning a gender analysis of schooling and classroom processes

By ‘school ethos’ we mean the fundamental attitudes and values that affect a school’s whole approach and its understanding of its role. A favourable ethos creates a climate in which gender issues can be addressed with trust and confidence. And it needs to be consistent, without contradictory messages: if there are explicit school policies about gender equality, everything in the school needs to reflect this – management structures, the way teachers behave, the content of the curriculum and so on.

Changing a school ethos can be a challenge, as these three examples show.

The first example, from Nigeria, shows how school ethos can reinforce discriminatory gender beliefs and behaviour.

Impact of school ethos

Students were also involved in classroom management as monitors and prefects. Their assignments include keeping order and discipline in class and assisting teachers in many different errands. These assignments differ in some cases for boys and girls. For example, matters concerning discipline and supervision of boys and girls were exclusively for boys, because girls are not expected to exercise control over boys by the school ethos, which considers it degrading to receive a directive from or obey female colleagues.

Girls play all the ‘balls’ played by the boys except football, although some girls expressed their desire to have played the game had it not for discouragement by society as translated in the school ethos.

Parental influence, students' interests and aspirations as well as certain factors within the schools played a complementary role in determining what students studied. It is a fact that some females felt unable to study sciences and both male and female students believed some subjects, particularly home economics, were more appropriate for females as were the core sciences for males.

However, it seems that the school ethos and practices as translated in teachers' attitudes and behaviour did more to direct students to take courses based on gender, as well as reinforcing gendered beliefs, than any other factor.

[NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The next example, from a single-sex girls' school in Pakistan, shows clearly the effect of the dominant ethos on the girls' education.

Ethos in a girls' school

The study data reveals the challenges facing girls to secure learning opportunities in the schools with co-education. The same struggle, however, also surfaced in the single-sex girls' school in the study. This school seems very well nested in the dominant gender ideology and hence has implications in terms of the overall quality of education offered to girls.

The principal perceived gender as the notion of individuals being boys and girls. Nurturing ways for boys and girls ought to be different due to their fundamental differences: 'Boys can be out and can go out but we have to control girls. We need to treat girls as girls'. She felt that the way girls conduct themselves outside in public exemplifies their education from a particular school.

Observation data reveal that through teaching, the approved code of conduct for females was communicated to the girls. 'Be like girls... don't talk a lot as excessive talk is a sign of stupidity. Do not get into fashion and pay attention to your studies... this is what will help you. Do not try to succeed through cheating' (Grade 9, physics lesson).

An emphasis on preparing female students for their future familial role was illustrated in the principal's description of her interactions with students. She often made it a point to teach them about the 'etiquettes' they needed to learn as girls. This also resonates with future prospects of girls. The majority of them, according to their teachers and principal, will discontinue education after grade 10. These girls may stay at home waiting for a suitable marriage proposal or start working in factories on daily wages. An upgrading of this school may ensure continuity of education for some of these female students.

[PAKISTAN GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The third example from India shows the need to involve all teachers in changing a school's ethos.

Changing the ethos

The various activities carried out under the Action Research project have shown that the teacher teams have to be constantly supported to create a vision of gender-friendly schools. Some teachers are reluctant to commit themselves, as they fear that they will be loaded with extra work. Others often talk of 'financial incentives' for doing any extra work. There is also a lack of resources to initiate any 'new activity'. While we have been able to build a relationship of trust with principals and teachers and they have been supportive, it is evident that we need to involve all the teachers in the schools in the discourse.

The recurring challenge is to facilitate a process where teachers can reflect on their behaviour and practice and help in changing the school ethos and schooling environment.

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

Did any of the examples reflect your experiences?

Here is another example from India, which describes what a positive focus on building school ethos can mean.

School ethos and Udaan

Udaan is a residential school for girls of 9–13 years who either have never been to school or have dropped out. It was started as one of the interventions of the Girls' Education Project being supported by CARE-India and implemented by a local NGO, Sarvodaya Ashram, in the Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh. This is the school where the Social Learning Package was first introduced.

It was designed with the objective of helping these girls complete grade V equivalent learning through an intensive course of accelerated learning on the one hand, and equipping them with information and capacities that help them deal with their immediate world from a position of strength on the other. The focus was on building their confidence, making them aware about the issues of gender equity and diversity, and strengthening their capacities to observe, think, understand, question, analyse, argue and negotiate.

The entire school programme, including curricular as well as extra-curricular activities, was designed with the above objectives in view. It was important that the different experiences of learners reinforced the same values and attitudes, rather than giving contradictory messages. For instance, if they were encouraged to ask questions in the social learning class, they could not be stopped from asking questions in the mathematics class. Students should not be shunned for asking either

uncomfortable or seemingly 'foolish' questions. If they were taught that everyone had an equal right to access whatever resources the school had, and a responsibility towards everyone's well-being, teachers too had to behave accordingly and could not have extra facilities without due justification.

The values of equality, sharing and responsibility were promoted by designing school management responsibilities so that everyone had an opportunity to experience different kinds of jobs. A number of committees were formed for running the library, keeping the premises clean, food, sports and so on with representation from students and teachers. These were rotated periodically.

Teacher training was also tailored accordingly. The process of training was geared towards the multiple objectives of

- (i) making teachers conscious of the unequal and differentiated practices in society and building their conviction towards the principle of equity,
- (ii) developing the skills and competence to undertake the desired activities in the classroom and internalise some of the practices in their day-to-day behaviour, and
- (iii) raising their confidence regarding their capacity to deal with these issues with young children.

[BASED ON CARE INDIA (2004) 'THE EVOLUTION OF UDAAN', CARE INDIA, NEW DELHI.]

The next example is much more detailed. It is an evaluation of the work done in a Seychelles secondary school in order to integrate gender into the school and classroom processes. It is useful because it sets out the different elements that contribute to a school's ethos.

The evaluation separates the overall task of integrating gender into the school and classroom processes into sensitisation, differences in academic performance, implementation of project and differences in boys' and girls' attitudes (column 1). Then it lists the achievements over the year (column 2), before identifying remaining concerns (column 3) and recommendations (column 4) and assessing the impact (column 5). Finally analysis/ reflection brings out the point that the most important thing was the work done on school ethos.

In the example we have highlighted the specific references to school ethos in bold type.

We suggest you now read through the evaluation carefully to identify the factors that have contributed to creating a favourable school ethos and to making it a good example of ways to combine the time, effort and commitment to build such an ethos. As you read it, note down for the activity that follows the elements you think have helped to create a more favourable school ethos.

What contributes to school ethos?

Evaluation of Gender Action Plan 2007–2008

Secondary School A (a public co-ed school with around 180 pupils)

| AREA | ACHIEVEMENTS | CONCERNS |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Sensitisation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff, students and parents were sensitised about the project. All teaching staff had school-based training sessions on gender dimensions. Teachers acknowledged some of the gender stereotyping that they were enforcing in the classes. <p>Gender stereotypes were challenged.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The non-teaching staff did not complete school-based training. Some teachers still have not challenged their gender stereotypes. |
| <i>Difference in academic performance</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap between girls and boys is narrowing, especially in subjects such as French, which were considered to be 'girls' subjects'. Boys' results have improved in the classes where the project was being piloted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys continue to under-perform generally. |
| <i>Implementation of project</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 teachers volunteered to do the project. The whole school was kept informed of the progress of the project. Teachers developed their own strategies to help tackle some of the gender disparities in their classroom; this also meant they had to read a lot. Adequate support was given by the school leaders, the School Improvement Team and their peers. Teachers doing the project also implemented some of the ideas into the other levels that were not part of the pilot classes. A few departments managed to change their lesson plans to accommodate gender strategies. Better collaborations developed within the departments because of the action research nature of the project. Teachers doing the project were given due recognition, both nationally and internationally. The school networked with Mt Fleuri school to share ideas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a few cases, the wrong concepts were employed; a situation that brought about a bit more stereotyping. Access to funding was not always easy, and availability of suitable material on the local market was always an issue. The science teacher doing the project left the school and no one continued in his place. There were too few male teachers involved in the project. |
| <i>Difference in boys' and girls' attitudes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys are now more confident to participate in class and school activities. At the end of 2008, they said they were now happy with the way teachers involve them in activities. Many boys, even those who were not part of the project, came forward to be in the limelight and take on responsibilities in whole school activities. Relationship between boys and girls in the pilot classes improved; they became more willing to work together. Catalogue of cases of undisciplined behaviours is now kept by gender and is analysed every term. The difference in thinking between boys and girls about school issues is now reduced. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the girls felt that they were now not happy with the way teachers involved them in the class. Some of the boys in the pilot classes did not want to work with other boys any more after they had experience working in collaboration with the girls. Students still have stereotypes, and certain undisciplined behaviours are still being associated with boys. |

Priority: Integrate gender into the school and classroom processes

Target: To reduce gender disparities in the school

Success criteria: At the end of 2008:

1. Boys and girls learn and collaborate together in gender-balanced classrooms.
2. Teachers have high expectations for both genders
3. Reduced gap in academic performance between boys and girls

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All students need to be further sensitised.
- Non-teaching staff need to have school-based training sessions.
- Sensitisation sessions for new staff members need to be done.
- More sessions for parents need to be organised.

- Continue with the project with the existing group, and also extend some areas into all other classes, across all departments.
- Efforts have to be made to ensure that girls' results are not affected by the project.

- The project is extended to all classes in 2009.
- Constant monitoring of progress and collection of data through meetings.
- Continued professional development sessions on gender dimensions to ensure that girls are now not neglected by teachers or that unhealthy competitions do not develop between boys and girls.
- Enforce parents' sensitisation and involve more parents in the activities.
- Do more sensitisation with students.
- Improve access to funding.
- Further action research is done on other gender issues in the school.
- More reflection sessions need to be organised for teachers.

- More gender training sessions need to be conducted with both boys and girls to challenge some of their existing stereotypes.
- Strategies need to be employed to ensure that girls are not now neglected by teachers.

IMPACT

- Students, teachers, and parents are fully aware of the different gender disparities that exist.
- Teachers and some parents developed genuine concern for the gender differences in the school.
- 14 teachers volunteered to pilot the gender project.
- **Change in school ethos to become more 'gender friendly'.**
- A few parents got involved in the project.
- Boys became more self-confident and challenged some of their own stereotyping.
- Gender is now part of the students' results analysis and is never ignored.

- Teachers gained more professional development in research work, particularly action research.
- Perception of teachers changed; stereotypes were really challenged and pre-conceived ideas were put to test.
- There was visible improvement in the relationship between teachers and boys.
- Gender gap in performance narrowed.
- Environment in the classes being piloted changed and boys and girls learned to work better together.
- **School ethos changed to become more gender-friendly;** students and teachers were more gender-conscious when organising school activities.
- Teachers became more reflective in planning, delivery and evaluation of their lessons.
- In the whole school, teachers took a more positive approach to any challenges they faced in the class.
- Teachers doing the project gained many more skills, and they themselves became more confident.

- Visible improvement with regards to discipline at the level where the project was being piloted, especially when seating arrangements were changed.
- Boys seem happier at school and with school, and it was also apparent in their responses for the school audit; it seems that they are now happier because they feel more valued by the teachers at school.

Analysis/Reflections

- The results of the evaluation show that the action plan was well implemented and that due consideration was given to it. The fact that the implementation reached classroom level was a great achievement, as this is difficult to do with professional development. This success could be because the project was well planned since 2007, and that there was no rush with the implementation. Structures were put in place first, and many sensitisation sessions were done to prepare everybody at the school, especially the teachers. The factor that contributed most to make the teachers react was the work done on school ethos. Teachers had to feel really concerned and motivated, not just aware of the problem. Definitely, the fact that this was also a Commonwealth project helped in making it successful.
- This project was very successful in changing the attitudes and perspectives of some parents, students, especially the boys, and the teachers. The boys in particular were more pro-active. They felt more valued by the teachers, and when the first few boys came forward, the others followed.
- Proper monitoring also ensured that data were being properly recorded, even data that were not considered as useful to teachers. For a very long time, the students were not directly involved in school projects, but in this one, they were, and they were given the chance to say what they think; this provided very useful data for the teachers and for the school. Some of these data were real 'eye openers'.
- The action research nature of the project brought about many advantages to the school; teachers became more reflective in their day-to-day teaching, and they were able to question their own practices, as well as accept criticism from others. This is also considered as a great achievement by the school. There was also better collaboration between teachers, which improved the ethos of the school. The teachers stopped using the 'blaming syndrome', and instead of complaining about boys' results and attitudes, they did something about it. They started talking more positively; all teachers doing the project thought they could make a difference.
- However, due consideration has to be given to the strategies to be used to sustain the successes, so that gender becomes an integral part of the day-to-day running of the school. Strategies also have to be employed to overcome the many challenges stated in the results of the evaluation, particularly to ensure that the girls are not neglected and that true meaning of 'gender equality' is clear to all.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

The next activity encourages you to look carefully at the case study again, and draw out its general lessons.

ACTIVITY A favourable school ethos

Thinking about the case study, note down three elements that you think help to create a more favourable ethos.

1

2

3

ACTIVITY 3.1.1

Here are the responses of three groups of Mozambique workshop participants to this activity. How do they compare with your ideas?

Elements in school ethos

Group 1

- 1 Work on the development of good communications between the school headteacher and all the other members of the school community
- 2 Organise work so that activities are distributed with no gender distinction, involving all the teachers
- 3 Give praise, create interest groups, encourage study groups, give information on gender issues to school community members (parents, guardians, teachers, pupils)

Group 2

- 1 Involve society in general (including parents) and make people understand that school is important
- 2 Improve communication between school and community
- 3 Make students feel their importance and value in school in order to encourage everyone to participate (for example, to promote debates on early pregnancy issues, sexuality)

Group 3

- 1 Involve society in general (parents, etc.) in school activities such as school cleanliness
- 2 Work on students' interaction inside and outside the classroom to strengthen the relationships among them
- 3 Develop activities such as discussions, debates, games and education on citizenship issues, in order to improve the effectiveness of rules established in school

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

Now look too at these general learning points from the Seychelles project, which state very clearly the importance of ethos and the key elements of a favourable ethos.

School ethos: preliminary findings

(from brain storming and scrutiny of reports and action research projects)

'Ethos' has been singled out as the one most important factor for gender integration in schools. The headteacher and support provider strongly argue that ethos should be tackled even before embarking on the project. Key elements of this favourable ethos are:

- Good communication structures
- Clear and high expectations for staff and students
- Valuing all students as persons, not only as boys or girls
- The importance of leadership
- Headteacher as leading professional, delegating, monitoring and providing appropriate support (moral and pedagogical)

- Finding champions for gender in the school
- Involving both girls and boys in the project and ensuring that there is no rivalry
- Involving everyone in the school, including non-teaching staff, and winning their personal commitment
- Ensuring that gender is 'forced into the agenda of all meetings' so that it permeates the whole school
- Professional conversations within the school focused on gender
- Increasing collaboration and peer support among teachers
- Recognising and celebrating teachers' work – presenting work inside and outside school through networking

It is evident from the study that the school that is making the more marked progress is one of the original case study schools that had been working on developing a more inclusive school ethos even before the start of the action research project. Building such an ethos requires time, perseverance and the full commitment of management staff. It is a prerequisite for the successful integration of gender.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

How do the case study and the findings about school ethos compare with your school's experiences? And if the Seychelles case study tells us about a good school ethos, what does a bad school ethos mean? Probably you can picture a poor ethos, by imagining the exact opposite of the Seychelles learning points above – there would be poor communication, lack of leadership and so on. Try that exercise now – work through the list of learnings, imagining the exact opposite for each item. And as we have said before, a school that gives out inconsistent messages – that does not practise what it preaches – will not be able to create a favourable ethos for gender equality. For example, it will find it hard to deal with issues of reproductive health and sexual harassment unless there is an ethos of good communication, respect and commitment.

The next activity asks you to reflect honestly on your own school. In doing this you may come up with elements of both good and bad ethos. These are your first thoughts. You do not need to share them with anyone, but keep them to look back at later. Then you can see what progress you have made and whether your initial thoughts were right.

The activity is a SWOT analysis, where you assess the **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats** involved in making changes.

ACTIVITY **SWOT analysis**

Take a separate sheet of paper and on it write down your first thoughts about these questions.

Thinking about your school as it is now in terms of its gender-responsiveness:

What are its **strengths**?

What are its **weaknesses**?

What are the **opportunities** for change?

What are the **threats** to these changes?

In doing this activity you will have started to build up a picture of your school and the opportunities there are for changing gender attitudes and identities. Perhaps you have identified the topics that this unit covers – ethos, cross-school organisation and processes, staff development and community involvement, especially parents, leading to the development of a school gender policy as a means of expressing the school ethos. Perhaps you have identified issues relating more closely to teaching and learning, which Unit 4 covers: teachers' and students' attitudes and what actually happens in the classroom. And you may have identified other opportunities in your own context.

But perhaps you have also realised that as a first step to make changes, and make them lasting, you may need more information. What exactly is going on? Who is involved? Can things be 'measured'?

This is where gender analysis comes in. Gender analysis is important in the early stages to build up a picture of the situation and provide evidence to underpin your own first thoughts. It involves an assessment of the school. Topic 5.2 Gender analysis provides more detailed information about gender analysis, methods and resources. You may like to look through that topic now, to help you with the next activity. You can consult it again before embarking on a full-scale gender analysis.

What kind of information do you need? One example is information on boys' and girls' experiences to identify problems and gaps, plan action and monitor change. Detailed information about the current situation and needs will help provide a structured framework to evaluate the situation at the start, during the process of change and at the end. Gender analysis is a key lever for change, and it will give you information to back up your impressions noted in the SWOT activity.

The next activity will help you develop an initial outline for a gender analysis in your school to collect information about the current situation.

ACTIVITY **Planning a gender analysis**

Write brief notes in answer to these questions:

Why?

Why do you need the information for a gender analysis?

What?

What kind of information do you need?

What will be the main issues to examine?

What do you think are the main information gaps?

How?

How can the information be collected?

ACTIVITY 3.1.3

This activity will help you start drafting a plan for gender analysis. You can look at Topic 5.2 for examples of gender analysis. Appendix 1 also gives you some idea about gender analysis in schools.

Finally, here's an activity that you can develop further as you work through this unit, leading up to Topic 3.5 School gender policy. As you have worked through this topic, you may have noted the kinds of gender issues arising in your school that could be covered by a school gender policy. Keep a note of them and add to your list as you work through the rest of this unit.

ACTIVITY School gender policy: first thoughts

Start making a list of headings for a school gender policy.

1

2

3

4

5

etc.

ACTIVITY 3.1.4

Review

As in Units 1 and 2, at the end of each topic there is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- Reflect on the importance of school ethos and what it means
- Identify opportunities for change in your school
- Develop the outline for a gender analysis of your school
- Start planning headings for your school gender policy

Topic 3.2 Across the school

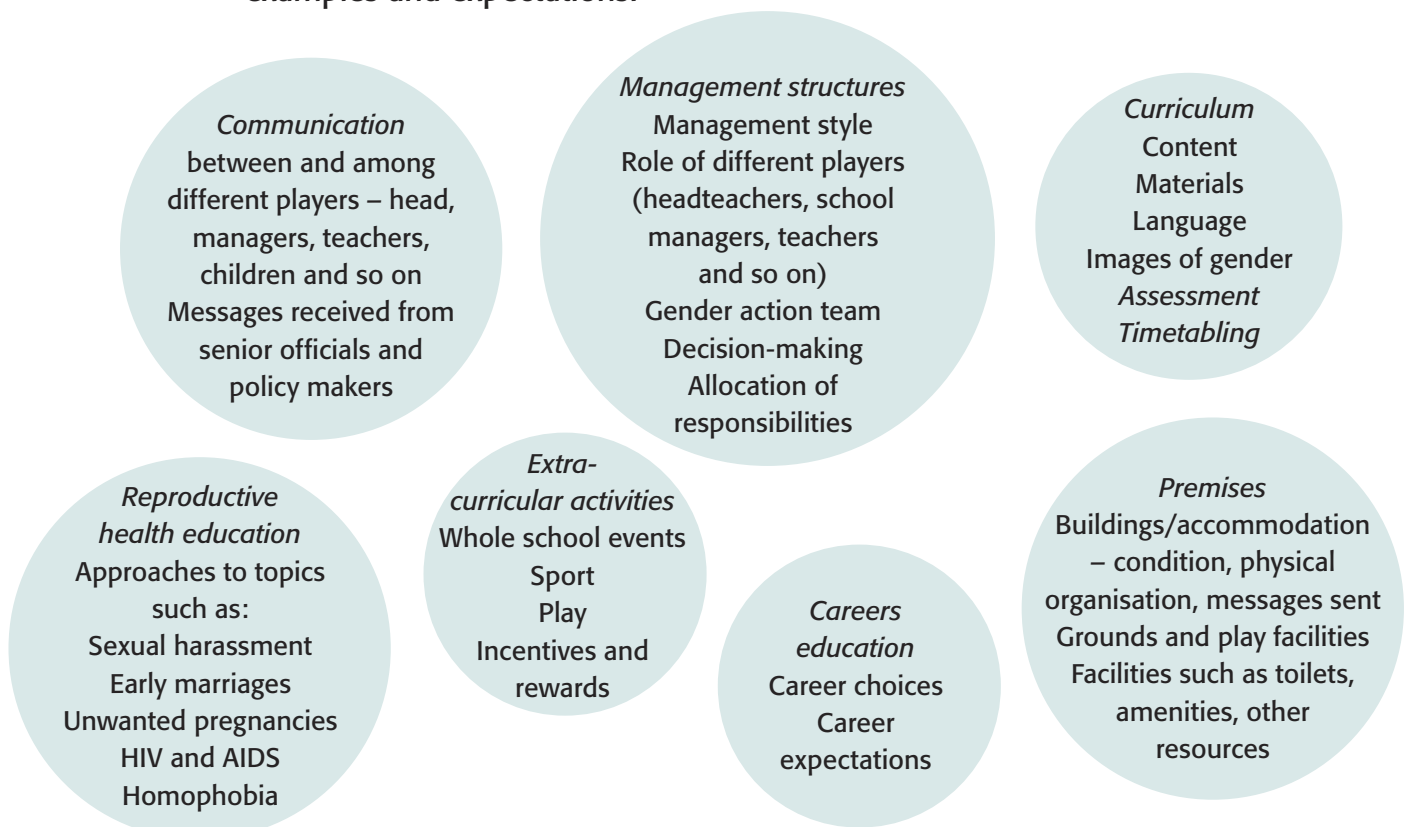
As part of the thinking about school ethos, we identified cross-school organisation as key in developing a gender-responsive school. By this we mean systems, structures and processes used across a school that determine the way it is run and that will require a collaborative effort if changes are to be made.

This topic will help you to:

- Identify these cross-school systems, structures and processes
- Think about what will be involved in changing them
- Think about how they can be incorporated into a school gender policy

It also introduces the idea of action research (covered more fully in Topic 5.1) as a way of investigating and making changes.

Here are examples of cross-school systems, structures and processes other schools have identified as affecting gender equality. You may have different examples and expectations.



ACTIVITY Ranking exercise

For your school, rank these in the order of their importance for gender equality, with 1 as the least important and 7 as the most important.

Are there any other systems, structures or processes you think should be included? Add them at the end.

Communications

Management structures

Curriculum

Reproductive health education

Extra-curricular activities

Careers education

Premises

Any others:

ACTIVITY 3.2.1

Now read these short descriptions about different aspects of cross-school systems, structures and processes. For each, we suggest you do the activity to compare what is described with your school's experience. This will help you to highlight what is similar and what is different. Add notes about what you think are the most important things to consider in your context.

Be aware that each example may illustrate more than one aspect of cross-school organisation. There is a mix of positive and negative examples. Some are drawn from the gender analysis of schooling processes studies in different countries, showing the existing situation. Others are drawn from the action projects and show work to find solutions.

Communication

These two examples describe the ways male and female teachers interact with male and female students and the ways students interact with each other.

Between teachers and students

Boys' interaction with male teachers was underscored by notions of preserving the masculine sphere. Whilst their interactions with female teachers seemed to be based on care and nurturing, with some of the male teachers there would be sexist remarks if they saw boys working closely together or sitting together. It should be noted that they do not regard this as a form of sexual harassment. In both the co-ed and the all-boys school male teachers treated boys as if they were 'partners' with a great deal of joking and sexual innuendo, for example, teasing boys when they sat next to other boys. Such behaviour on the part of male teachers hints at a certain kind of boy-boy relationship designed to maintain if not a hard-core masculinity, then one that is commonly accepted as masculine.

On the whole men and boys display a sharper and more well-defined sensitivity to masculinity than femininity and it is more about males reacting to other males. Females are not so pre-occupied with observing and commenting on boys' masculinities as boys themselves. And, females have a lot of leeway in their interactions with other females; as a matter of fact, much of this interaction goes unnoticed and without comment.

Female teachers reported mixed feelings about teaching boys. While some said they preferred boys to the 'cattiness' of girls, many felt that boys dominated the classroom and when bored often baited the teacher.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Between students

One key feature in all the co-educational schools studied was the gendered nature of student interactions both in and outside the classroom. In the classroom, gendered interactions were noticeable through the creation of gendered space. All sitting arrangements were structured in a way that boys and girls grouped themselves differently. The boys tended to sit separately and tended to occupy the front seats while the girls occupied the rear seats. It is also striking that students reveal that they chose to sit along gender lines without influence from the school authority. However, school authorities approved of this arrangement and said it was a logical thing to do.

The same practice was observed outside the classrooms. Observation in the playgrounds, morning assembly and dining areas all show a

segregated cluster of boys and girls working, playing and standing separately. Only occasionally, we saw boys and girls mixed.

[NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Here is the first of the series of activities on cross-school processes. Each time, think about the given examples and how they compare with what goes on in your school. You may find there are more similarities than differences, or the other way round.

ACTIVITY Communication

What is similar?

What is different?

What are the most important issues in your context?

Management structures

The first management example, from Nigeria, illustrates how school management structures can themselves play a large part in stereotyping.

Gender spread of principals, deputies and committee heads

The spill-over effect of the influence of Education Administrators can be seen in the gender spread of principals and their deputies across the schools surveyed. Only two schools out of the five studied had a female presence in their top management cadre; one was the principal and the other the vice principal (Administration) who incidentally was also in charge of the junior secondary school as its principal.

The school management for its part plays a strong role in gender stereotyping by delegating assignments and headship of various departments and committees based on gender. For example, committees such as Finance, Exams, Continuous Assessment and Timetable are headed by males while Social and Food Committees are headed by females; this was the pattern throughout the survey. Invariably, the students see the same trend in the larger society replicated in their schools and form a thought-pattern reminiscent of societal gender expectation. Specific facilities for female teachers such as maternity leave, early closure hour for nursing mothers and separate toilets were allowed. There is no recognised government policy, however, for paternity leave in the country.

[NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

By contrast, the second example – from one of the secondary schools in the Seychelles project – shows how by setting up a school gender action team, management structures can be used to work towards a more gender-responsive school.

Setting up a school gender action team

Action Plan target: To set up gender committees for students and staff

Task

- Set up school committee for gender
- Work on terms of reference

Outcomes

A School Gender Action Team (SGAT) was set up comprised of the Senior Leaders, the Professional Development Facilitator and a representative from each of the seven departments. The Team has worked on the terms of reference, bearing in mind what they see their role to be/what they are going to be doing. The Team has drawn up the school's action plans for gender.

Reflection/way forward

- Implementation of the action plans are progressing
- Monitoring and recording progress is a must

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

Again, for your activity consider what in these examples is similar to your experience, what is different and what is important in your context.

ACTIVITY Management structures

What is similar?

What is different?

What are the most important issues in your context?

Curriculum

Here are two examples relating to the curriculum, used here in the limited sense of what is taught/ the programme of study. The Nigerian example shows how teachers' preconceptions can influence students' curriculum choices along gender lines.

Influence of teachers on curriculum choices

Teachers attach great importance to educating both girls and boys, at least in theory. They however believe that there are some differences in the capacity and performance in certain subjects for girls and boys and also that there are differences in expressed desire of choice of study. They think that girls tend to like and do better in arts subjects, while boys aim for science subjects. There were exceptions, however, where some girls do better in the sciences and some boys do better in the arts.

Teachers are of the opinion that a male or female student should be allowed to assume their natural roles in the future, depending on their choice, even if that choice was influenced. That means if a girl chooses to play a feminine role or masculine role she should not only be allowed to but encouraged in that direction. However, they strongly objected to the idea of allowing boys to study 'feminine' subjects such as home economics. Teachers exhibited preconceived notions and strong prejudice as to the roles of females and males. The schools, undoubtedly, seemed to be preparing students to conform to the society's gender stereotyping of girls and boys.

The study further reveals that boys and girls are encouraged by the school ethos and practices to choose subjects along gender lines. What is more disturbing is the fact that none of the teachers or officials interviewed supported the idea of infusing gender issues in the curriculum and no one liked the idea of students being encouraged to take subjects across gender lines.

[NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The example from India raises the possibility of taking gender perspectives into account in the way curriculum subjects are designed and delivered.

Making the curriculum more gender-sensitive

All the principals commented that there was scope for making the curriculum more gender-sensitive. One male principal felt that gender issues could be taken into account in social science subjects, while in subjects like mathematics it was difficult to incorporate a gender perspective. They felt that regular teacher training and refresher courses should be organised for secondary and senior secondary teachers on various subjects as well as on issues such as gender.

[INDIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The following is the same kind of activity as before.

ACTIVITY Curriculum

What is similar?

What is different?

What are the most important issues in your context?

Reproductive health education

Reproductive health education and the way a school approaches it is very much a cross-school issue. It relates to curriculum (and where it appears in the curriculum) and to school ethos (and the need to give out consistent messages, both stated and unspoken). The example from the Trinidad and Tobago Action Project illustrates several elements, such as the need for sensitivity and the right atmosphere for discussion and the importance of involving parents.

Talking about relationships and sexuality

At School A I arranged for an intervention to be done in the week preceding Carnival because there was a desire to impress on the students the importance of being responsible during the Carnival season.

I was able to obtain approval from parents, the school and the Ministry of Education. I also met with the students who are to be a part of the project to determine their willingness to participate. The presentation was done by Mr. Joseph, a Public Health Educator attached to the Ministry of Health.

This intervention was extremely valuable. Mr. Joseph was very open and in some cases 'raw' while speaking to the students about their sexuality. While the students were generally comfortable and willing to talk, it was apparent that they preferred to speak about some of the things among their own sex group. When he brought up the topic of morning erections and masturbation, the boys were willing to talk about it but not in front of the girls.

This type of openness helped to break the ice. Using this technique, Mr Joseph was able to get the students comfortable to the point where two of the boys began to engage in some degree of introspection when asked about their relationship with their fathers. One boy lightened the tension by jokingly stating that he didn't like the conversation since it was getting all emotional and was like one of those TV shows such as Jerry Springer. At the end of the session Mr Joseph complimented all the students for giving positive peer support. He told the group that it was good that they did not laugh and that the boys were comfortable talking about their feelings with their parents, especially their fathers.

During the following week the students were engaged in a programme designed to strengthen their refusal skills. This programme was specifically carded for the week before the Carnival celebrations, a time when many individuals throw caution to the wind. Quite often it is during this season that there is an escalation of STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and unwanted pregnancies. During this session Ms Alvarez, the presenter, helped the students to focus on issues like 'How to say no – setting healthy boundaries', HPV (Human papillomavirus), and the 'Taboo word – No'. At the end of the

programme the students were to prepare posters displaying what they learned during the sessions.

Following the session on strengthening students' refusal skills, I extended an invitation to the parents to come in to discuss the project. In a short meeting with the first two parents who came (mothers), I briefed them about the project, what was done and what the future plans were. I asked if they were aware of what is taking place in the project and they both answered in the affirmative. They indicated that their children usually come home and speak about the day's activity.

I then had a separate meeting with another mother. In conversing I came around to telling her how her son 'opened up' in one of the sessions. This mother was quite surprised since she said she does not know her son to be that type of person. Eventually, she started 'opening up' herself, confirming the picture painted by the young man and adding a little more.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Again, think about what you can draw from this example to relate to your own context.

ACTIVITY Reproductive health education

What is similar?

What is different?

What are the most important issues in your context?

Extra-curricular activities

The example below of extra-curricular activities from Malaysia looks carefully at the provision of sports, highlighting that overall there is more provision for boys.

Sports facilities on offer

In School A, while there were limited sports facilities offered to the girls, interest was generated by the teachers. In a hockey lesson, the teacher was joking with the girls and encouraging them to try even though some of them kept missing the balls. There was patience shown by the teacher, and the students were able to reciprocate. There were also sufficient hockey sticks for everyone to have a go at the game.

School A's headmistress confirmed that the students were very active in games and sports and they had won many awards for the school, e.g., in hockey and tennis, and had won thrice in *pantun* (poetry) competitions. Some of them go bowling and play other sports outside of the school. These additional activities were provided by parents who were able to pay, and those students who joined additional activities, such as bowling, choir singing, scuba diving, kayaking and piano classes, do them during their own time. Such activities appear to be more popular with students whose parents have higher incomes, and most students only join those activities offered by the schools.

In the mixed schools and School D, there was more emphasis on boys' sports, such as football, *sepak takraw* (kick volleyball) and badminton. The teaching method varied from one teacher to another. It was observed that teachers in these schools were more interactive, patient and engaged with the male students when it came to games and sport activities.

In many ways, the games and sports equipment and facilities offered in the schools, especially School B, C and D, were more suited to boys' interests. Girls' interests were limited to netball, badminton and maybe occasionally basketball and hockey.

[MALAYSIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The following example from Samoa shows that the traditional Culture Day reflects strong cultural gender values, and it draws attention again to the contrast between Samoan and 'Western' educational notions.

Culture Day

Culture Day is an annual event in most schools. It brings together all the teaching and learning that went on in the school in Samoan language and cultural studies. This special event was observed in one school where traditional tasks of cooking by the boys and the girls were demonstrated as part of the learning outcomes in Samoan language and culture. It was noted that cooking using the *umu* or Samoan 'above

ground' oven was prepared and done by the boys, while cooking that uses boiling, frying or does not require heating, for example, *oka* (raw fish) is done by the girls. Craftwork, including weaving, also has gender-specific outcomes. Boys weave rough baskets for collecting food while girls weave the more refined baskets for women. Fishing is done by both men and women, but men go out on canoes and fish in the deep sea while women paddle in the lagoon for shell fish and sea slugs. The boys demonstrated the makings of the tools for deep-sea fishing while the girls showed what they used in lagoon fishing.

For Samoan dancing, the students were divided into four groups and each group did a final item where a girl (*taupou*) danced centre stage while the boys providing the *aiuli* danced at the periphery. This is the Samoan *taualuga*, which is more than just dancing. It reinforces the status of the people in a village community and it reminds people about their relative statuses in society.

These types of teaching and learning epitomise cultural gendered notions, and when taught in school they reinforce the societal notions of gender-specific roles and more importantly the reciprocal relationships that exist between male and female, especially that of a brother and sister in Samoan society.

If the purpose of education were to maintain and sustain Samoan culture and society, then such learning would be worthwhile indeed. However, students also tend to regard all forms of traditional Samoan knowledge as inferior to *palagi* (Western, middle class) knowledge, and Culture Day is often treated as a very brief digression from their main pursuit of Western knowledge.

[SAMOA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

What learning can you draw from these examples?

ACTIVITY **Extra-curricular activities**

What is similar?

What is different?

What are the most important issues in your context?

Careers education

The careers education example shows how students tend to make gendered and stereotyped career choices. It then describes a pilot project designed to make students more aware of the range of options open to them.

Career paths

The gender focus group at School B has decided that the centre of their investigation is the career development and paths of the students.

The students have shown pronounced proclivities towards highly gendered and stereotypical career choices. Male students have opted for subject choices and career paths that offer a heavy mechanical, manual and technical base while most female students have made career choices that are largely skewed in the domains of care-givers, nurturers and housewives.

The pilot project is designed as a career development programme where the main objective is for the students to acquire sensitivity towards careers that are not gendered.

The teacher-researchers have decided to establish this pilot project with a Form 1 class. This class is made up of 27 students (14 boys and 13 girls), aged from 11–15 years, who come from mainly low-income, single-parent homes. There are two form teachers, one male and the other female.

Form 1 students neither make their subject choices nor choose their career paths at this level. However, they are at an impressionable age where information, experience and socialisation help shape and mould their choices.

The pilot project is three-pronged.

- 1 The researchers intend to capitalise on a long-standing relationship between the school and British Petroleum (BPTT), a company that explores for oil in the region. BPTT has supported the school and student learning in several ways. Directly and indirectly it has been a job provider for many residents of the region. The students often seek positions with the firm and with its many service providers. The Human Resource Department of BPTT would be approached to arrange motivational talks on career development that highlight non-traditional jobs. Thus the students would be exposed to men behind desks and in positions that offer nurturing and care, men involved in culinary arts, women in technical fields, women in engineering, women in construction, women wearing hard hats and women involved in information technology.
- 2 Past students of the school provide another resource, through those who have explored innovative career paths. There are female students who have joined the protective and armed forces, or who

have become entrepreneurs and established their own business ventures. There are male students who have pursued the culinary arts and careers in the entertainment industry. They would be invited to share their experiences to serve as stimulus for students' thoughts about non-gendered jobs.

- 3 The members of the focus group did not want the students to view these discussions of career development as something that only occurred on certain days. The third focus for this pilot project is a curriculum intervention. For one term the teachers in the departments of social studies and Spanish would weave the notion of career development into their teaching so that the lessons would be infused with this theme.

Data would be collected from students, through oral interviews particularly, and some written assessments. These data sources are supremely important as student feedback would dictate the shape of future interventions and would provide insight into the students' thoughts and feelings. This pilot project is student-oriented so that its impact would be studied from the students' perspective.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

Does this example from an action project offer ideas for comparison?

ACTIVITY **Careers education**

What is similar?

What is different?

What are the most important issues in your context?

ACTIVITY 3.2.7

Premises

Here are two contrasting examples about premises. The first, from Nigeria, shows how poor premises and school environment have an enormous effect on the quality of education for both sexes, with particular implications for girls. The second, from Seychelles, describes action taken to refurbish classrooms, with benefits for all students.

Impact of school environment

Although the schools are visibly connected to an electric power supply, electricity was not constant and this interrupted their daily activities. The standard of hygiene and sanitation is very poor in four of the five schools observed. Water supply was another challenge that students faced as they had to trek long distances to fetch or buy water. During this process girls were apparently sometimes raped by a gang of male students. The lack of water in the schools also affected the state of toilets where available – for example, in one of the schools teachers bluntly refused to teach as a result of a discomfiting stench from the toilets. Absence of child-friendly school water and hygiene facilities and poor hygiene practices is one of the important reasons for children, especially girls, not going to school or dropping out from the school cycle. In this case, and owing to the belief that girls exhibit shyness and are more vulnerable to embarrassing situations than boys, it is more difficult for girls to remain in school under harsh school environments such as the ones reported on. The disease burden resulting from poor hygiene and polluted drinking water hampers the learning capacity of boys and girls in school.

Classrooms, like any other structure around the school compounds observed, were built with block and cement. Only two out of the five schools had adequate classrooms that were also in good condition, perhaps owing to their recent establishment date. The other schools not only have insufficient classrooms but these rooms are old, dilapidated, poorly furnished (seats and desks were often provided by individual parents, and students had to carry them to and from school), some with dusty non-cemented floors, others with no doors or window shutters and roofs partially blown off (exposing students to the elements). As a result of insufficient rooms, classrooms are over-crowded. A normal class scenario witnessed 64 students seated in one classroom. This situation seems to disadvantage girls in particular who are expected by society, school officials and male students to be shy, quiet and timid.

Over 60 per cent of the schools observed have a school compound that had no fencing or clearly defined ground rules for outside interference. A particular school compound was a thoroughfare, as vehicles and people pass freely even though classes and exams were going on. The school environment therefore did not seem to be conducive for effective teaching and learning for either girls or boys.

[NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Refurbishing classrooms

Context and progress

The 2007 Gender Analysis Study had drawn attention to the poor and dilapidated condition of many secondary classrooms, which were not very conducive to learning.

All five secondary 1 classes in School B have been cleaned and painted. Doors and locks have been repaired. All switches, sockets, lights and fans have been replaced. Whiteboards have been installed in all classes. The total cost for repairs amounted to RS 33,750.00.

Both parents and students of School B have noted great satisfaction with the state of classrooms. Out of the 71 parents who responded to the question, 61 commented positively on the cleanliness, high standard, ventilation, comfort and conducive environment. There were five negative comments and six parents had not visited the classrooms.

Parents, however, noted that walls were bare and more posters and pictures were needed. Some furniture was inappropriate. Students also commented very favourably on the classrooms and wished they would always be kept clean and tidy.

At School A, no major refurbishments were carried out. Rather, the emphasis has been on changing the learning ethos by displaying pupils' work and making classrooms lively and interactive. There is now a greater sense of belonging and pride among students.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

This is the last of the activities to help you think about what in these examples is similar to your experience, what is different and what is important in your context.

ACTIVITY Premises

What is similar?

What is different?

What are the most important issues in your context?

ACTIVITY 3.2.7

ACTIVITY Other systems, structures and processes

Finally, if you have identified any other important cross-school systems, structures or processes, write notes describing them and saying why they are important.

ACTIVITY 3.2.9

Now you have identified the relevant cross-school systems, structures and processes, think about possible action for change and the first steps needed.

In the light of Topic 3.1 School ethos we suggest that the first thing to do is to think about whether these systems, structures and processes should be included in your gender analysis. Look back at Activity 3.1.3 on gender analysis and ask the why? what? how? questions about them.

Second, add the relevant items to Activity 3.1.4 on school gender policy, if they're not already on it.

Third, think about the potential for using action research as a technique both for finding out more about exactly what's going on, and then for making and evaluating changes. Topic 5.1 looks in more detail at what action research is, how to undertake an action research project and how it can be used at whole school, classroom or individual practitioner level.

At this point, look through Topic 5.1 to get a better idea of the potential of action research.

ACTIVITY Opportunities for action research

Highlight from your provisional school gender policy gender list from Activity 3.1.4 three issues that seem to you to offer opportunities for action research.

1

2

3

Any others?

ACTIVITY 3.2.10

Review

Take this chance to review what you have covered in this topic. Look again at the objectives at the beginning and at your answers to the activities.

Now, at the end of this topic, you should be better able to:

- Identify the main cross-school systems, structures and processes in your school that can affect gender equality
- Plan first steps to tackle the issues, especially including them in plans for gender analysis and a whole school gender policy
- Start thinking about how action research might be used to address these issues

Topic 3.3 Staff development

Who are the players in developing a gender-friendly ethos and making whole school changes? As you saw when thinking about school ethos in Topic 3.1, all staff are involved – not just headteachers or managers and not just teachers. Building staff capability for a gender-responsive school is not only a matter of training. It also involves a collaborative effort to create awareness, challenge biases, acquire basic knowledge and develop skills and qualities.

This topic will help you to:

- Identify the learning and development needs of staff at different levels and in different roles
- Consider how action research can be used as an approach in staff development
- Outline what is involved in a staff development plan

The topic of staff development is central to the whole guide. It looks at the who? what? and how? questions of staff development to help you draw up a plan. It can be adapted in a number of ways. For example, it could be used by:

- a group working collaboratively to plan a programme of staff development
- an individual teacher to identify her or his own training needs and plan what is required
- a head or senior manager to plan staff development for the whole school.

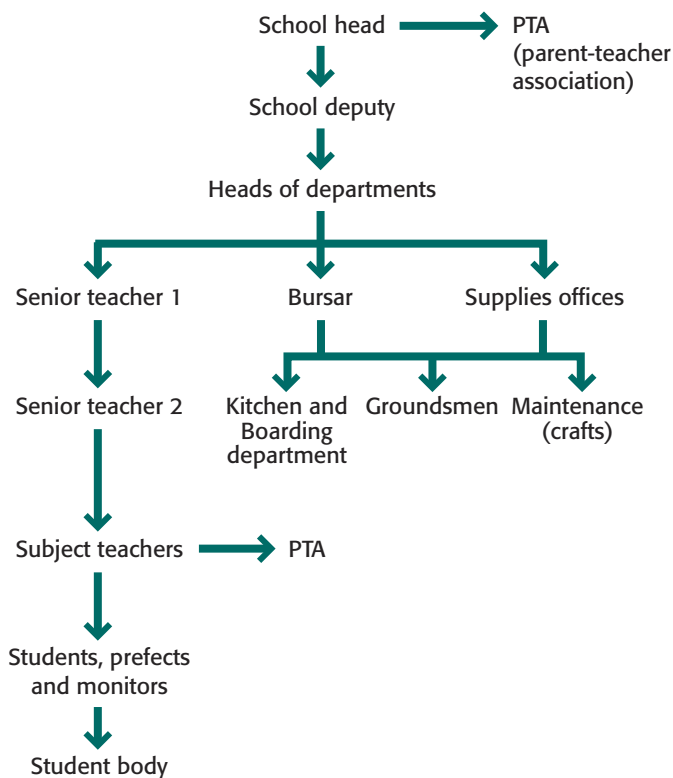
ACTIVITY Staff development: who?

Draft a rough diagram of staff in your school, stating their role and their main responsibilities.

ACTIVITY 3.3.1

If it's a small school you may have shown everyone individually; for a larger school perhaps you have grouped staff. As well as the head, the management team and teachers, have you remembered to include administrative and support staff?

Here is a rough diagram from one school in Botswana.

Staff structure

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

Now read these reflections on staff development activities. Note that these accounts are looking at the staff development processes, the reactions of participants and issues arising from the sessions. They do not give details here about the actual content of the sessions.

The first example shows the value of group discussion, but raises the question of whether teachers will actually try out new ideas. It also highlights the importance of the individual teacher's actions making a difference.

Workshop: Promoting gender equity in the classroom

Participants: heads of departments, members of school gender action team, teachers

Objective

- To provide teachers with specific, concrete ways to begin the process of building a gender-fair classroom (and hopefully school!)
- To encourage teachers to reflect on their classroom practice and examine their pedagogy
- To help teachers to begin this process and move toward more equitable education for all students

To summarise the programme, the workshop involved discussion of the topic: 'What can be done to change patterns of behaviour and reduce biases?' Various strategies were presented. Teachers discussed them, and read through and commented on detailed handouts suggesting practical solutions.

Evaluation of workshop

(Reflection on teachers' feedback by workshop facilitator)

The session managed to get the teachers together to reflect on their teaching practices. Through the discussions they were able to identify their own gender bias and ways of putting it right. They realise that their behaviour towards girls and boys is important in dealing with the issue of gender disparities in their classroom and school.

The mixed subject group work was well appreciated and brought about more fruitful discussions in terms of how different subject teachers approach their different subjects. It is hoped that it does not remain only a group activity to reflect on practices but that teachers go back to school and really try out some ideas/good practices learnt from the group work.

The session took place during the professional development time and this is after school. The time factor is always going to be an issue. Some remarks show that some of the teachers still do not see that the action has to come from them to make a difference and no-one else. They can only be made aware, but the actor remains the gender-sensitive individual. Some also do not truly see that the behaviour of students

boils down to what teachers do in class in terms of teaching strategies and classroom management/ control that takes into consideration the interest, experiences and differences in boys and girls.

It is clear from the points above that cultural background (way people have been raised) is deeply rooted and it will take a lot to bring about desired change in favour of gender equity. As mentioned, a lot of teachers are reinforcing gender stereotyping in the classroom/ school unconsciously. What is good to note is their consciousness that there is a difference between boys and girls and that equality in education does not necessarily mean only equality of access but also means equal access to opportunities, taking into consideration the differences in the boys' and girls' interests and experiences.

Overall the majority welcome more empowerment sessions, but preferably in the morning. They should also be provided with opportunity to share findings of their 'trailing out' in the classroom. Monitoring and mentoring remains two key strategies that school management needs to reinforce to see the impact of any changes that teachers trial out, either in action research projects or small attempts to address specific areas one at a time.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

The second example shows the importance of teachers' reflection, and that courage and honesty are required. It also shows how teachers can become leaders for other teachers.

Extract from headteacher's journal

Tuesday 30 September 2008

Held a whole school session with the teachers (including management). This was a session to get the participants to reflect on their classroom practices, examine their pedagogy and discuss possible solutions/ strategies to address their own gender bias. Participants were placed in mixed subject groups. The discussions were lively and very interesting. It really got the teachers to reflect

- on possible ways of changing their teaching methods/ approaches and interactions with the students
- on their attitude in relation to gender issues, which was found it to be an eye-opener

One teacher was brave enough to admit that the session made him/her aware that "there are a lot of things that I am actually doing that are gender biased, e.g. tone of voice to boys/girls and body language".

Questions to ask remain whether the teachers will really feel concerned enough to address these findings and apply the reflections for the better in their classroom.

Tuesday 7 October 2008

The four teachers who showed interest in conducting action research in their classroom shared their project with the rest of the staff during the professional development session. The four projects are looking into (i) students' learning styles/ modalities, (ii) learning manifested by change in behaviour, (iii) literature and gender and (iv) involvement of boys in environmental activities. They proved very, very interesting. The teachers really showed that they were concerned enough about the situation and thus the reason why they were doing something about it. Such a showcase was very important and useful to show other teachers that action research was not as complex as they might be thinking it was. It only required the interest and the response to a need.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

The third example illustrates the use of a focus group interview as a way of delivering staff development. It enables teachers to reflect, acknowledge difficulties and work towards lasting change.

Data-Sharing Gender Project

Focus group interview with eight members of staff (seven females and one male). All are involved in the project at S1 level.

[Note: The main points from teachers' answers for each question have been summarised for reflection.]

1 Were you concerned about the problem of gender before starting the project?

Teachers distinguish between being 'aware' and being 'concerned.' Being aware does not necessarily mean taking action. They 'know about it' but it 'does not affect them', they are not concerned by it. Being concerned means doing something about it. In that case just telling teachers about a problem is not enough. They need to be energised. How do you get teachers to feel concerned, to want to change their practice – to do something about it?

2 How were you sensitised to the problem?

Management proactive in this case, takes the lead, informs and gives data, problematises the issue, appeals for volunteers. What are effective strategies that management use? (Headteacher said in her interview that she personalises the issue – makes them think about their own sons' and daughters' futures and life chances – to push them into action, she shows statistics, persuades). Need to question management/ headteacher further.

3 How has involvement in the project changed your perceptions?

Teachers starting to question their own perceptions/ beliefs, not afraid to admit/ talk about their biases in public. Shows trust – good climate created to talk about these deep perceptions. How has this climate

been created? What does it take to make teachers feel comfortable to talk about these sensitive issues and admit they were being unfair to one group of pupils? How do you get teachers to confront their age-old beliefs, make them public?

4 Has your teaching changed? In what way?

Teachers more attentive/ reflecting on their practice, becoming more sensitive to boys/ individuals. Teachers trying out new strategies and getting results, putting in place interventions, comparing results, transferring the know-how to other classes.

5 How has your involvement in the project changed teacher-teacher relations?

Teachers very positive about sharing during implementation. Knowing what others are doing seems to encourage them to move forward. How has this climate been created? Inter-departmental/ cross-departmental? Explore further.

6 What changes have you noticed in school ethos?

Most changes noted are in terms of boys' attitude and behaviour. Is the change in boys' attitude a response to the greater attention/ sensitivity shown by teachers? To new teaching styles? What kinds of encouragement have boys been given? What strategies used? If want to replicate in other schools, need to tease out these strategies. Must read teachers' journals/ reflections, observe teachers interacting with pupils. One important change noted was in participation of teachers in social activities – all agreed important changes there. How has this been brought about?

7 What support have you received? What help did you receive from the headteacher?

School-based training important. What kind of school-based training? Content? Why does it work in this context?

8 How would you describe headteacher's style of leadership? How has it helped the project?

The word 'support' comes up often: Support important for teachers, but support that is targeted, listens, provides solutions, is involved in project, knows what teacher is trying to do. Teachers want support that is productive – unblocks them, helps them to move forward. Constant reminding, monitoring also important. Knowledgeable but does not impose – need to find right balance. How do you learn those skills? Any ideas?

9 Which interventions have been most successful? Why? What advice would you give to other schools that want to mainstream gender?

Teachers very positive about experience – not usual complaining – not discouraging at all. Realistic about challenges but positive about outcomes. Optimistic it will work. Is it because results are shared

frequently? Evidence of progress apparent? Collective process?

10 What have been the major challenges in redressing gender imbalances?

Teachers acknowledge difficulties but challenges in this case do not lead to inactivity – rather the search for solutions, question practices. Discover new areas to explore, e.g., content of exams. Do not mention challenges only in terms of physical resources but also question teachers’ skills/ practices. I haven’t heard this kind of language, especially at secondary school, for a long, long time!!!

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

As you see from these accounts, staff development does not simply mean training sessions ‘about’ gender. It needs to use processes which enable reflection and personal change. It covers a whole range of:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Knowledge and understanding, e.g., understanding basic gender concepts and terms, assessing the context in which the school is operating, identifying gender concerns.</p> | <p>Skills, e.g., practical skills, ability to develop practical solutions, broader capabilities like leadership, the ability to make and follow up changes.</p> | <p>Attitudes and values, e.g., gender awareness, challenging personal assumptions and bias, thinking about identities, sensitisation.</p> |
|--|--|--|

ACTIVITY Staff development: what?

From the above accounts and your own experience, list what you think staff development should cover.

Knowledge**Skills****Attitudes and values**

ACTIVITY 3.3.2

Here are some ideas from the Botswana school shown in the earlier diagram that indicate the issues of concern there, particularly issues relating to reproductive health education (pregnancies, HIV and AIDS, harassment and abuse) and guidance and counselling.

Ideas for staff development

- Encourage all staff to participate actively in these workshops
- Include gender topics in staff meetings and wellness meetings
- Get staff to examine personal views, e.g., in training programmes, questionnaires
- Check whether people understand phenomena such as gender, sexual harassment or stereotypes (using Activities 1.1.1, 1.2.2, etc. from the Action Guide)
- Advocate for gender topics in the curriculum e.g., in moral education, music, science
- Set out procedures that should be followed when dealing with issues such as pregnancies, HIV and AIDS, harassment and abuse
- Explain guidance and counselling referrals, together with referral to relevant offices such as social workers, police, etc.
- Give training in skills such as advocacy and presentation

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

The next activity asks you to start work on an overall learning needs analysis. Here is an example:

| | Attitudes and values gender awareness, challenging assumptions and bias, thinking about identities, sensitisation | Knowledge and understanding basic gender concepts and terms, assessing context, identifying gender concerns | Skills practical skills, developing practical solutions, leadership skills, change management | How? | When? | Who? |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|------|-------|------|
| Head | | | | | | |
| Management team | | | | | | |
| Heads of department | | | | | | |
| Teachers | | | | | | |
| Teaching assistants | | | | | | |
| Admin. staff | | | | | | |
| Support staff | | | | | | |
| Domestic staff | | | | | | |

ACTIVITY Staff development: needs analysis

Prepare a grid like the one on the previous page; adapt it for your needs, depending on the size and type of your school.

Fill in what you think staff development should cover (drawing on your Activity 3.3.2):

- attitudes and values
- knowledge and understanding
- skills

Then show which individuals/ groups need which topics.

Leave the how? when? who? columns empty for now.

ACTIVITY 3.3.3

At the moment this is just a starter exercise. The next steps towards a fuller needs analysis will include things like:

- clarifying aims and outcomes for school as a whole
- clarifying aims and outcomes for individuals
- discussing learning needs, expectations and prior learning with participants

Note: Unit 4 raises many more topics for staff development.

Traditional training is usually taken to mean initial teacher training, in-service training and formal continuing professional development. However, staff development on gender involves a whole school approach and far-reaching change. For this you need a wider repertoire of approaches:

- Group learning and collaborative sessions involving all staff or staff across sectors and levels.
- Reflection to help staff identify their own, colleagues' or the school's attitudes; this can be challenging and confrontational
- Personal development to develop qualities of leadership, risk-taking and change management
- Ongoing monitoring and follow up. Changes in attitude do not happen in a single session, but need to follow through into changes in practice and behaviour
- Ongoing support through networking and collaboration.

The approaches outlined in Unit 5 can be used as part of staff development. In particular, action research provides a process for learning and developing through taking stock, planning, acting and reflecting. It can be used by individual teachers for specific issues or collaboratively by a group in a school. (See Topic 5.1 for further details.)

For the last activity in this topic, we suggest you continue your work to draft an outline staff development programme.

ACTIVITY **Staff development: how, when and who?**

Using the grid you drew up for Activity 3.3.3,
Prioritise your topics

Under how? Note possible methods to meet these learning needs

Under when? Note possible timing.

Under who? Note who can provide the training.

Start thinking about the funding implications if you need to.

This topic has provided just an introduction to the need for staff development and its importance in working to create a gender-responsive school. Developing a more complete plan will take longer and involve discussion with everyone involved.

Review

Take this chance to review what you have covered in this topic. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- Identify the staff development needs in your school
- Learn from examples from other schools
- Draft an outline staff development plan as part of a whole school gender policy or an individual learning plan

Topic 3.4 Involving the wider community

Reflecting on the national education context in Topic 2.2, you looked at factors at national level that help or hinder the action schools can take. Closer at hand, the local community also has a part to play, and involving it in the school's efforts is important.

This topic will help you to:

- Explain why it is important to involve the wider community, especially parents
- Identify ways of doing this

First, what is meant by the local or wider community? Think quickly how each of these groups can help or hinder your school's aim of becoming more gender-responsive.

| ACTIVITY Help or hinder? Local community | |
|---|-------------|
| Can help? | Can hinder? |
| Parents and families | |
| School governors | |
| Sponsors/ donors | |
| Local organisations: NGOs and community organisations | |
| Local businesses and employers | |
| Local religious groups and leaders | |

ACTIVITY 3.4.1

Here are some examples illustrating how the wider community can help or block efforts. They show how important it is to win over other stakeholders.

The first examples, from Mozambique and Pakistan, show how parental attitudes and indifference can hinder girls' education.

Low value for schooling

Secondary School B is largely composed of students who live in a rural area of Mozambique.

In this environment there are few parents who think of school as an agent of change in the lives of students and the community, especially in respect of girls. Below are the main characteristics of the community the school serves:

- 1 Low value given to school
- 2 Tension between traditional and formal education
- 3 High level of poverty
- 4 Early marriages
- 5 Students suffering from lack of confidence and with low level of self-esteem

In the community of this district the population sees education as something addressed to boys more than girls. They believe that boys are those who will guarantee the future of the family. Girls are supposed to go to school in order to learn the Portuguese language while they wait for their opportunity to get married and have their own families.

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

Parents' indifference

The data revealed parents' indifference towards their daughters' schooling. Most were concerned with these girls getting through the grade 10 public examination to earn their secondary school certificate and were less interested in whether the girls had quality learning opportunities in the school.

Students' absenteeism was a grave issue facing schools, and teachers and the principal saw this as rooted in the low value given to girls' education by their parents. A family affair (wedding or funeral), sickness of a family member or some pressure of studies in school are frequently observed as excuses for sometimes a week-long absence from school. The teachers also reported pressure from parents in response to teachers' attempts to take any disciplinary actions.

The interview data with the principal, teachers and students revealed that parents' attitude towards girls' education was constrained by the cultural norm of early marriages and female status in patriarchal society. This attitude is reflected in parents' indifference towards teachers' concerns about these girls' education. Girls are generally engaged in

household chores and their spare time is kept for watching television, which is present in every village household. Poverty is yet another constraint that apparently hinders girls' education. However, parents' indifference seems the only reason for girls' inability to concentrate on education. The value of girls' education for these parents needs to be further explored.

[PAKISTAN GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

By contrast the next example from Malaysia illustrates higher expectations and support from parents, though in two of the schools discussed it was not easy to develop partnerships with parents. It is interesting to note that though boys' underachievement is an issue in Malaysia, traditional household roles for girls and boys have not changed.

Parental expectations

There was a strong expectation from the students that they would get support and guidance from their parents, especially to help them plan their studies. Most of the girls showed confidence in their parents' support. For the boys in School B and C, their parents expected them to help in the paddy fields, be hard working, and help in the shop and vegetable farms. The male students from School D did not have to divide their schoolwork with helping their families. They expressed that there were high expectations from teachers and parents to excel in their studies and to move on to further studies.

Most of the students said they would like to have better communication with their parents. About 85 per cent of the girls said that they prefer to talk to their mothers rather than their fathers as the latter do not seem to have time or showed lack of understanding.

Among the girls, there was high expectation for them to do housework after or before completion of school homework. About 20 of the girls said they had to do a lot of housework. They all said it in unison: '...sweeping, looking after younger brothers and sisters, washing the plates left in the sink by our brothers – we hate that!' The girls were resentful that there was so much favouritism towards their brothers. They all seem to refer to males as *lelaki* (the boys) even though they were their brothers. '...the boys...they seem to get everything they want' '...the boys get more than me'.

Only two girls who had no male siblings said that they were not discriminated against. Five girls were of the opinion that if they do get married, they will teach the boys to be more responsible and make them do housework. However, most of the girls accepted the 'state of affairs' as given, as the roles are 'girls' work'. Even though they are unhappy, they do not raise this with their parents. It appears that they have accepted that such chores and relationships cannot be changed.

Most of the boys replied that they do not do much housework. Some of the boys giggled and said: ‘...itu kerja perempuan (it’s girls’ work)’. Others said: ‘My mother does all the work.’ Only two boys in School B said that they do help to wash the plates, clean the shoes and iron their own clothes. In School D, some of the boys said that they do housework but sheepishly admitted that they only do it occasionally. In general, the boys have left housework and serving to their sisters and mothers.

Parents’ participation

Efforts were also made to reach out to the parents through parent-teacher associations. The headmistress of School A was pleased with the school’s relationship with the parents. They ‘*tunduk macam Jepun*’ (bow to us like the Japanese). She lamented that at her former school, she did not have the same support from the parents. Some of the parents are fishermen and tend to be less educated. They speak in a coarse manner to their children. When they speak with the teachers, they do not seem to show much respect. Parents from lower income groups do not give much self-esteem to their children and they tend to scold them often. Therefore, their children lose confidence and interest in their studies. This could be one of the reasons for lower performance in rural schools.

School B and C do try to make an effort to foster relationships with the parents and the communities, but they said that it had not been an easy task. The parents were not interested. When the parents were approached by the teachers regarding their children’s academic progress, they were negative and ‘did not care’.

[MALAYSIA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The last example from Samoa shows, on the one hand, the influence of religious bodies and, on the other, the impact of a centralised administration. It also stresses the domination of male viewpoints given the make-up of local school committees.

Governing bodies

The four schools in the study included two government schools and two mission schools. The government schools were both rural and located at opposite ends of the island of Upolu while the mission schools were an urban all-girls school and a semi-urban co-educational school.

School systems exist in a context that is governed by important economic, social and cultural factors.

Two of the schools have obvious religious contexts. One is a co-educational Methodist college while the other is a Congregational girls’ college. Both are governed by Education Boards that are made up almost entirely of male members who are part of the structure of administration of their church. The school boards are accountable to the church conferences that meet annually: the *Koneferenisi* for the Methodists and

the *Fono Tele* for the Congregationalists. Church teaching about female and male roles tends to follow the conservative perceptions found in the Bible. Church school administrators therefore do not have a perception of gender as an issue in the schools. However, practice shows that there is still a tendency to regard females and things female to be of lesser importance than males and what is considered to be the domain of males. This is shown by the fact that the only female single-sex school run by the Methodists has been closed and the only such school run by the Congregationalists has an uncertain future. The one thriving girl's school is that run by the Catholic Church. This has been mainly due to the constant and vigorous support provided by the old girls of the school over the years.

The government school system, however, is different. Government school control and administration is highly centralised in the Ministry of Education, which assigns teachers to schools and provides educational policy and practice as well as systems of supervision and discipline.

In Samoa the schools' physical facilities are provided and owned by the community. Governance of the school is provided mainly by the local school committee in which government agents such as the school principal and the school review officer are also represented. The local school committees characteristically comprise all male members, so that school governance tended to be dominated by male viewpoints and ways of doing things.

[SAMOA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Do these examples reflect any of your experiences of involving the wider community? In what ways? The following key points suggest some openings and challenges.

Key points

Parents can help by becoming more gender-aware and understanding what the school is trying to achieve. This may conflict with their own values and deep-seated ideas about family and the different roles of boys and girls. But winning their support can open up many opportunities.

Parental decisions

Parental decisions are influenced by community norms on appropriate gender roles and behaviours, but they are also increasingly influenced by perceptions of quality and the outcomes associated with schools. Parental decisions to educate girls may well be influenced by local norms regarding the appropriate age of marriage and the specific economic and other considerations that circumscribe the family's choices.

Where parents are willing to make the tentative trade-off between investing in girls' education at the risk of exposing them to new non-traditional influences, these spaces offer opportunities to promote new

ideas and ways of thinking about gender equality.

Source: Subrahmanian, R (2007) *Gender in Primary and Secondary Education: A Handbook for Policy-makers and Other Stakeholders*, New Gender Mainstreaming Series on Development Issues, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, p. 93.

School governors and people involved in supporting/ funding a school need to understand what the school is trying to achieve. Then they can back it up through their actions and decisions. But again, this may mean taking on opposing interests entrenched in traditional thinking or prejudice.

Local community organisations and NGOs can help by understanding the school's aims and supporting them. If they are doing related work, they might offer practical help with communications and sharing experiences, lobbying and advocacy, encouraging community participation, involving other groups and making links with other activities e.g., adult literacy and learning. They might provide the skills and capacity to help with monitoring and budgeting. Similarly local businesses and employers might offer help and support in relation to career and work-related issues.

Traditional and religious leaders can be advocates for change or can obstruct efforts. It is important to gain their trust and support. They can play an important part in creating awareness and support for gender equality.

In Activity 3.4.1 you thought about how the wider community can help or hinder. The question now is how to involve them. Here are some ideas.

- Sessions to raise awareness of gender issues and to question stereotypes and ingrained beliefs (e.g., by adapting activities from Units 1 and 2)
- Participatory activities to involve others in the work of the school
- Initiatives to encourage support from local stakeholders, e.g., NGOs, employers

For parents specifically:

- Involving them in activities like the governing body or a parent-teacher association (PTA)
- Involving them in children's work and progress
- Strengthening home-school links so that home reinforces the work of the school.

Here is an example from India of a community seminar to involve parents and the community.

Community Seminars

Experience of implementing Social Learning Package (SLP) in India
(see Appendix III for details)

When the first implementation of the SLP started in Udaan in India, no intervention was planned for the parents or community other than

mobilising them to enrol their daughters. However, it was realised that it is important to involve them for the twin purposes of

- (i) making them aware what SLP aims to do, and
- (ii) creating their readiness and support to accept behaviour/attitude change in their daughters.

This led to the evolution of the community seminar. Here is an account of how it came about.

Once the SLC implementation started for the first batch, a major problem cropped up in the form of opposition from a section of parents regarding a particular practice being followed as part of the SLP. It concerned cleaning of toilets in the school. It had been decided that committees would be formed for different purposes including cleaning, and the girls in the cleaning committee would be responsible for cleaning the toilets also. The committees were to rotate so all children would get an opportunity to experience all kinds of responsibilities such as managing the library, managing sports materials, looking after food, and health. Teachers were also attached to the committees. The teacher attached to the cleaning committee was expected to join the toilet cleaning to act as a role model.

The girls came from mixed social backgrounds and the opposition came mainly from the parents of high caste girls. They were very uncomfortable with the fact that their daughters were being made to clean the toilets that were being used by Dalits – the so-called outcaste girls. They threatened to withdraw their girls from school if the practice continued. This was an unforeseen problem. The teachers were also not very comfortable doing this act and favoured choosing the option of having a paid sweeper for the purpose.

The teachers engaged in detailed discussions regarding the importance and significance of this practice and the need for developing a strategy to deal with parental opposition. The teachers were ultimately convinced, and the idea of the community seminar emerged. The issue was discussed at great length in the first community seminar and the parents were also convinced of the necessity of the practice.

Once the idea of the community seminar emerged, it did not remain confined to discussions about the philosophy of the SLP alone. It was used to share the entire pedagogical approach and students' progress, and to change the community's attitude towards issues such as girls' education and gender equality. It became clear that the comments, concerns and suggestions of parents were critical in making school experiences a dynamic process of change for girls. The community seminar brought the local management, teachers, parents and children to a common platform. It also acted as a medium for understanding the expectations of parents from this schooling, their aspirations for their daughters, the barriers they faced and perceptions regarding the changes they were witnessing in the girls.

[INDIA SOCIAL LEARNING PACKAGE]

Make notes about what your school can do to involve parents in particular as well as other members of the wider community in general. Think about the purpose of each activity or initiative and what it is intended to achieve.

| ACTIVITY How to involve the wider community | |
|--|---------|
| Proposed activity | Purpose |
| Parents and families | |
| | |
| School governors | |
| | |
| Sponsors/ donors | |
| | |
| Local organisations: NGOs and community organisations | |
| | |
| Local businesses and employers | |
| | |
| Local religious groups and leaders | |
| | |

ACTIVITY 3.4.2

The kinds of things you may have thought of are parents' evenings, open days, organised visits or public meetings. You can add to this activity as you carry on working on the Action Guide and include it in the school gender policy.

Review

Take this chance to review what you have covered in this topic. Look again at the objectives at the beginning and at your answers to the activities.

Now that you have completed this topic, you should be better able to:

- Explain why it's important to involve the wider community, especially parents and families
- Plan activities to do this

Topic 3.5 School gender policy

All aspects of the whole school approach this unit has covered – school ethos, across the school structures, systems and processes, staff development, reaching the wider community – come together in a school gender policy. So too do the issues that you will cover in Unit 4 to do with teaching and learning.

This topic will help you to:

- Outline a school gender policy
- Outline a school gender action plan

First, what do we mean by a school gender policy – and why have a policy?

Most schools have written plans and policies that set out their aims and values and describe the way they operate. Perhaps your school has plans and policies on things like admissions, teacher recruitment, premises, learning or special educational needs. By adding a gender policy to these, the school shows that it thinks gender is an important issue and is committed to taking it into account in all aspects of school life. On the other hand, your school may not have well-articulated policies. In that case, why not make a beginning by drafting a gender policy? Once you have this, you can extend it later and add other aspects too.

To start this topic, here is a short activity as a kind of progress check.

ACTIVITY What stage are you at?

Look at the following statements. Tick the one that best describes your school's position on a gender policy.

- 1 We have not considered how gender could be part of our school policy
- 2 We have considered gender as an element of our school policy, but have taken no action
- 3 There is no stated policy, but certain acts reflect the unstated policy
- 4 Gender is part of the school policy, but few understand it or use it as a guide to decision-making
- 5 Gender is at the heart of the school policy and all school staff and pupils understand it
- 6 Gender drives school policy and the parents and community understand it

ACTIVITY 3.5.1

- If you are at stage 5 or 6, congratulations. But you can still work through this topic and see if there is room for development.
- If you are at stage 1, 2, 3 or 4, this topic will help you move forward. Work to develop a policy is also a useful way of raising awareness and involving people.

So who needs to contribute to your school's gender policy?

In addition to the headteacher and senior management, all staff should be involved in developing the policy. So should people like governors, volunteers, parents and families. Involving pupils as well will raise their awareness and commitment.

You may consider setting up a gender action team to take the lead, as in these two examples from the Seychelles and India Action Projects.

Terms of reference for the School Gender Action Team (SGAT)

The School Gender Action Team will:

- Guide, coordinate and/or assist in the implementation of the gender action plans at school level
- Guide, coordinate/or and assist in the monitoring and evaluation processes
- Ensure systematic reporting through levels (subject/ class teachers/ assistant class teachers) and departmental meetings
- Assist in the production of gender-sensitive training and materials
- Ensure that the school shares good practices and good lessons by networking with the feeder schools and other secondary schools
- Ensure dissemination of data to parents/ students/ teachers and Ministry's GAT
- Give publicity to the project at school level

Frequency of meetings

The SGAT will meet once every fortnight to

- Share progress in the implementation of the action plans
- Prepare capacity-building activities for teachers, students and parents
- Prepare reports as required

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

Review progress on Gender Action Plans

Each school team of teachers presented the progress made on Gender Action Plans. Some action that has been initiated in the schools includes: changes in morning assembly, girls' participation in sports activities and introducing gender balance in school committees, students' committees and so on.

It was suggested that that gender sensitisation sessions be conducted for all the teachers in the four schools, as some teachers were sceptical/cynical about the kind of activities being carried out under the Action Gender Project.

One critical area, which continues to be a challenge in all four schools, is maintenance of clean toilets. The principals were of the view that even though they try to see that the toilets are clean it continues to be a problem.

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

So what does a gender policy cover? It may cover topics such as:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| admissions | enrolment |
| recruitment | retention |
| course placement | achievement |
| staff promotion | curriculum |
| sexual harassment | |

- A school gender policy can be a simple statement, setting out the areas the policy will cover
- It can be a more formal policy, which might include legislative and detailed responsibilities
- Above all it should address the key issues of concern for your context.

Here are some possible headings.

Headings for school gender policy

School context

Statement of commitment/ key values

Aspects covered e.g.:

School ethos

Gender discrimination

Gender analysis

Consultation

Monitoring to remove all discrimination

Monitoring teaching and learning for impact on gender equality

Admissions and attendance

Staff recruitment and professional development

Action plan with objectives and actions

Partnership with parents and communities

Roles and responsibilities

Reviewing the policy

[based on Arden Primary School Birmingham UK Gender Equality Policy <http://www.arden.bham.sch.uk/pdfs/policy-gender.pdf>]

The next activity is not just aimed at a principal or senior manager. Anyone at any level can have a go at drafting, to encourage consultation and discussion

ACTIVITY Policy headings

From your work so far, draft possible headings for your school gender policy.

ACTIVITY 3.5.2

Well done for completing this activity, which is an important step towards a more gender-responsive school. You can come back to this later – for example, after further consultations or after you’ve thought about Unit 4 and 5 topics.

In doing this activity, perhaps you thought, ‘It’s all very well to write a policy on paper, but how do you put policy into practice? How do you turn commitments into changes that feed through into the daily life of a school?’

Turning ideas into action needs to be a collaborative effort. It cannot be imposed. As well as thinking what actions to take, think about an inclusive process to develop and sustain it – including the approaches and tools from Unit 5.

Here is part of one school’s gender action plan, showing the actions needed to carry it out. This is for one of the schools in the Seychelles Action Project – a small co-ed school of around 150 students with 40 staff.

This example just covers one priority of the action plan: creating ‘Equal access and opportunity for optimum achievement’. As you will see, the action plan first defines the priority, target and success criteria. It then gives details of the actions/ tasks involved, the people responsible, resources needed, staff development, timescale and costing.

Look through the example and see if it suggests a way you could develop an action plan.

From a school gender action plan
SECONDARY SCHOOL B GENDER ACTION TEAM (SGAT) ACTION PLAN 3:
Publication (amended date) April 2008

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Priority | Equal access and opportunity for optimum achievement | |
| Target | To provide and create favourable conditions for students to achieve to their optimum ability and career aspirations | |
| Success criteria | 1. Networking in school is well established 2. Gender-awareness sessions have been successfully completed | |
| Actions/Tasks | Person responsible | Resources |
| Sharing data from the gender study and sharing recommendations/reasons with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Students • Teachers | SGAT GAT | Study data from research study and data for this school |
| Raising students' expectations on their roles vis-à-vis their learning | Heads of year (HOYs) Heads of department (HODs) | Guidelines |
| Sessions for students on *Communication skills *Assertiveness – to raise concerns *Target Setting – expectations/suggestions/asking questions | HOYs HODs | Guidelines |
| Empower teachers to take up the challenge of allowing students to become active partners in their own learning (at classroom level) | HODs HOYs | Guidelines |
| Empower students to be more aware of gender issues and to stimulate equal participation of girls and boys | HODs HOYs | Guidelines |
| Hold gender-awareness session for parents/teachers T1 | SGAT GAT | Gender training materials/handouts |
| Hold gender-awareness session for parents/teachers T2 | SGAT GAT | Gender training materials/handouts |
| Hold gender-awareness session for parents/teachers T3 | SGAT GAT | Gender training materials/handouts |
| Set up special projects for students with severe learning difficulties (non-readers) [SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT] | Headteacher SGAT | Data on students who needs special project |

| Staff development | Timescale | Costing | |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | 13/03/08 22/01/08 | A4 paper LCD Projector Lap top | Newsprint Blu-tack Markers |
| Departmental sessions with teachers | 14/07/08 to 18/07/08 | A4 paper LCD Projector Lap top | Newsprint Blu-tack Markers |
| Departmental sessions with teachers | 14/07/08 to 18/07/08 | A4 paper LCD Projector Lap top | Newsprint Blu-tack Markers |
| | 14/07/08 to 18/07/08 | A4 paper LCD Projector Lap top | Newsprint Blu-tack Markers |
| Departmental sessions with teachers | On going | A4 paper | |
| | 13/03/08 | A4 paper LCD Projector Lap top | Newsprint Blu-tack Markers |
| | 15/07/08 | A4 paper LCD Projector Lap top | Newsprint Blu-tack Markers |
| | Mid Term 3 | A4 paper LCD Projector Lap top | Newsprint Blu-tack Markers |
| Sessions with different groups (SGAT/HoDs/HoYs) | 10/06/08 | A4 paper LCD Projector Lap top | Newsprint Blu-tack Markers |

ACTIVITY Policy action plan

When you have looked at the example, and thought about what is involved, start drafting an action plan, identifying actions needed to turn policy statements into practice.

Here is one suggested framework based on the Seychelles example. Adapt it to suit, or follow the format your school already uses for action plans.

| Priority | Target | Success criteria | Action | Tasks | Person responsible | Resources | Staff development | Timescale | Costs |
|----------|--------|------------------|--------|-------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

ACTIVITY 3.5.3

Again this activity is an important step in defining and developing what needs to be done to create a more gender-responsive school.

Finally think about your next steps to make progress towards developing a school gender policy and action plan.

ACTIVITY Next steps

List three things to do in the next week to move forward your school gender policy and action plan.

1

2

3

ACTIVITY 3.5.4

You may perhaps have thought of some simple things like discuss with colleagues, set date for consultation meeting or allocate resources. It may be a good idea to add them to your diary or 'to do' list to make sure they happen.

Review

Take this chance to review what you have covered in this topic (and unit). Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- Explain the purpose of a school gender policy
- Outline policy headings
- Outline a gender action plan
- Plan your next steps

UNIT 4 Teaching and learning

This unit focuses on individual teachers and their students. What goes on in a classroom links both to a whole school approach and the wider context. There is always an interplay between them – changes in one area influence and are influenced by changes in another.

- The unit looks at ways of becoming more gender-responsive through approaches to teaching and learning that can lead to changes in ideas, attitudes and gender identities
- It provides practical ideas about how to ‘do things differently’ drawn from the experiences of other teachers
- It leads up to an action plan to follow up your learning in this unit

You can work through this unit in a variety of ways. Teachers may want to work through it on their own or collaboratively. The unit can provide an outline for a training programme. A headteacher or senior manager can use the topics to think about teaching and learning as part of a whole school approach.

Topic 4.1 Entry points

What are the issues in your classroom and your work as a teacher?

This topic will help you:

- Describe and analyse gender issues in your classroom
- Identify key themes in accounts of teachers’ situations

Topic 4.2 Curriculum

We have noted the importance of the curriculum. What does this mean in the classroom? This topic will help you to:

- Explain how curriculum can affect gender equality in the classroom
- Identify actions you could take in your own classroom and changes calling for a whole school approach.

Topic 4.3 Classroom dynamics

By dynamics we mean the relationships between children and teachers and also practical and physical arrangements. This topic will help you to:

- Explain how classroom dynamics can affect gender equality
- Identify actions to take in your own classroom and changes calling for a whole school approach.

Topic 4.4 Underachievement

In this topic we explore further the whole question of underachievement, of both boys and girls. This topic will help you to:

- Explain what you understand by underachievement
- Analyse examples of underachievement in your context
- Plan ways of tackling underachievement

Topic 4.5 Teaching and learning for change

Becoming more gender-responsive, calls not only for technical and practical changes, but also for a different approach to teaching and learning. This topic will help you to:

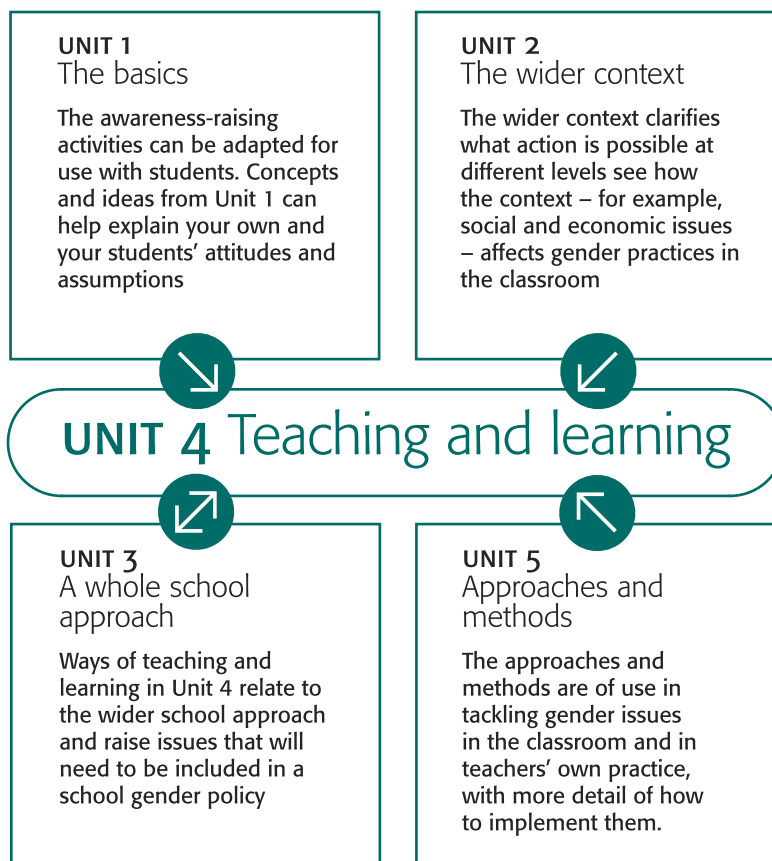
- Identify ways of teaching and learning to enable changes in ideas, attitudes and identities
- Plan different approaches to teaching and learning

Topic 4.6 Making changes last

After working through this unit you may be inspired with ideas about how you might do things differently. But how can you make these changes, and how can you make them stick? This topic will help you to:

- Identify your challenges and opportunities for making changes
- Devise ways of making them part of a whole school approach
- See how the action research approach can empower you
- Draw up a personal action plan

Links



Topic 4.1 Entry points

We start by asking you to build up a picture of what is actually going on. What are the issues in your classroom and your work as a teacher?

This topic will help you to:

- Describe and analyse gender issues in your classroom
- Identify key themes in accounts of teachers' situations

To start with, here's an activity to reflect on your experiences as a teacher.

Describe your own classroom or a day in your life as a teacher. Try to build up a full and rich picture of what it's like. If you work with several classes or groups, choose the one that seems to you most typical.

For this activity you don't have to do a formal written account. You could draw picture or a diagram showing what goes on. You could do a mind map or spidergram. Write if you want to. Whatever format you choose, describe the class – what it's like, practical arrangements and physical environment; the pupils – how many boys and girls, how they behave, the relationships and dynamics; and your place in the classroom – for example, your physical position and your relationship to the pupils, your role, style and behaviour.

For example, what do you see each morning? Try to be specific and personal rather than making generalisations.

ACTIVITY Teacher's reflection

If you need to, take a separate sheet of paper for your description or picture. If you are writing the description, aim to write 250-300 words. If drawing or doing a diagram, keep it to one page.

Do your description quickly, without analysing too much.

ACTIVITY 4.1.1

We hope you enjoyed that exercise. It can be a good way of bringing to light things you may take for granted.

Now read these accounts of other teachers' experiences and classroom situations. As you read, make notes or underline key themes. Compare the accounts with your own experiences.

The first examples describe classroom conditions and how teachers respond in three Mozambique secondary schools.

Teachers' reflections from Mozambique

Teacher 1

In the classroom I chose for the classroom description there are no rigid criteria (defined by the school headteacher) to establish the way students sit. In these cases students sit based on friendship relations, interests, affinity. Occasionally I reorder students according to their affinities and behaviour. Students' desks are organised in lines and they sit in pairs.

On those days when the students do group activities, desks are organised according to the number composing each group (which varies from 6 to 8). Group formation does not obey a specific rule or rules either. I give the student the opportunity to choose her/his own group, but sometimes I interfere in order to establish gender balance.

In circumstances where I have given homework previously, classes begin with homework correction. I select students to go to the blackboard insisting on both girls and boys and not just those students who show interest in collaborating spontaneously.

Teacher 2

On my first working day as a teacher I was given a 6th grade class. It was a co-educational school.

Once my activity was supposed to happen outside the classroom. I noticed while it was taking place that when students organised themselves in groups, boys placed themselves at the front, while girls formed their own group. I could easily see that boys demonstrated self-confidence while girls were, apparently, showing despair during the activities. I felt I needed to encourage girls when they showed concern because they did not seem to be used to that type of activity.

In my view girls need more attention than boys when confronted with a new situation that exposes them to others.

In an activity based on trial and error, I notice that usually girls get confused and adopt a defensive attitude. I can also observe that despite the fact that there are more girls than boys, they let themselves be guided by boys.

Teacher 3

I begin the class with a general welcome, followed by revision of the contents of the previous class and homework correction. After this I start to explain new content, creating an environment of interaction with the students. I finish the class with a short evaluation.

Boys usually don't volunteer to do homework correction or to go to the blackboard to do exercises. I try to create the necessary conditions in order to make girls participate.

Classroom dynamics depend on the classroom organisation. The classrooms I work in have desks meant for 50 to 60 students but now accommodate 125, many of them sitting on the floor. This necessarily affects some aspects in classroom dynamics, such as my control of the students. This is limited due to the lack of space inside the classroom for me to move around and compromises the process of teaching and learning.

As a teacher I notice that girls' participation is still weak. It is my task to develop the necessary mechanisms to improve girl's participation.

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

The second example is a step-by-step account of classroom practice. It does not specifically address gender issues, but it suggests that a detailed observation of what actually happens in a classroom could be used as a starting point to analyse such things as dynamics, relationships, and teaching and learning styles.

Teachers' behaviour**English**

- 1 The teacher routinely articulates some housekeeping information in relation to students' work for internal assessment, homework and prescribed readers. Teacher routinely parades around face-to-face with students marking their homework.
- 2 The teacher randomly nominates students to give a brief description of their project rationale. Students get up one by one to do this.
- 3 The teacher re-emphasises important points to follow prior to nominating a few other students, maybe 4 or 5. Students who haven't had turns follow suit.
- 4 Shared reading of short story – the teacher nominates a student to begin reading 2–4 lines and the reading goes around the room until everyone has a turn (30 minutes of class).
- 5 In a brainstorming session, the teacher initiates an interaction pattern by a random selection of students to provide responses to her line of questions.

Mathematics

- 1 The teacher signals (non-verbally) to students not to talk and gets on with the work on the board. Girls do the task in uncertain slow

motion.

- 2 The teacher nominates a student to read out his/her answers to homework problems.
- 3 The teacher further demonstrates solving some complicated maths equation on the board, calling out for students to take part in the process.
- 4 The teacher calls out to continue with the rest of the problems in the textbook for the remaining class time and for homework.
- 5 The teacher goes around the room interacting with individual students, assisting and checking their progress.

[SAMOA GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The third examples give very personal accounts from the viewpoints of a teacher and student from the Trinidad and Tobago Action Project.

Reflections from a teacher and student

A teacher's viewpoint

Situated in the foothills is School A. Expectations are high among the teaching fraternity, and why not? Here we have a creative bunch of students who find novel ways of expressing themselves verbally and otherwise. It is not uncommon to be passing by a classroom and hear conversations that describe their exploits. Their language is usually colourful, and if you stay long enough, you would see actions and gestures that are commensurate with what is said. Those activities though, are the adventures of students who were sentenced here. Their days are spent dodging the Safety Officers and Deans who are yet to find equally creative ways to counter theirs.

There are others who believe school is a large baby-sitting facility. Informal conversations with them reveal that they 'don't like school' but they have to come because no one is at home to look after them, and 'my mother say she not leaving we home alone'. In spite of teachers' discomfort with the focus of the students, they spend their time counselling, guiding, chiding, scolding, empathising, reprimanding and loving these students.

At the school we compete with the groundsmen and women, who whack, pound, saw, drag and do all manner of physical labour, for a time to teach in relative silence. As far as the sights and scents go, at any time during the day one can get a strong 'whiff' of tobacco from the nearby cigarette factory, or the over-powering 'fragrance' of the garbage dumpster when being emptied can certainly nauseate you. The pile of rubble at the side or back of the school appears to be a permanent fixture. I hate to mention having to work in an environment so cramped for space that the assembly hall is shared with the driveway that carries one from the gateway to the muster point

cum play area cum car park. Do we have fun here? Do we enjoy our teaching experience? We manage, particularly when we are reminded that every setback is supposed to prepare us for something more worthwhile. We liaise with parents in an attempt to get them more involved in the learning experience of their children, but alas, they seem more wary than we are. We need a culture change.

A student's view-point

I hate school and I hate them teachers. They always 'jumbie-ing' [harassing] we.

Teachers always seem to be interfering with our games of cards or shilling throws or cell-phone conversations. In addition, why not allow us to wear our uniforms as we please? After all uniforms have nothing to do with learning. All yuh teachers should concentrate on teaching and doh bother with we. We know all yuh doing all you job but we like what we doing.

Yes, education important but we know a lot of people who did not finish school and they are making more money than you teachers. Anyway when I leave here I am going to meet my mother in America. My pardner here, he is getting everything he wants so he doesn't have to bother about school. The girls could get rich men to take care of them, so they are cool. Not all of them though. Some of them prefer to do hairdressing and fixing nails. You don't see their bags? Gel, powder, lip-gloss and combs; but school doesn't cater for that.

We don't really see the need for Spanish and science because we really not looking for any big work. We just want to survive. No, we cannot stay at home. Our parents say it is not safe and they are not leaving us at home alone. Look, I want to be successful but success does not have to mean books. Everybody cannot take books. Who could take it, that's good for them. I am not on any fighting scene. No, we are not on any fighting scene, I only want to survive. Yes, we only want to survive.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

Did you recognise aspects of your own experiences in these accounts? Did you respond more to the personal accounts or the more factual observations? Building up a picture of what actually goes on can help you observe and analyse all aspects of the situation.

Now look again at your own description with a more critical, analytical eye. Think about the issues raised by the examples. Think about what is going on in terms of gender. To do the next activity, look at your account, and answer 'yes' or 'no'. If you answer 'yes', then see if you can write short answers to the questions. For each question, ask too 'which boys?' and 'which girls?' rather than seeing them as uniform blocks.

ACTIVITY Analysis of reflection

From your reflection and in your experience:

Do any social issues affect boys and girls differently?
Yes/ No Which issues?

Do girls and boys see themselves differently?
Yes/ No In what ways?

Do classroom arrangements and relationships affect boys and girls differently? Yes/ No In what ways?

Do boys and girls have different levels of achievement?
Yes/ No What are the differences?

Do boys and girls relate differently to different subjects?
Yes/ No Which subjects?

Do they learn in different ways?
Yes/ No What are the differences?

Does the way you teach affect girls and boys differently?
Yes/ No How?

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Just try to understand exactly what is going on and why. For example, many teachers find on reflection that they have different expectations of boys and girls influenced perhaps by the kind of stereotypes discussed in Topic 1.2. In addition, classroom processes themselves are involved in creating the children's gender identities.

The main themes that emerge from these and other teachers' accounts, and perhaps too from your activities, are:

- Curriculum issues
- Classroom dynamics
- Children's perceptions of what it means to be a girl or boy and the different forms that masculine and feminine identity may take
- Underachievement
- Teaching and learning styles

The rest of this unit looks at these themes. Although they are discussed as separate topics, they are of course tightly connected in practice.

ACTIVITY **Prioritising**

Before carrying on with this unit, which of these themes are the most important in your context?

Prioritise them from 1 most important to 5 least important.

- Curriculum issues
- Classroom dynamics
- Children's own perceptions of what it means to be a girl or boy
- Underachievements
- Teaching and learning styles.

ACTIVITY 4.13

In trying to better understand and analyse what goes on in your classroom, there are two useful approaches covered in Unit 5.

- Action research. Your reflection on your practice is the first step in action research – understanding what is going on and what the issues are before taking action to make changes.
- Gender analysis. Your account of your classroom is a first step – as a description. You can carry your analysis further, adding more detail or quantitative data.

You may find it useful to look now at these topics in Unit 5 to see how these approaches can help before working through the rest of this unit.

Review

As in earlier units, at the end of each topic there is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of this topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- Build up a picture of gender issues in the context of your classroom
- Identify the main themes in teaching and learning that affect gender equality
- Analyse and reflect on your own experiences as the first steps to thinking about change

Topic 4.2 Curriculum

When what happens in the classroom is considered, the curriculum always emerges as a key theme.

This topic will help you to:

- Explain how the curriculum can affect gender equality in the classroom
- Identify actions that you could take in your own classroom and changes that call for a whole school approach

To recap from Topic 2.2 The national context, the word 'curriculum' in its broad sense is all the experiences that students undergo at school. It includes the official curriculum, the enacted curriculum (what is taught) and the hidden curriculum.

However, the word may be used more specifically to mean different things in different contexts. For example:

- A syllabus/ a body of knowledge
- A set of objectives or goals
- The process of teaching and learning
- A commitment to values, e.g., emancipation or transformation.

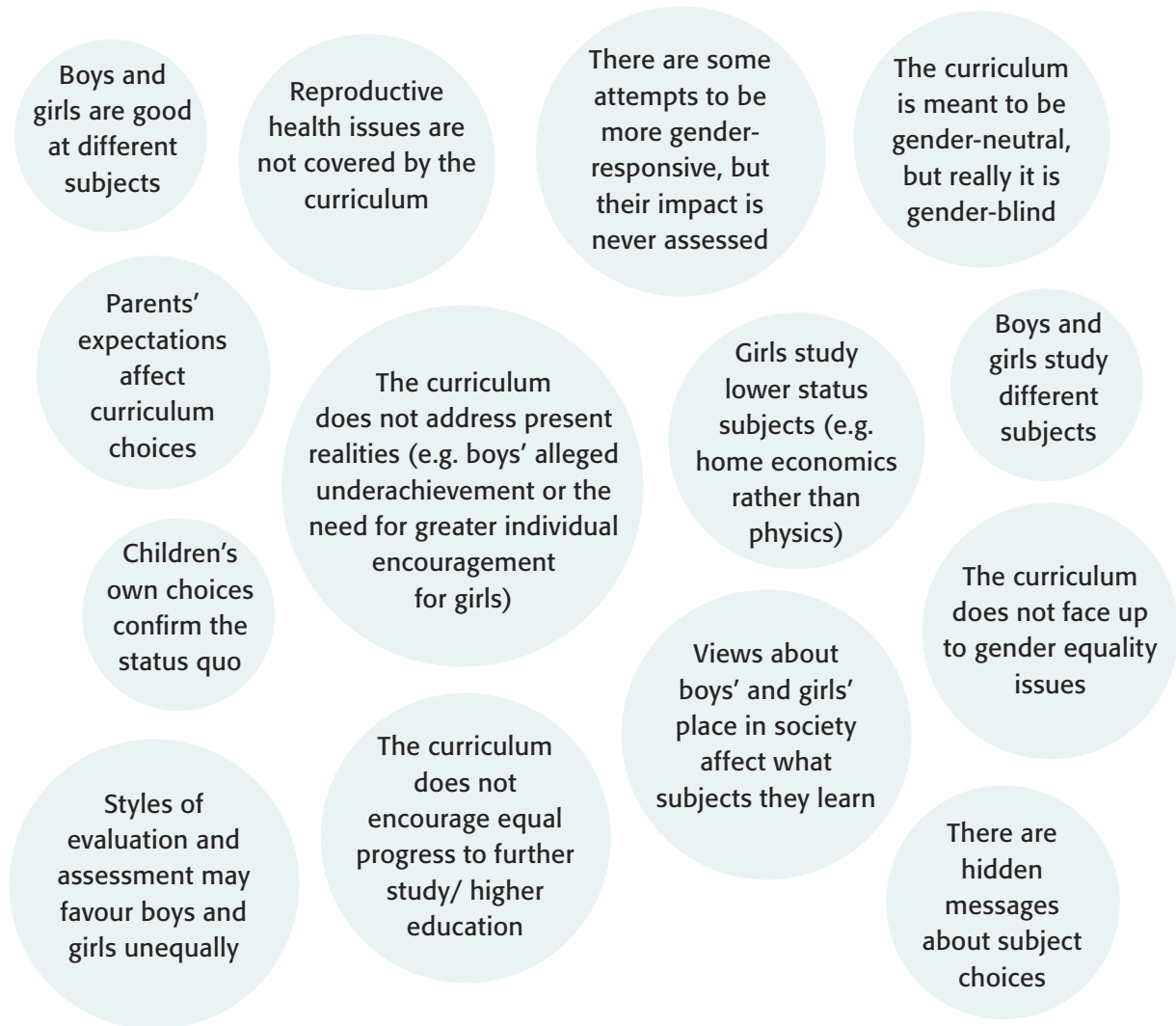
In this topic it is used mainly to describe the subjects taught or the courses of study available in a school. It covers the curriculum offered to students, the choices they make and curriculum content, including textbooks and materials.

The curriculum may be laid down at the national (or sub-national) level. It may be limited by assessment and qualification frameworks. But whatever the constraints, you need to understand the impact of the curriculum and identify openings for making change, whether within your own practice and school or by efforts to influence policy and the wider context.

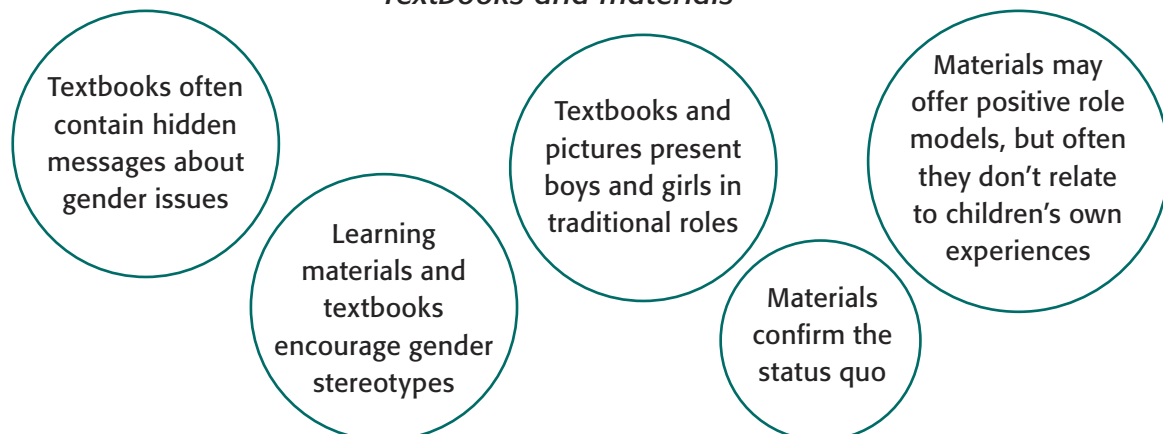
Here are a range of statements about gender equality and curriculum questions.

The curriculum, learning materials and gender equality

Curriculum offer, choices and content



Textbooks and materials



ACTIVITY Curriculum impact

Look carefully at the statements above and tick the ones that you think apply to your classroom or your experience.

ACTIVITY 4.2.1

Here are some examples relating to gender equality in the curriculum and possible ways to develop a more gender-responsive curriculum.

First, here's a reading that considers what is meant by 'a gender-just and empowering curriculum' with an example.

A gender-just and empowering curriculum

A gender-just and empowering curriculum should have the potential to enable students to critically engage with and challenge received knowledge about fixed gender identities. Insights from women's studies and the women's movement both in this country and in other parts of the world over the past twenty years have enriched our understanding of how education can form a part of this project of possibility.

Experiences of literacy activists and those engaged in teaching women's studies at the university level show that it is possible to integrate gender into the curriculum, not as marginal or incidental but as critical to the content of different subject areas. The content itself can then be made to take on wider dimensions, involving various subject areas in the school curriculum. Feminist critiques of knowledge also have the potential to influence more just and inclusive pedagogical practices and facilitate creation of 'child-friendly' classrooms that empower students as well as teachers. They open up possibilities for gender inclusion in an integrated approach within and across different core academic areas of the school curriculum.

Assuming that the evolutionary approach to education involves building upon experiences and thought structures that are familiar, the curriculum will have to be designed such that it helps the child critically understand her surroundings before recognising and negotiating other contexts. The themes that become important in such a context will have to relate to work, body, sexuality, marriage, parenthood, family, caste, community, state, modernity, economy, violence, conflict, heterogeneity and hierarchy. These cross cut into language, social science and science. As against the surfeit of information that is sought to be passed on to the student, the emphasis should be on introducing these issues and developing critical thinking through them. These themes could be taken up in each of the subjects that are taught at school at every stage. Complexity in thinking can be introduced as the stages advance. Higher stage here would therefore indicate strengthening of critical tools rather than accumulation of information.

Source: National Council of Educational Research and Training (2006) 'National Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education', Position Paper, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi.

This is an example of an integrated approach across disciplines. It comes from a curriculum module developed by Nirantar for rural girls and women.

Properties of water

How does rainfall occur?

Three states of water

- Water cycle
- Rainfall
- Monsoon

How do plants absorb nutrients from the soil?

Solvency

- Plant nutrition
- Water pollution

How does water get polluted?

How does life exist in water?

Oxygen content

- Life in water

Water and the environment

Where does water come from?

Natural sources of water

How are seas, oceans, rivers formed?

- Rivers, lakes, seas
- Underground water

What are our local water resources?

Water resource mapping

- Local/regional/national

Why do wells dry up?

How do handpumps work?

Relationship between natural and man-made sources of water

Are big dams more beneficial than small?

- Understanding the water table
- Handpumps
- Systems of irrigation
- Environmental impact of big dams

How do people in desert areas procure water?

Water in different ecosystems

What causes droughts?

- Water sources in desert areas
- Water sources in mountainous regions
- Droughts and floods

Social aspects of water

Who controls the village well?

Caste and class

- Purity and pollution
- Control over water resources

Who fetches water?

Gender division of labour and water

Do we have enough water?

Availability of water

- Local and regional agitations for drinking and irrigation water
- Government structure: Water Department
- Alternative efforts at making water available

Why is clean water essential?

Health

- Body's need for water
- Right to potable water
- Water-borne diseases

Nirantar (1997) 'Windows to the World: Developing a curriculum for rural women', Nirantar, New Delhi, pp. 90–91 (cited in National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2006 – see previous box).

The second example, from the Indian Social Learning Package (see Appendix III for more information), looks at the social themes the package deals with and how children can learn complex values, processes, relations and positions through this holistic approach to the curriculum, with the main focus on objectives relating to understanding, values and attitudes rather than on subject-specific knowledge and competences. (This is for Class 6, Upper Primary School.)

Social learning themes

The Social Learning Package deals with a range of themes that are based on the belief that schooling is an important and influential form of socialisation. Children from an early age are capable of learning complex values, processes, relations and positions, if these are taught and transacted through appropriate methods and tools. The focus is on awareness and empowerment leading to development of critical life skills. It tries to address the established notions of femininity and masculinity in patriarchal societies and is designed to attend to the needs of both boys and girls.

Objectives

Children should be able to:

- Express their thoughts and feelings effectively in different situations and develop basic skills of structured communication
- Establish coherence and harmony within themselves as well as harmony in their relationships with others from different groups.
- Understand the complexities of moral judgements and the gravity of truth and its application in daily life

- Understand the diversities that different cultures have in family structures and practices, and recognise the inequalities that are prevalent in their families and society at large
- Appreciate individual, cultural, social and lingual diversity and understand the social issues connected with them
- Learn team work and understand the importance of organisation, together with adherence to rules
- Acquire skills to plan for a journey and understand the importance of travel for enriching experiences
- Comprehend the functioning of schools and understand the necessity of school as an institution
- Understand the various aspects of elections and democratic governance
- Imbibe some basic survival skills and extend support to accident/disaster victims when the need arises

Unit 1 Expression

Unit 2 My identity

Unit 3 Making one's own judgement

Unit 4 Family

Unit 5 Diversity

Unit 6 Organisation and rules

Unit 7 Travel

Unit 8 School as an institution

Unit 9 Elections and democracy

Unit 10 Our response to accident and disaster

[INDIA SOCIAL LEARNING PACKAGE]

The third curriculum example from Trinidad and Tobago shows a teacher taking steps to broaden students' horizons. The example involves looking at career choices, but also at ways of recognising and encouraging children's interests, talents and learning choices.

Broadening student horizons

This report documents some of the events that have taken place at School B with the pilot project that is subsumed under the Action Gender Project. Part of the pilot project revolves around talks by former students and persons who are experts in various non-stereotypical fields with the aim of broadening the horizons of the students. I am documenting two of those experiences.

Visit on 11 February 2009

Eric was a former student of School B. At present he works at one of the oil giants in Trinidad and Tobago and he is also heavily involved in the entertainment industry. I asked him to talk to the students in the latter capacity. He spoke about his years at the school, the passes he

attained and how he went on to further his studies. He said that he learnt some valuable lessons along the way; the theme of 'Never giving up' was one of them. He made special mention of a friend who always told him that he had a gift that should be nurtured.

He mentioned that he worked with some renowned artistes. He has released some videos in various musical genres, but most of his work seemed to be heavily infused with soca. The students seemed to enjoy his presentation as it was spliced with him performing two of his songs for them and a video presentation. He gave the students CDs when they answered questions or participated actively in the session.

In interviews with some of the students after his presentation, two male students revealed that they were also musically inclined; in fact one has participated in a soca competition within his home region and placed third. A female student stated that she has already written songs. When asked what her parents thought of her compositions, she shrugged nonchalantly. She was encouraged to continue writing, continue exploring her talent and perhaps find someone who could nurture her gift.

Visit on 11 March 2009

A five-member team comprised of paramedics and team assistants in their official work gear from a divers company came to speak to the students on possible careers within this field.

The interactive session not only gave the students valuable information in terms of the different levels of emergency response personnel and the necessary qualifications but was also punctuated by demonstrations. The team used the students to feature certain procedures such as cardio pulmonary resuscitation, use of the defibrillator, bandaging and rescue operations on crash sites using specific equipment. The students were also told about the correct use of medication. They were even treated to a tour of an ambulance.

In conversation with two of the male students after this session, they revealed that they do not think that they can see themselves in this line of work. When probed further, they said that they were squeamish and could not stand all the blood and cuts. They said that they feel like vomiting under those circumstances. Some female students, however, did not express such sentiments. In fact, two of them did not have any reservations about this line of work and eagerly grasped the opportunity to explore the ambulance and ask questions.

Another tier of the pilot project involves an on-going student portfolio. As the sessions continue, the students are asked to document their thoughts, beliefs and feelings as well as reflect on their own situations at home and in their community. This portfolio would help give some definition and voice to their ideas.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

The final curriculum example is about gender analysis of textbooks. While critiquing the gender messages of traditional textbooks, it also mentions how a team of women were able to produce a more gender-inclusive textbook.

Gender analysis of textbooks

To achieve curriculum objectives, Pakistani schools heavily rely on textbooks as the legitimate and only source of knowledge. Therefore, textbooks were analysed to understand what gender-related messages were passed on to the students. While all textbooks were scanned to identify gender messages, Urdu and English books were particularly analysed because all secondary school students, regardless of their subject stream, study these books.

The analysis revealed that:

- Deeply rooted traditional beliefs and perceptions of women’s position in society were portrayed in the text and illustrations. Women are shown in their reproductive roles. Men, on the other hand are portrayed in productive and decision-making roles.
- The visibility of women is very low as compare to men’s appearance in the textbooks.
- Women and men are identified with certain stereotypical attributes. For instance, bravery, heroism, honesty and strength are portrayed as male attributes. Caring, self-sacrificing, love and kindness are associated with women.
- Members of the textbook review and authors are almost all men with an insignificant number of female authors.
- However, in one instance, a team of female authors and reviewers were able to produce a comparatively more gender-inclusive textbook (class IX).

The analysis confirms that textbooks used in secondary schools perpetuate the dominant gender ideology.

[PAKISTAN GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

From these examples and your experiences and reflection, try to identify changes that could be made to make the curriculum you teach more gender-responsive, and how these changes might be made. Divide the changes into:

- Things you yourself could do,
- Things that need a whole school approach, and
- Things that demand change on a wider scale.

Try to think of at least one change relating to each area.

ACTIVITY Changing the curriculum

| | Changes in your classroom | Whole school approach | Wider policy change |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Curriculum on offer</i> | | | |
| <i>Curriculum choices by students</i> | | | |
| <i>Curriculum content</i> | | | |
| <i>Textbooks and materials</i> | | | |

ACTIVITY 4.2.2

Here is how a group of teachers from Malawi responded to this activity.

Changing the curriculum

| | Changes in your classroom | Whole school approach | Wider policy change |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <i>Curriculum on offer</i> | Introduce a new subject Infuse some emerging issues | Form clubs Invite specialists from outside Look at spread of subjects on termly basis and change where necessary | Govt to offer guidance through policy |
| <i>Curriculum choices by students</i> | Give students information through careers talks – information to be gender-neutral | Introduce a curriculum form and give to students Avoid offering subjects not helpful in future | Incorporate ideas from school and form a policy for all |
| <i>Curriculum content</i> | Infuse emerging issues e.g. gender, HIV and AIDS | Have support structures through meetings/ committees Balance number of boys and girls in subjects | Curriculum panel to incorporate different practices |
| <i>Textbooks and material</i> | Not to use books that are not gender-sensitive Use books on gender-sensitivity for purposes of discussion | Monitor textbooks used and avoid wrong books Selection committee to be set up | Curriculum to prescribe gender |

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

Further suggestions include:

- Involve pupils in the processes of change, for example, through discussion, challenging their assumptions and choices or using role-play to raise their awareness (see Topic 4.5)
- Discuss with colleagues and make alliances in the search for solutions
- Get the issue included as part of staff development and ongoing professional development
- Raise it as part of a whole school approach
- Raise the issue with parents to encourage them to think about their own expectations and assumptions

Review

As before, at the end of this topic here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- See how curriculum issues and choices can have an impact on gender equality
- Find ways of making changes to the curriculum to make it more gender-responsive

Topic 4.3 Classroom dynamics

Whatever the curriculum as discussed in Topic 4.2 may be, it cannot be separated from the dynamics of a classroom. By this we mean the relationships among the children and between the children and teacher – the way they interact and behave towards each other – and also the practical and physical arrangements that can affect the dynamics.

This topic will help you to:

- Explain how classroom dynamics can affect gender equality
- Identify actions that you could take in your own classroom and changes that call for a whole school approach

Here are some accounts of aspects of classroom dynamics for you to read. Once again, as you read, think about how these experiences compare with your own. The first two examples are from Pakistan. One looks at the way students occupy physical space, while the other looks at the complex issue of mixed or single-sex classes.

Gender and space

Gender differences were observed in the four study schools in terms of how male and female students occupied physical space. Observations of classroom teaching and learning, games lessons and recess hours revealed a gender pattern in this regard. For instance, girls were found huddled together both inside and outside the classroom, while boys occupied space more comfortably by spreading around. This was also explicit in teachers' descriptions of how boys and girls occupy space available in a science laboratory. According to a science teacher, generally girls would hover around one table while doing experiments. Boys, on the other hand, would spread out and occupy all the tables. The science teacher interpreted it as girls' attempts at seeking security and help from their peers. These patterns of students' occupying space, in other words, can be associated with hierarchical social structures in which women are considered weak and dependent. Furthermore, socialisation of females into femininity and feminine ways to conduct themselves could be yet another explanation of this behaviour.

[PAKISTAN GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Studying together?

The case study schools offer an interesting picture of schools' and communities' efforts to ensure gender equity in accessing education at secondary level.

Except for the single-sex government girls' school, all the schools offered co-education. School D was established as a facility for both boys and girls from a community with a low socio-economic background. To address disciplinary issues arising from boys' conduct towards girls, the school administration and the board of governors decided to shift to single-sex classrooms. At present, girls and boys from grade six onward study in their own sex groups. The chairman of the School Management Committee regarded it as a timely measure to encourage girls to stay on. The single-sex instructions have posed a huge challenge to the teachers. The disruptive attitude of boys has been reported as a constant hindering factor in these classrooms. Boys admitted creating nonsense in the classrooms and believed that girls' presence there would have made them more focused on their studies as their underperformance in front of girls would be unacceptable to them. Girls, however, felt more comfortable in single-sex classrooms and did not see any reason for replacing this with co-education. Minimum interaction with boys, they viewed, makes the classroom an enabling environment and more acceptable for their parents.

On the other hand School P started off as a secondary school with single-sex instruction for girls and boys. The school management, particularly the principal, found boys underperforming due to their disruptive behaviour in the classroom and decided to switch to co-education as a measure to address these issues. Both female and male students find that co-education boosts their confidence and that it keeps them (boys) focused on their studies. Inability to respond to teachers' questions or low-level participation in classroom processes becomes a challenge for male students in female classmates' presence. Studying together with boys in the same classroom boosts girls' confidence and morale. Besides, girls reported on the liveliness of the classroom environment due to boys' constant jokes. Observations and focus group discussion data reveal boys' visibility in the classrooms through their jokes and disruptive attitude. As a result, they remained the focus of teachers' attention in all lessons. In one instance, an extra teacher was present to monitor boys' engagement in the assigned tasks. While there was unanimous agreement on bringing challenging tasks to the teaching and learning to engage boys, female teachers disagreed with a male teacher that boys posed more challenges to female teachers than to male teachers.

This school offers an opportunity for boys and girls to study together throughout their school years in the same classrooms. However, the

gender divide is very visible outside the classroom. The playground and courtyard where students spend their recess and sports periods are separate for boys and girls. Both courtyards have separate tuck shops with exclusively male and female staff.

[PAKISTAN GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

The next example looks at 'eve-teasing' as an example of sexual harassment in the dynamics between boys and girls, and sometimes between students and teachers.

Eve teasing

A research study in Rajasthan in India looked at the problem of 'eve teasing' among school-going girls in an in-depth manner. The study addressed the following broad questions:

- Is eve-teasing a widespread phenomenon, or non-existent?
- Who are the eve-teasers and how do they behave?
- How do girls in the given social environment deal with eve teasing?
- How does society view this problem and what concrete help can girls who face eve teasing anticipate from it?

The findings were that eve teasing is a social crime and happens everywhere in schools and in homes irrespective of caste and creed. Many girls who encounter eve teasing are unable to share their experiences due to deep-seated socialisation patterns and there is loss of self-confidence. Some of the findings of the study include:

- A significant result of the survey was that as high as one-third of the respondents faced at least one incident of eve-teasing in their lives.
- The analysis of eve-teasing faced by rural and urban school students disclosed that a higher proportion of girls going to schools in rural areas faced eve-teasing compared to those going to urban-based schools.
- The most common forms of eve teasing included staring, winking, following and whistling/singing. A significant 13 per cent of the girls stated experiencing more serious forms of eve-teasing, which involve physical harassment.
- A considerable proportion of the eve-teasers belong to the age-group 15-20 years in every category of eve-teasing.
- As high as one half of the girls were too scared to react, or ignored the eve-teaser at the point of time they were being harassed. However, in one-third of the cases, the girls actively retaliated, either verbally or by striking back. In another 4 per cent of cases, the girl looked for help either from people around or by calling someone on the phone.
- During the study 83 students in the five blocks spoke clearly of an experience of eve-teasing by their male teachers or staff that they had personally gone through, or knew of a school student

who had. It was found that harassment by male teachers or staff usually takes several forms. Calling a girl student to his room on the pretext of checking her copy and then trying to touch her; attempting to force himself on a girl student who comes to him for tuition after sending off the rest; putting his leg on a girl student's feet after making her sit next to him and so on were the various ways of sexual harassment by teachers described by the students.

A teachers' discussion raised various questions related to these findings. Some of the teachers felt that girls themselves are to be blamed, as they 'invite trouble'. Others argued that such problems faced by girls should be taken seriously and redressal mechanisms should be put in place. It was felt that with support/help from teachers and parents, the ills of eve-teasing within and outside schools could be addressed.

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

The third example is an account of changes to arrangements and how they changed relations and behaviour in the classroom.

Changing the environment

OBJECTIVE 1: Create more gender-friendly school and classroom environments

Context and Progress

The research project carried out in 2007 identified the practice of ability-streaming as one of the root causes for the persistent gender gap in performance between boys and girls in Seychelles. The trend has been for girls to outperform boys in national exams at primary six and secondary five levels for the last few years and for top ability classes to be dominated by girls. The report also noted the segregated seating arrangements in classrooms, which did not favour healthy relationships and exchange between boys and girls.

Activity 1: De-stream classes and introduce more gender balance

Indicators: *Percentage of high/low achievers in each class*
Ratio of boys/girls in each class

At the start of the academic year in January 2008, Secondary School B de-streamed all of its five secondary 1 classes and introduced more gender balance. Clear and transparent criteria for grouping students, taking into account performance, gender and feeder schools, were established. This is in sharp contrast to situations prevailing in previous years where all top classes were skewed in favour of girls. There is now a healthier balance of boys and girls in each class both in terms of ability and gender. Seating arrangements are mixed.

At School A, classes continue to be streamed by ability but efforts have been made to have equal numbers of boys and girls in each class.

Seating arrangements have been modified so that boys and girls are mixed and not strictly segregated as was the case last year.

Initial reactions

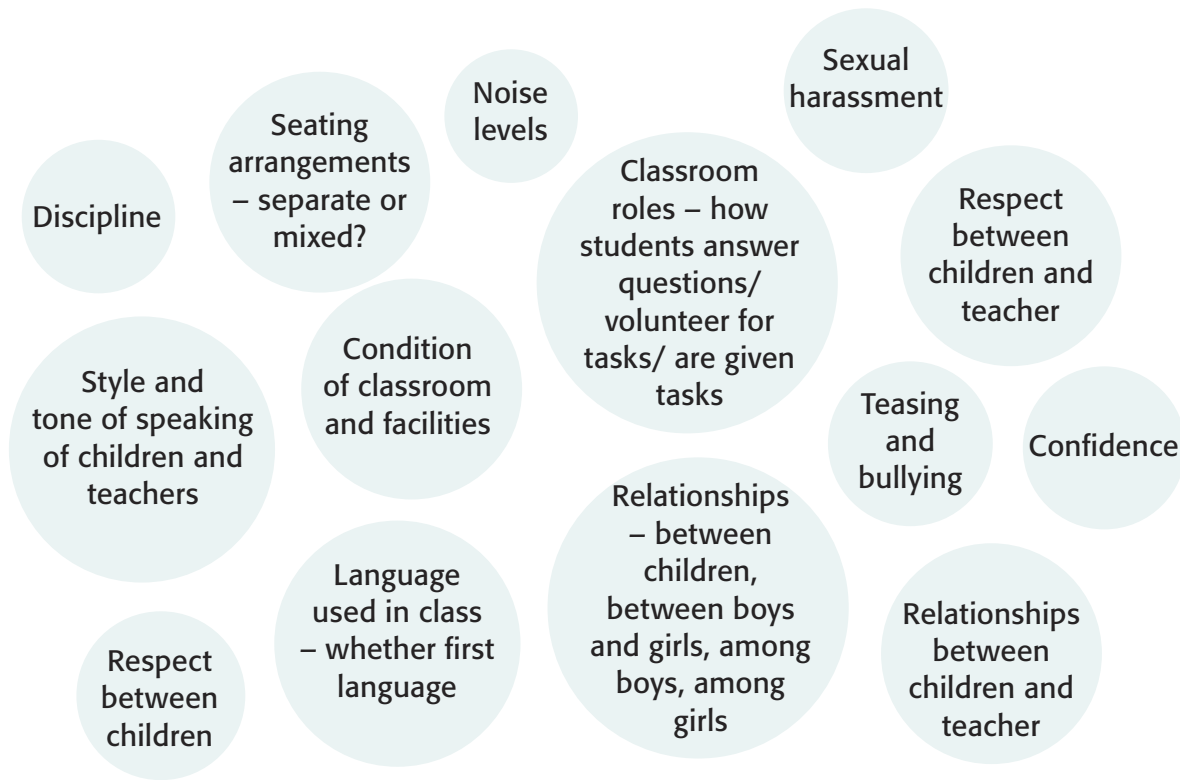
Questionnaires were distributed to 148 parents of secondary 1 students at School B on 22 January to gauge their reactions to the changes, and 120 questionnaires were returned. Results show that the majority are in favour of gender-balanced and mixed ability classes. All respondents (87) who commented on gender-balanced classes were positive about the change, stating it would develop friendship, understanding and respect and create a better society by promoting equal opportunities and life chances. Parents were more apprehensive of mixed ability classes: 76 parents commented positively on mixed ability classes, stating it would benefit the weaker pupils and encourage competition; 21 parents expressed concern that weak students would disturb the class and slow down the pace of work of brighter students; and others felt that the weak ones would be left behind. Parents will need to be reassured that mixed ability teaching will not adversely affect their children's progress.

At Secondary School A, the headteacher and teachers have remarked on a significant change of ethos in the classes as noted in diary entries and minutes of meetings. The noise level has reduced and classes remain on task even when left unsupervised. Some parents have already noticed a positive change in the attitude of their boys.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

Of course here we can only include a small number of examples, covering just a few aspects of classroom dynamics – use of space, mixed versus single-sex classes, sexual harassment, and changing ability streaming and segregated seating. Do these echo your experiences or would you stress other aspects?

Here are some features affecting classroom dynamics and gender relations that different teachers have observed.



And going beyond the classroom itself:



Next as an activity, go back to the picture of your own classroom you built up in Activities 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, looking again at the question:

- Do classroom arrangements and relationships affect boys and girls differently? In what ways?

ACTIVITY Gender impacts of classroom dynamics

Note which of the features described in this topic and listed above are relevant in your classroom.

Note other features that you think influence the gender dynamics in your class.

This activity will have drawn on your own experiences. It is another example of gender analysis and small-scale investigation that could be the first step of an action research process for you – identifying a problem and observing what is going on.

The next question is what causes the problem(s)? You may find deep underlying causes: how girls and boys see themselves; social, family or peer expectations; fixed ideas about what girls and boys are like; and also set views of what a teacher should be like. In Topic 4.5 we will look at some ways of tackling these deep-seated issues.

But you may also give simpler reasons, and for these there could be practical solutions to make the classroom more gender-responsive.

Here are some possible solutions to issues of dynamics and communication from other teachers' experiences in one secondary school in India.

Some practical solutions

School S

- **Prayer:** Equal participation of boys and girls in leading prayers during prayer meeting, group song, pledge, news reading. To encourage the use of musical instruments during morning assembly
- **Classroom Cleanliness:** Identifying four students each day according to their roll numbers for cleaning the classroom.
- **Toilet Facilities:** Regular cleaning of the toilets by using phenyl, naphthylene balls, acid.
- **School Management:** Reorganising of present school committees by ensuring equal participation of male and female teachers.
- **Games:** Due to the lack of playground facility in the school, indoor games such as badminton, carom-board, chess, table-tennis, ludo, ring ball, skipping and disc throwing will be encouraged.
- **Library:** Forming a library committee for boys and girls for issuing books to them.
- **School Incharge:** To ensure equal participation of male and female teachers by allotting equal duties/tasks to them.
- **Educational Tour:** Organising excursion /educational tours in a year according to the session calendar.
- **Student Assembly and Cultural Programmes:** Ensuring equal participation of boys and girls in the programme according to their skill. Rewards will be given to the students to encourage their participation in school activities.
- **Health Programme:** Organising a health camp in the school for regular health checkup of students and teachers and to generate awareness among the adolescents regarding health and hygiene.
- **Social Awareness:** Encouraging the students to participate in role-

plays, discussions etc. on topics related to social issues to make them aware about these

- **MTA/Teachers Meeting:** Creation of Mother-Teacher Association to provide individual and group counselling to boys and girls to deal with the problems they face during the adolescent period.

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

These may seem relatively straightforward solutions, but they call for consultation and for support from the head or colleagues. Each change could be a small action research project; after observation and analysis, a change is planned and implemented, and its impact is monitored and evaluated.

In this way teachers can be empowered to make their own changes.

ACTIVITY Changing classroom dynamics

Identify three changes you could make in your classroom that will improve classroom dynamics and make it more gender-responsive.

1

2

3

ACTIVITY 4.3.3

We will come back to your ideas at the end of this unit.

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic, here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Think about relationships and practical arrangements in your classroom to see how they can have an impact on gender responsiveness
- Analyse causes and effects of these dynamics
- Identify possible areas for action in your classroom

Topic 4.4 Underachievement

We've talked about providing equality of opportunity and trying to make sure that in terms of both the curriculum and the classroom dynamics you are gender-responsive. In this topic we explore further the whole question of underachievement – of both boys and girls.

This topic will help you to:

- Explain what you understand by underachievement
- Analyse examples of underachievement in your context
- Plan ways of tackling underachievement

Before going on with this topic, think quickly about what you understand by the term 'underachievement'.

ACTIVITY What is underachievement?

What were the first things you thought of when you saw the heading 'Underachievement'?

ACTIVITY 4.4.1

The kind of things people often come up with are:

- Girls doing badly at maths
- Boys doing badly at English
- Boys or girls not choosing certain subjects
- Girls not taking part in sports
- Boys' exam results being worse than girls'
- Students dropping out of school

One definition would be: 'An underachieving child is a child who fails to achieve the performance appropriate for her or his abilities'.

Two aspects of underachievement are:

- Under-performance by either boys or girls at any stage and in any area/ subject
- Under-participation by either boys or girls at any stage

As with inequality, there are many dimensions of underachievement – not just gender but also race and ethnicity, location, class and other social or economic groupings. It is always important to take into account the other aspects and ask ‘Which girls? Which boys?’ when talking about underachievement.

Now read these accounts of underachievement. As you read, think about which boys and which girls are involved. Think about possible underlying reasons, from the kind of factors looked at earlier – such as stereotyping, identities and expectations by teachers, parents, society or children themselves. How do these case studies compare with what you noted down in Activity 4.4.1 – your own definition of underachievement?

The first example is from a secondary school in Mozambique where most students live in rural areas. It shows the multiple factors that result in girls’ underachievement.

Girls’ underachieving

Secondary School B is largely composed of students who live in a rural area where education is not a priority. Parents and the community expect boys to go on to be providers but girls to get married and look after their families.

The students

- Are respectful
- Are not committed to studies and school activities in general

Girls

- Are not encouraged to study
- Their perception of themselves is that they are weak
- React slowly when questioned during classes
- Are sexually abused by their male colleagues
- Give up school before they finish 12th grade

The school

- Teachers perceive there is gender inequality in the classroom
- Problems /difficulties identified in this school:
 - Lack of furniture in the classrooms
 - No labs for chemical experiences
 - No library
 - High number of students per class
 - Teachers concerned with the transmission of knowledge only

- Low number of teachers participating in activities related to the girls' club
- Lack of extra-curricular activities such as gardening, sewing, cleaning
- Absence of cultural activities

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

The second example looks at boys' underachievement and how to address it.

Boys' underachievement

Background

At the inception of Secondary School A in the early 1970s, students were expected to perform creditably with the introduction of a system of education that exposed them to a range of vocational activities that moved them away from the traditional subjects.

However, on the whole very little effort was made to allow the process to work at its best. Despite this negative input, many students performed way beyond the expectations of the nay-sayers. Particularly within the first three-year tenure of the school, graduates, both male and female, later became doctors, lawyers and successful businessmen as well as skilled tradesmen. But as the years progressed, rather than capitalising on these early gains, the school fell into a 'rut'.

The late 1990s saw the administration and staff of the school undertaking the task of introducing contemporary technology-based and vocational subjects into the curriculum. In addition to providing resources to the deficient labs and workshops mainly through fundraising activities, efforts were being made to introduce hairdressing, beauty culture, nail artistry, and computer programming and technology. Like almost everything else at the school, there was a false start that has not yet been rectified.

Though the public cry of dissatisfaction with the Junior Secondary system was unrelenting, it took over 30 years to create any impact. An accelerated attempt is now being made to convert all Junior Secondary Schools such as School A to all-day schools.

To the present day, the process is incomplete, in spite of the fact that students and teachers were mentally prepared for the imminent changes. This state of uneasiness and the continued apparent indifference to the situation had a negative impact on both teachers and students. The students were perceptive enough to recognise that they were not benefiting from the present circumstances and they lost interest, leading to diminishing academic returns on their part.

On the whole, the school suffers from low achievement levels, which is more pronounced among the boys. The test scores and grades of

students, both males and females, have been in continuous decline. A cursory glance at scores at the school shows that many of the students are failing. However, the failure rate among the boys is much higher.

This situation, though not unique to the school is cause for grave concern there. The pertinent questions to be asked are:

- Why aren't boys more fully engaged in the classroom?
- Why aren't they in the classroom?
- Why are they in school, if they are not 'interested' in learning?
- Is it that their brains are structurally different from the girls?
Or are their needs different?

This topic of boys' underachievement has found an audience on talk shows, in magazines and in roadside rum-shop bars. There has been at least one clarion call for policy-makers to make schools more 'boy-friendly' (Newsweek, 2006). This call is echoed at the school – to maximise the learning capabilities of our students, particularly our boys.

The Study

This study will use an action research intervention that addresses the sometimes peculiar situation of boys and their need for freedom of self-expression in a non-threatening environment.

Prior to the intervention, attempts would be made to include an insight into the demography and home environment of the students. It would also be necessary to explore some of the gender-related attitudes and expectations of teachers and of the pupils themselves, as well as some of the sub-cultures of the school. The study of these facets is necessary as they contribute to the academic/ educational experience of the students. The students' strengths and interests would be acknowledged, valued and used.

In an attempt to address the particular concerns of the school, the researcher formed a focus group to assist in identifying and refining the problem, to offer suggestions for possible interventions and to assist in their execution.

The Way Forward

- 1 Data collection on the nature of the problem of boys' underachievement at this school (a low status, failing school in the eyes of the public)
- 2 Analysis of the data towards designing an intervention
- 3 The development of an intervention
- 4 Implementation of the intervention
- 5 Evaluation of the intervention

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

In both these examples, the underlying reasons seem to be deep-seated. But the two examples also raise the question of boys' underachievement vs. girls' underachievement – and the issue of gender equality in relation to underachievement. Boys' alleged underachievement is regarded as a growing phenomenon, and girls' improved performance may sometimes be put forward as the cause. Indeed, since the 1990s there has been something of a moral panic in some countries about this issue.

The following reading looks at this and argues that this is not a war of the sexes. Neither boys' nor girls' achievements should be at the expense of the other.

Three myths about boys' underachievement

The underachievement of boys in education is a subject that raises heated debate and a host of conflicting hypotheses. Three persistent myths surround the subject:

Myth one is that it is about 'boys versus girls'. It is not. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed by all Commonwealth governments in 2000, commit States to eliminating gender disparities in education. That means addressing the needs of whichever gender – girls or boys – is falling behind in either access to education or achievement. We want therefore to understand and address boys' underachievement in education in the contexts where it is an issue whilst continuing to focus on girls' access to education elsewhere. It is not either one or the other. We are committed to doing both.

Myth two is that boys' underachievement results from 'a war of the sexes', and that somehow girls and maybe female teachers are responsible for boys falling behind. The roots of girls' exclusion from education lay in discrimination whereby girls in some places were banned from education, or more school places were provided for boys than girls. There is no such suggestion here that boys' underachievement is a result of any similar formal discrimination. In fact, this study argues that the same socially determined gender roles may impact negatively on both boys and girls. Both sexes can be victims of a culture that, for example, prescribes education as not 'cool' for boys and also tolerates violence against girls.

Myth three is that boys' achievement at school should be measured against that of girls. To further demonstrate that this is not a war of the sexes, both boys' and girls' achievement at school should be measured against objective education standards for all children at that stage of education. We are not saying, therefore, that boys are underachieving in education compared to their female classmates but that they are doing so against objective standards of literacy, numeracy, etc. for their peer group.

Source: Jha, J and Kelleher, F (2006) *Boys' Underachievement in Education*, Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning, London, p. xiii

The questions that need to be addressed in this context are:

- What are the finer aspects of this phenomenon as they are seen in different countries?
- What are the variations in the nature of the trend as seen in different countries?
- What are the trends when it comes to specific social/geographical/ethnic groups in a particular country or region?
- Do socio-economic practices play any role in this and, if so, what are these and how do they operate?
- How are these related to the socialisation process of boys and girls and to the expected gender roles in particular societies?
- How is this connected to curriculum and teaching-learning practices adopted in schools?
- Does this have any link with teachers' expectations and, if yes, what are these?
- Is there any difference in the level of motivation between girls and boys and, if so, what are the reasons?
- Do school and schooling processes question or reinforce the existing societal norms of masculine and feminine behaviours, images and practices?
- How do these various factors, socio-economic backgrounds, socialisation, expected gender roles and schooling processes act on and interact with each other and get manifested in boys' underachievement?
- Does the trend of boys' underachievement mean a situation of gender privilege for girls?

Answers to these questions should help in understanding the trend, appreciating the underlying causes and developing various ways to address the issue.

Source: Ibid., pp. 10–11.

The next activity asks you to reflect on an example of gender-related underachievement in your country in the light of what you have learned from the previous examples and reading.

ACTIVITY Analysing underachievement

Choose an example of gender-related underachievement in boys or girls from your experience. Describe it briefly.

Then relate it to the questions raised by the previous reading. For example:

What aspects are specific to your example?

What are the trends in your country/ for particular groups in your country?

What (if any) are the social and economic influences on your example?

How does your example relate to:

- expected gender roles/ norms of behaviour?
- curriculum and teaching/ learning practices in your school?
- teacher expectations?

ACTIVITY 4.4.2

Here is a second case study of boys' underachievement. It summarises overheads from a presentation describing an action research project. The focus of the study is the boys' learning of the English language and why they do not perform as well as the girls.

This example brings in a number of factors already mentioned – e.g., expectations, classroom organisation and dynamics – and identifies the action research approach to tackling the problems.

Boys and the learning of English: An issue of ability, attitude or assessment?

Why don't boys perform as well as girls in English?

Statement of the problem

- Poor behaviour in class often caused by inability to follow lessons due to poor foundation.
- Poor concentration skills, often pupils sitting next to their friends.
- Poor attitude towards learning reinforced by family background.
- Students' lackadaisical attitude towards and low interest in the English language
- Teacher's effect on the teaching of English in school

**The design of the study:
action research methodology**

A number of cycles. Each cycle consisted of four components:

- Planning
- Observation
- Data collection and analysis
- Reflection and assessment

Cycle 1: Establishing the context of the study

Framing the problem – questionnaires

Acting and observing

Data collection and analysis

Questionnaires to students about:

- Homework
- Preference for learning
- Preference of time spent
- Learning style
- Learning new words
- How they like to be corrected
- Correction of work
- Learning gadgets
- Preferred feedback

Emerging themes/categories

Three issues:

- Ability
- Attitude
- Assessment

Ability

- Lack of reading – lack content knowledge
- Boys' short span of concentration
- Boys as dependent learners
- Lack of interest – dysfunctional families
- Teacher factor – teacher-centred, passive learning, own inadequacies

Attitude

- Poor concentration skills – lessons slow pace
- Poor behaviour – bored
- Family background
- Ethnocentric views toward learning English

Assessment

Boys' preference for practical activities
 Did not want to appear as failures

System:

Too exam-oriented
 Not boy-friendly
 Non-constructivist approach

Cycle 2: Creating an atmosphere of incremental improvement

Reading material – suitable level
 Student-centred
 Extra classes by other teachers to create variety
 Assignments marked and commented on by teachers
 Appropriate discipline measures
 Involvement of parents

Improvements

More peaceful environment
 Hand up homework
 More co-operation from the teachers

Cycle 3: Deepening the commitment

Motivation – computers
 Other teachers involved

Conclusion and reflection

Link between class participation and achievement.
 High expectations on boys – opposed to the Asian mentality of boys a level higher than girls.
 Lessons should relate to boys' interests, e.g., sports, astrology, aeroplanes, Mike Tyson, David Beckham
 Computers and Internet have important role

Agenda for the future

Relate the interest of the boys to what they read
 Help boys to be more meticulous in what they write
 Make sure even the most reluctant actually do their homework
 Plan lessons well so that they are short, well-focused and well-paced

Likely challenges in the future

- Relate the interest of the boys to what they read. It is difficult to find out each boy's interest and if that is possible, it would take a long time. Time is what teachers do not have.
- Make sure even the most reluctant boys actually do their homework. This is near to impossible because of the inclination of the boys to be absent from school when the things get tough for them.

- Teachers need to be aware of students' learner characteristics and to make use of the knowledge to facilitate the learning process. Teachers are not qualified nor do they have the time to learn about learner's characteristics. They lack the innovative and creative elements in solving problems. They tend to wait and follow instructions rather than to think of their own ideas.

[MALAYSIA ACTION PROJECT]

This example from Malaysia seems to highlight some success factors relating to a whole school approach (collaboration with other teachers, parental influence) and some relating to classroom arrangements and learning and teaching (behaviour, motivation, use of computers).

ACTIVITY **Tackling underachievement**

List three strategies from this case study or the rest of this topic that could be used in your context to tackle the example of underachievement you described and analysed in Activity 4.4.2.

1

2

3

The strategies you choose may relate back to curriculum and classroom dynamics, or forward to different teaching and learning styles to bring about deeper transformative changes, which we look at in the next topic.

One final comment should be made on underachievement. An important point from much research on boys' underachievement is that teaching techniques that engage boys are also girl-friendly. They characterise quality teaching and are just as desirable for girls as for boys. An active classroom benefits both girls and boys. Girls may manage to perform better than boys in passive situations, but their performance will also improve in active situations. Concern about boys should not be at girls' expense.

Review

Now that you are at the end of this topic, here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Analyse examples of gender-related underachievement from your experience as a teacher
- Suggest strategies for tackling them

Topic 4.5 Teaching and learning for change

In this unit and Unit 3 you have looked at ways of becoming more gender-responsive, with practical approaches to doing things differently across the whole school and in the classroom. The issues of gender equality that arise involve people's sense of personal and social identity as well as complex attitudes and behaviour. These call not only for technical and practical changes but also for a different approach to teaching and learning.

This topic will help you to:

- Identify ways of teaching and learning to enable changes in ideas, attitudes and identities
- Plan different approaches to teaching and learning

Why are fresh approaches needed? Think of the kind of questions this guide raises: what does it mean to become a boy or a girl? What are the expectations of parents and the community? How do teachers see their role and status? These reflect deep-seated beliefs and expectations. Changing these calls for the school to become an agent of change. The teacher's role is about transforming lives and empowering students, not just handing on knowledge.

As you have seen, schools can often reinforce existing ideology, stereotypes and attitudes, for example, through what teachers expect of their pupils, practical arrangements in the classroom, students' choices of subjects and careers, and students' own aspirations, perceptions and sense of masculinities and femininities.

So what kind of approaches to teaching and learning can counter this?

Here are some approaches that the action projects have found can help changes ideas and attitudes.



We start this topic with a range of examples of teachers trying out new ways of teaching and learning. As you read them, try to compare more traditional kinds of teaching with these approaches for the activity that follows. Are there approaches and techniques that you use or could adopt?

The first example comes from the manual for the Social Learning Project described in Topic 1.3 Gender and education and Appendix III. It underlines the importance of dialogue and openness with children, and the need to make the process of teaching consistent with its message and content.

Dialogue with children

The Social Learning Package hopes to deal with the themes in an honest, straightforward manner. It takes up deeply held assumptions and values for exploration and questioning. This can be done only when what is taught in the package is consistent with how it is transacted. Hence, part of the content of the package is in its practice.

If we want to teach children that they should give importance to their own selves and others equally, the teacher herself is required to give equal importance to every child. If we want to teach democratic values to children, our practices have to be democratic too. If not, a child is liable to get conflicting messages with harmful consequences. Many activities in this curriculum are designed in a manner to be communicated not through words, but through what is implied in the activities.

An attempt has been made while framing the package to avoid making it dull, uninteresting and academic. Stories, poems, role-plays, games and outdoor visits have been included wherever possible. But the main vehicle for the transaction of this package is dialogue with and among children. We discuss below some important points for the benefit of teachers who want to use this manual.

Dialogue and questions

This package depends for its success on the dialogue that takes place between the teacher and the student, as well as between student and student. Dialogue takes place in conversations, discussions and questions and answers. The children have to begin to trust the teacher and develop a close relationship with her for an open and honest dialogue to take place.

Try to know your students individually. Irrespective of whether the transaction of the package is effective or not, a relationship in itself is cherished by the children.

First of all, one must believe that a real dialogue, a serious conversation can take place between you and the children. It is often assumed that we should speak to a child as a child. We should feign a childish posture and diction when talking to one. This is not needed. Talk to children in a normal manner, unless you are doing it on a specific occasion for a specific purpose.

A serious dialogue requires self-reflection on the part of the teacher as well as the children. In fact, these conversations provide an opportunity for the teachers to examine their own beliefs and experiences. Do not rush; keep the tempo of the conversation slow and relaxed, even if it means you will be unable to cover the intended portion for the day.

The children will hesitate and falter many a time. This requires careful listening. Train the children to listen when their colleagues are speaking and not only when the teacher speaks. They must listen in order to be heard.

Source: Care India (2008) 'Guidelines for use for Grades 6, 7 and 8', *Social Learning for Upper Primary Schools: A Reference Manual for Teachers*, Care India, New Delhi, pp. 8–9.

Do you have experience of this kind of dialogue with your students? Can you think of a situation where you could try out such an approach?

The next case study describes a teacher's action research project in Malaysia concerned with boys' underachievement in reading. It shows too the teacher's concern with changing her teaching and her self-awareness about what is needed. The school involved is a public co-educational semi-urban lower secondary school. The class consisted of 22 students aged 14.

Read and reflect: children's reading preferences

The project

My way of teaching did not encourage students to find information on their own. I was spoon-feeding my students most of the time. Therefore, this action research is to find ways to improve my teaching approach and to help boost boys' interest in reading. At the same time I was trying to change my teaching style from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach.

My initial observation in the reading classes.

- Boys usually kept quiet or resorted to talking about other matters that were not stated in the text that was being studied, or even made silly jokes that had nothing to do with the topic. It was as if what they read did not catch their interest at all!
- My informal interview with the boys found that...
 - Boys felt that reading is a girly stuff – it is an activity that girls do.
 - Boys felt that they take a longer time to read, in contrast to girls who usually read faster.
 - Boys have much less interest in leisure reading.
 - Most of the boys declared themselves as non-readers.
 - Boys do not like to talk about or openly respond to their reading as girls do.
- Boys prefer active responses to reading in which they physically act out responses, do, or make something.

To strengthen my initial findings, I then came out with this action research. My intention – to see the relationship between gender and reading preferences among my students. Once the reading preferences could be identified, it will be able to help me to choose the right materials for reading activities. I also hope to be able to find ways to boost the boys' interest in reading.

Questionnaires showed:

- Students' reading preferences:
 - Boys' reading preferences (genre) – History, sports, transportation, war stories
 - Boys' reading preferences (parts of newspaper items) – sports, political stories
 - Girls' reading preferences (genre) – romance, detective
 - Girls' reading preferences (parts of newspaper items) – headlines, current events, entertainment.
 - Both liked humour, mysteries and adventure
- Students' reading attitude
 - Only 60 per cent of the boys claimed that they 'like to read' while 90 per cent of them said that they 'like to read the newspaper'. (Girls – 100 per cent)

- Only 50 per cent of the boys claimed that they read quite frequently (once or twice a week). (Girls – 100 per cent)
- Both boys and girls did not really go to the library
- Girls 'read for fun' more frequently than boys (20 per cent of boys claimed that they have never or hardly ever done so).
- Reading is not one of the most popular past-time activities enjoyed by the boys. Boys preferred participating in sports and playing computer games.

The Intervention Plan

1) RnR (Read and Reflect) Project

To promote reading through project-based activities.

Activity 1 – Info Hunting

- School's Resource Centre (Library) and school's (Internet) Access Room.
- Students were to search for the necessary information needed regarding the topic (Japan and its culture)
- The students were focusing on five subtopics: Kimono, Origami, Geography and History of Japan, Tea Ceremony, Food.
- A field trip to the Japanese Language Room at Sekolah Berasrama Penuh Integrasi (SBPI) Batu Rakit.
- The students then had a discussion in their own groups to compile and share the information that they got.

Activity 2 – Put Your Hands On

- Students prepared scrapbooks based on their own subtopics as listed above.

Activity 3 – Showtime!

- Mini exhibition on the occasion of a visit to the school by the deputy minister of education. Students displayed scrapbooks and products, and spoke about them.

2) RnR Log Book

To reinforce reading and to make reading more personal to the students.

Activity 1- Log Book Making

- Students produced their own Log Book. The books could be decorated according to their own creativity, so that they became more personal.

Activity 2 – Read and Reflect (on-going process of writing about what they read twice a week)

- Students wrote in their RnR Log Books twice a week.
- Students given total freedom on what to write but it had to be based on their reading, e.g., students could write just a phrase from a paragraph and explain their feelings, or simply reflect on the reading material in general, or even write a quotation from the reading materials.

Activity 3 – Sharing is Caring

- In every English class, for just 2 minutes, students took turns to talk about or share with their friends one of their entries in the RnR Log Book.

Observation

The activities done under both projects, RnR Project and RnR Log Book, provided totally new experiences for both my students and me as we shared a common interest during the teaching and learning process. The students enjoyed learning and reading what they liked while I could optimise the students' potential in the reading classroom. Both boys and girls who found reading to be a boring activity at first started to participate actively in the classroom and contributed to the production of materials.

I personally believed that the three specific objectives of the research had been achieved. In choosing the right materials for the reading lessons, as both gender preferred the genres of humour, mysteries and adventure, I could incorporate these elements in the reading texts that I was using in the class. Meanwhile, the activities conducted had somehow helped to increase the boys' interest in reading, and thus, a fun and enjoyable learning environment was created.

I am aware now that boys and girls have a different attitude towards reading, so I have to keep on motivating the students (especially boys) to read.

[MALAYSIA ACTION PROJECT]

The next example illustrates ways of getting students to communicate freely and participate actively. The methods used are an envisioning exercise, icebreakers and a rule-setting session.

Helping students to communicate

1 Envisioning exercise: 'Image of a dream school'

At a workshop several exercises were carried out with students to elicit their responses on schooling experiences and processes.

- I dream that my school should have all the qualities of a good school i.e., able teachers who will take the responsibility of teaching children who can be 'nation builders'. I dream that every student in the school is an achiever; I dream that there is no discrimination in my school and my school sets an example for other schools in the country. I wish to have a school where equal attention is given to computer teaching and sports activities as well as classroom studies (Class XI, male student).
- The school should provide a clean environment. There should be discipline in the school. Teachers should be appointed for all

subjects. Students cannot be made to learn under pressure or fear so teachers should be friendly and willing to help the students. Sports facilities should be provided in the school as physical activity is necessary for overall growth (Class XI male student)

- Every student dreams that he/she should study in a 'good' school where there is discipline and the teacher-student relationship is friendly and respectful. The attitude of teachers towards students should be positive and inspiring. The school premises should be clean and both students and teachers should work towards maintaining a clean environment in the school. The teachers should also give boys and girls equal opportunity to participate in sports and cultural activities (Class XII, female student).

While there was little difference in responses of male and female students, the analysis of student responses does indicate that students highlighted those issues that were relevant to their current schooling experiences. Issues of teacher absenteeism, monotonous teaching methods, lacks of sport facilities and library facilities are common problems encountered in these schools.

2 Icebreakers

Given the fact that adolescence is a critical stage, which is often fraught with peculiar anxieties and problems, the second set of student workshops focussed on exploring issues related to 'Adolescent Identity and Relationships'. The main objectives of the workshops were to facilitate an understanding on Life Skills Education (LSE) from a gender perspective. Different methods were used during the workshop to facilitate the discussion-group work, case study analysis and role play.

The introductory sessions in the workshop consisted of some defreezing exercises wherein students were asked to introduce themselves and state his/her name and their favorite actor/actresses.

Introducing each other

In School A after the introduction of the resource team, all the students were told to sit in a circle. Students were then asked to introduce themselves. After the introduction of each student, boys were supposed to identify girls by their names and similarly girls were supposed to identify boys by their names

It was observed that since girls and boys of Class IX sit in separate sections, both were uncomfortable sitting together in mixed groups. In order to break the ice the students were divided in pairs with the use of match cards (table-chair and sun-moon, etc.). Each student had to find his/her pair and was expected to introduce the partner to the larger group. It was observed that students were excited and shed

their inhibition and got busy finding their partners. After finding their partners all the students were given five minutes to find out some details about their partners viz. name, hobbies, aspiration and name of favourite actor and actresses. After this activity students got to know each other better. It was observed that girls took the initiative in introducing their partners. Both boys and girls showed different areas of interest and aspirations.

3 Setting the rules

After the introductory session, students were also invited to set some rules for the workshop. It was discussed that these rules would be applicable to all and that every member of the group should follow the rules. All the students (both boys and girls) enthusiastically participated in this exercise. Four rules were framed for the workshop:

1. Discipline must be maintained in the class
2. Each student should co-operate in the class
3. Student should be attentive in the class
4. Discussions would be issue-based and not pertain to any individual

All the rules were written on a chart paper and put on the wall. The research team then asked the purpose of making the workshop rules from the students. The boys and girls replied that the rules would help in making the workshop successful.

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

The next example shows a teacher carefully observing her students and what helps them to learn, e.g., praise, discussion, active participation and enjoyment.

Teacher diary extracts

4 September 2008

Today the boys participate actively in the lessons as opposed to the previous lesson and produce some very good pieces of work. David, one of the weakest boys in the class who today has understood the lesson, requests my permission to help George who is the weakest student in the class. George was very happy and he also managed to produce a good piece of work. I congratulate both of them and talk to them about the importance of helping each other to succeed in life.

Errol and Richie were called for a small conference because they did not do much work in the previous lesson. We discuss the importance of doing the class work and proving to other people what they can do. They promise to do their class work. They continuously seek help during the lessons. This proves that the conversation with them was effective.

5 September 2008

I took the students on the beach today. The lesson was on coordinates and the objective was to use the coordinate system to locate position.

I explain the objectives of the lesson to the students. Without hesitation two boys, David and Irwin wanted to draw the grid in the sand. I asked the girls to help so that they do not feel left out. They did so. They were all eager to get started, both boys and girls. It was so interesting to see the boys so involved in a lesson, which was one of the rare occasions. A student would call out a coordinate and another would move to that position, respecting the order of plotting coordinates points. The girls would just walk along the x-axis, and then the y-axis in a very obedient manner, but the boys were having fun. Irwin was doing rabbit hops to get to the location while George was pretending to drive. Students who got the location wrong were given another chance. All students were ensuring that all of them got it right.

9 September 2008

Today the students were allowed to choose their own sticker to put in their exercise book if they get all their work correct or produce a very clean and neat work (quality work). There were smiley faces and butterflies stickers and they were of different sizes. Everyone work really hard to finish fast so as to get the better sticker. Richie, Pascal and Robert, who rarely complete the work, manage to do so today. Those who got it wrong did their correction willingly, which is something that previously they were reluctant to do.

To my surprise many boys chose the butterflies stickers though some did choose smiley faces. The girls also chose butterflies and smiley faces. At first I thought that the boys would not choose butterflies. All the boys participated actively in the lesson and produced quality work.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

Thinking about these four examples – of dialogue, motivation, communication and sensitive observation – note down differences in approach from traditional teaching and learning or the formal classroom, where the teacher’s role may be seen mainly as passing on information and keeping order. What kind of processes and methods do the examples show? What are the advantages? And are there perhaps disadvantages too?

ACTIVITY Comparing teaching and learning approaches

Methods and processes

Advantages

Disadvantages

ACTIVITY 4.5.1

The differences seem to lie in things like listening to children, encouraging questioning, enabling dialogue and accepting what children say. This can involve major changes in teachers' approaches and can be challenging.

Plan an activity now to try out new approaches to problems you identified in earlier topics in this unit. Look back through earlier topics and your activities and notes to find the problems you uncovered. First, list the problems.

ACTIVITY **What are the problems?**

Examples of problems

Stereotyping in subject choices

Communications between students in the classroom

Underachievement by boys or girls in a particular subject

Problems you identified

Choose just two of the problems you want to tackle. Describe briefly how you usually deal with them in the classroom. Then outline how you will try dealing with them in a different way.

ACTIVITY Trying new approaches

Problem 1

The problem

What do you usually do?

What will you try?

Problem 2

The problem

What do you usually do?

What will you try?

Here are some examples of approaches teachers use to help children explore and question values and assumptions.

Range of possible approaches



This is a challenging topic. It may have asked you to think about your teaching in a quite different way. It raises other questions – how to make such changes and how they relate to the rest of the school – that we will look at in Unit 5.

To end with, here's another teacher's reflection:

Changing the focus

So if I ever carry out such a project again, I must keep reminding myself that the kids' world is completely different from the one I was thinking of. Therefore I must vary my task to kindle the interest of the kids and not to please myself.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic, here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Recognise the kind of changes needed in teaching and learning to enable change in ideas and attitudes
- Reflect on your own teaching
- Plan activities to experiment with new approaches

Topic 4.6 Making changes last

After working through this unit you may be inspired with ideas about how you might do things differently – from the details of seating plans, to changes in curriculum, to more radical changes in your teaching style. But you may also be feeling uncertain – how can you make these changes, and how can you make them stick?

This topic will help you to:

- Identify your challenges and opportunities for making changes
- Devise ways of making them part of a whole school approach
- See how the action research approach can empower you as a teacher
- Draw up a personal action plan

First, think about the challenges and opportunities. Draw on examples from this guide as well as your previous experiences of making changes – what worked and what didn't work. For example, look back at Activities 4.1.3 on prioritising, 4.2.2 on curriculum, 4.3.3 on dynamics and 4.4.2 on underachievement.

ACTIVITY Challenges and opportunities

The changes you want to make

Challenges

Opportunities

ACTIVITY 4.6.1

Some of the challenges mentioned in this guide are things like resources, time, timetable, exam pressures, management structure and lack of interest from parents. But you may see opportunities in supportive colleagues, your school's gender policy, scope for planning your own classroom work or undertaking an action research project, and enthusiasm from your students for new approaches.

Whatever the challenges and opportunities, two basic questions are:

- Can you make the change on your own?
- Can you make the change only by working with other people?

Even if you answer 'yes' to the first question, you will almost certainly need to work with other people to make a change that lasts.

This shows the importance of the interplay between a whole school approach and an individual teacher's approach. What happens in a classroom, between a teacher and her or his pupils, is underpinned by the whole school approach aimed at making changes and becoming more gender-responsive.

Look at these aspects of a whole school approach from Unit 3. Highlight those where you can make a contribution or participate, and note how you could do that.

ACTIVITY Working together

Area

Developing whole school ethos

Communication

Management structures

Curriculum

Reproductive health education

Extra-curricular activities

Careers education

Premises

Any others:

Staff development

Involving wider community

Producing whole school policy

How you can participate

On the other hand, if you are unlucky enough to be working in a school that is not committed to developing a gender-responsive ethos, what are your options? Basically you need to build alliances and win people over – for example:

- Find colleagues who share your ideas
- Talk to colleagues about your ideas
- Share practice and compare experiences
- Work with colleagues to get issues raised on school agendas
- Ask for staff development
- Raise issues with head/ management

ACTIVITY **Enlisting colleagues**

Which colleagues could be your allies?

What joint action can you take?

Which people do you need to influence?

What action can you take to influence them?

Here is a realistic description of getting started with a group of colleagues – the challenges of getting people involved and then finding the time to meet and work together.

Focus groups

The relative success of the research projects at each of the four selected schools is largely a result of the ease with which some groups formed and developed their plan of action. In each school the lead researcher, a member of staff, sought to recruit other members of staff to form a focus group – the foundation for any action research project. In all schools, the focus group comprised five or six members and followed the basic research design:

- From February 2008 the researcher and the focus group in each school discussed the issue of gender and educational experience in relation to student well being. These meetings took place over two or three months and were frequently disrupted by school factors – very busy times of the school cycle, national celebrations, early dismissals for lack of water, teacher absenteeism. In all schools this phase took longer than expected and one school is still at this stage.
- Eventually the group sought consensus on the gender issue they thought was most problematic for their own situation and resolved to investigate that issue with the intention of exploring ways to effectively intervene in that situation. This phase has been taking place as the school term drew to an end (July 2008).

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

Topic 5.3 Change management looks at the kinds of skills and qualities needed to make changes. What we are talking about here is influencing upwards and leadership from below.

Now we turn again to the action research approach that has been mentioned a number of times and that underpins this whole Action Guide.

Action research is an approach that can

- Empower you as a teacher to act to change your own practice
- Empower groups of teacher to work collaboratively on a problem
- Provide a way forward for a whole school approach

It gives you a framework to reflect, plan action, take action, evaluate the action and start a new cycle. It is called action research because it enables you both to act and to research your own practice.

Topic 5.1 looks in more detail at the action research process and outlines the steps involved. We suggest you look at that topic, thinking which issues you could tackle with action research – either as an individual or working jointly.

ACTIVITY Action research ideas

Brainstorm your first thoughts about three issues you might tackle with action research.

1

2

3

ACTIVITY 4.6.4

Here is a range of action research ideas from other teachers.

Action research ideas**Action research topics from Mozambique teachers**

- 1 Reduction of premature weddings and pregnancies
- 2 Boys achieving low marks in English
- 3 Opportunities in the classroom; maths 13-14 years; girls' lack of confidence
- 4 Addressing possible gender bias in textbooks
- 5 Failure of girls in science

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

Topics from Malaysia action project, which identified boys' underachievement as the main problem.

- 1 Boys and the learning of English: an issue of ability, attitude or assessment?
- 2 Gender reading preferences: a selective guide to material sourcing
- 3 Improving gender writing style: a study in students' narrative essay writing
- 4 Visual technique: the way to increase the interest of Form 4 MPV male students in science subjects
- 5 Enhancing the achievement of boys in Form 5 Beta in the topic thermo-chemistry using the DIY method
- 6 Mastery in biology facts through 'Bio-score module + Act' and reduce achievement gap between genders in the cell division topics
- 7 Mastery learning through action gender: a success story of a rural school
- 8 Improving the achievement of male students in addition and subtraction of integer through 'make the difference method'

[MALAYSIA ACTION PROJECT]

As these examples show, action research can be used to tackle specific problems in a practical way. It means an individual teacher can make a difference.

Finally in this unit we ask you to bring together your ideas. Draw up a personal action plan for the next steps you will take to make one change to become more gender-responsive in your approach to teaching and learning. If you want to start planning an action research project, there is more about that in Topic 5.1.

Define your own task, purpose, steps, timeframe and so on, and your first steps.

ACTIVITY A planned change

Action What is the planned change?

Purpose Why are you doing this? What do you plan to achieve?

Steps What steps can you break your task down into? What are your priorities?

Timeframe How long have you got?

Completion date?

Time (in hours) for task?

Who else will be involved?

What are the gaps? What do you need in order to do the task that you don't yet have? E.g.,

- people
- information
- equipment/ resources
- skills
- other

How will you get them?

How will you know if you have succeeded in your task?

Next steps you will take over the next month to get started on the task

To end this unit, here are some next steps that participants planned to follow up the workshop.

'Practise, apply, improve, share'

Practise and apply

Will do action plan and implement; talk to students

Keep gender issues in mind when planning and teaching

Use what I have learned in my classroom.

Work on debates in classes; invite gender specialist to debates

Create opportunities for girls to express themselves

Need to think about Mozambican context

Plan project of what I want girls to be in future; coordinate with colleagues

Incorporate it in school activities wherever possible as a school manager

Improve

Will help with ideas for projects already planned relating to teacher support

In review of curriculum assist reviewers to be more gender-sensitive.

Find ways of using the manual/ guide in existing interventions

Share

Share ideas with colleagues/ small circles/ groups

Integrate ideas into capacity building

Use activities to train senior management so that we can engage the whole school

As action items in meetings: wellness, retreats and training workshops

I will first orient my fellow teachers by using in-service training

Follow Action Guide steps and use activities and case studies as group tasks to help participants to be empathetic

Orient other schools.

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic (and unit), here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Assess the challenges and opportunities for the change/ changes you want to make
- Identify ways of making them part of a whole school approach
- Explore the action research approach
- Draw up a personal action plan, with short-term steps

UNIT 5 Approaches and methods

This last unit looks at approaches and methods you can use to help you make the changes you identify as you work through the Action Guide. These are approaches and methods that others have used in their task of making schools more gender-responsive.

- The unit aims to help you find out about the approaches and methods and their uses
- It will help you plan ways to implement these in order to make lasting changes

Before you start this unit, think about actions you are planning. You may have identified problems from doing the activities and reading the examples and case studies and be wondering what to do about them. As you work through this unit, see which of the approaches and methods can help. As you will see, they are closely linked and there is some overlap between them – particularly the cycle of plan-act-observe-reflect.

Topic 5.1 Action research

Action research is at the heart of the Action Gender in Schools Project. This topic will help you to:

- Outline possible uses of action research
- Identify problems in your own practice to which action research could be applied
- Plan an action research project

Topic 5.2 Gender analysis

Information is essential as a basis for action to become more gender-responsive. This topic will help you to:

- Explain why gender analysis is important
- Plan a gender analysis
- Think about appropriate methods

Topic 5.3 Change management

It may seem strange to have change as a topic in this unit as the whole of this Action Guide is about change. This topic will help you to:

- Have an overview of ways to make a change happen effectively
- Recognise reasons people may resist change, and think of ways of countering them

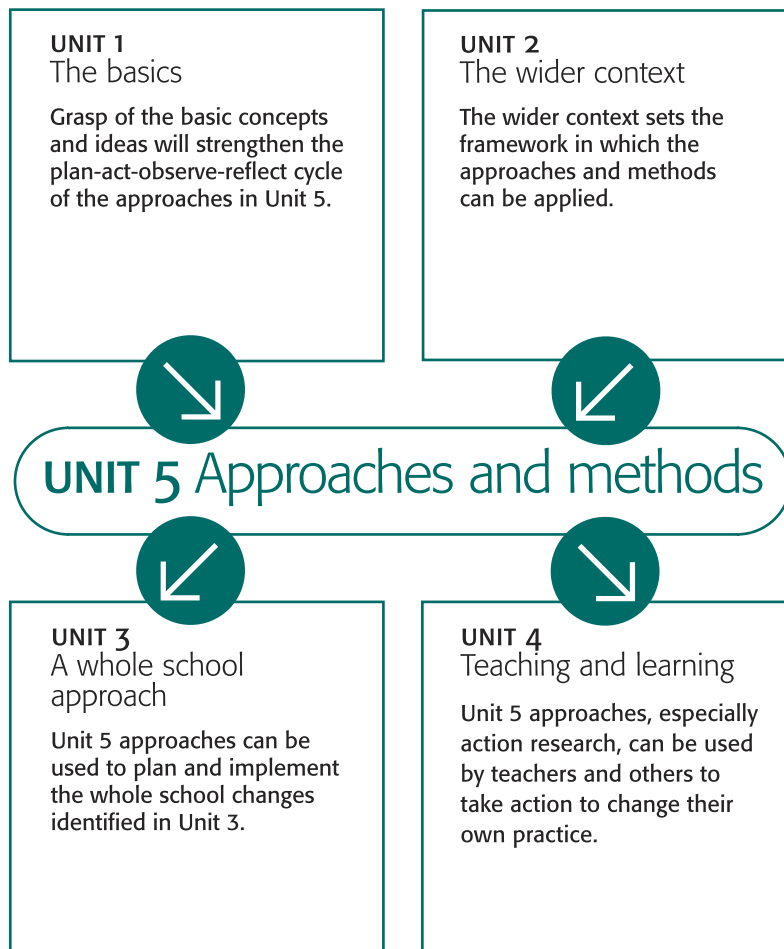
- Identify some of the leadership skills and capacities needed for change
- Apply ideas about change management to a change you want to make

Topic 5.4 Evaluation

Evaluation seems to come last, but it is something to think about early on, right at the start of any action. This topic will help you to:

- Decide what kind of evaluation suits your purpose
- Plan an evaluation to meet your needs

Links



Topic 5.1 Action research

Action research is at the heart of the Action Gender in Schools Project. It is being used by all the schools that have contributed their experiences to the project. It has been described as an empowering process that allows teachers and others to take action to improve their own practice.

This topic will help you to:

- Outline possible uses of action research
- Identify problems in your own practice to which action research could be applied
- Plan an action research project

Action research is research by a practitioner into her or his own practice in order to bring about change. In schooling it is a process by which a teacher or group of teachers and others investigate teaching and learning and other aspects of their work in order to make improvements or changes. Unlike in traditional research, this does not involve an outside expert who comes in, collects data and goes away to write up findings. The teacher-researcher is involved in researching her or his own activities, acting to change and improve them and finding new opportunities for continually improving practice.

What does all this mean in practice? Here is a case study of an action research project. As you read it, think about how this teacher:

- observed and analysed what was going on in her class
- planned what to do
- implemented her plan
- observed and analysed what happened
- reflected and learned from what happened
- planned a cycle of further action

Science action research project: Case study

Project title: Enhancing the achievement of boys in the topic thermochemistry using the DIY ('do it yourself') method

School: A public co-ed rural secondary school in Malaysia, with 1,703 students.

Approach

This project followed an action research model and the entire process was documented. This research was carried out with the intention of increasing students' achievement in chemistry, especially among boys. For the purpose of this research, I focused only on the topic of thermochemistry.

There are 11 boys and 17 girls in this class, Form 5. As a teacher, I'm not satisfied with my students' achievement and attitude, especially the boys. Even though this is the second best class in my school, the students' performance in mathematics and science subjects such as chemistry and physics is not encouraging. The girls' achievement is slightly better than the boys' but still not good enough. Out of the 11 boys, six or seven of them always failed to submit their assignments, exercises or homework. Only two girls always failed to submit their work, but from my observation and experience I know they copied each other's answers.

Both boys and girls love to carry out lab activities or experiments but only two or three boys and 15 girls submitted their lab report. They carried out experiments without really understanding what they are doing or the purpose of certain procedures, and could not answer the questions related to the experiments. They would always seek answers from me rather than trying to solve the problem themselves. I realised that my reaction to give them the answer straight away, without giving enough time for my students to think on their own, has led to this problem. I have to motivate my students and find the effective method to increase their achievement.

Specific objectives:

At the end of the research:

- i. There will be a narrowing of the gap in the achievement of boys and girls
- ii. Boys will be able to understand classroom instruction better
- iii. Boys will do and submit their assignments in chemistry

Preliminary data were collected from the students' results in the previous monthly test and term examination, a questionnaire and observation. Based on the students' response in the questionnaire, the D.I.Y. (do-it-yourself) method was applied to this target group. This method is an inquiry approach. Inquiry means that teachers design situations so that pupils can apply procedures that research scientists use to recognise problems, ask questions, apply investigational procedures and provide consistent descriptions, predictions and explanations that are compatible with shared experience of the physical world.

As a science teacher, I notice that boys love to carry out experiment or hands-on activities rather than listening to the teacher's lecture. If I can capture the boys' interest, I believe I can help them to improve their achievement.

The D.I.Y method gives a chance for the students to move around

during teaching and learning. Movement seems to help boys to not only stimulate their brains but also manage and relieve impulsive behaviour. Students have to complete the task (using worksheets designed by the teacher) in groups in order to gain knowledge and understand thermochemistry. Both girls and boys benefit from learning in teams and doing group work.

Activities undertaken

- Students were divided into seven groups and there were four members in each group. There were two boys and two girls in each group except for Group 6 (one boy, three girls) and Group 7 (all girls). I allowed my students to choose their own group members.
- I prepared five worksheets on thermochemistry according to the learning outcomes in the curriculum specification.
- Each group was assigned the five worksheets. The students gathered information from the textbook or reference book or other resources and carried out experiments in order to complete the worksheets.
- I didn't explain how to conduct the experiment. My students had to read and understand the procedures and discuss with their group members before they could carry out the experiment.
- Students then carried out their experiment and answered all the questions in the worksheets. Each member in the group then submitted their worksheets.
- My students were given 80 minutes to carry out each experiment.
- After I had checked their worksheets, the students and I discussed the outcome.
- The students answered questions from their textbook and submitted their work.
- One week after my students had completed all the five worksheets, I gave them a post-test.

Successes

I observed my students' behaviour in class during the teaching and learning sessions. Before I implemented the D.I.Y. method, only one boy and three girls always responded to my questions. When I asked them to solve problems on the blackboard, the same students would volunteer. When I asked the other students to do the same, they failed to do so. What I saw were only their confused and blank faces. Even after I gave them the clues or key words to solve the problems, they were still not confident in solving them. Every time I asked them questions, they would try to avoid answering them by looking at their textbooks or reference books and turning the pages or whispering to each other. The words that always came out from their mouth were 'difficult', 'cannot remember' and 'don't understand'.

After I implemented the D.I.Y. method, my students, especially boys, were more confident in responding to questions orally. The boys

answered my questions with a louder voice and more boys volunteered to solve problems on the blackboard. Boys' achievement in the post-tests showed a significant improvement. Only two boys failed the test and six boys were among the top ten. After I implemented the D.I.Y. method I found out that the number of students who submitted their lab report/ worksheet increased. Even though not all the students submitted their work, the total number of students, especially boys, that submitted their work increased. Both boys and girls showed good teamwork spirit.

I felt happy because the girls also showed an improvement. Eleven out of seventeen girls passed the thermochemistry test (one girl did not sit for the test). Both the boys and girls showed good teamwork. Through my observation, I found out that the girls preferred to gather information or read about examples of similar experiments from reference books before they carried out the experiments. In contrast, the boys started to do the experiments without spending too much time on reading. They looked more confident, even though sometime they did not take the correct apparatus needed for the experiment and did not follow the correct procedures to conduct the experiment.

Challenges

My students still depend on me to spoon-feed them with answers. This may be due to the old habit of being spoon-fed whenever they could not answer any question. This has been the norm since primary school. The Malaysian education system is so exam-oriented that most teachers have to finish their syllabus within a specified time frame before students can sit for any examination. This leads to teachers having to rush as they cannot wait for the students to 'build up' their understanding and confidence. Teachers tend to spoon-feed to make sure students get the correct answers, hoping that they would excel in their examination.

Future Plan

I plan to apply the D.I.Y. method to my students in other classes.

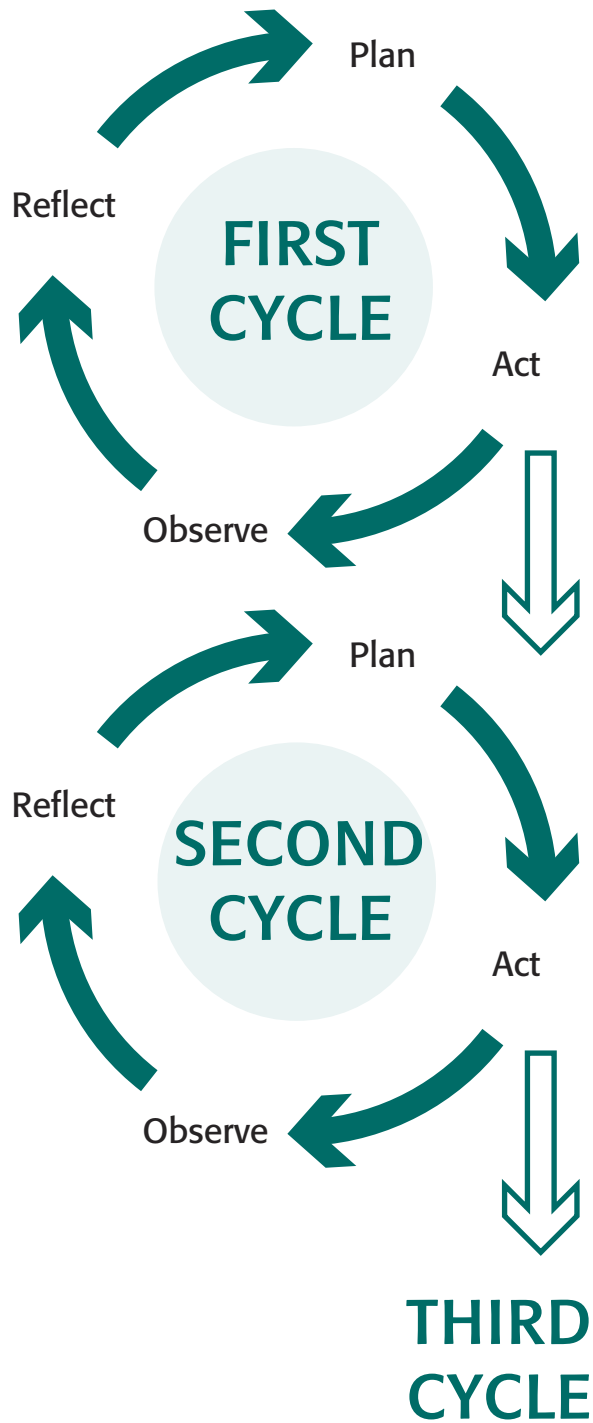
Sustainability and expansion

In my opinion, the D.I.Y. method can be applied to any subjects, in any school, with a little bit of adjustment so as to suit the students' ability. It is good if the education district officers can gather the teachers and develop a manual, module or teaching tools that are more sensitive and responsive to gender.

[MALAYSIA ACTION PROJECT]

As well as giving an example of an action research project, this account also shows how the changes in teaching and learning have benefited the girls as well as the boys. Does the project reflect your experiences? Or do you perhaps face a situation where the girls are lacking in confidence, are underachieving and need a different approach?

Even if you need a different approach, the action research steps remain the same. The case study shows the four action research steps.



1 Plan

- Identify the problem – it should be a manageable problem that can be researched
- Analyse the problem – think about what might be causing the problem
- Think about a solution and how to implement it
- Think about what evidence you will need to decide whether your action is successful or not

2 Act

- Implement your solution.

3 Observe

- Observe the activities to decide whether your solution was successful or not
- You can collect many types of evidence (e.g., students' work, other documents like lessons plans, field notes, observations, questionnaires, student and teacher journals)

4 Reflect

- Analyse the evidence you have gathered. Has the problem been solved? If not, how will you continue to a second cycle? If yes, what problem will you try to solve now?

When an action project is conceptualised for a classroom, it usually involves engagement of teachers and students only. But when it is conceptualised for the school as a whole, it involves engagement of students, teachers, the principal and often parents and the community as well.

Now here's an activity to help you analyse the thermochemistry DIY project.

ACTIVITY Benefits of action research

Look at the case study.
Summarise how it uses the four stages

plan

act

observe

reflect

What do you think are the benefits of action research in this case study?

Do you think the same results could have been achieved in any other way? If so, how?

ACTIVITY 5.1.1

One teacher's comment about action research is, 'I have learned that a teacher can act as a change agent.' The case study shows this teacher making changes in a planned, reflective way.

Here is one project's view of the strengths of action research – the internal perspective of those inside the school seeking to improve it.

Conceptualisation of the action research project in Trinidad and Tobago

Problem Statement

The dominant experience of school reform in Trinidad and Tobago has been a top down approach where interventions are 'rolled out' from the Ministry of Education through rhetoric and supported by some workshops for teachers. Consequently, teachers create strategies to accommodate their understanding of the reforms without much change to their traditional practice. Reforms are notoriously unsuccessful even though millions are spent to upgrade education and make it more effective.

This Action Gender Research Project is an attempt to seek reform from the ground up by having teachers at a school investigate the nature of gender inequities and devise the means to address the problem. Deeply embedded in our schools, and indeed in the society, are gender

stereotypes and gendered ways of thinking and acting that put certain categories of persons at risk. For example, boys in all types of schools are underachieving and under-participating in the life of the school.

To address the problem, more is needed than well-meaning, large-scale interventions that begin with the Ministry of Education. While Ministry support is vital, the project is more meaningfully addressed by teachers in their new role as 'researchers', the ones with intimate knowledge of the context and its day-to-day manifestations. Meeting as a focus group, teachers at a school discuss the issue and take responsibility for conducting an empirical study. Based on the findings they design an intervention and implement it. They co-opt teachers or other stakeholders into the project as they better understand the issue. They publicise their findings and ideas about interventions to the staff and parents for feedback. In this way, the project unfolds with an internal perspective – insiders seeking school improvement.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

In thinking about using the action research approach, the first question is: how do you decide what to research?

In the context of this Action Guide, action research topics may come out of Units 3 and 4. Your analysis of schooling and classroom processes, problems and possible changes, teaching and learning approaches, and underachievement will probably throw up a wide range of possibilities for individual teachers, for groups of teachers or for a whole school approach. Or you may have come to the Action Guide with a view from the start of the problems you want to solve.

Here is a variety of action research ideas from different projects. The example shows how four schools began with initial problem statements and then examined specific areas to investigate.

Action research ideas: India

- 1 Students are inhibited and cannot articulate their problems to teachers.
- 2 Boys involvement in cultural activities is poor.
- 3 Poor sanitation and toilet facilities in the school create health problems for girls.
- 4 Many posts of teachers are vacant in the schools leading to non-completion of curriculum.
- 5 Lack of discipline in the students forces teachers to be strict.
- 6 Some boys and girls are shy and lack confidence.
- 7 Students are not motivated for self-study at home.
- 8 Handwriting of the students in Hindi language is poor. They make spelling mistakes.

- 9 Students under-perform in mathematics and English.
- 10 The rate of absenteeism is high
- 11 There are inadequate facilities for sports especially for girls.

Each school team then identified a subject area that they wanted to understand in depth and arrive at some school-based solutions. The areas of action research that were finalised during the workshop include:

School A

The school team identified that most students make various spelling mistakes in Hindi language writing. They decided that they would work towards 'Improving spelling in Hindi language writing of the students'. They planned to work with students of Class XI.

School B

The mathematics teacher shared that there were several students who under-performed in maths and made careless mistakes. The team decided that they would focus their action research on 'Improving the performance of the students in mathematics'. Both boys and girls who had obtained marks below 30 per cent in mathematics in the class tests would be identified and special efforts would be made with them.

School C

The issue identified by the school team was to 'Improve the handwriting of students in Hindi'. It was also proposed that short case studies of girls who had enrolled for the agriculture course in the past two years be taken up to assess the impact of incentives for girls.

School D

The school team proposed that they would work towards 'Improving the labelling of the diagrams in science'.

The time period for the action research was decided as three months.

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

In the second set of ideas, boys' underachievement is perceived as the main problem. They show how gender-related action research projects could take place in any department or subject. The ideas are framed as initial problem statements. The next step would be to break down these problems into more detail and develop specific objectives for the action research.

Action research ideas: Seychelles

- 1 Use memory as a strategy to improve boys' performance and reduce the gender disparity (Maths Department)
- 2 Improving boys' performance in English-speaking tests (English Department)
- 3 Gender preference of different technological context. (Technology and Enterprise)

- 4 Boys as leaders (English Department)
- 5 To get the boys to share the same interest as the girls so as to reduce the stereotyping issue and improve the boys' performance in French (French Department)
- 6 Boys monitoring their own behaviour: Learning as a change in behaviour (PSE and careers)
- 7 The academic effectiveness of gender balance in group work (Social studies Department)
- 8 Improving collaboration between boys and girls in Religion class (Religion teacher)
- 9 How learning is manifested in a changing of behaviour (History)
- 10 Learning modalities in the classroom (Maths)
- 11 Boys' involvement in environmental activities (ICT)
- 12 Literature and gender (English)

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

We hope the case study and these examples of topics will have given you further ideas about what is possible. Now try to identify possibilities from the work you have done through the Action Guide.

ACTIVITY **Reviewing action research ideas**

Go through your activities (for example 3.2.9, 4.6.4 and 4.6.5) and make a list of possibilities for action research projects. Try to list at least five to start with.

1

2

3

4

5

As you start planning, a word of warning. Action research can at times become quite a narrow, technical approach to solving one problem – the steps are followed, an improvement is made and the matter is closed. The focus is on more efficient and effective practice (e.g., ‘improve boys’ exam results’), but it may ignore wider gender issues (e.g., boys’ sense of masculine identity, which affects their learning). This may happen with the classroom type of action research.

But action research can be broadened to a more participatory process. Then the teachers involved play a full part in designing the research. They approach it with critical awareness and a view to creating deeper change, not just practical improvements. The related terms ‘participatory action research’, ‘emancipatory action research’ or ‘participatory action learning’ carry that flavour. In the reflection phase, always leave room for the questions ‘so what?’ ‘what else?’ and ‘what was unexpected?’ Think about how to share findings, how to make changes sustainable and how to move on to the next phase.

ACTIVITY Action research plan

Choose one change identified in Unit 3 or 4 and draft an action research plan. This could be an individual teacher’s classroom project or a collaborative, participatory project. Follow the basic steps.

1 Plan

2 Act

3 Observe

4 Reflect

Review

As in earlier units, at the end of this topic here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of this topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- Describe how action research can be used
- List problems that could be tackled by action research
- Plan an action research project

Topic 5.2 Gender analysis

Information is essential as a basis for action to become more gender-responsive. Having sound data allows you to identify problems and gaps. It gives you a picture of the current situation and needs. It makes it possible to plan action. It gives you a framework to assess a situation at the start and to monitor and evaluate during and at the end of an action/ project.

This topic will help you:

- Explain why gender analysis is important
- Plan a gender analysis
- Think about appropriate methods for conducting this

Gender analysis starts by asking simple questions about the impact(s) of a policy, situation or service on women and men. For example:

- Who does what?
- Who has what?
- Who decides?
- Who gains, who loses?

Gender analysis is the key process to obtain information to underpin action. It involves both quantitative data (which can be measured, e.g., the number of girls and boys in a school) and qualitative analysis (which focuses on meaning and experience, e.g., why fewer girls than boys are taking science classes).

There is a mass of literature and evidence about gender analysis in the wider development context that:

- Examines the differences in women's and men's lives, including those that lead to social and economic inequity
- Applies this understanding to policy development and service delivery
- Is concerned with the underlying causes of these inequities
- Aims to achieve positive change for women

Gender analysis asks systematic questions about differences between men and women in a given population or context. It examines their roles, constraints, beliefs and incentives. It involves collecting sex-disaggregated

data – in other words, data that presents information separately for women and men, boys and girls.

There are several gender analysis frameworks widely used in development. The best known are the Harvard Framework, the Longwe Framework, the Gender Analysis Matrix and the Social Relations Approach. Each has a particular focus and its own strengths and weaknesses.

You may already have experience of these frameworks in use, or have been involved in a gender analysis exercise. If so, think about what you learned from the experience. You may find the following checklist of questions helps your reflection. (If this is your introduction to gender analysis, you needn't do this activity.)

ACTIVITY Experience of gender analysis

Was the analysis focused more on efficiency or equity?

Did it include women's empowerment?

Did it use participatory methods and develop gender analysis capacity in the people affected?

Did it consider relations between people involved and issues of power?

How useful would it be in a school context?

ACTIVITY 5.2.1

Your answers will depend on your experience, but the activity should have helped you start thinking about gender analysis in schools. The frameworks listed above are not specifically designed for educational settings and would need to be modified for use in schools. The following resources could more easily be adapted to suit the local context and schools. Further details about them are included at the end of this topic.

- Leach, F (2003) *Practising Gender Analysis in Education*, Oxfam Skills and Practice Series, Oxfam GB, Oxford
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2004) *GENIA Toolkit for Promoting Gender Equality in Education*, UNESCO, Bangkok

This Action Guide, as explained in the Introduction, has been developed from the research studies 'Gender Analysis of Classroom and Other Schooling Processes in Secondary Schools', which the Commonwealth Secretariat supported in 2007. Those final studies show that data were gathered systematically and analysed to provide the foundation for future action. They have provided much of the background and examples for this Action Guide. Each covered:

Profiles of the schools

Findings

Classrooms and outside classroom processes

Principals' and teachers' expectations and perceptions

Students' aspirations and motivations

Gender analysis of school textbooks

School system process and practices

Recommendations

Read the examples that follow from three of the research studies. First, here is more detail of a gender analysis process for a school.

Data for a gender analysis

An extensive programme of gender analysis was undertaken in Rajasthan in India as part of the Commonwealth Secretariat project. It covered four senior secondary schools in urban areas of Jaipur. It was decided that the following information was needed to observe the interplay of gender in schooling processes at the level of everyday school practice and experience.

Quantitative data

General Information

Name of school

Type of school

Level of school

Co-ed/single-sex

Number of teachers

Male

Female

Total

Numbers of teachers by grade

Enrolment in surveyed schools

Boys and girls by class /total

Caste-wise enrolment

Infrastructure facilities

No. of classrooms

Drinking water

Electricity

Toilet facilities

Common

Male

Female

Water facilities

Library facility

Separate library room

Number of books

Playground

Games boys/ girls

Computers (no.)

Qualitative data

Based on observations, focus group discussions with students, teachers, administrative staff and in-depth interviews with principals and education managers. The findings are organised under the following heads:

- Classroom and outside classroom processes – classroom setting, teacher time and attention, student participation, non-classroom activities
- Teachers expectations, perceptions, language and behaviour – self-image, equity issues and school policies, attitudes towards gender equality, teacher expectations from students, violence and abuse, training, guidance and counselling
- Textbooks and other learning materials – social science, English, Hindi, science
- School management processes and practices – awareness of gender, delegation of tasks, expectation from students, curriculum training, staff meetings, views of administrative staff
- Students' aspirations, expectations, perceptions, language and behaviour. Self-image, aspirations and prevailing notions, roles and responsibilities within household, within the school, teacher attention and behaviour, extra-curricular activities, ensuring safe environment

- School system processes and practices – gender equality and schooling, continuing problem areas, assessment of male and female principals, position of women teachers, gender-specific issues, training, gender-friendly schools

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

Second, here is a checklist that can be used to check in more depth qualitative details about classroom and outside classroom processes from a gender point of view.

Checklist for students

What gender inequities/imbances exist at school?

| | Who is advantaged? | Who is disadvantaged? | Reasons |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Classroom</i> Seating arrangements Teacher attention Praise/reward Participation in lessons Punishment Duty rosters • <i>Lessons</i> Choice of topics Teaching style Language • <i>Performance</i> Classwork Exams Homework Awards • <i>Participation</i> Extra-curricular activities National competitions • <i>Posts of responsibility</i> Prefects School committees • <i>Discipline</i> Dress code Code of conduct • <i>Use of space/resources</i> Playground Specialist rooms/ comp. rooms | | | |

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

The third example offers a framework for gender analysis of textbooks.

Gender analysis of textbooks and other textual materials

School:

Title of text/ materials:

Author:

Type of text:

Textbook/ e-book

Teacher-made materials

Supplementary materials

Other, CD-Roms

Subject:

Class:

No. of girls:

No. of boys:

Guiding Questions

Illustrations

Do the illustrations depict males and females -

1. in equal or close to equal numbers?
2. clearly, in images similar in size, position and aesthetics (e.g., colour)?
3. in a variety of roles, traditional and non-traditional?
4. in ways that are likely to interest students?
5. in ways that are complemented by the text?
6. displaying similar levels of power, authority, passiveness, and/or control?

Content

Does the text include -

1. significant contributions made by males and females (to the family, country, professions)?
2. a wide variety of roles played by males and females, of different ages, ethnicities, and socio-economic status?
3. equal use of gendered pronouns (e.g., 'his', 'him' or 'he', and 'hers', 'her' or 'she')?
4. gendered pronouns that are not intended to be generic (in certain languages the masculine form can be used generically; does the text point this out? Does it suggest alternative ways of expressing this)?
5. non-stereotypical and non-prejudicial terms (e.g., rather than 'chairman', 'mankind' or 'stewardess', 'chair', 'humanity' and 'flight attendant' are used)?
6. portrayals of women's lives as interesting and problematic (and not just in terms of their roles as wives, mothers and daughters)?
7. a balance of the public and private spheres (e.g., evidence of men and women combining traditional and non-traditional roles)?
8. problematising gender issues where relevant?
9. a view of gender as socially constructed (rather than as essential, binary categories that are fixed and immutable)?
10. attempts to portray men's lives as a gendered group (and not as

invisible, neutral beings who represent the 'standard', whilst women are visible to emphasise their 'difference' – e.g., the possibility of a male being fearful, sad, lonely)?

11. attempts to analyse historical figures in a balanced way (e.g. Columbus not only as a heroic portrayal of hegemonic masculinity – courage, leadership – but as responsible for genocide, violence and destruction)?
12. attempts to portray males and females not in stereotypical terms of man being the oppressor and women as victims but as both being implicated in structures of stratification based on ethnicity, social class and gender
13. a view of gender as a performance evoking a range of masculinities and femininities (moving away from binary positions of motherhood/ fatherhood, femininity/masculinity, women/men; one is 'doing' gender at any one moment, not 'being' a gender)?

Pedagogy

Do the learning approaches and assumptions about learning in the text –

1. require exercises that call for reflection, communication and negotiation (providing opportunities for understanding self and others, examining stereotypes, prejudices and the Other).
2. allow for various voices and different perspectives (e.g., masculinities and femininities, encouraging empathy)?
3. emphasise constructivist pedagogies that portray knowledge as malleable and unfinished (e.g., changing conceptions of gender over historical time)?
4. focus on the dismantling of 'revealed truths'/'facts' (i.e., a critical stance to knowledge as it has been packaged and organised)?
5. utilise interdisciplinary learning experiences/ways of expressing e.g., art, literature, science, social sciences, mathematics, agriculture, cookery, music and technology (helping to break down stereotypes leading to gendered subject knowledge)?

Notes:

1. The reviewer may select a portion of a text to examine [say 30 pages] but this has to be done in relation to the whole text and its content, e.g., a chapter where gender is important may not be selected if the whole text is not given a preliminary examination.
2. We may need to narrow the selection of subjects to ensure greater comparability across sites.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

If you did Activity 3.1.4 Planning a gender analysis, you will have drafted your first thoughts about gender analysis, considering the following questions:

- Why do you need the information for a gender analysis?
- What kind of information do you need?
- What will be the main issues to examine?
- What do you think are the main information gaps?

Look back at that activity now. The next activity develops it further.

ACTIVITY Gender analysis plan

Develop a more detailed framework of the information you will need to build up full information about your school as a basis for action to become more gender-responsive. Include both quantitative and qualitative information.

Here the headings from the India project gender analysis are used as a guide.

General information

Name of school

Type of school

Level of school

Co-ed/single-sex

Number of teachers

Male

Female

Total

Numbers of teachers by grade

Enrolment

Boys and girls by class/total

Infrastructure facilities

No. of classrooms

Drinking water

Electricity

Toilet facilities

Common/ male/ female

Water facilities

Library facility

Separate library room

Number of books

Playground

Games boys/ girls

Computers (no.)

Qualitative data

- Classroom and outside classroom processes
- Teachers expectations, perceptions, language and behaviour
- Textbooks and other learning materials
- School management processes and practices
- Students' aspirations, expectations, perceptions, language and behaviour.
- School system processes and practices

Gender analysis is a form of research so you do need to take into account such issues as your approach, methods and data collection. Here are some tips:

Approach

- Treat participants with respect: explain what you are doing and get their agreement
- This includes your students: listen to them carefully and give them a chance to speak
- Respect confidentiality and anonymity
- Involve participants, giving them a chance to challenge accounts and discuss findings
- When asking personal questions, work with individuals rather than groups
- For sensitive topics (e.g., reproductive health) work with single-sex rather than mixed groups
- Above all, make sure the research process is gender-sensitive and matches your basic principles of equity and fairness

Choosing methods

- Think about what methods are feasible in terms of time, resources, skills and expertise
- Pilot your methods – e.g., get someone to try out a questionnaire; for interviews, run through your questions with someone from the target group
- Think in advance how you will analyse and interpret data and allow time for this
- Make sure your methods/ questions will give the information you need (e.g., if you want to know about the quality of girls' experience, information about survival/ drop out rates will not be enough)

Collecting data

- Don't collect too much information – beware information overload
- Keep your data organised as you go along – set up a filing or index card system; sort it into themes and topics
- Be systematic – it's easy to collect information, harder to make sense of it later.

Now have a go at the next activity to help you think how you might carry out a gender analysis.

ACTIVITY Gender analysis methods

How can the information best be collected?

What would be appropriate methods?

How can you ensure that the methods used are gender-sensitive?

ACTIVITY 5.2.3

Your replies will depend on your context and what is feasible and realistic. Before starting a gender analysis process, discuss your suggested methods and approach with colleagues and get their feedback.

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic, here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Explain why gender analysis is important and how it can be applied to schooling
- Plan a gender analysis
- Think about appropriate methods for conducting this

Resources for gender analysis in schools

These contents lists give an overview of different approaches and what is available.

Leach, F (2003) *Practising Gender Analysis in Education*, Oxfam Skills and Practice Series, Oxfam GB

Outline contents

1. Introduction

Why we need gender analysis in education

Gender debates

Gender mainstreaming

The role of gender analysis in achieving gender equality in education

2. Key concepts in gender and education

Gender concepts

Education concepts

3. Choosing your gender analysis tools

Can these tools be used with men and boys?

4. The Harvard Framework

Case study 1: a Nigerian teacher training college

Case study 2: BRAC in Bangladesh

5. Women's Empowerment Framework

Case study 1: the Tanzania Primary Education Project

Case study 2: the Reflect programme in Ghana

6. The Gender Analysis Matrix

Case study 1: a women's silk-reeling project in India

Case study 2: the Reflect programme in Malawi

7. The Social Relations Approach

Case study: HIV / AIDS education in Uganda

8. Curriculum-materials analysis

Case study 1: a primary textbook from Malawi

Case study 2: a primary reader for India

Proposals for improvement

9. Participatory tools for analysis and action

Limitations of the participatory approach

Participatory tools

Case study: pupil's workshop materials on abuse in African schools

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2004) *GENIA Toolkit for Promoting Gender Equality in Education*, UNESCO, Bangkok

The GENIA Toolkit was designed to be a cluster of resources for use by education planners and implementers to incorporate gender equality into their work. This 2004 version has been revised and expanded with tools for Classroom Observation Tools and a Gender Lens for Community Learning Centers (CLCs).

Outline contents

1. How to Use Your GENIA Toolkit
2. The 'More-Than-an-Agenda'
3. Gender Definitions
4. Statements about Women and Men
5. Gender Equality Donkey
6. Climbing the Steps: Gender Equity to Gender Equality
7. Background 'What is a Gender Lens?'
8. Definition of Gender Mainstreaming & Gender Mainstreaming Cycle
9. Guidelines for Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating Gender-Responsive EFA Plans.
10. Gender Lens for Education Projects
11. Gender Lens for Measuring the Child-Friendliness of Schools
12. Gender Lens to Create Curriculum and Textbooks Free of Gender Bias
13. Gender Lens to Measure the Gender-Friendliness of MoE Departments
14. Gender Lens to Measure the Gender-Responsiveness of Community Learning Centres (CLCs)
15. Classroom Observation Tools: Guidelines for How to Conduct Classroom Observations from a Gender Perspective.
16. Slide Show: Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA)
17. Eleven Ways to Obtain Participation

Available for download at : <http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=4626>

Topic 5.3 Change management

It may seem strange to have change as a topic in this unit as the whole of this Action Guide is about change. However, it is important to note that there are many methodologies and models for introducing and managing change in organisations of all kinds. Much can be learned from them to help with the process of changing schools to become more gender-responsive:

This topic will help you to:

- Have an overview of ways to make a change happen effectively
- Recognise reasons people may resist change and think of ways of countering them
- Identify some of the leadership skills and capacities needed for change
- Apply ideas about change management to a change you want to make

Change management means the effective management of change in any organisation, to ensure that everyone works together to implement new methods and approaches successfully. It recognises that people may be resistant to change, so it is important to get everyone committed from the start. All this applies as much to schools as to any other organisation.

There are a number of models of the change process. A simple one was developed by Kurt Lewin* (who also first coined the term 'action research'). He described change as a three-stage process:

- 1 **Unfreezing** – overcoming the existing mindset and attitudes that maintain the status quo.
- 2 **Moving** – when the change occurs, shifting behaviours and attitudes to the new state. Typically this is a time of transition and confusion.
- 3 **Freezing (or refreezing)** when the new situation becomes the norm and people become comfortable again.

* Lewin, K (1946) 'Action research and minority issues', *Journal of Social Sciences*, 2 (4), pp. 34-46.

However, change in real life is likely to be more complex. The last stage is often not a final point of arrival but the start of a new round of change. The more current concept of the 'learning organisation' recognises that change is a continual process involving things like shared vision and team learning. So there is no refreezing phase after unfreezing and moving; rather, continuous learning becomes the new organisational culture. Like action research, change management is a cycle that leads on to the future.

A planned change, like action research, includes the steps of:

- Plan (diagnosis, planning, setting objectives)
- Act (implementation),
- Observe (collecting data, monitoring)
- Reflect (evaluation)

But change management recognises what bringing about change in an organisation involves. Remember, change is a journey, not a single step.

Think about your own experience of change to see what all this means in practice. Name one change in your school that has taken place over the last two years (e.g., change from single-sex to mixed-sex classes, introduction of new national curriculum, change in school hours) and answer the questions in the activity below.

ACTIVITY Experience of change

What was the change?

Who initiated the change?

Describe briefly the process of change (for example, how was it planned, implemented and evaluated?)

Who welcomed it?

Who opposed it?

Was it well managed or badly managed?

What could have been done differently?

How did the change make you feel?

Positive feelings

Negative feelings

This activity will have helped you reflect on your own experience of change. You may have noted that there can be negative as well as positive feelings about change, and we look at these next.

Resistance to change is very natural. Change means stepping into the unknown. Change calls for energy and enthusiasm. Recognising common kinds of resistance, and being prepared, makes them easier to deal with. You can challenge them, focusing on the behaviour rather than becoming too personal.

We haven't got a problem here

It's not our main priority

The problem's not that bad

Girls can succeed if they try

It's the boys' own fault

We can't change because ...

So what are some signs of resistance? It might appear as:

Gossip

grumbling and complaining

Testing

challenging decisions, e.g.,
not turning up to a meeting

Individual action

depending on individual's
position, influence

Collective action

organised resistance is
usually a sign of a deeper
divide and serious issues

Covert resistance

e.g., sabotage

Overt resistance

open argument, refusal,
attack

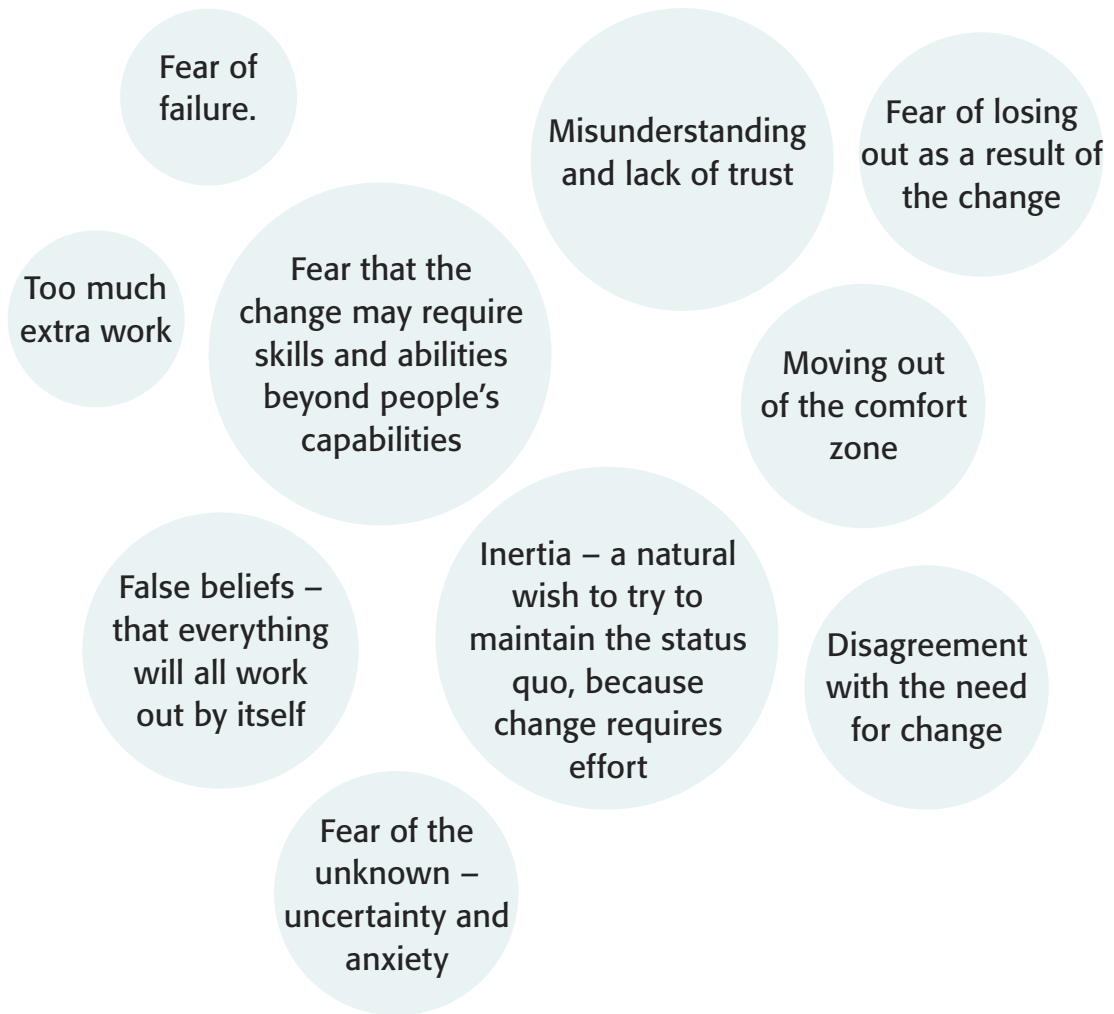
Passive resistance

e.g., apparently agreeing,
then doing nothing

Active resistance

deliberate action to oppose
change, public statements
and acts of resistance

Understanding the reasons can help to tackle the resistance. Some of the reasons people give for being against change are given below.



Remember, resistance in a school can come from anywhere – the principal, managers, admin. and support staff, teachers, parents, other stakeholders or the pupils themselves.

So what are the **strategies for overcoming resistance** to change?

Some common ways are:

- Education and communication – raising awareness through presenting facts, debate, persuasion, advocacy
- Participation and involvement – a collaborative approach involving change champions, partnerships and networks
- Facilitation and support – enabling not controlling change, participant-centred, using a questioning technique, drawing out people’s experience to guide the process of change
- Negotiation and agreement – jointly addressing problems, problem-solving approaches
- Confrontation and provocation may sometimes be needed, but without being disrespectful

As you can see, these are approaches that reflect the general approach of the Action Guide, with a stress on communication and participation.

However, two more approaches are:

- Manipulation and co-optation
- Coercion, implicit or explicit

These two are power strategies using authority, position, pressure or threat. They may bring a quick change, but other strategies will be needed to sustain it. They are more likely to lead to a backlash.

Look back again at Activity 5.3.1. See if any of these signs, reasons and strategies were present in your example of change.

Leadership for change

Looking at change shows it is a complex process. It calls for leadership qualities and skills, besides all the gender-related knowledge, skills and attitudes and school and teaching-related skills you’ve looked at so far.

Leadership can come from above – from recognised leaders like the principal or management – but it can also come from below in a school, from the individual teacher with vision and personal drive who can become a champion for change. In this case, advocacy, lobbying, influencing and networking skills are particularly important.

Look at the list of skills in the next activity. Assess yourself and think about your own development needs.

ACTIVITY Building capacity for change

Look at the list of skills.

Tick the skills you think you need to bring about change in your context.

Rate yourself 1 – 3

(1 = no good at this; 2 = OK at this; 3 = brilliant at this)

- Advocacy
- Build partnerships
- Capacity building
- Communicate well
- Deal with resistance
- Draw on allies
- Draw on other people's skills
- Draw others into the process
- Facilitation
- Influence + influence upwards
- Leadership
- Lobbying
- Networking
- Make hard choices
- Presentations/ speak in public
- Reflection
- Risk taking
- Set priorities
- Strategic planning
- Think strategically
- Work collaboratively

What training/ staff development could help you build the skills you need?

How can you get it?

Finally, here's an activity to apply the change management approach to a planned change you want to make after working through the Action Guide. This could be a change you identified in Topic 5.1 Action research. Think about possible resistance and ways of overcoming it.

ACTIVITY **Change plan**

What is the planned change?

What are the steps (refer back to Activity 5.1.3)

What resistance is likely?

How will you overcome it?

What skills and capabilities will you need?

ACTIVITY 5.3.3

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic, here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Apply ideas about change management to your own experience of change
- Recognise common forms of resistance to change and ways of overcoming them
- Plan a change in your school in the light of what you have learned in this topic

Topic 5.4 Evaluation

Evaluation seems to come last – last of the approaches in this unit and last topic in the Action Guide. But it is something to think about early on, right at the start of any action, action research, gender analysis or planned change. Planning the evaluation, and the monitoring involved, should be part of the original project design.

This topic will help you to:

- Decide what kind of evaluation suits your purpose
- Plan an evaluation to meet your needs

Evaluation is not a one-off event; it is a continuous process. The approaches and methods in this unit – action research, gender analysis and change management – each include forms of evaluation. However, this topic looks more at forms of whole project evaluation.

First, think of any experience you have of carrying out an evaluation, or of being involved in a project that was evaluated. (If you have no experience of evaluation, you can skip this activity.)

Thinking of your own experiences, write short notes in answer to the questions.

ACTIVITY Experience of evaluation

What was being evaluated?

What was the purpose of the evaluation?

Overall, do you think the evaluation was satisfactory?

What went well?

What could have been better?

Now we ask you to think about evaluation in general, leading up to a checklist of key questions you can use in designing an evaluation for your own purpose. We start with the usual key questions – Why? What? When? Who? How?

Evaluation

Why?

What is the purpose of the evaluation?

For example, to:

- Demonstrate that a project's objectives have been successfully met (summative evaluation)
- Provide feedback for future improvements/ progress (formative evaluation)
- Provide a chance for reflection
- Satisfy evaluation requirements of an external body, e.g., a donor, that a project has been properly conducted
- Make information collected through the project more readily available
- Evaluate costs and benefits, financial and other
- Offer recommendations for future activities
- Assess the social impact
- Check that a project had been done efficiently and completed in the short term
- Check that a project has been effective and has the intended long-term impact

What?

What exactly will be evaluated and what information is required?

- Will the evaluation involve mainly
 - quantitative data – e.g., numbers of pupils, survival rates, class sizes
 - qualitative data – e.g., changes in behaviour, reactions, teachers' views and attitudes
 - or both
- What scale of monitoring and evaluation is proportionate for the size of project/ activity?
- What are the indicators; they need to be defined early so that the information can be collected at the right time.
- Does the evaluation include questions like: is the activity sustainable? Can it be replicated? Will lessons be shared?

When?

At what stage/ stages will the evaluation take place?

- At key points during an activity or project? On completion?
- At what stage/ stages will information have to be collected?
- At what stage will it be analysed and evaluated?

Who?**Who is the evaluation aimed at?**

(Who the evaluation is for is a defining factor in deciding its purpose, e.g., if it is for an external body, with set evaluation requirements.)

- Who will carry out the evaluation?
 - external evaluation by an outside organisation or expert?
 - internal evaluation eg by a member of staff?
- A self-evaluation involving all?
- A participatory process of evaluation, where everyone involved also plays a part in defining objectives and methods?
- Who is responsible for
 - designing the evaluation?
 - monitoring and collecting information?
 - analysing information and reaching conclusions?

How?**What methods are appropriate for the monitoring and evaluation?**

- Collection of statistical and quantitative data?
- Analysis of written records?
- Questionnaires?
- Interviews?
- Meetings or discussions?
- Self-evaluation?
- Other?

How will the evaluation be presented?

- Formal written report?
- Presentation?
- Action plan for improvements/ next stage?
- Other?

Reflection on findings

It is important not just to show that everything has been a success but also to reflect on the evaluation findings. Leave time to ask questions:

- What happened that was unexpected and unforeseen?
- What were the weaknesses as well as the strengths?
- What has been learned that can offer pointers to the future?
- How will the next cycle of change or improvement happen?
- Who will be responsible for reflection, and for drawing wider lessons from the evaluation?

Here is an example of a project monitoring form from the Seychelles project. The questions, data collection and analysis methods were defined at the start.

Monitoring form

Project title: Reducing gender disparity in the classroom

Action to be taken: sensitisation of staff, parents, students

Expected outcomes: teachers, students, parents are gender sensitised

Researching the action: generating data for reflecting about the consequences of the action

| Researching about the practices | Data to be collected | Collection method |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who were involved in the planning and organisation? Who were the facilitators? | Names of organisers and facilitators | From the organisation programme |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What organisations were set up at school level? Who were involved? | Lists of any special organisation set up and names of those involved | From the organisation programme |

| Researching about the participants | Data to be collected | Collection method |
|--|--|---|
| Who were the participants? | Name of participants | Attendance lists and evaluation forms |
| What were the participants' reactions and feelings? | Participants' reactions to the session | Evaluation forms, note discussions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did they participate? Attendance? | Participants level of participation/enthusiasm | Photos, record discussions in journals, note taking |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of gender-sensitised experts at school • What level of school organisation expertise/leadership are coming from | <p>Special considerations</p> <p><i>Administrative</i> <i>Financial</i></p> <p>Focus group discussions and assigning of task for writing reports</p> |
| <p>Type of organisation required</p> | <p>Focus group discussions and assigning of task for writing reports</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Data analysis</p> <p>Who participated and how many</p> | <p>Special considerations</p> <p><i>Administrative</i> <i>Financial</i></p> <p>Focus group discussions and assigning of task for writing reports</p> |
| <p>Participants' feelings/prior knowledge about gender</p> | <p>Focus group discussions and assigning of task for writing reports</p> |
| <p>Participants' interactions during the session/interests/concerns</p> | <p>Focus group discussions and assigning of task for writing reports</p> |

| Researching about the situation | Data to be collected | Collection method |
|--|----------------------|--|
| What were the reactions of others who were not directly involved? | Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Informal discussions • Meetings |
| What was generated at school level? [SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT] | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Focus group discussions |

Now choose an activity or project you have planned during the Action Guide (for example, in Activity 5.1.3). Design an outline evaluation for it, using the checklist.

ACTIVITY Evaluation plan

Why evaluate?

What will be evaluated?

When will the evaluation take place?

Who will be responsible for the evaluation?

How will the evaluation be carried out?

Reflection – how will you ensure the evaluation allows for reflection?

Data analysis

Interests of staff/
parents/students not
directly involved with
the project

Ideas, complaints

Special considerations

Administrative

Financial

Evaluation sheet to be
given

Organise whole school R500 for refreshments
sharing session

Review

As before, at the end of this topic (and unit) here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- Define the main elements to include in an evaluation
- Outline an evaluation for work planned during the Action Guide

Following this topic, you will find a reflection and action plan to help you bring together your learning from the Action Guide.

Action plan and reflection

The purpose of this Action Guide has been to provide ideas and tools to make schools more gender-responsive. At the end of the Introduction you drew up an action plan for working through the guide – you defined your three main objectives and planned how you would learn most effectively from the guide.

This final section will help you to:

- Develop a final action plan for what you hope to achieve next
- Review your learning from the Action Guide

Action plan

The first activity asks you to bring together your learning and the thinking and planning you have done as you have worked through the Action Guide. If you completed the action plan at the end of Unit 4 (Activity 4.6.5), you can look back at that and revise what you wrote then. The planning activities from Units 3 and 5 will also contribute to this final plan.

ACTIVITY Planning action

Action What is your task in working to create a more gender-responsive school?

Purpose Why are you doing this? What do you plan to achieve?

Steps What steps can you break your task down into? What are your priorities?

Timeframe How long have you got?

Completion date?

Time (in hours) for task?

Who else will be involved?

E.g.,

- Colleagues
- Headteacher
- School manager/ administrator
- Parents and guardians
- Students
- Others

What are the gaps? What do you need in order to do the task that you don't yet have? E.g.,

- people
- information
- equipment/ resources
- skills
- other

How will you get them?

How will you know if you have succeeded in your task?

Next steps you will take over the next month to get started on the task

Reviewing progress

To follow up your action plan, think of ways in which you can monitor your progress and evaluate and review your work. Questions to consider:

- Why will you review your work? (e.g., to report back, to check progress, to improve)
- When do you need to review progress? (e.g., after 1, 3, 6 and 12 months)
- What will you review? (e.g., what the interim steps are and how you will measure what you have achieved)
- Who else will be involved? (e.g., self-evaluation, colleagues, head teacher)
- How will you carry out the review? (e.g., personal reflection, discussion, more formal evaluation)
- What kind of action do you expect to take as a result of the review? (e.g., revise your plans, decide whether or not to continue).

ACTIVITY Reviewing the action plan

Why?

When?

What?

Who involved?

How?

Diary dates: write the review dates in your diary now.

Action?

Reflection

Finally, here is a chance to reflect on your learning from the Action Guide and how you can apply it to your task. Look back at the Introduction and review your first action plan there.

ACTIVITY Reflecting on learning

What happened?

(What did you hope to get from the Action Guide? Which units did you work through? What did you learn? Did you meet your objectives?)

How did you feel?

(What went well with your learning? What went less well? How did it compare with your expectations?)

What could you have done differently?

(Approached the learning or task in a different way? Organised the timing differently?)

What will you do differently another time?

And finally:

What will you do next to follow up on your learning?

[ACTIVITY REFLECTION]

Things you could do next to follow up on your learning

- Do further work following on from the Action Guide (e.g., further activities, action research, talking to colleagues)
- Look back at the units and see if there are things you intended to do; work through units you left out the first time round.
- Do more investigation; look back and see if there are topics to follow up.
- Get further training and development; what about staff development?
- Fill in the feedback sheet to complete your reflection.

Now you have come to the end of the Action Guide, we hope you will be able to move forward with greater confidence and understanding to fulfil your aims of creating a more gender-responsive school. We wish you every success.

Selected resources

Aikman, S and Unterhalter, E (eds.) (2007) *Practising Gender Equality in Education*, Oxfam, Oxford.

Aikman, S and Unterhalter, E (2005) *Beyond Access: Transforming Policy and Practice for Gender Equality in Education*, Oxfam, Oxford.

Jha, J and Kelleher, F (2006) *Boys' Underachievement in Education*, Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning, London.

Jha, J and Page, E (eds.) (2009 forthcoming) *Exploring the Bias: Gender and Stereotyping in Secondary Schools*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

Subrahmanian, R (2007) *Gender in Primary and Secondary Education: A Handbook for Policy-makers and Other Stakeholders*, New Gender Mainstreaming Series on Development Issues, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

Unterhalter, E (2006) *Gender, Schooling and Global Social Justice*, Routledge, Oxford.

Appendices

APPENDIX I Gender analysis of classroom and other processes in seven selected Commonwealth countries: Some basic facts and findings

The Education Section in the Commonwealth Secretariat recently initiated a research study on 'Gender Analysis of Classroom and Other Schooling Processes in Secondary Schools' in seven selected Commonwealth countries. The countries are India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Samoa, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago.

The choice of countries was guided by various factors. One was the need to have a diverse picture from various economic, geographical, social and cultural contexts, so as to allow a comparative analysis of similarities and differences across the globe. Another was the desire to choose countries where disparities are sharp either against girls or against boys, and to see whether schooling processes explain these. Still another factor was the importance of having representation from all the four main regions of the Commonwealth: Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. India, Nigeria and Pakistan are three high-population, low-income countries with high gender disparity in favour of boys. Samoa, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago are middle-income countries with low populations that have achieved near gender parity at the primary level but are facing some disparities in favour of girls at the secondary level of education. Malaysia comes closer to the second set of countries in terms of income level and boys' underachievement (Table 1).

Table 1: Selected development indicators for the seven study countries

| | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Samoa | Seychelles | Trinidad and Tobago |
|--|--------|----------|---------|----------|-------|------------|---------------------|
| Income category 2005 | LIC | UMC | LIC | LIC | LMC | UMC | LMC |
| Population (millions) | 1134.4 | 25.7 | 141.4 | 158.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 1.3 |
| Per capita GDP (US dollars) | 3,452 | 10,882 | 1,128 | 2,370 | 8,677 | 16,106 | 14,603 |
| Human Development Index (HDI) 2005 | 128 | 63 | 158 | 136 | 77 | 50 | 59 |
| Gender Development Index (GDI) 2005 | 113 | 58 | 139 | 125 | 72 | NA | 56 |

Notes:

1. UMC: upper middle-income country; LMC: lower middle-income country; LIC: low-income country
2. HDI is a composite index based on life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, combined enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education and per-capita GDP
3. GDI is based on life expectancy, education index and income index

Sources: Income category from World Bank, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation* and *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development*, The World Bank, Washington, DC; all remaining data from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2007) *Human Development Report 2007/2008: Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

The educational status is diverse in these seven countries. In general, school life expectancy (SLE) has gone up between 1999 and 2005 for both males and females, except for Trinidad and Tobago where it is stagnant and Seychelles where it shows a declining trend. The countries largely reflect the trends seen in the region they come from. In general, and quite expectedly so, SLE is stagnant in regions where it is already high and increasing where it remains low. As such, the increases are significant for South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The increases are higher for females in Asia than for males; the opposite is true for sub-Saharan Africa, the region where SLE is the lowest for both boys and girls (Table 2).

Table 2: School life expectancy in identified countries (1999 and 2005)

| Countries | SLE 1999 | | | SLE 2005 | | |
|---------------------|----------|------|--------|----------|------|--------|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| India | | | | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| Malaysia | 12 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 14 |
| Nigeria | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 8 |
| Pakistan | | | | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Samoa | 12 | 12 | 13 | | | |
| Seychelles | 14 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 14 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |

Source: UNESCO (2007) *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008: Education for All by 2015 – Will we make it?*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris.

The relatively lower SLE in India, Nigeria and Pakistan is reflected in the lower net enrolment ratios (NERs) in these countries both at primary and secondary levels. The enrolment ratios are particularly low at the secondary stage in Nigeria and Pakistan, and the gender disparities are sharp against girls in all three countries. On the other hand, gender disparities are high

in favour of boys (although enrolment ratios are relatively higher for both males and females) in the remaining four countries: Malaysia, Samoa, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago. While both boys and girls have similar enrolment rates at the primary stage, girls clearly have better rates at the secondary stage in these four countries. This is not the case with India, Pakistan and Nigeria where girls are at a disadvantage; girls have lower enrolment rates both at primary and secondary stages (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Net enrolment ratio and the number of out-of-school children at primary stage in identified countries (2005)

| Countries | Net Enrolment Ratio | | | Out-of-School Children (in thousands) | |
|---------------------|---------------------|------|--------|--|-------------|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | % of female |
| India | 89 | 92 | 85 | 6,395 | 81 |
| Malaysia | 95 | 96 | 95 | 150 | 50 |
| Nigeria | 68 | 72 | 64 | 6,584 | 56 |
| Pakistan | 79 | 84 | 74 | 6,303 | 63 |
| Samoa | 90 | 90 | 91 | 0.3 | |
| Seychelles | 99 | 99 | 100 | 0.04 | |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 90 | 90 | 90 | 7 | 48 |

Source: UNESCO (2007) *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008: Education for All by 2015 – Will we make it?*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris.

Table 4: Gross and net enrolment ratios at secondary level in identified countries (2005)

| Countries | GER | | | NER | | |
|---------------------|-------|------|--------|-------|------|--------|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| India | 59 | 65 | 52 | | | |
| Malaysia | 76 | 72 | 81 | 76 | 71 | 81 |
| Nigeria | 34 | 37 | 31 | 27 | 29 | 25 |
| Pakistan | 27 | 21 | 23 | 21 | 24 | 18 |
| Samoa | 80 | 76 | 85 | 66 | 62 | 70 |
| Seychelles | 105 | 106 | 105 | 97 | 94 | 100 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 81 | 79 | 82 | 69 | 68 | 70 |

Source: UNESCO (2007) *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008: Education for All by 2015 – Will we make it?*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris.

Approach and methodology

The main objective of the study was to analyse the classroom and outside-classroom processes in a few secondary schools from a gender perspective in order to understand (i) whether classroom and school processes question or reinforce the dominant unequal gendered notions and stereotypes, (ii) how they question or reinforce the existing notions and stereotypes and (iii) what the likely solutions are if schooling processes are found to be reinforcing the dominant gender notions and stereotypes. The aspects that we tried to understand included (i) teachers' expectations, perceptions, behaviour, choice of teaching methods and use of language: how gender manifests itself in whatever they do with students in the classroom as well as outside classrooms, (ii) school management and distribution of duties among teachers: how gender unfolds itself in the aspects of management, (iii) school systems' requirements and expectations from schools: whether gender is an important reference and, if yes, in what way, and (iv) students' aspirations, expectations, perceptions, behaviour and use of language, and their gender dimensions.

The study followed a research design and basic set of tools developed by the team of country researchers in consultation with the Education Section in the Secretariat. This was to allow comparative analysis and facilitate a synthesis of the country studies. The methods used included (i) classroom observation, (ii) teacher interviews, (iii) focus group discussions with girls/ boys, (iv) principals' interviews, (v) focus group discussions with teachers, (vi) focus group discussions with administrative staff, (vii) focus group discussions with school inspectors/ support officials, (viii) interviews with senior education managers in the district and (ix) textbook analysis.

Main findings

Schools in most cases reinforce the existing gender ideology, stereotypes, norms and expectations everywhere – this is what emerged from the study in a nutshell. We are presenting here some highlights of the major findings. The study has been published by the Commonwealth Secretariat and is available as a book if you are interested in reading the report in detail.*

Teachers' perceptions and expectations:

- Girls are considered more responsible and hard-working, boys are considered indifferent and aggressive; but boys are also still seen as 'leaders' in most countries, though girls are taking leadership roles in Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago
- Teachers' expectations in terms of academic performance are higher from girls in Malaysia, Samoa, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago; this is not so clearly differentiated in the other countries
- Girls' role in contributing to 'care' work in school and home is viewed as 'just' and 'unavoidable' almost everywhere

Subject choices and classroom processes

- Gendered subject choices exist in most countries, though some changes are visible
- Teachers give greater attention to boys in terms of providing them with more opportunities to respond and participate in India, Nigeria and Pakistan; not much difference was observed in the remaining countries
- Girls are shy and timid in India and Pakistan; there is no effort from the teachers' side to change this
- Classrooms are passive and teacher-controlled in India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Samoa; they are teacher-controlled in the remaining countries as well but with greater opportunities for students' participation
- Girls and boys sit separately almost everywhere
- Boys and girls rarely interact even in co-ed schools in Pakistan; the level of interaction varies elsewhere
- Language reinforces gender stereotypes in most places, though not in Seychelles
- Choice of sports is gendered everywhere; sports are generally seen as a male preserve everywhere (except Seychelles)
- Boys receive more harsh reprimands for minor offences everywhere

Textbooks

- The visibility of women is very low as compared to men's appearance in the textbooks; women and men are identified with stereotypical attributes: brave, heroic, honest and strong are portrayed as male attributes while caring, self sacrificing, love and kindness are shown as female attributes (Pakistan)
- Members of textbook review panels and authors are almost all men; in one instance, a team of female authors and reviewers was able to produce a comparatively more gender-inclusive textbook (Pakistan)
- Under-representation of women is clearly evident in all the textbooks across subjects; there is some effort to depict women in non-traditional roles and portray them as capable of making choices (India, Malaysia); there have been token 'shifts' such as an added chapter on women's status (India)
- Most of the textbooks in use are recently published books and gender-friendly in Seychelles

Students' aspirations and perceptions

- Males believe they will be the main breadwinner everywhere and see girls as 'weaker' and in need of protection
- Girls are less stereotypical in their aspirations about career choices, though at times these are inconsistent with their subject choices
- Even when girls speak of being 'independent' they believe in being protected

- Parents reinforce gender stereotypes; there are gendered differences in parental support
- Boys who are interested in academics being seen as 'feminine' by peers is very strong in Trinidad and Tobago and to varying extent everywhere

Follow-up action pilot projects

Based on findings and recommendations of these studies, the Secretariat initiated school-based pilot projects in four countries (India, Malaysia, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago). The idea was first discussed in the sharing workshop for the study, held in Seychelles, where all seven countries participated. For a variety of reasons, these pilots could not be initiated in the other three countries.

The four countries followed different models of managing this project. While it was led by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia and Seychelles, it was led by a research institution in India and by a university in Trinidad and Tobago. The four country teams met in a mid-term sharing workshop in Norwich, United Kingdom, where they shared their experiences and exchanged ideas. This Action Guide is largely based on the experiences of these four school-based pilot projects.

- Jha, J and Page, E (eds) (2009 forthcoming) *Exploring the Bias: Gender and Stereotyping in Secondary Schools*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

APPENDIX II **Trialling workshop for southern Africa, Maputo, Mozambique**

As noted in the Action Guide, the school-based pilot action projects that formed the basis for the guide's development were limited to four countries. Since the guide is aimed at a wider audience throughout the Commonwealth, it was important to validate it through trials and consultations in as many countries and regions as possible. Therefore, southern Africa was identified as a region for holding a trialling workshop. The workshop was organised in partnership with the Foundation for Community Development (FDC), which is a non-profit, non-governmental institution in Mozambique. The workshop was organised in Maputo, Mozambique on 23–24 February 2009 with the participation of four countries: Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi and South Africa. The highest number of participants came from Mozambique. Participants were mainly teachers and headteachers, with a few representatives from the Ministries of Education.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Share and analyse experiences of gender issues in secondary schools
- Identify challenges faced in making schools more gender-responsive
- Trial some of the key activities included in the draft guide and contribute to the finalisation of the Action Guide
- Orient teachers from two Mozambican schools for trialling a few selected activities in their respective schools

Main features and outputs

The main features of the workshop were:

- It was a bilingual workshop with full arrangements, including audio receivers, for simultaneous interpretation in English and Portuguese. This was required as nearly half of the participants (coming from Botswana, Malawi and South Africa as well as the Commonwealth Secretariat) spoke in English whereas almost all the participants from Mozambique spoke in Portuguese. It was also a challenge in terms of translation of materials into Portuguese, but it was wonderfully achieved because of the engagement of the FDC staff.
- The workshop proved successful in providing useful feedback on the draft Action Guide despite the limited time. In general the selected activities worked well in terms of leading to desired reflections and outcomes, and a number of additions and minor modifications were suggested and noted.
- The presence of four countries from one region, with similarities and differences in gender situations, provided good contexts for trialling.

The gender-related situation varies from one country to another: for instance, Botswana faces the issue of boys' underachievement whereas Malawi and Mozambique are struggling with girls' underrepresentation, and South Africa witnesses diverse situations in different regions. All of them could relate to all the activities, showing that the guide had the element of universal applicability.

- One important gap that came to the fore was that the draft guide did not cover the issue of sexual harassment and abuse sufficiently. This is an important issue in schools in many African countries. The workshop provided some important suggestions on this issue that are now being included in the guide.
- Since the workshop design focused on written activities by the participants, these provided a number of examples on various aspects from the region for inclusion in the final guide.
- The workshop also succeeded in orienting the participants in initiating some of the activities right away in their respective schools/ departments.

APPENDIX III Social Learning Package

The Social Learning Package (SLP) – initially known as the Social Learning Curriculum – started as part of a small primary education project for girls at a residential school called Udaan run by a Gandhian NGO and supported by CARE India in Uttar Pradesh, a Hindi-speaking Indian state. It was later adapted for about 150 government primary schools. The SLP implementation was supported by a UNDP-led programme known as Janshala.

The SLP was an attempt to include overt teaching lessons with broad objectives of developing appreciation for different forms of equity, respect for diversity and democracy, and capability to question, argue and negotiate. These objectives were set in the context of real life experiences and social situations within a broad framework of gender equality. Initially aimed at girls and later all children in the 9+ age group, the SLP is based on the belief that schooling is an important and influential form of socialisation and that children from an early age are capable of learning complex values, processes, relations and positions if these are taught and transacted through appropriate methods and tools. The experiences suggest that this is a well-founded belief despite the fact that the implementation challenges are enormous, especially in a large system of education.

The Commonwealth Secretariat later supported CARE India to develop the SLP for the age group 10–14 based on trialling in three different Indian states. This package, which is in the shape of three books, was shared with all Commonwealth member countries. Cyprus responded by requesting support for adaptation and translation to Greek. The Secretariat is supporting this request, and the package will be made available to all primary schools to be integrated into the main curriculum. CARE India has also used this package in post-emergency education programmes: in post-earthquake Gujarat and in post-Tsunami Andaman and Nicobar islands. This reflects the robustness and potential for wider adaptability of the SLP approach.

Social learning is a process that occurs continuously and naturally in the milieu we are born into. It is a part of growing up. However, social learning taking place in the family or community is limited in its scope by the experience, tradition and knowledge of that community. There is often an uncritical acceptance of certain world-views. Many a time, these world-views are narrow in their outlook and are parochial. Hence, the role of school in giving a different direction to this process of socialisation becomes critical. The Social Learning Curriculum was conceptualised as encouraging a critical and democratic attitude in children while not alienating them from their own milieu.

Social learning deals with a range of themes, from cleanliness and interdependence in nature to marriage, health, inequality and banking. Awareness about gender-differentiated practices and gender equality were integrated into a number of themes. Themes like 'family and cleanliness' discussed the issues of discrimination in work distribution and parental attention, while themes like 'looking after oneself and making one's own judgements' raised the issue of the importance of girls and women taking care of themselves and making decisions. Even themes like 'news and newspapers' tackled the issue in the form of who reads and who does not read newspapers, why some men and boys have time and women and girls do not have time to read newspapers, and what is missed by not reading newspapers. The theme of 'freedom struggle' discussed the life sketches of women freedom fighters. The 'rule of law' discussed the importance of laws and following them but also of questioning them if there is a flaw such as unequal access to parental property for women.

The principle that mainly guided the choice regarding the transaction methods for SLP was that children should be able to fully participate and engage themselves. It was deliberately sought to make the process enjoyable lest the weightiness of the issues could make them boring and incomprehensible for young children. The use of a story and discussions based on the story is a commonly followed practice, and so is the process of doing projects that involved the steps of discussions, dialogue, preparation of questions, collecting information, processing information, and preparing presentations in the form of role-plays, newsletters, collages, etc. There is an emphasis on linking the issues to students' context wherever possible. In cases where the issue does not form part of their context and experiences, the context is built through stories and other people's experiences. The focus is on having something in the form of a concrete example to which they can relate rather than leaving an issue entirely abstract.

Different evaluations suggest that the impact of SLP implementation in various parts of India has been significant in many ways. Obvious changes were noticed in students' personalities, which became more self-confident, and their performance as they applied greater curiosity and interest in learning. In many cases, larger social implications were also equally noticeable. Many girls negotiated with their parents for continuation of their studies and against early marriages. A perceptible change was noted in the parental attitude and behaviour in the areas where the SLP was in operation. The change in their daughters' personalities, abilities and confidence levels seemed to have convinced parents of the utility of girls' education.

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The Gender-Responsive School: An Action Guide

Feedback sheet

Your name and school/ organisation (optional)

.....

What were your objectives in using the Action Guide?

.....

How well did the Action Guide meet your objectives?

.....

How do you intend to put what you have learned into practice?

.....

Which parts of the Action Guide did you use?

.....

Which parts did you find most useful?

.....

Which parts (if any) were not useful?

.....

Suggestions for improving the Action Guide

.....

Any other comments

.....

Thank you for your feedback. Please return this sheet to The Publications Manager, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, United Kingdom. Email publications@commonwealth.int

The Gender-Responsive School shows teachers, headteachers and school administrators how to spot the key spaces in school life where gender is important. It gives them tools to address gender biases by changing attitudes and ideas among staff and students.

This Action Guide is full of activities that can be undertaken at either individual or group level. Based on trials with teachers in a wide range of countries with different cultures, educational systems and attitudes towards gender issues, it shows how important school is, especially at the post-primary stage, in forming expectations of girls and boys and ideas about gender roles.

The Gender-Responsive School will be of practical value for all educational professionals who are concerned to promote gender equality.

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