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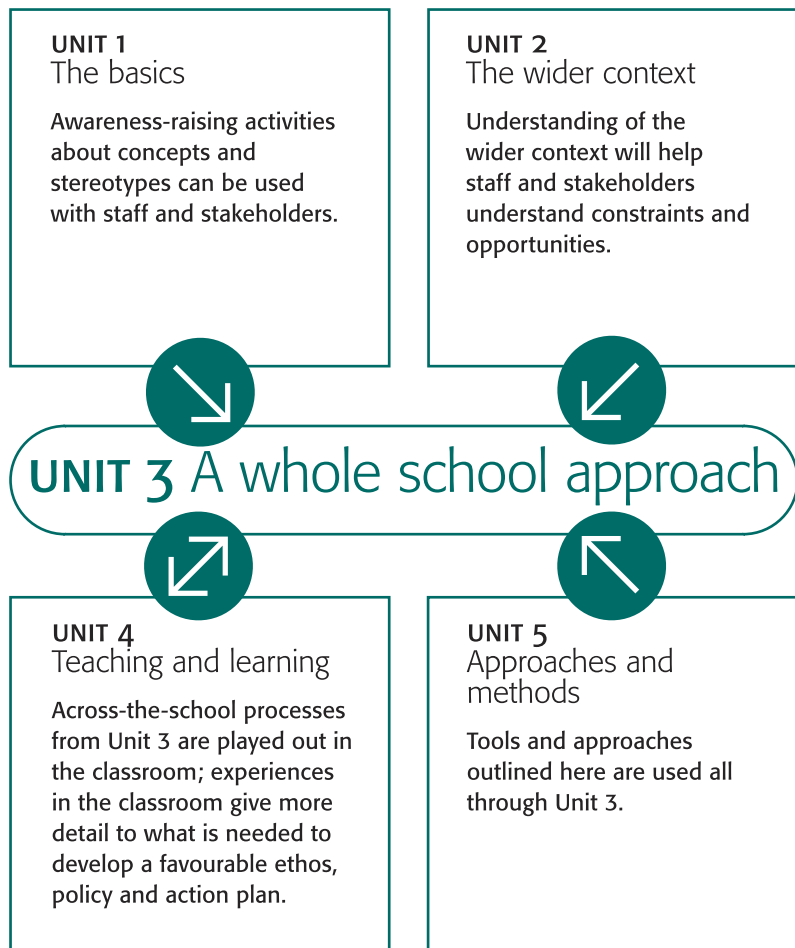
- Explain why it is important to involve the wider community, especially parents
- Identify ways of doing this

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

UNIT 1
The basics

Awareness-raising activities about concepts and stereotypes can be used with staff and stakeholders.

UNIT 2
The wider context

Understanding of the wider context will help staff and stakeholders understand constraints and opportunities.

UNIT 3 A whole school approach

UNIT 4
Teaching and learning

Across-the-school processes from Unit 3 are played out in the classroom; experiences in the classroom give more detail to what is needed to develop a favourable ethos, policy and action plan.

UNIT 5
Approaches and methods

Tools and approaches outlined here are used all through Unit 3.

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
Sensitisation	• 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. Gender stereotypes were challenged.	• The non-teaching staff did not complete school-based training. • Some teachers still have not challenged their gender stereotypes.
Difference in academic performance	• 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.	• Boys continue to under-perform generally.
Implementation of project	• 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.	• 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.
Difference in boys' and girls' attitudes	• 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.	• 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	IMPACT
• 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.	• 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.
• 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.	• 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.
• 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.	• 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.
• 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.	• 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?

ACTIVITY 3.1.2

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
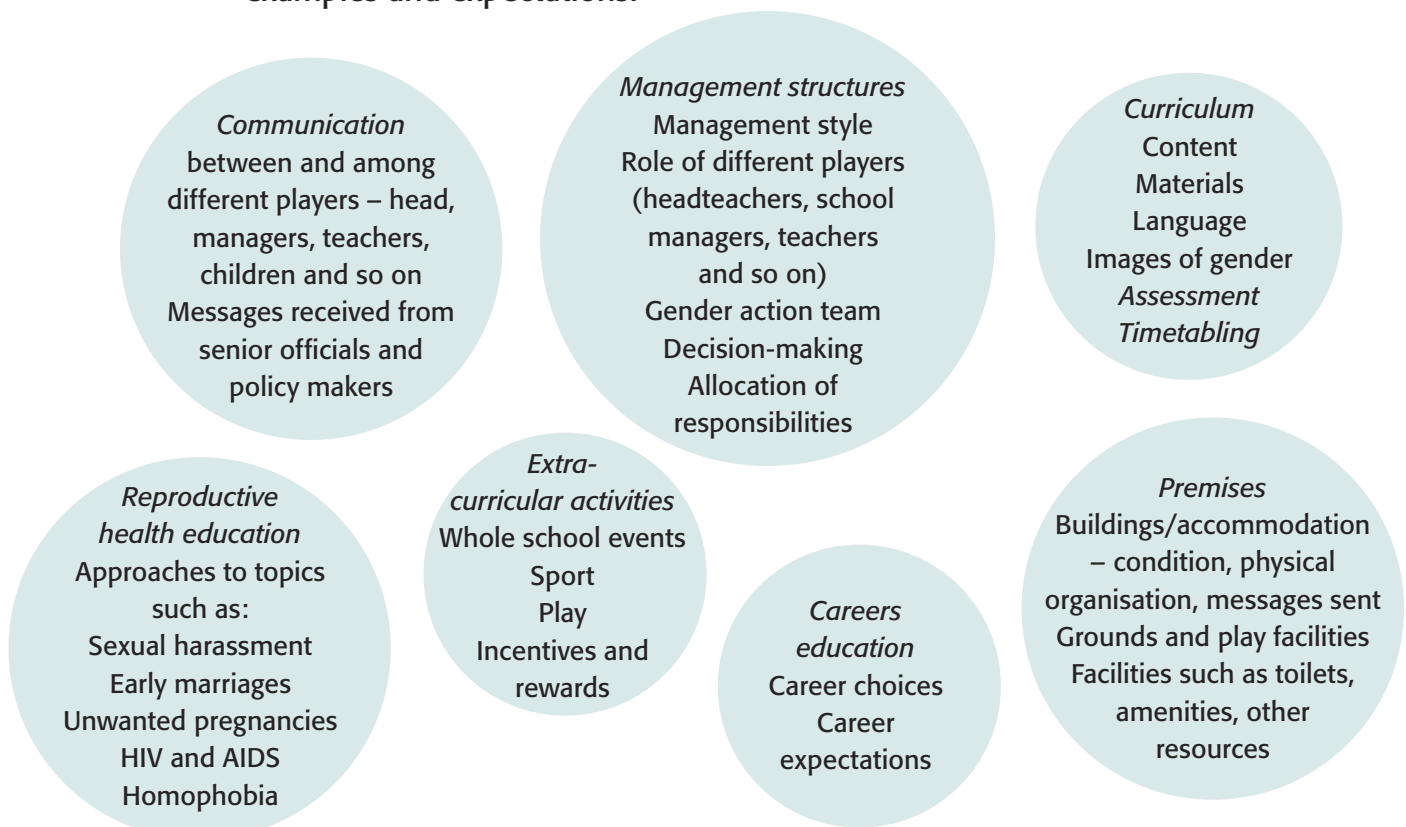
Topic 3.2 Across the school

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.

Communication
between and among different players – head, managers, teachers, children and so on
Messages received from senior officials and policy makers

Management structures
Management style
Role of different players (headteachers, school managers, teachers and so on)
Gender action team
Decision-making
Allocation of responsibilities

Curriculum
Content
Materials
Language
Images of gender
Assessment
Timetabling

Reproductive health education
Approaches to topics such as:
Sexual harassment
Early marriages
Unwanted pregnancies
HIV and AIDS
Homophobia

Extra-curricular activities
Whole school events
Sport
Play
Incentives and rewards

Careers education
Career choices
Career expectations

Premises
Buildings/accommodation – condition, physical organisation, messages sent
Grounds and play facilities
Facilities such as toilets, amenities, other resources

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 'pardners' 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?

ACTIVITY 3.2.2

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?

ACTIVITY 3.2.3

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?

ACTIVITY 3.2.4

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?

ACTIVITY 3.2.5

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?

ACTIVITY 3.2.6

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
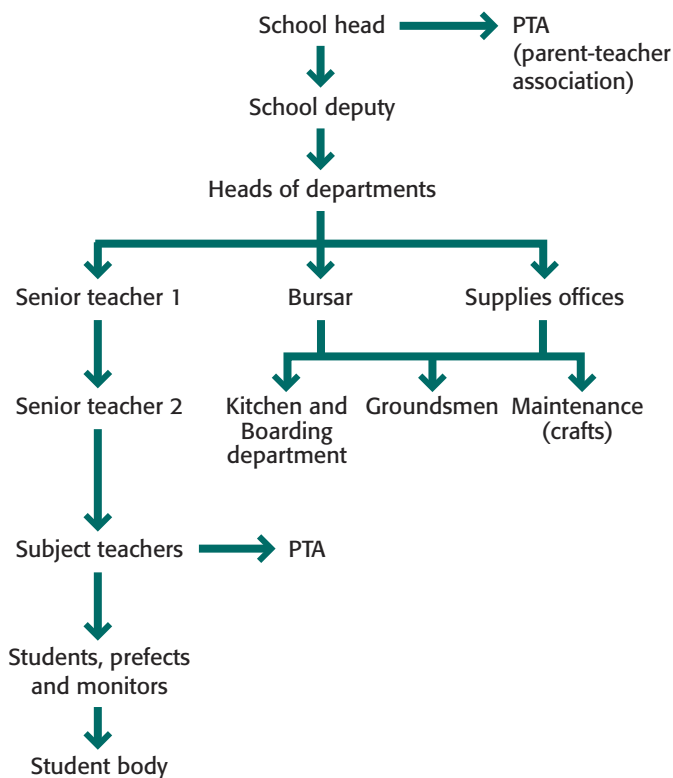- a head or senior manager to plan staff development for the whole school.

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

School head → PTA (parent-teacher association)
↓
School deputy
↓
Heads of departments
├── Senior teacher 1
│   ↓
│   Senior teacher 2
│   ↓
│   Subject teachers → PTA
│   ↓
│   Students, prefects and monitors
│   ↓
│   Student body
├── Bursar
│   ├── Kitchen and Boarding department
│   ├── Groundsmen
│   └── Maintenance (crafts)
└── Supplies offices

[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 'trialling 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:

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

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.

ACTIVITY 3.3.4

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

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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: • 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	A4 paper	Newsprint
		LCD Projector	Blu-tack
	22/01/08	Lap top	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