D. 4.1

STATE OF THE ART OF EDUCATIONAL METHODS AND TOOLS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AWARENESS

Report

FONDAZIONE HALLGARTEN-FRANCHETTI CENTRO STUDI VILLA MONTESCA

07/2023

Grant Agreement	No. 101088073	Deliverable Due Date	Date 31/07/2023
Project Starting Date	9 January 2023 (42 months)	Actual Submission	Date 31/07/2023
Deliverable Number	D4.1 (WP4)	Leading Partner	FCSVM

AUTHORS & CONTRIBUTORS		
Author	**Institution**	**Authored Sections**
Fabrizio Boldrini Maria Rita Bracchini	FCSVM	Entire Document
Contributor	**Institution**	**Contributed Sections**
Sara Arnold	CI	Section: IRELAND
Silvia Fanti	FCSVM	Section: ITALY/Good Practices
Petar Tsvetkov	CEI	Section: BULGARIA
Joyce Grech	MEYR	Section: MALTA
Joana Vieira dos Santos	UAlg	Section: PORTUGAL
Raluca-Nicoleta Radu	UB	Section: ROMANIA

REVIEWS		
Reviewer	**Institution**	**Reviewed Sections**
Marica Spalletta Antonio Opromolla	LCU	Entire Document

VERSION HISTORY		
Release	**Status**	**Date**
0.1	Initial Draft	30 March 2023
0.2	Internal Review	30 April2023
0.3	Second Draft	15 June 2023
0.44	Internal Final Review	2 July 2023
1.0	Final Version - Submitted to EC	31 July 2023

DISCLAIMER

Responsibility of this publication lies entirely with the author. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Executive summary

1. About the project

In line with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and from an intersectional perspective, the research-action project GEMINI (Gender Equality through Media Investigation and New training Insights) aims to tackle gender-based stereotypes that create gender inequalities and empower young adults to develop products and tools that convey positive messages of gender equality.

Focusing on the representation of gender identities in TV series and how they can contribute to gender equality, GEMINI addresses European high school students and trainers/teachers in four different European geographical and socio-cultural areas (Mediterranean, Northern, Eastern and Anglo-Saxon) to reach the following goals through a varied set of activities:

1. Investigating the production and narrative strategies underlying the representation of gender identities in TV series and how such representation affects the promotion of gender equality among the target groups through in-depth interviews to key informants, textual/production analysis and media content/sentiment analysis on a selected corpus of TV series

2. Understanding the target groups' awareness about gender equality and how they perceive the representation of gender identities on TV through focus groups, multi-language surveys, semi-structured interviews

3. Enhancing analytical, relational and communication skills on gender equality practices and models through the development of the educational toolkit

4. Spreading a gender equality-oriented culture through self-produced communication initiatives, such as audiovisual products and a screenwriting contest

5. Providing guidelines and policy recommendations on how to communicate gender equality addressed to EU and national institutions as well as broadcasters and streaming platforms

6. Exploiting the project results and disseminating them among the target groups and the general public through the website, communication activities, academic and promotional events, and scholarly publications.

2. Background and objectives of the Report

Challenging gender stereotypes from early years is one of the key objectives of the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 and the first target of the UN SDGs 2030 (Goal 5), incorporating a gender equality perspective in core activities, processes and policies is seen as the most effective way to achieve the set EU and UN goals. The EU sees social norms and gender stereotypes as barriers to girls and women's agency in social, economic, political and civil life. Socially and culturally, we are at a point where gender issues are becoming ever more prominent in social life, both in their potential harm to individuals and society, but also in the need for innovative approaches and solution. Gender inequality is also a root cause of gender-based violence. The promotion of gender equality in and through education is a prerequisite to the achievement of de facto equality between women and men in all spheres of life in society. The education system is a subsystem of societies, and therefore reflects the culture and values of that society.

This Report aims at identifying the state of the art of educational methods and tools that improve awareness regarding gender equality by considering: target groups, institutions involved, applied tools, topics, contexts of application. This allows to identify the unexplored opportunities, providing a reflection on sexist stereotypes in the education system, by investigating and presenting relevant issues and some of the most appropriate strategies to combat them carried on in the project Countries, namely Italy, Romania, Bulgaria Ireland, Portugal and Malta.

Combating gender stereotypes in education means to question and to deconstruct them. Not to eliminate them. Societies remain strongly gender stereotyped and sexism is far from having been eliminated from contemporary societies' organization and functioning and from social and interpersonal relationships between men and women. But we have to take into full consideration a fundamental starting point: education is a basic human right and a gender-responsive education has to:
- addresses gender-based barriers so that all can learn
- respects differences based on gender and acknowledges gender, together with age, ethnicity, language, disability, and religion are all part of a learner's identity
- enables education structures, systems and methodologies to be sensitive to all gender typologies
- ensures gender parity in education is part of a wider strategy to advance gender equality in society
- continuously evolves to close gaps on gender disparity and eradicate gender-based discrimination.

For all these reasons, combating gender stereotypes should not be centered only on education system without considering its relationship with the society that creates, maintains and needs it.

Gender-responsive education is essential if we are to achieve quality education for all. There are many actions adopted at political and institutional level to promote the prevention and the contrast to stereotypes. We have, anyway, to be aware that sometimes the gender dynamics are clearly visible, but at other times they might be less obvious, or even hidden.
Therefore, combating gender stereotypes in the education system should focus on its irreplaceable role: the construction of knowledge.
If knowledge about the world and humanity integrates and values the gender diversity, the knowledge becomes more comprehensive and closer to reality and incorporates a larger range of models of human being.

By raising awareness, broadening horizons, confronting misinformation, expanding the knowledge and offering new models of behaviour, the school can be seen as an instrument for positive change.

Furthermore, another fundamental issue for effectively combating gender stereotypes in education systems is to seek out possible synergies between gender equality policies and the challenges facing national education systems. Indeed, most member states have incorporated the principle of equality between men and women into national laws, and other measures have been taken to promote gender equality, however, schools are not the main target of policies and programs in the majority of cases.

This report tries to focus, after a general overview of the EU policies and perspectives on gender equality, on how gender equality in and trough education is interpreted in the participating countries and how, as a consequence, the actions are directed and managed. By analyzing each country, the first section presents how gender differences emerge and develop along the educational trajectory. The second section reviews the evidence related to the role played by different factors in explaining the observed gender gaps. The third section discusses some policy initiatives and interventions for which there is consistent evidence about their effectiveness.

The last sections provide concluding remarks and a Compendium of Good Practices in Training for Gender Equality brings together diverse practices from several European countries and the state of art of the educational methods end tools for gender equality awareness. It offers in-depth information on different good practices, pedagogic approach including detailed outlines of training courses; examples of dealing with challenges that arise in training for gender equality; and a collection of tools and activities for use in such training initiatives.

3. Gender equality: EU Policies and Perspectives

As already mentioned, achieving gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democracy, respect for the rule of law and economic growth and sustainability. Equality between women and men is enshrined in the EU Treaties; it is a core value of the EU, a fundamental right and a key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The promotion of equality between women and men is a task for the Union as the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 recalls it. Annual reports on gender equality in the EU take stock of where the EU and its Member States stand on gender equality, highlighting the EU's achievements and showcasing inspiring examples from the Member States and EU-funded projects in these areas.

While the EU is a global leader in gender equality, and its Member States have been making comprehensive efforts to achieve gender equality, according to the Gender Equality Index 2022, no Member State has achieved full gender equality and the EU average is 68.6 out of 100.

In order to achieve the goal of ending gender-based violence comprehensively and effectively throughout the Union, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive to combat violence against women and domestic violence in March 2022. Concerning preventive measures, the proposal included the following education-related preventive measures: **strengthening sexuality education** and **socioemotional competencies**, **empathy** and developing healthy and **respectful relationships**, addressing cyber violence and ensuring that education measures include the **development of digital literacy skills**, including **critical engagement with the digital world**.

Making education and training more inclusive and gender sensitive and maintaining its institutions as safe environments is at the core of the European Education Area strategic cooperation. The European Commission's 2020 Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025, proposes the following objectives for national reforms and European cooperation in education and training (among others): (1) developing a better gender sensitivity in education processes and institutions; (2) challenging and dissolving gender stereotypes; and (3) working towards a proper gender balance in leadership positions, including in higher education institutions.

In 2020, with the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 and similarly in the updated European Skills Agenda, the European Commission set out measures and announced different actions to promote gender-balanced participation in STEM, including ICT-related occupations and digital skills development. In the same year, the Council of the EU adopted the reinforced Youth Guarantee which supports measures addressing gender bias and discrimination in employment counselling and guidance, and the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, recommending targeted measures to achieve gender balance in traditionally "male" or "female" occupations.

The gender dimension is integrated into different EU funding programs such as Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ program. The Commission also continues to fund projects addressing different aspects of gender equality through the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) program. The Multiannual Financial Framework 2021- 2027 strengthens gender mainstreaming in the spending of the EU budget, in particular through the EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

In their national Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs) Member States were expected to detail how proposed measures will contribute to promoting gender equality and equal opportunities for all. The European Commission has created the Women in Digital Scoreboard. The scoreboard is one of the actions put in place to assess women's inclusion in digital jobs, careers and entrepreneurship.

The scoreboard assesses Member States' performance in the areas of internet use, internet user skills, specialist skills and employment based on 12 indicators. Though not directly connected to education, the scoreboard indicates where education initiatives are needed. The progress of gender equality in the EU is measured since 2010, via EIGE's Gender Equality Index, a composite indicator that consists of six core domains, including the **knowledge domain** that measures gender inequalities in educational attainment, participation in education and training and gender segregation.

The 2022 Report shows that Gender Equality Index score for the EU has increased only by 5.5 points since 2010 and Covid-19 has negatively affected the fragile gains made since 2010. **For the first time in a decade, gender inequalities in employment** (fulltime equivalent employment rate (FTE) and duration of working life), **education** (tertiary graduation and participation in formal or informal education and training), **health status and access to health services have grown.**

Recently, the European Commission launched a campaign to challenge gender stereotypes, on 8 March 2023. This EU-wide campaign tackles gender stereotypes affecting both men and women in different spheres of life, including career choices, sharing care responsibilities and decision-making. It is a concrete deliverable of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

Because existing studies provide evidence of a complex set of factors that explain the observed gender gaps, though the magnitude of the determinants differs across countries and over time (among other explanatory factors, the educational context, the structure of the labor market and the environment of the workplace, as well as broader gender equality in cultural values and social norms in society) there are several options for further EU involvement or support that could help to tackle persistent gender gaps and speed up progress. These include better implementation and enforcement of existing EU gender equality legislation, moves to modernize it or introduce new legislation to fill gaps in protection or address emerging issues, further non-legislative measures such as data collection and monitoring, benchmarking, awareness-raising, and finally **fostering education and awareness**.

4. Gender equality in education: countries comparative analysis

4.1 Introduction - Gender divide and gender stereotypes in Europe

The following analysis related to the gender equality policies, legislative and educative frameworks in education in the countries covered by the GEMINI project, shows that we still have a **clear gender divide problem in education**. Just to make an exemplum: according to Eurostat, human resources in science and technology annual average data from 2016 to 2020, women represent 57.7% of the tertiary education graduates, in some disciplines, notably those related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics **(STEM), there is still a visible preponderance of men.** This disproportion is reflected in the labour force, as females only account for 2 out of 5 scientists and engineers. Moreover, also in sectors in which women are the majority, such as education, they are under-represented at top hierarchical positions. (Communication COM(2020) 152 final. A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. European Commission).

This situation is still actual, despite it is possible to verify that according to the last year PISA tests there are no reasons to justify this gap. Furthermore, we are aware that as studies revealed (Openpolis: on data Eige, 2022) how **the "index of gender equality in EU" demonstrates that not all the countries follow the same track.** Just making reference to some of the Gemini countries: Italy got 63.3; DK 77.4, Bulgaria 59,6, being the EU average 67.9. The project deliverable shows how a comparative analysis of the practices could be very important for a reciprocal learning.

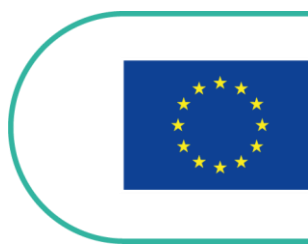**In the majority of EU Member States, girls exceed boys in or are at least in the same level in all the areas.**

It is no possible to appeal only specific factual decisive situations, that make difficult the realization of an authentic equality of opportunities in the labor market, then the reason for the educational choices made by women must be found in cultural reasons. Specifically, is the **"old" conflictual confrontation between the traditional feminine role** and the careers with the addition of a scarcity of female role models in traditionally male-dominated sectors. More and more present but not resolutive yet.

We are convinced that this phenomenon has significant consequences in the social perception and causes an overall loss in society since extremely gifted women have difficulties in accessing traditionally male-dominated professions.

The scientific literature proposes arguments that suggest that particular gender gaps could actually affect performance. (S. Klasen, F. Lamanna: The impact of gender inequality in education and employment on economic growth: new evidence for a panel of countries, in: Feminist Economics, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2009). The opportunity to an education opened to all, is evidently positive. However, it is not yet realized. **As shown by the different countries approach about gender education, it is clear that all the educative systems feel that there is still a lot of "road to do".**

And again, if the gap has cultural roots, it is obvious that the strategies have to be launched considering a cultural impact.

However, the general framework presented in this document shows that following the role of the European policies**, the Member states do not remain indifferent, adopting actions and policies at national level in order to reach a gender balance in education, and in perspective in the job market and other related fields.** In particular, attention seems to be focused on the unbalanced situation in the STEM.

The mentioned EU Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (European Commission, 2020), which, due to the awareness of the gender stereotypes in education, has among its propositions to present a proposal for a recommendation of the Council on education and training addressing gender balance in traditionally male- or female-dominated professions, gender stereotypes, and educational and training inequalities. This is strictly linked with the New Skills Agenda for Europe, which was launched on July 1st, 2020, that includes in its action plans a call for young women to be more engaged in STEM disciplines. On this basis, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the 10th of June 2021 on promoting gender equality in STEM education and careers (European Parliament, 2021).

Member states are invited to contrast the gender inequalities in STEM through policies including awareness-raising campaigns, training, career guidance in order to promote entrepreneurship, and specific scholarships for girls and women who wish to pursue a career in the STEM sector. It is interesting to note that also the media are encouraged to use inclusive language and to avoid stereotypes that lead to the formation of opinions against girls' participation and interest in STEM education.

In terms of application, **several initiatives have been set in order to try to overcome directly the reasons that lie at the basis of this educational divide**. Analyzing the different approaches, we can see how they are influenced by the main aspect of the assumed delay of the gender equality in education, as indicated in the different documents and national strategies in the STEM area.

But, as the unsatisfactory result of the application of the mentioned policies shows, focusing on STEM is positive, but it is not enough, if **the goal is inversing the trend and starting the promotion of a different cultural perception at any level in education.**

We need a more general approach. According to an Italian article published a few years ago, (B. Mapelli, G. Tarizzo, D. De Marchi, Orientamento e identità di genere. Crescere uomini e donne, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 2001) it is as if there were two curricula operating in the school at the same time: the hidden or implicit one and the explicit and evident one. While the explicit one is represented by the teaching contents-programs, the implicit one includes "all those expectations, principles and values of the teacher(s), of the families, and all that passes in the teacher's educational relationship with the class, through verbal and non-verbal language". Awareness of the implicit curriculum is neither simple nor obvious. Since the teacher training phase, it is important to start with the right step, aiming at making teachers aware of all that goes unconsciously through their educational relationship with the class.

The" dark side of the moon" in this case, calls us to **consider a cultural approach in education**, nor merely based on sciences and technical considerations.

And the school is the right place for launching cultural experiments to creating an advanced perception of gender equality.

Just to have a clear dimension of how difficult can be to create this sensibility, and how the policies programs and actions are going against a complexity and a wall of well-rooted prejudiced in all the actual cultural environments, we can consider the perception transmitted by the language of the schoolbooks. Before presenting an apparent paradox, we must consider the differences and the difficulties that are evident more in some countries then in other. Because, in some Eastern and Mediterranean realities, the promotion of a culture of equality has to be put in relationship with daily problems related also to the health and life of young women.

The language is the proof that the symbols are still male-predominant.

In the schoolbooks, in parallel and complementary fashion, images belonging to the sphere of paid work feature men. Studies of English-language books (Lee, Collins, 2009; Cellanetti, 2013) conclude

that the number of images showing men at work is almost twice as high as those showing women. Scierri (2017: 32) notes that 'the male gender is recognised as having a significantly higher professional identity than the female gender; moreover, even when professional identity is recognised for women, they may identify in a narrower typology of roles than men'. Indeed, when a woman participates in working life, she is associated with professions that appear to be an extension of female tasks performed in the domestic sphere, such as caring for children or the health of others. Studies confirm that male characters generally carry out more activities than female characters (Cerezal, Jiménez, 1999) and that the latter, when they do work outside the home, perform what are traditionally called 'female professions' such as housewife or shop assistant (Biemmi, 2010), nurses, secretaries or hostesses (Galiano Sierra, 1991), as well as professions that belong to the field of fashion (Giaschi, 2000) and teaching (Cellanetti, 2013). According to Biemmi (2010: 124), this scenario contributes to "shaping an imaginary in which the world of work is associated with the male gender; women do not work or work in socially de-qualified professions". Synthesising the previous studies, carried out on school material relating to the years 2000 and 2010, we see that the images in the textbooks still seem to portray a stereotyped vision that associates femininity with the home or professions clearly identified as feminine and masculinity with the world of work. It is clear that this way of organizing activities represents stereotypical cultural archetypes that are far removed from reality and construct an image of society that is more caricatured than plausible (Naves, Wisnia-Weill, 2015)

In her book "A modo de autobiografia" (Almost an autobiography) the philosopher Maria Zambrano wrote: "My authentic condition, that is, vocation, has been to be, not to be something, but to think, to see, to look, to have the boundless patience, which remains in me, to live by thinking".

These lines seem to evoke a **good definition of education to gender equality**, because talking about education and gender can be translated into the search for meanings of being and becoming women and men in the contemporary world and how this can become thinking, learning, common and personal knowledge, exchange and transformation over time. The encounter and knowledge of otherness (in particular sexual and gender difference, the foundation of all otherness) is the essential condition for the constitution of the subject. Identities are formed in relationships; growth is a path that weaves together autonomy-intimacy and dependence-recognition of the other and of oneself in the other. Cultures, tasks and pedagogical practices must, therefore, be based on this new awareness, on the knowledge/experiences in which individual life trajectories intersect with collective histories.

This is the theme of **mutual moral responsibility in the places of educating**, which moves in the relationships between women and men, between different generations, between those who educate and those who are educated. When speaking of mutual moral responsibility, and it seems a complex and difficult discourse, we mean nothing more than the mutual teaching that the histories of women and men over time, the different knowledge, experiences and knowledge that have been built up and the confrontation with new, multiple nodes of being or thinking of themselves as women and men, can offer each and every one for a personal and shared re-elaboration in relationships of what it means to be in the world, to know how to choose, to think about elaborating one's own project in the world, but also to be aware that one can also influence the project of the world.

This overall framework shows that gender equality is a necessity for the development, in the EU and beyond, of an inclusive, prosperous, resilient and fair societies. The analysis related to the different countries under observation is going to describe the national paths towards the promotion of gender equality in and through education.

4.2 ITALY

4.2.1 General introduction and state of the art

Many studies show that in Italy, the gender gap that still struggles to close has solid roots in the country's history, as we know extremely traditional, which has represented the male holder of intellectual knowledge and political power and has imposed decisions on anyone who was close to him and did not enjoy the same privileges (Bourdieu, 2009).

As in many other European countries, women were reserved for domestic work, the education and care of their offspring (especially daughters) and all other activities related to the sphere of 'doing' carried out strictly in the home and acquired on the basis of teachings transmitted directly from their own. It may happen to those who enter the 57/A-Food Science for Teaching competition class (teaching included in the syllabus of the Italian magistral school), to come across an anachronistic lexicon: 'women's work'. This term could still be found in 2014 on a form for inclusion in the teaching lists. It remains quite astonishing that in spite of all the reforms in education, including all the changes in the names of school and university subjects, that discriminatory term persists. That 'women's work' takes us back to a time when women were mainly considered in their role as wives and mothers and cut off from a broader social context. In fact, 'women's work' is mentioned in the 1859 Casati law, a royal decree of the Kingdom of Sardinia, which came into force in 1860, and with the unification of Italy extended to the whole peninsula.

For a better understanding of the term 'women's work', a kind of teaching module from 1923 is given.

Home economics:

- Personal cleanliness: Room objects pertaining to personal cleanliness and hygiene. The body. Teeth. Clothes. Baths. Footwear.
- Room cleaning: heating and ventilation. Fireplaces. Stoves. Central heating.
- Water and hygiene: Water filtration. Filtering candles. Drinking water. Water analysis. Contamination index. Mineral waters.
- The kitchen: utensils and crockery. Gas. Electricity. Meters. Reading them. Precautions to take when using gas.

The long march towards the recognition of gender equality has been to find innovations that have found their way into schools, but which have originated in society. Over the years, a series of legislative provisions and agreements have followed, in particular at the instigation of the equal opportunities department operating at the presidency of the council in the Italian government. These inputs and regulations have been followed up with a series of projects of various kinds aimed at redressing the existing imbalance. However, there are still prejudices and barriers that need to be broken.

Stereotypes and prejudices have found in the socio-familiar context the most fertile 'terrain' for their development, but the 'reinforcing' action exerted by the school should not be underestimated either. In this way, the educational institution has played a particularly favorable role in the preservation of the status quo, preventing women from taking on a real redemption of their role in society and in the spheres in which it is articulated (work, politics, research, to name but a few) (Bombelli, 2000). To give an example, it is sufficient to recall that for a very long time (and perhaps in some cases still today) it was believed that school curricula contained courses and disciplines more suited to males (those of a technical-scientific nature) and others more akin to the female character (those of a humanistic and

practical nature). These 'beliefs' have profoundly conditioned young people in their choice of subsequent high school and university studies, generating long lists of male students in engineering faculties and in the scientific area in general, and long lists of female students in faculties qualifying for teaching and in those in the literary, psychological and linguistic area (Ministry of Universities and Research, *"L'università in cifre"* 2006, Rome, 2006).

In this 'vicious circle', teachers of both sexes have also had and continue to have their responsibility. Convinced that they conduct 'universal and asexual' didactic activities, they propose, almost unchanged, an 'anthropocentric' body of knowledge that excludes women's contributions to human progress. In the field of history and science, for example, references to female historical figures or internationally renowned female scientists are rare, just as in the field of literature, works written by native and/or foreign female authors are hardly ever read and studied. The framework outlined above highlights a series of critical issues that should prompt those involved in educational processes to undertake further theoretical investigations and research in the field, from which new working paths can be drawn to educate active citizenship from a gender perspective.

Concerning the involvement of women in STEM, Italy is one of those countries in which the gender gap is most pronounced and gender differences in mathematics tests carried out at national level (INVALSI, Istituto nazionale di Valuazione 2016; Contini, Di Tommaso & Mendolia, 2017).

In Italy, the National Evaluation Service (SNV), a section of the INVALSI Institute, has administered standardized tests of mathematics at different school levels. The objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of the national education system, through the collection of information on students' learning in mathematics and Italian (since 2018, surveys in secondary schools also involve English). These tests allow to evaluate and consider the issue of gender differences in mathematics, these data are used almost exclusively from a statistical point of view. The gender gap is usually presented in terms of the difference between the average scores obtained by males and females within the test.

The latest INVALSI findings show an evident marked difference, but specific policies are not launched and there is not proper evidence of the interpretation of this framework.

Another interesting area is that of **the production of school textbooks**, which in Italy has constituted a separate publishing sector that has undergone considerable development in recent decades, both because many publishing houses have become involved in it, and **because ministerial indications, experiments carried out in schools, and changes in school practices have called for an increasingly broader and more diversified production.** This kind of product, as many authors emphasize, constitutes a very important vehicle for the transmission of gender models, both because of the plots and characters it presents, sometimes associated with apparently 'neutral' content (or considered as such by teachers), and because of the incisiveness of the imagines.

The Italian Publishers' Association, in 1999, signed this project, drafting an interesting Self-Regulatory Code, with the aim of proposing in textbooks a perspective that would enhance both genders.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the denunciation of the presence of sexist stereotypes in school textbooks ran parallel to an increasingly attentive and in-depth reflection on the role of women in schools, considerations on the use of language in educational and school contexts and more generally in everyday life. Reflection on the role of women in schools had already begun with the publication of Elena Gianini Belotti's famous text "Dalla parte delle bambine" (1973), which analyses the interactions between pre-school teachers and children, revealing **how adults within educational contexts perpetuated the most traditional male and female stereotypes in a very heavy and unconscious manner.** These considerations, which appeared almost disconcerting at the time, were accompanied by a growing body of literature studying the **now unstoppable phenomenon of the feminization of**

teaching. The research emphasized, in fact, how the now rampant presence of women in teaching was linked both to the low social consideration of the teaching role and to deep-rooted stereotypes that saw care work as naturally pertaining to women (CHISTOLINI, 1983).

Since the beginning of this century, research on children's publishing has undergone an interesting and stimulating development, as have reflections on language and those on the role of women in educational institutions and schools. At the same time, we must emphasize how the reality of growing up has become increasingly complex, fluid, and difficult to define, as all sociological and pedagogical studies emphasize. On the other hand, with regard specifically to school textbooks, the study published by Irene Biemmi in 2010 is very stimulating: this author analyses ten reading books aimed at fourth grade classes by various publishers and unfortunately highlights how these texts do not meet the criteria indicated by the POLITE Project, which the publishers have subscribed to, but instead reveal extremely **traditional stereotypes regarding male/female in the stories proposed, in the illustrations and in the support for the contents**. The volume proposes a very rigorous analysis, showing how all aspects and dimensions of the texts are related to gender and convey traditional messages, both through the characteristics and situations of the characters and through the settings and plots. The book asks why there are such conventional models, which are anachronistic for children today, and recalls how the role of teachers is fundamental in order to deconstruct the stereotypes still used in the transmission of knowledge. Unfortunately, at present, **teacher training on these issues appears to be little widespread, very fragile and not supported by adequate ministerial measures**, so that very often teachers lack an awareness both of the importance of the models transmitted in the texts and of how it is possible to play their role as women teachers in such a way as to favor the real emancipation of boys and girls, with a view to valuing all differences. (cf. DE CONCILIIS, 2012).

All in all, we can say that the overall picture which emerges from this note is that, in many fields Italy is still far from reaching satisfactory results, in spite of relevant progress under the pressure of women's movement, civil society and European legislation. The present severe financial crisis and austerity policies threaten some of women's recent achievements in terms of income, employment for highly educated women and social infrastructure, but, at the same time, it offers the opportunity of re-thinking the Italian welfare model which relies extensively on the un-paid work of women as providers of care services.

4.2.2 Legislative aspects and Government guidelines on Gender equality in and through education

In Italy, the Law No. 107 of 13 July 2015 states that the three-year plan for the provision of education must ensure the implementation of the principles of equal opportunities, promoting in schools of all levels education for gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination, in order to inform and raise awareness among students, teachers and parents on the issues dealt with in the extraordinary action plan against sexual and gender-based violence (Article 5 of Decree Law No. 93 of 14 August 2103, converted into Law No. 119 of 2013).

The Ministry of education therefore intends to support the work of teachers, school staff and families, who are engaged on a daily basis in equal opportunities education and in training their pupils on issues related to all forms of discrimination. With this aim, the Ministry has realized the platform www.noisiamopari.it , which gathers the experiences of schools on the topic of equal opportunities, information, exchange and support tools. Experts, associations and organizations specialized in anti-

discrimination have collaborated in the creation of the website, which was created to bring together teaching materials, projects and initiatives carried out in schools of all levels.

The Guidelines are addressed to autonomous school institutions for the implementation of paragraph 16 of Article 1 of Law 107 of 2015, which states*: 'The three-year plan of the educational offer ensures the implementation of the principles of equal opportunities by promoting in schools of every level and grade education on gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination, in order to inform and raise awareness among students, teachers and parents on the issues indicated in Article 5, paragraph 2, of Decree-Law No. 93 of 14 August 2013, converted, with amendments, by Law No. 119 of 15 October 2013. The aforementioned paragraph implements the fundamental principles of equal dignity and non-discrimination set out in Article 3 of the Italian Constitution: 'All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, personal and social conditions. It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of an economic and social nature which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country".*

The same Guidelines contain a series of educational indications that must be implemented in order to combat gender stereotypes. They also contain a series of indications to prevent gender-based violence. With regard to the specifics of the definition of stereotypes, a very careful reference is made to language.

In particular, it is said that:

In teaching practice, it is therefore suggested to check the appropriateness of the language used in the textbooks of all disciplines not only with regard to the presence of possible stereotypes of the masculine and feminine, but also with regard to the use of grammatical gender, which is a fundamental tool for the representation of women in language. Particular attention should be paid to the indications on the use of grammatical gender contained in texts dedicated to language education. In this regard, one is reminded of the importance of:

a) explain how the rules of genre assignment and agreement work;
b) show how grammatical gender constitutes a powerful tool for textual cohesion and therefore knowledge of its functioning aids the encoding and decoding of any text;
c) illustrate the meaning and use of new female terms indicating institutional roles and prestigious professions, such as architect, councilor, assessor, lawyer, chancellor, surgeon, lecturer, counsellor, critic, deputy, defender, (general) director, official, engineer, inspector, doctor, minister, notary, prefect, primary, procurator, rector, auditor, (general) secretary, senator, mayor, treasurer, etc;
d) to emphasize the grammatical regularity of these forms and explain their formation, providing some notion of morphology that allows, for example, to distinguish between simple nouns (figli- o, figli-a) and compound nouns with a suffix (consiglier-e, consiglier-a), so as to also increase knowledge of the lexicon of Italian.

In the same document, the Ministry suggests particular attention to the issue of digital discrimination. In Note no. 2501 of 25.3.2016, the Ministry, in order to promote awareness-raising and information actions in schools on the topic of incitement to online hate and the risks it represents, invites educational institutions of all levels to "an extract of the manual drawn up by the Council of Europe to better understand the characteristics of the phenomenon and the operational methods through which to help our children grow up in a society that is more respectful of diversity, safeguards respect for human rights and combats hate speech.
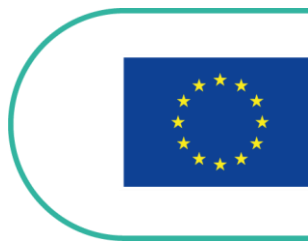
4.2.3 An educational framework

In Italy there is no clear institutional framework for the education in the area of equality and counternarrative of the gender stereotypes. The Istanbul Convention provides explicitly and for the first time in a structured manner that violence is fought through prevention and that member states commit themselves to activating pathways, but this has never been translated into practice.

In 2014, before she became Minister of Education, Senator Valeria Fedeli had presented a bill called 'Introduction of gender education', which had reached the Chamber of Deputies and aimed - in the intentions of the signatories - to introduce into school curricula 'the interdisciplinary teaching of gender education aimed at educational, cultural and emotional growth, for the realisation of the principles of equality, equal opportunities and full citizenship in contemporary social reality'.

The design was then incorporated into the aforementioned Law 107 of 2015, the so-called 'Buona Scuola' (the Good School), which in Article 1 paragraph 16 promotes 'education for gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination'. Subsequently, the National Plan for Respect Education in Schools of the Ministry of Education of Universities and Research (MIUR) was issued and guidelines directed to institutes were produced. The latter, within the framework of school autonomy, are asked to 'provide the appropriate supports so that each person develops a conscious and open identity' by supporting reciprocal diversity 'through knowledge of our own and other cultures in a confrontation that does not elude issues such as religious beliefs, family roles, gender differences'.

The document has been criticised because it says nothing about relationships, sexuality, masculinity, sexual orientation, transphobic bullying, What the document does in concrete terms, he adds, is invite institutions to provide these programmes and thus act as a support or hook for teachers or managers who are already motivated to do so. **The result is therefore that the existing projects launched in schools and promoted by local institutions are personal initiatives of teachers or managers, financed by anti-violence centres, local authorities or foundations.** According to the debate launched in this field, this approach produces a great inequality between territories, between regions and also between institutes: there are students who have access to a certain type of educational proposal on gender equality and others who will never encounter it (due to issues of sensitivity of the headmaster, school problems, lack of funds, etc.). This situation mirrors what happens with sex education projects in the various Italian regions.

These courses have been the subject of criticism and discussion by various politicians and intellectuals who express perplexity about the validity of their content. In 2018, a note from the MIUR, led at the time by Education Minister Bussetti, recognised the right to 'informed consent' from parents on extracurricular projects and the obligation for schools to exempt students whose families request it for non-compulsory subjects. On these grounds, events were cancelled in various parts of Italy, because they were considered negative by some parents. The Group of Experts on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention (GREVIO/Inf (2019)18) noted a growing resistance movement to these courses, often reinforced by misinformation campaigns about their content. This is why GREVIO recommended that Italy, among other things, "continue its efforts to integrate gender equality and information on gender-based violence in all its forms into the education system (…), ensuring wide dissemination of the national guidelines on respect education in all schools and vocational institutes in the country and promoting compulsory initial and ongoing training of teachers and all educational staff on these issues". It seems quite clear **that the lack of a clear institutional framework and the development of an organic process of activities, with the consequence that all initiatives in this area are left to the free initiative of school leaders, teachers, associations**. This means that there is no certainty

and no educational frame of reference that would allow a common and consistent approach to the fight against gender stereotypes.

In **July 2021, the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Government has decided to draft the National Strategy for Gender Equality**, which serves as a strategic framework for the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) and the reform of the Family Act. It started a wide-ranging and inclusive process, whereby the contributions from central Administrations, Regional and Local Authorities, as well as social partners and the main associations active in promoting gender equality were collected, integrated and duly exploited. This joint effort makes this Strategy a shared asset: the path that was designed and mapped out together to move the country forward and see it finally "reinvigorated by women's energy, ideas and freedom".

Concerning education (and the strategic priority on Skills), the National Strategy suggests (among the others) the following initiatives:

- **Cross-cutting promotion of the principle of gender equality at all levels of education and training** as well as introduction of gender mainstreaming notions in curricula: Lectures or classes on gender mainstreaming to be held during school hours by qualified staff, including assessment of the minimum number of hours/interactions with the students

- **Reform of the requirements for textbooks and training materials to encourage publishers to give visibility to women:** Reform of the requirements for publishing and/or recommending the purchase of school books for primary and secondary schools; this is to ensure that they do not promote gender stereotypes, but on the contrary encourage parity and equality, focusing on examples of women who have made a fundamental contribution to building up knowledge and understanding of the subject in question - if not, such books will not be authorised for distribution in schools.

- **Promotion of measures to counter school drop-outs and educational and training poverty,** through targeted initiatives in favour of younger and older women (including forms of computer and digital literacy, financial literacy, and support for non-discriminatory skilling and risk-taking processes that enhance female skills, etc.).

- **Introducing upgrading courses in STEM disciplines.** Allocation of funds for voluntary upgrading courses in scientific and mathematical disciplines (e.g. mathematics, physics, chemistry, geometry) as well as in financial education; these courses will be held at school, in classrooms and laboratories in extracurricular hours and will be intended for all students enrolled in high schools scoring below the average in the INVALSI-PISA tests. Places will be made available in proportion to the total number of students and in classes with fewer students to enable teachers to pay greater attention to the needs of each participant. Any further " gender " interpretation or classification will be evaluated.

- **Granting of public scholarships for female STEM students.** Granting of public scholarships (in addition to any private or public-private scholarships).

- **Strengthening individual educational guidance services to promote access to STEM studies.** Enhancing psychological support programmes (i.e. school psychologists or provincial guidance offices) in middle and high schools, aimed at providing aptitude guidance and overcoming gender stereotypes and focusing on how girls consider STEM disciplines and the influence of cultural and family background on academic and career choices. This may include 'shadowing/mentoring' programmes (e.g. having female university students speak in schools

or offer one-to-one interviews), and encouraging business representatives to speak in schools or online for outreach purposes.

- **Reform of ministerial and school activities to guide high school students through university and employment.** Strengthening ministerial and school activities to guide high school students through university and employment, especially directed at encouraging career development for women in the STEM and technological fields; this includes mandating a tour during the 'open university' days for fourth and fifth grade students. Promotion and guidance for vocational qualifications in traditionally male-dominated jobs and vice versa, with the aim of encouraging female entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.

- **Having places reserved for female students in STEM disciplines by means of entry tests, especially in universities with a very low female presence.** Having a minimum number of places reserved for female students in public or private university faculties requiring entry tests and which have recorded a lower percentage of female students in previous academic years, subject to a minimum score in the tests.

- **Support for female student-mothers at university.** Exemption from the payment of tuition fees and suspending calculation of course years for female students who are mothers from the time they get pregnant until the early months or years of their child, while still guaranteeing them the opportunity to attend classes and take exams.

- **Introduction of gender quotas in university staff evaluation boards and gender-neutral evaluation of academic performance.** Introduction of gender quotas in the boards responsible for the selection, appointment and evaluation of all professors (full and associate professors) and in all joint decision-making bodies (e.g. the Academic Senate); definition and application, during the above-mentioned evaluations, of objective gender-neutral criteria for the evaluation of academic performance, under penalty of disqualification of the body and sanctions for the universities in proportion to the funds allocated by MIUR for ordinary activities.

- **Reform of the mechanism for allocating funds from the Ministry of Universities and Research for universities to reflect gender differences in teaching staff and/or academic institutions.** Allocation of ad-hoc MUR funds to universities that achieve minimum levels of gender representation in teaching staff, research staff, administrative departments, Academic Senate, number of female students in STEM disciplines, and university's top professors and researchers according to the H-Index. Further incentives or sanctions should be considered.

- **Tax deductions or incentives for private companies to provide after-school digital and ICT literacy courses for female target groups.** Allocation of grants to private companies for the organisation of digital literacy courses on ICT skills (basic or advanced) for their female employees (regardless of whether these skills are required in their daily activities). This measure can also be extended to self-employed women and entrepreneurs/professionals.

- **Compulsory training for teachers on gender mainstreaming and gender stereotyping, especially in STEM and high-segregation disciplines:** Introduction of compulsory refresher courses, for all teaching staff of first and second grade schools, public or private, to promote the recognition and correction of gender stereotypes in teachers' conduct and to give them concrete tools to promote consideration of highly gender-segregated subjects by female students (especially, but not exclusively in STEM disciplines) and students (especially in literary, humanistic and social disciplines) in their curricular activities with students.

4.3 IRELAND

4.3.1 General introduction and state of the art

The Irish education system has a multifaceted approach to gender education mainly due to its systematic use of division and separation when it comes to curriculum, teaching, and schooling itself. In order to understand the problems currently facing how we can combat gender stereotypes, it's necessary to understand the context in which the Irish education system was founded and how these archaic and traditionalist values have trickled down into how we prioritise gender education. The upper Irish education system can be divided into two distinct levels, or 'cycles': the Junior cycle, which involves students aged approx. 12-15, and the Senior or colloquially the Leaving cycle, with students aged approx. 16-18. Having two cycles also means that the Irish national curriculum is divided, with different priorities attributed to subjects based on their congruent cycle. What this has meant in terms of combating gender stereotypes is that there are, in essence, fighting a battle on two fronts, with the need to radically change two opposing curriculums. For instance, the subject that most typically focuses on gender and relationships, SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education), is a mandatory part of the Junior Cycle's Wellbeing programme, with around 100 hours dedicated in the curriculum for this subject over the span of three years. However, for the Senior Cycle this allocation is greatly reduced, with SPHE only having a mandated six hours of course time per year, an aspect that many schools deem to be optional and insignificant to the overall development of upper-level students. The first focus on what universal barriers hinder gender equality throughout the Irish education system.

4.3.2 Legislative aspects and Government guidelines on Gender equality in and through education

The majority of Ireland's educational awareness surrounding gender inequality is covered in the **SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education) curriculum during secondary school**. It was initially developed as a curriculum subject in 2000 in response to the high levels of teen pregnancies and the HIV crisis. Its main objectives, as outlined by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is to provide a safe classroom setting in which students can discuss and deconstruct their interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions, leading to 'healthy lives, healthy choices and building caring and respectful relationships.' (NCAA, 2022).

A major review of the SPHE has since been carried out by the NCAA in 2019 that uncovered a disconnect between the subject's aims and its real-life practices. The review found that the curriculum was extremely outdated, rooted in traditionalist values and focused more on what students shouldn't be doing rather than what they should. For instance, high priority was given towards abstinence and chastity rather than safe-sex practices. Overall, a general consensus emerged that the curriculum neglected the emotional and interpersonal dynamics of relationships which subsequently had a 'knock-on' effect to how the students viewed and interacted with gender. The review also revealed that teachers felt they lacked proper training and resources to effectively deliver the subject. This review, combined with recent national policies that advocated for more immediate remedies towards gender inequality such as the Programme for Government 2020 and the Zero Tolerance: The Third National Strategy for Domestic and Gender Based Violence 2022, helped spur a complete redevelopment of the curriculum, with the revised SPHE for the Junior Cycle to be carried out in September 2023.

Within the revised curriculum, specific allocation has been given to the issue of gender stereotyping as well as gender identity as a whole. However, there is now a disconnect between the revised curriculum for the Junior Cycle and the curriculum for the Senior Cycle, which still operates under the archaic values of the 2000 curriculum. Additionally, as SPHE is not currently a mandatory subject for the Senior Cycle, with only six hours per year allotted to RSE (Relationships and Sexual Education), we can only presume that the provision and space to talk about gender is only further diminished for Senior Cycle students. While the NCAA is currently aiming to redevelop the Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum, a draft version of the proposed redevelopment programme will be published in late 2023 with no definitive date as of yet on when it will be fully implemented. The majority of SPHE training materials is delivered through online guides, recommendations and digital toolkits. Most training material can be delivered in a day, or at the very most within a week which highlights the problem uncovered by the NCAA review of teachers being inadequately prepared or trained to tackle the difficult and complex questions associated with gender. In order to properly address gender inequality and stereotypes within education, the two leading training materials are: Gender Identity and Gender Expression in E-Resources for Second Level Schools developed by the University of Limerick in 2020, which will prove fundamental to the redevelopment of the SPHE curriculum, and Through the Looking Glass- a Guide to Empowering Young People to Become Advocates for Gender Equality published by the National Women's Council of Ireland in 2014. **Due to the current teacher shortage, as well as educational budget cuts, in Ireland, SPHE has often been deemed as a 'filler subjec**t'. This means that the responsibility to provide an inclusive and well-informed SPHE class often falls under the ownership of a teacher with an entirely separate speciality and is wholly unqualified for the role. Often times teachers are asked by the principal to jointly run the SPHE curriculum alongside their qualified subject due to the lack of value and demand associated with SPHE (O'Sullivan, et. al., 2012). Combined with the freedom teachers have to choose their classroom resources when it comes to SPHE and there becomes a prevalent issue of under-training and skewed learning topics within the curriculum.

Despite the many challenges and barriers facing the achievement of inclusive and accessible gender education, Ireland is slowly becoming more proactive in its activities to dismantle gender inequality and stereotypes within its education. The following programmes, policies and national guidelines have been the main drivers for this change:

- Citizen's Assembly on Gender Equality (2021) has provided recommendations for the SPHE curriculum- on gender it states that SPHE should (a) promote gender equality and diversity and (b) explicitly cover gender power dynamics, consent, and domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, both online and offline. (NCAA, 2022).

- Current move towards equality-focused co-educational and non-denominational schools (mainly the Educate Together school programme which has a network of 117 schools across Ireland) (OECD, 2020).

- Equality Unit, which was created in 2001, serves as part of the Irish state's Department of Education and Science and focuses on ensuring gender equality across secondary level schools in Ireland. It has produced a set of guidelines in 2006 that has enabled schools to effectively audit, review and rectify their gender equality issues.

- Gender Equality Matters project, funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the EU delivered educational training materials across primary and secondary schools and was launched by Dublin City University (2020).

- Gender Action Plan 2018-2020 was created out of the direct findings uncovered by the Gender Equality Taskforce and focused on raising women's representation in higher education.

+ The Department of Education published the [Recommendations on Gender Balance in STEM Education](#) in March 2022 as well as a national STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026. It has a particular focus on increasing participation in STEM by women.

4.3.3 An educational framework

Perhaps **the most prevalent issue within Ireland's education system regarding gender equality is that of the predominant use of single-sex schooling**. This issue funnels down to impact the variety of equal access opportunities open to young individuals in terms of subject choice and long-term career development, as well as opening up a chasm for gender differences and stereotypes. Approximately **one-third of all secondary level schools in Ireland are single-sex**, making it the second highest proportion of single-sex schools in all of Europe, falling only behind Malta (Healy, 2022). This is mainly due to Ireland's historic roots as being a predominantly Catholic country with the majority of its schools being run by Catholic order. At the time, Catholic schools thought it necessary to separate based on gender mainly in order to stop students being distracted from their work by the opposite gender. The heteronormative rhetoric emerged that co-educational schooling will distract students from their academic performance as they will be too preoccupied with the opposite gender (Maguire, 2022). However, recent studies have shown that there is little to no difference in academic performance across co-educational and single-sex schools (Smyth, 2010). Further research has also indicated **that single-sex schooling may be even more detrimental to a young person's healthy development by isolating them into segregated gender roles**. Halpern et. al (2011) found that single-sex schools tend to 'increase gender stereotyping and legitimised institutional sexism' with all-boys schools displaying increased behavioural and aggression problems whilst all-girls maintain their strict socialised gender role and have less admissions into STEM career paths.

Despite this, the Catholic dominated schooling approach has made an enduring impact on how the Irish education system is run, **with a government mentality to stick with the 'status quo' rather than uphaul decades, if not centuries, of tradition**. Coupled with the high turnover in personnel serving as Ministers for Education means that Ireland is often delayed in radicalising its long-term strategic policy making (Harford et. al., 2023). The most important piece of modern legislation relating to the structure of schooling has been the Admission to Schools Act (2018) in which article 61:2(b) prohibited the use of religion as a criterion in school admissions in an effort to curb the oversaturation of Catholic denominated schools. However, a notable exemption has been given towards gender in schools admission, with article 62:7(c iii) stating that schools can refuse admission based on gender if they are single sex. As such, there is **no current legislative force that limits or hinders the growth of single-sex schooling** (Clavel & Flannery, 2022.)

However, that is not to say that there hasn't been significant push-back surrounding single-sex schooling. Significant portions of research have been allocated to investigate and dismantle the opinion that single-sex schools perform better academically and there has also been significant advocacy for the abolition of single-sex schools altogether. Stemming from a community level, this advocacy has slowly been encroaching on the national legislature. A newly proposed bill, the Education (Admission to School) (Co-education) Bill, has been introduced into the Irish parliament in 2022. Led by the Labour faction of the parliament, it proposes that over a ten-year period, single-sex schools at a primary level (ages approx. 5-12) are abolished and after a fifteen-year period, all secondary schools that are public (i.e., in receipt of State funding) will be co-educational. However, as of June 2023 it is still in the preliminary stages of debate within the parliament.

A secondary problem that has arisen, stemming from the oversaturation of single-sex schools in Ireland, is **the presence of a 'hidden curriculum' that continually perpetuates gender stereotypes**. **Single-sex schools often have set subject choices that cater towards preconceived gender roles and stereotypes**. For instance, boys in single-sex schools are typically offered a narrower range of subjects than those in co-educational or all-girls schools, with subjects that are deemed to be more traditionally 'feminine' subjects, such as **Home Economics** (which teaches cooking, nutrition, family, home and resource management) **and Music being the subjects often excluded in all-boys subject choices**. **The inverse is also true, with few all-girls schools offering more 'masculine' subjects such as Materials Technology (Woodworking), Technical Graphics and Computer Science** (Lodge & Lynch, 2004). Data collected from the Higher Education Authority found that 86% of male students study practical and technical based subjects during the Senior Cycle, such as technical graphics and design, engineering and construction, whilst less than 5% of female students' nationwide study these subjects at all (Delaney & Devereux, 2019).

This 'hidden curriculum' is often cited as the main problem for low levels of engagement amongst women in STEM related fields as women in all-girls schools are segregated by subject choices into predetermined gender roles (O'Sullivan, 2022). In 2019, out of all 2116 students who completed Physics during their Senior Cycle, only 4% were female (McLoughlin, O'Neill and Fagan, 2020). Additionally, the UCD Centre for Economic Research in 2019 was able to definitively link this low engagement to the use of differential subject choices offered across all-girls, all-boys and co-educational schools. This has become a notable issue for the Department of Education and they have since introduced several recommendations and policies to better improve female access and participation to STEM based subjects, such as the STEM Education Plan 2017-2019, the STEM Passport for Inclusion pilot programme and the Recommendations on Gender Balance in STEM Education 2022. However, whilst considerable effort has been made to bridge these barriers facing female students, there has been little to no policies or recommendations that promote arts and humanities or health and social care-based subjects to male students. **This is an area that remains lacking and threatens to cement Irish students into gender stereotyped based subjects and careers**.

In addition, **there is a lack of gender balance at all levels within the education system**. For Ireland to educate its students on gender equality, there must also be a mirror reflection of that equality and values within the teaching and management of education itself. **The vast majority of teachers across Ireland are female, however they still remain a minority figure when it comes to managerial roles within the education sectors, namely when it comes to being principals and directors** (McKeon, 2020). This is not a uniquely Irish problem and is instead more representative of a systemic problem in education systems across the EU and internationally. Ireland is one of the leading EU countries when it comes to gender balance in its education system, falling only behind Italy and Austria when it comes to female representation in primary education (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017).

4.4 BULGARIA

4.4.1 General introduction and state of the art

Since the fall of communism in 1989, the Bulgaria's transition to capitalism signified important changes both in Bulgaria's labour market and in its educational system, which has witnessed structural reforms including the decentralisation, liberalisation, and privatisation of educational institutions by having a severe impact on the working population. The transformation to capitalism was accompanied by changes in the educational system, including the liberalisation of educational institutions. The Bulgarian educational system has in fact passed substantial reforms as far as its legal framework and orientation towards the private sector are concerned. Changes and reforms gave way to more freedom and initiative for the individual, creating possibilities to allow pupils and their families to make their own educational and vocational choices (Popov 2007).

The societal transformation from a totalitarian society, where both possibilities and inequalities were levelled, towards a post-communist society opened up new opportunities in education and the labour market while at the same time increasing differences and inequalities.

The post-1989 educational system has been characterised by a process that led to enhanced social inequality and stratification. A case in point is the massification of higher education which refers to the educational expansion of the tertiary levels. There has been a predominance of women in higher education since the late 1970s in socialist Bulgaria and this educational gap between women and men persisted throughout the 1990s, during the enormous increase in the total enrolment of students (Adnanes 2000). Thus, educational structures provide a considerable advantage for women compared to men, which is reflected in the positive positioning and the higher upward mobility for girls and women in Bulgaria's educational system. Moreover, Bulgaria has one of the lowest field-specific gender segregation with a strong representation of females in computer science programs and the proportion of women in traditionally male technical fields is relatively high compared to other EU countries.

However, the educational system shapes the gendered occupational trajectories for men but it does not hold the same explanatory power for women. Even if, higher education in Bulgaria seems to be geared rather towards female-typical programs, in contrast to the VET system, where young men are highly overrepresented; neither vocational nor higher education has a significant effect for women. In contrast, men with vocational education are more likely to work in male-typed occupations and, in line with the literature, higher education steers men toward gender mixed and a-typical occupations. Women continue to face discrimination in the workplace and are underrepresented in leadership positions. They also face high rates of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence.

4.4.2 Legislative aspects and Government guidelines on Gender equality in and through education

Bulgaria has a long history of gender inequality, which dates back to the Ottoman Empire's rule over the region. During this time, women were largely confined to the home and had limited access to education and other opportunities and woman is subordinate to man within a patriarchal culture entirely governed by tradition. In the 1840s the so-called "literary feminism" appeared, whose representatives appealed from the pages of the newspapers for the need to change the position of the

Bulgarian woman. **Until the Liberation from the Ottoman Empire the only intellectual profession available to Bulgarian women was that of teacher**. There are records of over 400 women teachers working in various parts of the Bulgarian lands. During this period women teachers made up about ten percent of the total number of teachers. Regardless of their qualifications, their pay was about half that of a male teacher with the same qualifications.

In 1995, Bulgaria signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in the next year the Government adopted a National Action Plan in implementation of its commitments at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995 (1996). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action makes several references to education workforce problems proposing concrete actions to be taken to - "Eliminate occupational segregation, ... and encourage men to seek employment in the social sector" as well as to "Take actions to ensure that female teachers and professors have the same possibilities and status as male teachers and professors". At that time the share of women in the overall teaching staff had already reached 81.1%. The economic crisis and political changes in the transition period had only accelerated the process of feminisation and deepened the problems resulting from it. Women among school leaders were also predominant but as percentage of all women teachers were three times less compared to men directors. In tertiary education, the average percentage of female academic staff was 41.2% but there were substantial differences between women and men in terms of academic and management positions as well as in some fields of science. In the 1990s women professors were only 12.5% and there was only one women rector. There were no women at the highest policy-making positions in the education sector in the legislative or the executive.

In April 2016, the Bulgarian government adopted a new Law on Equality between Women and Men, which mandates equal treatment and opportunities for individuals of all genders. This law establishes the principle of equality as a coordinated state policy and it also designates specialized bodies and mechanisms for implementation at all levels. The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria also enshrines the principle of equality by stating that all citizens are equal before the law, with no restrictions on rights or privileges based on sex. Although Bulgaria has yet to introduce a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) requirement at the national level, two Bulgarian universities are developing a GEP under the Horizon 2020 project, Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research, which runs from 2019-2023.

4.4.3 An educational framework

According to the Public Education Act (PEA), school education in Bulgaria is compulsory until the age of 16 and *"does not allow any restrictions or privileges based on racial or sexual features, ethnic or social origin, religion, and social status".*

Bulgaria has made some progress in promoting gender equality in education, but significant challenges remain. Girls and boys have equal access to primary and secondary education, but girls are underrepresented in STEM fields, and boys are more likely to drop out of school. Additionally, gender stereotypes and biases persist in the classroom, which can hinder girls' academic achievement and limit their career opportunities.

To address these challenges, the Bulgarian government has developed a number of initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in education. For example, the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025 includes specific targets related to education, such as increasing the number of girls and women in STEM fields and reducing gender gaps in educational attainment. The strategy also emphasizes the

importance of promoting gender-sensitive education and training for teachers and other education professionals.

NGOs and civil society organizations have also played an important role in promoting gender equality in education in Bulgaria. For example, the Bulgarian Fund for Women has supported a number of projects aimed at increasing girls' participation in STEM fields, while the Gender Alternatives Foundation has developed training programs for teachers on gender-sensitive education. Overall, education has the potential to be a powerful tool for promoting gender equality in Bulgaria, but more work is needed to address the persistent gender gaps and biases that exist in the education system.

The problems of the education sector can be structured like this:

- Feminisation of the teaching profession and of management positions in pre-school, primary, primary and secondary general and vocational education;
- Horizontal segregation between different fields of knowledge and vertical segregation in terms of academic and managerial positions in higher education;
- Gaps in publicly available sex-disaggregated data on all aspects of the presence of women in teaching and academic staff and in management/decision-making positions in education

Some current practices and tools used in Bulgarian educational institutions to promote gender equality include the development and implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), introducing gender dimensions into organizational, study, and research activities, and revising or creating gender-sensitive policies.

According to the **UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2020**, Bulgarian schools face challenges in creating safe learning environments for girls, who are more likely to experience verbal and sexual harassment, abuse, and violence. The report also highlights that the content of education in Bulgaria perpetuates gender stereotypes, portraying girls and women in passive roles.

However, there are some initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in Bulgarian secondary schools. For example, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science has developed and implemented a Gender Equality Plan for the period of 2019-2023, which includes specific measures for promoting gender equality in education. Additionally, some schools have adopted whole-school approaches to promote gender equality, which involve creating a supportive and inclusive school culture that values diversity and challenges gender stereotypes.

There are also ongoing efforts to address **gender inequality in education, particularly concerning access to education for marginalized groups**. Research has been conducted on the access to education **for Roma girls**, with a focus on identifying and addressing social norms that may hinder their educational opportunities Furthermore, the Bulgarian educational system has been analyzed to understand gender segregation and inequality and efforts are being made to decrease gender disparities in general upper-secondary education.

4.5 ROMANIA

4.5.1 General introduction and state of the art

Although Romania has a legal basis for gender equality, analysis of the current situation from the perspective of non-discrimination in several sectors of the Romanian educational system shows that **schools still face difficulties in putting into practice educational approaches regarding the promotion of fair and equal treatment, regardless of gender.** According to teachers, students and parents who support traditional gender roles have shown resistance to efforts to promote gender equality in schools (Center for Legal Resources, 2020).

The study 'Non-discrimination in education' (Center for Legal Resources, 2020) thoroughly addresses gender equality by analyzing those school subjects that have an increased weight in the training of students from a social and ethical point of view, such as the Romanian language and literature, History, but also the optional discipline Education for health which contains a sexual education component, relevant for the issue of gender equality. The results of the study show that **in the case of the Romanian language high school program, less than 10% of the recommended authors are women**. **In the case of the gymnasium program, in the History textbook, we do not find any female historical figure. These results show that the school curriculum does not pay attention to gender equality, marginalizes, or even excludes gender equality - a subject that is not addressed in class in a structured way in schools in Romania.**

Regarding extracurricular activities, there is an increase in the presence of non-governmental organizations that offer more options for the involvement of students, especially from the urban environment. Although the traditionalist approach regarding gender equality is deeply rooted in the rural environment, rural students do not have proper access to information (Center for Legal Resources, 2020). Given the systematic lack of funding for extracurricular activities, the effort of schools to direct their students to these initiatives is to be appreciated.

Despite these obstacles, there is an encouraging development in the promotion of gender equality in schools in Romania. In 2022, **a manual developed by a team of experts and researchers, for classroom teaching of gender equality 'from an inclusive and intersectional perspective', was made available to pre-university teachers**. The Gender Equality Handbook is structured into five chapters and includes theoretical aspects of gender stereotypes and prejudices, information on different forms of discrimination against girls and women, with examples from the European Court of Human Rights and the National Council for Combating Discrimination case studies, and gender equality topics, especially regarding education (Edumanager.ro, 2022). The goal of using these materials for classroom instruction is for students to be able to define equality of gender, investigate some of the causes and consequences of inequality of gender, and recognize how equality of gender is promoted by the end of the lesson.

Several specific examples of how gender equality is reflected in Romanian school culture are as follows:
→ **Organizing physical space**: Schools in Romania make efforts to ensure that students can interact in ways that allow them to express their identity, from neutral toilets or physical education courses or eliminating dress codes. For example, football is no longer considered an exclusive male team sport.
→ **Communication within and outside of the classroom**: Communication with the local community is a key element in promoting gender equality. Some schools have established student councils and forums that function as communication channels, through which students can express their opinions. Partnering with local organizations helped to stabilize a dialogue about gender equality within the local community, as described below.
→ **Curriculum and instructional materials**: Romanian schools take steps to ensure that their curricula materials promote gender equality. For instance, some schools have adopted educational materials that promote gender equality and do not use sexist stereotypes. Additionally, some

schools have implemented workshops and programs to aid students in developing critical thinking skills and challenging societal stereotypes, as indicated by the materials on didactic.ro.

4.5.2 Legislative aspects and Government guidelines on Gender equality in and through education

The legislative framework regarding the protection against any form of discrimination is structured in a pyramidal form from the fundamental principles contained in the Romanian Constitution, passing through laws with specific content for this issue, then laws in which certain articles address these issues and finally Government Decisions and other orders by the minister or regulations that set policies in this field.

Thus, the Romanian Constitution enshrines the principle of equality between Romanian citizens (in article 16), which automatically means the exclusion of privileges and or discrimination, and then resumes this principle with application to children and young people in article 49(1): "Children and young people enjoy a special regime of protection and assistance in realizing their rights."

Several laws address, on the one hand, the promotion of equal opportunities and, on the other hand, the avoidance and, if necessary, the sanctioning of various possible forms of discrimination. We can mention here, first of all, the Education Law, which both in its previous form from 2011 and in the current version, promoted by the Parliament in June 2023, includes articles with reference to the education of young people in the spirit of respecting the equality and dignity of any person (art. 2, art. 3, art. 4 - for example).

From another perspective, Law no. 48 of 2002, supplemented by Law no. 27 of 2004, refers to the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination; starting from the constitutional principle of equality between citizens, it specifies that these rights are guaranteed especially in essential areas (such as the right to education or access to the professional field) and defines the forms through which discrimination is exercised: Article 2(1). According to this ordinances, discrimination means any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, non-contagious chronic disease, HIV infection, membership to a disadvantaged category, as well as any other criterion that has the purpose or effect of restricting, removing the recognition, use or exercise, under conditions of equality, of human rights and fundamental freedoms or rights recognized by law, in the political, economic, social and cultural or in any other areas of public life.

Another facet of promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination is that of gender differences; in this sense, Law no. 202 of 2002 lists the fields in which equal opportunities apply: work, education, health, culture and information, politics, participation in decisions, access to services and others, regardless of gender differences.

4.5.3 An educational framework

Due to the high prevalence of teen pregnancies and of sexual crimes against women and children, the issue of gender equality, in general, and of health education, in particular, is a recurrent theme in the public space.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations, focusing on children or women rights, through programs financed by the European Union and funding lines of foreign governments (such as France, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, or USA) **pressured the Romanian government and the Ministry of Education to adopt effective public policies and to implement educational strategies, to support gender equality**. As a result, the Ministry of Education launched several projects that overlapped in scope, such as Education for health and Education for life, and proposed strategies that raised a tide of protests and were subsequently withdrawn.

In Europe, gender equality is a 'valence issue' (Strokes, 1963) – most stakeholders agree that women and men alike should enjoy equal opportunities and equal treatment and live a healthy, fulfilling, violence free
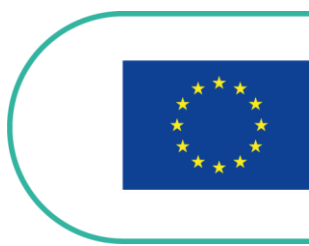
life. In Romania, gender equality evolved, during the last decade, into a 'position issue' (Strokes, 1963): some stakeholders (organised in NGOs and pressure groups) stress the importance of women's rights and campaign (sometimes dramatically) **for the solution of sexual education in schools as the only viable solution to solve teen pregnancies,** while others (politicians, representatives of religious groups and alternative media) focus on Romanian traditional values and the importance of Religion, as a discipline in schools (from the 1st to the 12th grade) and protest vehemently against 'gender ideology'.

Historically, women studies appeared in the academic field about 25 years ago (Bucur, 2021), following international trends in research and education. At governmental level, as part of the accession to the European Union, the Romanian Government established in 2002 the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between women and men and adopted several international regulations regarding human rights, in general, and gender equality, in particular.

Also in 2002, **a first 'National program in Education for health in Romanian schools' (MEC, n.d.) led to the introduction in 2004, by the Ministry of Education, of an optional discipline, at undergraduate level** (1st to 12th grade), **called 'Education for health'**. This new discipline **included themes such as social relations between boys and girls, violence, mental health and reproductive health** (MECTS, 2004). The introduction of 'Education for health' in 2004 was followed, 13 years later, by the launch of another optional discipline, called **'Prepared for life. Education for life and community'**, from preschool up to the 8th grade (MEN, 2017). The situation is similar for media literacy content: there is an optional discipline called Media Education, and other disciplines that may cover similar issues, such as Universal literature, Literature for children, Methodology for the discipline Romanian language and literature, Language education (in pedagogical high schools), Communication techniques (in pedagogical high schools), Reading as a life skill, Mother language and literature. The list is compiled by the Centre for Independent Journalism, that offers training for trainers in media literacy.

The new optional discipline, Education for life, follows a similar concept with Education for health, covering themes like family, community, empathy, diversity, health, but also gender stereotypes, rights, and respect (starting from the 4th grade). There are other disciplines with similar scope, such as the now classical weekly hour reserved for discussions with the teacher coordinating the class (Dirigenţie, since the 5th grade), or disciplines dedicated to Civic education and Education for democratic citizenship. In 2021, the minister of education announced that the discipline 'Education for life and community' will include sexual education classes for grades 5th to 12, and parents may decide to withdraw their children from the course, just like in the case of Religion (Redacţia, 2021).

Yet, the situation of teens pregnancies did not improve, in the absence of other public policies that could solve such a multidimensional issue. **In 2018, the Ministry of Education launched a project of 'National strategy for parental education 2018-2025'**, with the help of UNICEF and four other organizations and foundations, and partially supported by a Swiss grant. The project was heavily criticized by teachers' associations, unions, and church representatives, for the inclusion of a definition of the family from a sociological point of view, and was consequently withdrawn (Hotnews.ro, 2018). The same year, 2018, was also marked by a referendum to redefine family in the Constitution, in line with traditional values and against sexual minorities. The majority of Romanian boycotted the vote, following several awareness campaigns, and the referendum failed to reach the minimum voting benchmark imposed by the law.

4.6 PORTUGAL

4.6.1 General introduction and state of the art

The transformations related to the modernisation of Portuguese society triggered by the implementation of democracy did not fully accommodate gender equality. In particular, when we consider the areas where the most progress has been made in keeping with a broadly shared urge for modernisation, education and science; whereas women have contributed to boosting the Portuguese population's level of education, thus inverting the worst legacy of the dictatorship and developing scientific research, gender inequalities are still visible in highly qualified professions.

Unemployment and job insecurity are higher among women; the gender pay gap (16.3% in Portugal6) is present in all ages, levels of education and occupations and unpaid work is shared very unequally between women and men. The high participation of women in the labour force (above EU average) and low part-time employment rates (below EU average) in Portugal reflect prevailing low wages.

To overcome such situation over the past years Portugal assumed equality between women and men as a clear public policy priority. This required a multifaceted approach; one that recognizes the structural nature of the disadvantages that women and girls continue to suffer and the underlying gender stereotypes.

In this context, mainstreaming gender equality at all levels of governance is a political commitment and a strategy for achieving equality between women and men, girls and boys, in all government activities as well as in all policies implemented at Central and Local levels of Public Administration (among many other actions, through the adoption of Plans for Gender Equality in all ministries and in all municipalities, and in the appointment of ministerial and municipal Gender Equality Advisors). In addition, cooperation between government and public administration with other relevant stakeholders, such as the private sector, social partners civil society organisations, including women's rights NGO's, academia, etc, has also been reinforced through strategic partnerships and support in many areas of intervention to achieve equality between women and men.

Portugal has developed numerous actions to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination based on sex and to ensure that men and women enjoy the same rights, in law and in fact, in all sector and at all levels.

One of the major achievements is the adoption of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 "Portugal + Igual" (ENIND), approved in 2018 by a Resolution of the Council of Ministers.

4.6.2 Legislative aspects and Government guidelines on Gender equality in and through education

Portugal has a strong legal framework that promotes gender equality in education. Since the instauration of democracy in Portugal, in 1974, successive steps were taken to ensure, both politically and legally, that gender equality becomes a reality in the multiple contexts of social life, with schools at the forefront of these efforts.

The National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination – Portugal + Equal1 (Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.61/2018, 2018; Decree-law n.55/2018) aligns with several national and international documents of reference, such as the Convention of Istanbul (2011). It sets different goals concerning education:

1. to ensure conditions for education and training free from gender stereotypes,
2. to qualify primary and secondary prevention programs and the respective entities and professionals, and promote their implementation, as well as
3. to deconstruct homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and interphobic stereotypes.

4.6.3 An educational framework

In the Portuguese educational system, gender equality is a mandatory part of the curriculum since preschool. In the 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education, education for gender equality is one of the domains foreseen for Citizenship and Development subject (Direção-Geral da Educação, n.d.). The integration of gender equality in the curriculum aims to "promote the equal rights and duties of female and male students, through an education free of prejudice and gender stereotypes, to ensure the same educational opportunities and social and professional options.

This process is shaped from a growing awareness of the living experiences of female and male students, considering their historical growth, with the prospect of changing attitudes and behaviors. **The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) developed guidelines that support education professionals in addressing gender equality, thus promoting the "gradual elimination of social gender stereotypes that predefine what one is supposed to be and do as a boy or a girl"** (Pinto et al., 2015, p. VII).

Besides gender equality, **health education is another part of the mandatory curriculum** in this subject, "which aims to give children and young people the knowledge, attitudes, and values that help them make choices and decisions that are appropriate to their health and physical, social and mental well-being" (Direção-Geral de Educação, 2013). Within the health framework, the theme "Affects and Education Sexuality" also addresses "Identity and Gender" and "Affective relationships", "Development of sexuality", "Maternity and Paternity", and "Sexual and reproductive rights".

Although there are no specific mandatory objectives in the Citizenship and Development curriculum on gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence, current guidelines underline that other school subjects, activities, projects, and partnerships with the community can and should complement the development of students' knowledge, attitudes, and values in these matters, underlining an integrated vision and consistent and systematic school practices. The Portuguese Decree-law 60/2009 establishes that sexuality education should be promoted in public and private educational establishments, from primary to secondary education.

4.7 MALTA

4.7.1 General introduction and state of the art

Malta has made significant progress on achieving gender equality, especially women's economic participation, but **concerns remain about challenges rooted in discriminatory gender roles enhanced by a patriarchal culture still holding women back.**

However, through several initiatives undertaken by the Maltese Government throughout the past years, gender inequalities in both legislation and policy have been considerably decreased. **Women's empowerment has come a long way, and society has become more conscious of the importance of gender equality and how central this is for a better functioning society.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected countries all over the world and impacted the lives and well-being of many people. Despite this, Government has continued to make strides in the equality sector, **but challenges remain in areas such as work and pay, representation in politics and leadership positions, and gender-based violence.**

Firstly, a dedicated unit within the Public Service has been active in addressing challenges highlighted by women and gender minorities ever since its formation. This is the Gender Mainstreaming Unit (GMU) within the Human Rights Directorate that was established in January 2019 and serves as the main governmental coordinating body that liaises with various national, European, and international entities, imparts information, and feeds the gender perspective to ongoing processes.

Recent years have seen an increase in the number of women in employment. However, it has also led to slow increases in the gender pay gap, where it stood at 7.8% in 2007 and rose to 11% by 2016. **Malta is below the EU-28 average of 16.2%, but the fact that the gender pay gap is increasing implies that action needs to be taken to ensure that males and females have the same opportunities in the economy**, and that women and men are treated equally in the labour market. For that, Malta is working steadily to implement the directive which comes into force in 2024. This Directive is also part of the bigger picture which is a multipronged approach that addresses the gender pay gap, reduces in-work poverty especially for single-parent households and increases work-life balance through the Work-Life Balance Directive and Directive on Improving Gender Balance on the boards of EU-listed companies. (In Malta, the Work-Life Balance Directive was implemented for Parents and Carers, entering into force on 2 August 2022.)

4.7.2 Legislative aspects and Government guidelines on Gender equality in and through education

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Maltese Constitution. Article 14 of the Constitution states that 'the State shall promote the equal right of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights and for this purpose shall take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination between the sexes by any person, organisation or enterprise; the State shall, in particular, aim at ensuring that women workers enjoy equal rights and the same wages for the same work as men.'

The Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap. 456 of the Laws of Malta) is the overarching legislative document that stipulates gender equality in Malta. Amongst its main principles, it includes the abolishment of discrimination in educational establishments or any other entity providing vocational training and guidance (Art. 8 Cap. 456). This principle is also reflected in the Article 3 of the Education Act (Cap. 605 of the Laws of Malta). As for the basic principles of non-discrimination (based on other characteristics as well, including gender and sex) can be found in the Maltese Constitution and the European Convention Act (Cap. 319).

The first legal gender recognition procedures were introduced through amendments to the Civil Code in 2004 (ACT XVIII of 2004). The provisions were repealed in 2015 and replaced with the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (ACT XI of 2015 further amended by ACT XX of 2015).
The Act introduces a right to gender identity for all citizens of Malta and entitles them to:

- the recognition of their gender identity;
- the free development of their person according to their gender identity;
- be treated according to their gender identity and,
- be identified in that way in the documents providing their identity, and
- bodily integrity and physical autonomy.

The Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (Chapter 540 of the Laws of Malta) allows for the legal gender recognition of persons based on self-determination and bodily integrity.
Malta has consistently scored positively on the Gender equality index due to the measures spearheaded by the Government and the current economic and social climate. Malta's ranking is the highest (5th among all Member States) in the domain of work, scoring 77.0 points out of 100. Within this domain, the country has the highest score in the sub-domain of participation at work (81.2 points) Compared to other EU countries, Malta performs best in the sub-domain of segregation and quality of work in which it has held the second place since 2010 and currently scores 73 points.
In 2022, Malta launched its first National Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy & Action Plan (GEMSAP) 2022 – 2027.
This Strategy identifies and eradicates those obstacles by strengthening the gender perspective at all levels and stages of policy making. GEMSAP focuses on eight strategic objectives:

1. Strengthening of Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality
2. Guarantee equal access to employment in all sectors, combat segregation and ensuring Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value
3. Enhancing women's economic independence
4. Strengthening the principle of gender equality & mainstreaming in the education system and challenging gender stereotypes
5. Promoting co-responsibility and balance of work, private and family life
6. Achieving gender balance in political and public decision making
7. Promoting gender equality in social wellbeing and healthcare policies
8. Eliminate gender imbalance in the field of justice by addressing gender bias and gender stereotypes

An inter-Ministerial Committee was set up in the beginning of the year to monitor and develop the GEMSAP Action Plan by all Government Ministries. The Human Rights Directorate within the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality has been tasked with the coordinating and monitoring body.

4.7.3 An educational framework

The Ministry of Education Youth, Sport, Research and Innovation will be leading various measures in the coming years and support other initiatives to ensure that gender equality is prioritised tackling specific areas where imbalance is still prevalent in society. These are the following measures that will be led by the Ministry for Education, Youth, Sport, Research and Innovation:

- Strengthen positive gender representation in formal education of all subjects to tackle gender stereotypes and to ensure that the content of the curriculum includes values and attitudes of gender equality.
- Carry out gender equality audits in all schools and higher education institutions to assess the gaps in the present allocation of resources and the gender relations and representation within them.

- Ensure that the necessary resources are made available to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the educational system, including the national curriculum, educational facility setups, as well as sports and STEM facilities.
- Address the gender dimension in the preparation of specific educational support and reinforcement programmes directed at vulnerable groups likely to experience multiple discrimination (such as the Ġużè Ellul Mercer educational programme and Alternative Learning Programmes)
- Provide relevant, up to date resources for schools and libraries, including resource packs for teachers, story books, fiction and non-fiction for children and adolescents.
- Introduce higher education training blocks divided into attainable steps (without stipulated timeframes), especially for women whose regular educational path was truncated.
- Review the sex education currently being given within formal education.
- Create information sessions specifically designed for girls and women interested in careers which are traditionally predominantly male.
- Promote and encourage women to make use of Recognition of Prior Learning programmes and institutions to recognise such programmes.
- Promote the reinforcement and implementation of gender equality and non-discrimination in sports, drama, art, music, and organisations offering non-formal education.
- Support sectoral women's rights organisations to implement a systematic programme concerning educational and professional networking events.
- Celebrate the International Day of Girls in ICT with an initiative led by the Directorate for Digital Literacy and Transversal Skills

Supporting measures which will be held in conjunction with other Ministries
- Extend free childcare services for employees who work in the evening, weekends and on a shift basis.
- Ensure that upskilling training and employment guidance programmes for women belonging to vulnerable groups are provided (namely, migrants, persons with a disability, the elderly and LBTIQ people) for them to access, and remain in, the labour market, and be fully included in society.
- Establish an MoU between the Equality Ministry and Academic Entities, with the aim of identifying research areas related to equality and promoting these identified areas to their students and academics.
- Enhance awareness of the importance and positive aspects of STEM tertiary education for girls and women.
- Provide free menstruation products in schools to eliminate the stigma that exists around this issue.

In addition**, the Broadcasting Authority has also worked extensively to promote good practice and awareness in the equal representation of gender in all television and radio broadcasting**, with a specific focus on current affairs programming including news bulletins and discussion programs by producing guidelines and conducting comparative studies with other countries to provide recommendations to voice the perspectives of all genders.

In conclusion, gender equality is a fundamental principle that is embedded in all legislation and policy documents that are in force or are currently being drafted. Malta, like other member states is committed to challenge gender stereotypes and social and cultural norms through education and broadcasting in order to ensure equal opportunities for all.

5. Selected initiatives and practices for the promotion of Gender Equality in Education

This section is a Compendium of Good Practices to promote gender equality in primary and secondary schools brings together different practices and pedagogic approaches from several European countries (with a focus on the GEMINI' participating countries) and the state of art of the educational methods end tools for gender equality awareness.

Basically, they include:

→ **Gender-sensitive teaching materials and methods**: This involves using teaching materials and methods that promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes. For example, textbooks and other teaching materials can be revised to ensure that they do not perpetuate gender stereotypes, and teachers can be trained to use gender-sensitive teaching methods that promote inclusion and respect for diversity.

→ **Gender-responsive teaching and learning**: Gender-responsive teaching and learning involves using teaching methods and curriculum that are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of all students, including girls and boys. This can include using gender-sensitive language and images, providing girls and boys with the same opportunities and resources to succeed, and providing education on gender equality and healthy relationships.

→ **Peer education and mentorship program**s: These programs involve training students to become peer educators or mentors who can promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes among their peers. Peer education and mentorship programs can be effective in creating a supportive and inclusive school culture that values diversity and promotes gender equality.

→ **Engaging communities and families in promoting gender equality in education:** Communities and families play a critical role in promoting gender equality in education. By engaging with families and communities, schools can work to address cultural and economic barriers that prevent girls from attending school. This usually involves working with families to provide girls and boys with the necessary resources to attend school. Likewise, working communities to promote cultural change and eliminate practices that discriminate against girls.

→ **Awareness-raising campaigns and events**: These campaigns and events can be used to raise awareness about gender equality issues and promote positive attitudes towards gender equality. For example, schools can organize workshops, seminars, and other events that focus on gender equality topics and engage students, teachers, and other stakeholders in discussions and activities that promote gender equality.

1. THE MIND THE GAP PROJECT "Step up for gender equality"

Mind the Gap. Step up for gender equality is a project (2021/2022) co-funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, coordinated by AIDOS – Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo (Italy) in partnership with APF - Associaçao para Planeamento Familiar (Portugal), END FGM European Network (based in Belgium, working at EU level) and Medicos del Mundo (Spain).

Description of good practice

In many EU countries stereotypical gender perceptions influence education, profession and life of boys and girls. Girls studying education, health, humanities are double compared to men and end up in teaching and caring professions, usually valued and paid less, thus increasing the EU pay gap (16%). Female under representation in full time employment (16%) in all EU Countries is also due to the disproportion between women and men in housework and caring responsibilities. EIGE and OECD suggest that education places are ideal spaces to break-down gender stereotypes at an early stage. Non-gender equitable textbooks and images and teachers' attitudes in influencing students have an impact on their career choices and employment opportunities: as an example, recent research has proved that female students are prevented from choosing a career in the STEM sector also due to a negative gender approach perpetuated by teachers.

In Italy, Portugal and Spain practices in education still fuel gender inequality. In these countries, statistics on women's education/work/life choices confirm EU trends, while governmental guidelines and recommendations to promote gender equality in education have yet to be fully applied, as school personnel lacks training and often shows prejudices about girls and boys not conforming to gender stereotypes.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to tackling gender stereotypes in education in Italy, Spain and Portugal, thus reducing the influence of gender expectations on young people's choices in education, work and life. The project's specific objective is to strengthen the capacity of professionals and other adults in contact with children to identify and address gender stereotypes in education including own unconscious bias.

The project partially builds on the previous EU funded GENDER ABC project, that was implemented by all the project partners from 2018 to 2020 and in the framework of which 21 educational modules on gender-based violence prevention in education.

Activities

→ Production of a guide on How to avoid gender bias in teaching
→ 70 trainings of educational staff/teachers, professionals/educators of non-formal systems (people who work with children in sports, summer-camps, guardians, etc.), students of university and other high educational courses
→ 26 exchange meetings between partners, training beneficiaries, teachers, parents and children
→ 6 awareness raising events
→ Final exchange meeting and advocacy event in Brussels

Target

Educators, teachers and any other professional working with children, educators of non-formal systems and university students of Pedagogical and teenagers that wish to raise awareness about gender equality and gender-based violence.

Objectives

The project aims at providing the target group with a set of useful tools to be used when working with young people in order to promote gender equality, prevent gender-based violence, enhance the capacity of students to explore their full potential, and build an inclusive and equitable educational environment for all.

Result

- Production of a guide on How to avoid gender bias in teaching

Index

1. What are gender stereotypes and what is their impact
2. Deconstructing gender stereotypes
3. The official curriculum
4. The hidden curriculum
5. Gender stereotypes through language and gender binarism
6. Physical education and sport

More information https://aidos.it/en/project/mind-the-gap-step-up-for-gender-equality/

2. **GECM Project "Expanding the use of the Gender Equality Charter Mark for Schools across Europe"**

The GECM was a three-year project granted by the EU Justice Fund to a partnership of Development Education Centre, South Yorkshire (DECSY, England – Lead), Anthropolis Association (Hungary), Oxfam (Italy), Center for Citizenship Education (CEO, Poland), Forum for Freedom in Education (Croatia), Peace Education Institute (Finland), Slovak Centre for Communication and Development (Slovakia), Sudwind Association for Development Policy and Global Justice (Austria), University of Thessaly (Greece).

Description of good practice

The main objective of the project is to create and disseminate a tool to help teachers to develop teaching and educational relationships based on the enhancement of gender difference and the prevention of stereotypes and gender violence that prevent the achievement of equality between men and women.

The project aims to develop tools to enable a school to measure progress in tackling the effects that gender stereotyping still has on pupils in relation to both subject (and career) choices and as a root of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in schools and wider society and to extend the use of the Gender Equality Charter Mark to schools across Europe.

Target

Early Years, Primary and Secondary Schools: a whole-school approach means the target groups are school - children, teachers and headteachers but also parents, administrators and the wider community.

Objectives

→ To challenge the negative and damaging norms, stereotypes and expectations by using our Gender Equality Charter Mark (GECM) to provide a framework for instilling a whole-school approach to gender equality (GE) in schools across Europe.

→ To foster and encourage positive change in the approach to gender equality, and develop a culture where children engage their critical thinking skills to understand, question and

challenge gender inequality and violence. The change we hope to see includes widening subject and career choices made by pupils and reductions in harassment and gender-based violence in schools and wider society.

Activities

The GECM in its first phase was a three-year project funded by the EU Justice Fund. The GECM itself was initially developed by the three NGOs from England (DECSY), Hungary (Anthropolis Association) and Italy (Oxfam Italy).

The five main themes of the charter mark (**Leadership, Curriculum, Physical Environment, Attitudes and Relationships and Community**) were agreed, along with sub-sections and a suggested framework for incremental improvements. The Consortium recognized from the start that each country had a different social, cultural, political and legal framework in which we were trying to promote GE in education, and our initial ideas were adapted by working with groups of teachers and experts in each country to pilot a GECM for secondary schools in each country.

Results

→ Development/adaptation of GECM to schools teaching ages 3-11 (DECSY leads)
→ Charter marks adapted for each partner country
→ Handbook on how to implement the charter mark including case studies
→ Handbook of gender equality support materials - curriculum ideas and classroom resources
→ Teacher professional development modules on gender equality which can be adapted to different
→ countries
→ Initial teacher education modules on gender equality which can be adapted to different countries
→ Train the trainer events in each country
→ Multiplier / dissemination events in each country

Resources

The international Gender Equality Charter Mark (GECM) provides tools for equality work and planning in schools. It is a framework and a tool to enhance equality in schools were developed through a process of working together, sharing knowledge, and transferring the best practices and innovative approaches between the partner countries. The frame work is part of the international project Gender Equality In Schools.

The tool supports schools to look at influencing and informing their leadership, curriculum, physical environment, and the attitudes and relationships of both the students, staff and the wider community in relation to equality issues.

Key themes

→ **Leadership** is the first theme, as you need to have the commitment and support of the headteacher and school leadership (not only senior leaders, but also middle and student leaders) in order to influence the curriculum and ethos of the school. It is important to ensure a whole-school approach, as this has been shown to be the most effective way to achieve change and to ensure that staff have proper training.
→ The second theme is **Curriculum,** as gender equality needs to be a part of daily teaching and learning, cover all subject areas and pervade all learning experiences in the school. All curriculum areas need to be proactive about challenging assumptions and stereotypes and ensuring that all genders are able to make free choices about subjects and careers.
→ The third theme is **Physical Environment** as it is important to ensure that the Physical Environment is unbiased in terms of design, safety and representation. All pupils need to feel safe and included in all areas of the school.

→ The fourth theme is **Attitudes and Relationships**, as these are crucial to the establishment and maintenance of a gender-equal ethos. It includes being aware of sexist language which too often goes unnoticed or unchallenged. It is also about becoming aware of unconscious bias and whether there is gender-based expectations of student behavior.

→ The fifth theme is **Community**, as the school is part of and needs to engage with the wider community. Family engagement is crucial to get parents and carers to understand why the school's work on gender equality is important and how they can support it. It is also important that the prior and post educational settings are aware of the need to ensure gender equality at all ages and stages.

More information **https://genderequalityinschools.org/about-the-project/**

3. "TOWARDS GENDER-SENSITIVE EDUCATION" TGSE PROJECT

"Towards gender sensitive education" is a three-year long project funded by the ErasmusPlus Programme and implemented by five organizations from three EU countries in a strategic partnership: Masaryk University (Czech Republic), Gender Information Centre NORA (Czech Republic), Hungarian Women's Lobby (Hungary), Eötvös Loránd University (Hungary) and Verein EfEU (Austria).

Description of good practice

The main objective of the project "Towards gender sensitive education (2017-2020)" is to enhance gender sensitivity of current and future teachers and to develop, pilot and disseminate a methodology for training in gender sensitive education, with a special focus on lower secondary schools. The project priorities include social inclusion by addressing the issue of gender diversity in classroom, and strengthening the teaching profession by supporting teachers in dealing with diversity in the classroom.

Target

Current and future lower secondary school teachers, students of faculties of education or teachers of pupils of age 11-15.

Objectives

→ familiarize teachers with the most important notions of gender, gender equality, the gender order, gender performance, diversity, intersectionality, and anti-discrimination, and make them understand why gender is relevant in education;

→ explain these concepts through teachers' experiences and consider the former as experts whose teaching knowledge and experiences are an important asset for the courses;

→ allow time and space for teachers to bring up their own concerns and issues related to gender in education;

→ use a lot of concrete situations as starting points for analysis and as illustrations, and to offer a variety of concrete teaching methods;

→ deploy positive examples, not only ones that may be criticized from a gendered perspective;

→ make teachers aware that it is their duty to protect students against sexism and gender-based-violence in school, and that supporting, encouraging, and strengthening students to act in non-stereotypical ways are important duties for teachers;

→ include the topic of sexuality in the course and connect it with gender;

→ make visible the connection between daily pedagogical practices and the gender order of society and to present schools as establishments that have gendered power relations and as gendered institutions that participate in the construction and reproduction of the gender order both at the organizational level (structure and organizational processes) and at the level of interactions (individual subjectivities);

→ help teachers understand that curricula are typically not 'value-free', 'objective', 'gender-neutral' descriptions of teaching content;

→ not make teachers feel that they are expected to carry the 'burden' of gender-sensitive education on their individual shoulders, or make them feel criticized for reproducing gender inequality.

Results

→ Comparative report: Gender in national education documents and teaching resources, and in teachers' pedagogical approaches and everyday teaching practices in Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary;

→ Two gender-sensitive education courses focusing either on practicing teachers or teacher trainees;

→ A handbook for teacher trainers in the field of gender sensitive education;

→ 5 videos about *Career Counselling, double standard, Homophobic Bullying, Sexual Harassment, Parallel Scene: This Way or That Way.*

Resources

About the handbook - The handbook consists of three main parts.

The first one, called ***Drama as a Way of Exploring the World***, provides a brief insight into drama education and introduces several drama techniques that can be used during the realization of the courses. Drama is a powerful tool for exploring various societal issues and with this section the consortium seeks to support trainers' use of drama techniques in their courses as the latter allow participants to learn through emotions and experiences. Stories that allow participants to explore a subject through drama-based methods and techniques at an emotional level can be a powerful pedagogical tool for exposing stereotypical behavior and opening new paths to dealing with problematic situations in life. It is here that we see the potential of applying drama education methods and techniques to the area of gender-sensitive education

The second and largest part, entitled ***Themes and Activities***, contains a detailed description of activities that support teachers' gender-sensitivity. It starts with the chapter **Getting Started** which offers activities for introducing the course, and continues with the chapter **Gender (in)Equality in Society** which deals with gender in general and gender socialization. The next chapter, **Gender (in) Equality in School**, provides a number of activities concerning gender-sensitive teaching, including career counselling, school-related gender-based violence, and LGBTIQ* people in school. The Themes and Activities part also includes a chapter called **Out-of-Class Activities** and **Wrap-up/Evaluation Activities.**

In the third part of the handbook, there are scenarios for ***five potential gender-sensitive education courses***. Three are designed for pre-service teachers and two for in-service teachers. The scenarios reflect the experiences with three different countries and ten (different) groups of participants. Trainers should aim to define balanced and clear targets for their courses that are based on participants' needs, a dynamic and interesting structure and presentation of tasks, sensitivity to participants' reactions and interests, and the flexibility to adjust tasks if problems with timing arise. Trainers may or may not be able to fit into the course(s) as much as they originally plan, and may have to adjust their plans to the conditions – the number of participants, their particular interests, the talkativeness of a few members, etc.

More information https://gendersensed.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-Handbook-for-Teacher-Trainers.pdf

4. SAFER – Systematic Approaches for Equality of gender

The SAFER project was granted by DG JUST – Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)– to a partnership of Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (Cyprus, coordinator) Faculty of Philosophy – Vilnius University (Lithuania) Profexcel.Net Ltd (Ireland) Neophytos Ch. Charalambous (Institute of Development) Ltd (Cyprus) GRANTXPERT CONSULTING LIMITED (Cyprus) Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology (Greece) YouAct (United Kingdom) CESIE (Italy).

Description of good practice
SAFER Project aims to prevent, encourage reporting and combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through the application of Positive Psychology principles. A systematic approach is proposed in order to cultivate valuable skills which can be utilized not only to combat and prevent GBV, but also to enhance individual's emotional and psychological well-being and create healthy social connections and interactions.
The project aims to raise awareness among Primary School Teachers, Students, Parents and relevant Stakeholders regarding challenges which exist in modern society in relation to Gender Stereotypes and Inequality, with a view to reducing and, ultimately, preventing GBV.

Target
Primary School Teachers, Students, Parents

Objectives
→ To prevent, encourage reporting and combat gender-based violence (GBV) against children fostering a systematic approach in cultivating life skills, building healthy relationships, adopting and maintaining values, and increasing resilience and personal strength.
→ To sensitize and raise awareness among primary school teachers, students, parents and relevant stakeholders regarding GBV.
→ To supply teachers with relevant classroom materials enabling them to discuss about GBV in their classroom, challenge existing gender stereotypes and ultimately prevent GBV.

Activities
→ Design and development of the comparative research on the gender-based violence attitudes, experience and reactions of teachers and children in EU countries.
→ Development of educational resources and training materials for teachers on gender and socially-constructed gender roles in order to change existing attitudes.
→ Implementation of capacity-building activities and training for teachers on identifying and preventing GBV.
→ Implementation of awareness-raising and dissemination activities to facilitate learning and awareness on preventing and combating GBV among general public.

Results
→ Literature review and comparative research analysis on the gender-based violence attitudes, experience and reactions of teachers and children
→ Educational resources and training materials for teachers.
→ Animation movie for children on gender equality.
→ Mobile game application for children (Android | IOS)

Resources
Based on the training of life skills, teachers can transfer appropriate information, knowledge and skills to children to manage their behaviors, avoid and prevent violent behaviors.
Developing healthy relationships with others and maintain meaningful life skills are considered very crucial elements for the building trust and positive relations in order to identify maladaptive and abusive behaviors.

Moreover, trained teachers can be competent to identify, recognize, prevent and know how to respond to incidents of GBV, but also avoid stereotypes that contribute to GBV. The aim of the project is to provide the necessary resources to the teachers to implement activities in the classroom in the future to raise awareness about GBV.

SAFER Project proposes 4 key Modules to achieve the aforementioned goals:

1. **Gender Sensitive Pedagogy (and Comprehensive Sexuality Education)**: refers to the pedagogical measure deployed to reach gender and equity goals, an approach that promotes a learning process that pays close attention to identification and critique of gender stereotypical behaviors.
2. **Life Skills**: are defined as psychological abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal effectively and sufficiently with the demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO).
3. **Character Education**: is a term used to describe an educational approach which aims to help children to develop moral, civic and socially acceptable thinking and behavior.
4. **Resilience**: the ability to bounce back from adversity – the process of adapting will in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy or even significant sources of stress.

The trainings can be conducted within the classroom, working with small or large groups (around 20-25 people). The duration of the training can vary again, depending to the audience and availability, however do keep in mind that the team proposes around 5 hours for each module (around 5 activities of 45 minutes, plus brief pause in between to be used as deemed needed by the facilitator – break / room alterations / audience following instructions / material give always etc). **More information https://saferlearning.eu/**

5.   My-ID – My Identity, My Idea to be Myself

My-ID project was granted by the Italian Erasmus+ authority to a partnership of Fondazione Hallgarten – Franchetti Centro Studi Villa Montesca (Italy, coordinator), DEFOIN – Formación para el Desarrollo y la Inserción (Spain), GALE – Stichting Global Alliance for LGBT Education (Netherlands), EUROTRAINING – Educational Organization (Greece), CESIE (Italy), Xarxa I Col·Laboració Serveis Educatius, S.L. (Spain), Iedersland College (Netherlands) Douka Ekpaideftiria AE – Palladion Lykeion Ekfpaideuthria Douka (Greece).

Description of good practice

My-ID project (My Identity, My Idea to be Myself) aims at supporting a comprehensive approach and specific educational actions to address discrimination and inequality experienced on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics in school, but also in connection to related but wider competences in the area of social behaviour, citizenship, democratic participation and comprehensive sexual education.

Inclusive schools set the starting points from which students chart the course of the rest of their lives. It's where opinions form, values are established and aspirations are set. In this framework schools are called to contribute to the promotion of equality & the prevention of discrimination.

Target

Teachers in secondary education

Objectives

→ To support a comprehensive approach and specific educative actions to address discrimination and inequality experienced on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics in school;

→ To integrate sensitivity for sexual and gender diversity in secondary schools;
→ To empower teachers to start educating about gender issues and on how to deal with potential conflicts arising from this;
→ To inform and mentor parents to understand, tolerate, and accept sexual and gender diversity.

Activities
→ Desk research and need analysis with students, teachers, and parents to understand the specific needs regarding gender and sexual inclusivity;
→ Development of a compendium of activities for teachers to conduct in the classroom to integrate sensitivity to the project topics;
→ Creation of a teacher guide to support teachers in handling sensitive questions that may arise during sexual diversity education activities;
→ Development of a handbook for parents with activities on how to discuss and understand gender and sexual diversity and to involve them in the educative process;
→ Organization of an international training mobility for teachers to acquire the skills and tools proposed;
→ Piloting and evaluation sessions of the activities developed with students, teachers, and parents.

Results
→ Teacher manual: compendium of activities to conduct in the classroom
→ Teacher guide: how to handle sensitive questions during sexual diversity education activities
→ [My ID-Reader for secondary education: exploring complex concepts and situations](#)
→ Manual on how to reach out and work with parents
→ Handbook for parents: compendium of activities on how to discuss and understand sexual diversity

Resources
The "My-ID" method is based on an analysis of heteronormativity and evidence-grounded methods to educate in a way which sustainably changes negative attitudes and the underlying negative emotions towards gender and sexual diversity.
The project employs three key strategies to support high schools in implementing the My-ID method:
1.   Developing concrete classroom activities to integrate in a spiral curriculum
2.   Manual to empower teachers
3.   Guidance on how to inform and mentor parents

The section about implementation describes how the activity is going to be carried out. This is done by giving the teacher directions for the different steps to make. It is best to formulate these directions directly, like: "ask the students to form subgroups of three" rather than: "the teacher divides the students in groups of three".
Most lessons will consist of 4 steps, or variations on four phases.
1. a trigger: a video, joke, anecdote, or question to get the interest and curiosity of the students
2. an introduction: an explanation by the which teacher about what the lesson will be about and why. This is also the phase where the teacher can ask if students want to engage in this activity; in democratic schools, students have the right to refuse if they don't like the topic or the method.
3. the activities itself: which can consist of several methods like brainstorm, video viewing, a game, a role-play, or dialogue.
4. the activity usually closes with a debriefing: a closing reflection in which the students or the teacher summarizes the learning impact of the activity and - if necessary - makes a link to daily life

More information https://myid-project.eu/

6. SENSE: VOCATION AND SEXUAL SENSITIVITY – SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN SOCIAL DOMAIN VOCATIONAL TRAINING (ERASMUS PLUS KA2)

The SENSE project was granted by the Dutch Erasmus+ authority to a partnership of GALE (Global Alliance for LGBT Education, Netherlands), Villa Montesca (Italy), CESIE (Italy), DEFOIN (Spain), EUROTraining (Greece), ROC of Amsterdam (Netherlands) and EFVET (European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training).

Description of the good practice

The project aims to integrate sensitivity for sexual diversity (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex – LGBTI - issues) in vocational training. SENSE aims to build on the evidence and good practice of current research data, in developing and testing a curriculum based on inclusive activities and collaborative approaches that will be used to equip teachers and managers in responding to diversity, fostering mutual understanding and respect among their students and improve the educational performance of VET students. The main purpose of developing this tool is to strengthen the professionalism of teachers. Teacher professionalism is the key factor to promote participation and learning in all students, and teacher professionalism has a higher effect on students' achievement than other school factors (Hattie 2009).

Target: Students and teachers in secondary education

Objectives
→ To make use of theatre and films as triggers for dialogue among VET students about sexual diversity
→ To support VET teachers with training on how to educate students on sexual diversity and support LGBTI students
→ To encourage VET teachers and managers to include sexual diversity sensitivity into the teaching curriculum
→ To support VET managers in the inclusion of sexual diversity within the teaching competence framework

Activities
→ Carrying out a needs assessment among VET students to identify current prejudices in VET institutions related to sexual diversity
→ Development together with VET students of a trigger technology aimed at fostering dialogue on sexual diversity
→ Implementation of 3 teacher training mobilities with at least 15 teachers and 1 student training mobility with at least 18 students on how to deal with sexual diversity and integrate this dialogue into diversity competence framework
→ Counselling at least 1 VET institution in each partner country on how to include sexual diversity in the broader qualification framework

Results
→ Manual on how to choose and develop triggers to facilitate dialogue among VET students about sexual diversity
→ Manuals for teacher trainers and VET teachers on how to support students and educate them about sexual diversity
→ Manual for VET teachers and managers on how to develop a more comprehensive curriculum which includes sexual diversity
→ Development of a framework for VET students and teachers on how to deal with sexual diversity and on how to include sexual diversity competences in formal qualification frameworks

Resources

The "My-ID" method used has 3 modules.

1. **Trigger Technology**

The first is an artistic "trigger", like a theatre performance, to get students to talk about sexual diversity. This is a key module because many students and most teachers find it difficult to start a dialogue on this sensitive topic. This refers to instruments used to foster a discussion among students. The goal of a trigger is to get attention, create interest and to provide inspiration for further discussion and debate. In earlier projects on sexual diversity, experiences showed that theater and short video films, especially interactive theater, work very well to engage VET students. However, it is also clear that triggers need to be tailored closely to the attitudes and context of the student target group

2. **Teacher training**

This second module is focused on how to deal with insecure, aggressive or disinterested reactions from students, and on how help student to change their attitudes in a more tolerant direction. The teacher training is a one-day (7 hours) training which can be given to 15-50 teachers. The trainings can include discussion of ground rules, a trigger, exploring challenging situations, explanation of the norm of heterosexuality and discussion of pedagogical, didactic and school policy solutions. The training closes with an exploration of a possible spiral curriculum.

3. **Spiral Curriculum**

The third module is a manual on how to integrate diversity and sexual diversity in a more comprehensive curriculum starting from to the concept of "spiral curriculum" developed by Jerome Bruner, that is based on cognitive theory and that underlines why complex topics (like diversity, citizenship, gender and sexuality) cannot be learned with a single lesson, but needs a repetition in different context and a deepening over time. In simple term, the spiral curriculum is defined as a list of topics and contents proposed in a certain time, divided per different school grades, that returns to the same topics over time. The term spiral is a metaphoric approach used to define different methods and learning proposals that involve learning something then passing to the next idea and arguments, with the opportunity to be engaged to it again but with different content acquired in the meantime. When students re-engage with a topic repeatedly; they both consolidate prior knowledge in their memory and build on it over time. Bruner defines his spiral approach with scheme that presents three key principles:

Cyclical: Students should return to the same topic several times throughout their school career

Increasing Depth: Each time a student returns to the topic it should be learned at a deeper level and explore more complexity

Prior Knowledge: A student's prior knowledge should be utilized when a topic is returned to so that they build from their foundations rather than starting anew.

This spiral scheme inspired by Bruner proposal, is an adaptation of what in the school environment is define as "Spiral Curriculum". It aims to create a proper system of discussion that involves the emotional growth of the students, their active perception of the rights of citizenship and they prosocial attitude. All these areas are addressed to promote diversity as a contribution to a personal, sexual and social life without constrictions and need to be under stereotypical views.

More information **https://www.gale.info/en/projects/sense-project**

6. Conclusion and recommendation

The results indicate that despite the inclusion of the principle of equality between women and men in the national laws on education by the vast majority of GEMINI' partners, the strategy of gender mainstreaming throughout their education systems has not been fully implemented in most of these countries.

In general, gender equality in education and training continues to be affected by a number of factors:
→ gender-based different choices across study fields
→ the feminization of the teaching profession v. the masculinization of teaching in tertiary education
→ gender stereotypes in education
→ gender and low achievement in school
→ gender and early school leaving
→ gender and training
→ gender-based violence at school.

In all the participating countries, educational choices and career expectations of pupils in compulsory education are still strongly influenced by gender stereotypes, with qualitative data showing that in general a more limited effort is made to break down those affecting the choices of boys. **Boys are much more likely to choose STEM subjects, while girls typically predominate in subjects such as art, the humanities, care and education. Boys are also more likely to choose vocational rather than academic pathways.**

Gender stereotypes are also still present in teaching materials of all the participating countries. Textbooks contain many stereotypes providing examples through gendered images diminishing the role of women. This is especially the case when men and women are depicted in professional contexts. In almost all participating countries, girls and women remain under-represented in textbooks, and when they are included, they are depicted in gender-based stereotypical role. Also linked to the issue of gender stereotypes is how to better mainstream gender in school curricula. **In Italy**, this is still left to the single interpretation of schools and teachers. The only way of integrating or mainstreaming gender issues into the curriculum should be directly through the teachers and the leadership of schools at an institutional level.
However, one of the main problems remains how to motivate teachers and school leaders, and how to make this a normal part of the curriculum at each school level.
Among the GEMINI' partners, several national studies have looked into gender bias in textbooks and learning materials, showing that '**textbooks often still tend to use language that depicts men and women in traditional social contexts: women are most often represented in caregiver roles** and as those who worry about their appearance; there are fewer stories representing experiences of women; and men's activities and experiences are represented as being more important than women's.'

In Ireland, the predominant use of the single-sex schooling gets as results that the education system is not inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of all students. Therefore, addressing gender disparities in access to education is not only a matter of increasing enrollment but also of ensuring that girls and young women have access to quality education, are able to complete their education and have access to the same opportunities as their male counterparts. In addition, in many countries, there is inadequate funding for education, which can limit the ability of schools to provide a quality education for all students. This is particularly true for girls and women, who often have less access to resources and support than boys and men.
In some countries, girls are less likely to continue their education and more likely to drop out of school than boys. This is particularly true for young women from disadvantaged backgrounds (like **the Roma girls in Bulgaria**), who are often facing multiple barriers to education, such as poverty, cultural beliefs and practices, and conflict. In **Romania,** adolescent pregnancies – and adolescent parenthood in particular –

carry high social and economic costs and have a bearing on health, social benefits and even crime. **Early school leaving as a result of adolescent pregnancy and childbirth prevents girls from completing the education, they need to acquire a profession, making it more difficult to later find a job**. Unemployment, and hence poverty, consequently affect this group of people and their children. Several researches have highlighted the worrying **cyclicality of the phenomenon, which is perpetuated in a family generation after generation**, dragging along lots of economic, social and health-related vulnerabilities.

In addition, gender prejudices and stereotypes throughout the education cycle, from primary school to lifelong learning, can reduce gender imbalances in other spheres of life. For example, gender segregation in the labour market (like **the feminization of the teaching profession in Bulgaria**) as a result of different educational and professional choices in schools and universities, both for pupils and teachers, is widespread. As a consequence, in some countries, the pay gap between men and women is significant, with women earning on average less than a quarter of what men make. Furthermore, **there is a lack of representation of women in decision-making positions**, such as boardrooms, parliaments, and cabinets. This lack of representation limits women's ability to participate actively in shaping policies and decisions that affect their lives.

Existing research provides evidence of a complex set of determinants the gender gaps, though the magnitude of the effects varies across countries and over time. Among other explanatory factors, **the educational context, the structure of the labor market and the environment of the workplace, as well as broader gender equality in cultural values and social norms in society, appear to play important roles.** Given the nature and magnitude of the gender gaps, and the fact that they alter by educational stage, different policies and interventions are needed along the educational trajectory. Current evidence on the effectiveness of policies and interventions converges toward showing the importance of teachers and role models.

Surely**, education plays a crucial role in achieving gender equality**. It is a powerful tool that can break down barriers and empower individuals, especially women, to reach their full potential. However, it is important to note that ongoing efforts are needed to address the various challenges facing gender equality in education. This includes addressing issues such as lack of access to education, gender-based violence and discrimination, and inadequate resources and support for marginalized groups. By continuing to work towards gender equality in education, we can create a more equitable and just society for all.

The analysis of the national documents and strategies also gives **some important indications for the creation, within the GEMINI project, of the educative TOOLKIT**: in particular the studied frameworks underline that the attention should be focused on the stereotypes and on how to contrast them in and through education.

The GEMINI ambition is not related to all the impacts that gender equality can produce in society and in the school environment but should be concentrated on instrument for a proper and effective gender education, basing part of the activities on the TV series perception of gender roles, as studied in the first part of the project.

Gender stereotypes do not only determine what disciplines people might be interested in, but also what attitudes and behaviours they are supposed to have. These gender discriminations also have strong repercussions on the future lives of younger people.

Both girls and boys are negatively affected by gender stereotypes. These restrict the freedom of younger people to develop their full potential in terms of schooling, education and psychosocial life. Deconstructing the gender preconceptions is the precondition for questioning them. The more aware teachers are of

gender stereotypes, the more they can try to mediate their effects. They must be aware that their approach to teaching is also influenced by what they themselves have been taught.

It is needed to intervene in education, because not only TV series, but also school textbooks are full of stereotypes and rigid gender roles, both in images and texts. Images are often considered mere decoration, whereas their function goes far beyond.

Children's books are an important means of disseminating gender stereotypes, because they present girls and boys with a model on the basis of which they organize their behaviour.

It is possible to note the existence of specific gender symbolism in the school children perception as female figures are relegated to the private sphere and male figures portrayed in the public sphere are still very common.

The analysis of the national documents and their **comparative study creates light in some aspects of school gender education**:

– Gender inequality in history is a topic that is important to talk about, using appropriately designed activities, as it crosses all historical epochs as a global phenomenon;
– Propose a 'hidden curriculum' that consists of the 'unwritten, unofficial and often unintended lessons, values and perspectives that pupils and students learn at school'. If, on the one hand, the 'formal' curriculum consists of the courses, lessons and learning activities in which the students are called upon to participate, as well as the knowledge and skills that educational figures intentionally teach them, the hidden curriculum is the 'unspoken' or implicit academic, social and cultural information conveyed to and from the and students while in school;
– Active Teaching methodologies can help build a more inclusive environment in schools. Encouraging a participative approach in the classroom allows younger people to take an active role in their own learning process. Some of the areas that could benefit from a more active approach are emotional literacy, interpersonal and social skills, critical thinking, and civic skills for citizenship. Different methodologies will focus on developing different skills: making connections, asking questions and exploring new points of view are all strategies.

A critical approach to stereotyped models proposed by the TV series can help the student to have a correct approach and these models can be used in experiential laboratories.

Bibliography

Donna : storia e critica di un concetto polemico / Paola Rudan. - Bologna : Il mulino, 2020. - 181 p. ; 22 cm. *BIblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa A A1 PG 20DON* **2019**

Fare la differenza : educazione di genere dalla prima infanzia all'età adulta / Rossella Ghigi. - Bologna : Il Mulino, ©2019. - 135 p.; 20 cm *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa A A1 PG 19FAR* **2018**

La comunicazione di genere: prospettive teoriche e buone pratiche / Saveria Capecchi. - Roma: Carocci, 2018. - 159 p. ; 22 cm *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa A A1 PG 18COM*

La condizione delle bambine e delle ragazze nel mondo 2018 Settima edizione del dossier, a cura della Fondazione Terre des hommes, sui diritti negati, soprusi e infanzia calpestata di bambine e adolescenti nel mondo. Realizzato nell'ambito della campagna "Indifesa", progetto di prevenzione e contrasto delle violenze e discriminazioni contro le bambine e le ragazze – 3 ottobre 2018 *[Risorsa online]*

Genere e diritti sociali / a cura di Cristina Solera e Emmanuele Pavolini. Dossier. Tra famiglia e lavoro, quattro sistemi a confronto. I casi di Australia, Stati Uniti, Italia e Giappone (M. Migliavacca, M. Naldini). La riforma dei servizi per l'infanzia e il lavoro di cura dei bambini tra residualità e universalismo (S. Neri). Disuguaglianze di genere nel mercato del lavoro: l'impatto del Bonus Infanzia e del congedo di paternità (E.M. Martino). La dimensione di genere nell'analisi del welfare e nelle proposte di riforma (C. Saraceno). Congedi parentali e paternità: ambivalenze delle politiche tra Italia ed Europa (M. Cannito). Genere e politiche di lotta alla povertà. Una riflessione sulle misure di reddito minimo (A. Martelli). Un welfare italiano che non discrimini per orientamento sessuale e identità di genere (M.G. Toniollo) [Selezione] In RPS : la rivista delle politiche sociali : Italian journal of social policy , n. 1/2018, p. 9-250 *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa* **2017**

Che cos'è il genere? / a cura di Laurie Laufer, Florence Rochefort; premessa di Alfonsina Bellio. - Milano: Angeli, 2017. - 204 p. ; 23 cm *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa A A1 PG 17CHE*

Disparità o uguaglianza? Costruzioni discorsive del divario di genere in politica / Silvia De Simone … [et al.] In: Polis/polis: ricerche e studi su società e politica in Italia, fasc.2/2017, p. 177-206 * Segregazione di genere e lavoro familiare in Italia. Divario di genere in politica nella letteratura. Risultati di un'indagine attraverso interviste a uomini e donne impegnati in politica * *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa*

Essere leader al femminile : costruire nuovi modi di fare impresa / a cura di Simona Cuomo, Martina Raffaglio. - Milano : Egea, 2017. - 1 testo elettronico (EPUB) (195 p.) * Un viaggio alla riscoperta del femminile, del suo talento, della sua natura, del suo modo di pensare, sentire e agire più autentico, interpretato da una prospettiva multidisciplinare: è questo il percorso del libro, teso a dimostrare come la femminilità possa tradursi in leadership, proteggendo la propria identità senza cedere alle lusinghe del conformismo, in contesti che selezionano e premiano stili di pensiero e comportamento omologanti *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa*

Libere tutte : dall'aborto al velo, donne nel nuovo millennio / Cecilia D'Elia e Giorgia Serughetti. - Roma: Minimum fax, 2017. - 1 testo elettronico (EPUB) (221 p.) * La libertà femminile vive nel mondo, ma si scontra con resistenze e paternalismi di ogni sorta. Come riconoscere, difendere e promuovere l'autodeterminazione in un tempo in cui l'avanzata di forze conservatrici e integraliste mira a controllare la sessualità delle donne e la riproduzione, mentre il mercato cerca di trarne profitto? C'è ancora bisogno di femminismo. Questa parola, che alcuni hanno archiviato

troppo presto, ritrova oggi il suo significato di battaglia per la libertà. Per tutte le donne. E per tutti gli uomini che vogliono camminare con loro * *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa.*

La rappresentazione femminile nella programmazione televisiva della Rai. Anno 2016
Pubblicazione con dati statistici a cura di Isimm Ricerche e Università degli Studi Roma Tre - marzo 2017
[Risorsa online ; Pdf 1.4 MB]

A capo coperto : storie di donne e di veli / Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli. - Bologna: Il mulino, 2016. - 214 p., [10] carte di tav. : ill. ; 21 cm *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa A A1 PG 16CAP*

Discriminazione, stereotipi e diritto penale di genere [Questioni di genere nel diritto italiano] / Maria Cristina Barbieri In: Notizie di Politeia, fasc. 124/2016, p.46-57 *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa*

Genere e linguaggio : i segni dell'uguaglianza e della diversità / a cura di Fabio Corbisiero, Pietro Maturi, Elisabetta Ruspini ; scritti di Abbatecola ... [et al.]. - Milano: Angeli, 2016. - 160 p.; 23 cm. *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa A A1 PG 16GEN*

Il linguaggio giuridico di genere: la rappresentazione sessuata dei soggetti nel diritto e nella regolamentazione lavoristica / di Gemma Pacella. In: Lavoro e diritto, A. 30:n. 3 (2016:lug) , p. 481-500 * Linguaggio giuridico sessuato tra leggi e atti giuridici. Qualche esempio: linguaggio della Costituzione, due fenomeni linguistici nel codice penale, clausola civilistica del bonus pater familias, spazio giuspubblicistico. Focus sul diritto del lavoro. Jobs Act. Costruzione di un linguaggio giuridico di genere * *Biblioteca dell'Assemblea legislativa*

Further readings

Irene Biemmi, Gabbie di genere: retaggi sessisti e scelte formative. Torino, Rosenberg & Selliers, 2016.

Irene Biemmi, Educazione sessista: stereotipi di genere nei libri delle elementari. Torino, Rosenberg & Selliers, 2017.

Stefano Ciccone, *Essere maschi: tra potere e libertà.* Torino, Rosenberg & Selliers, 2009.

Trasformare il maschile. Nella cura, nell'educazione, nelle relazioni, a cura di Salvatore Deiana e Massimo M. Greco. Assisi, Cittadella, 2012.
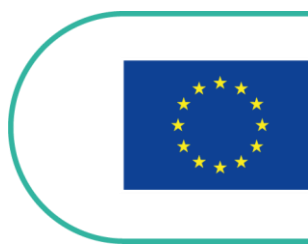
Leggere senza stereotipi. Percorsi educativi 0-6 anni per figurarsi il futuro, a cura di Elena Fierli [et.al.]. Cagli, Settenove, 2015.

Vèronique Francis [et. al.], *Colori della pelle e differenze di genere negli albi illustrati. Ricerche e prospettive pedagogiche.* Milano, Franco Angeli, 2018.

Educare al genere. Riflessioni e strumenti per articolare la complessità, a cura di Cristina Gamberi; Maria Agnese Maio; Giulia Selmi. Roma, Carocci, 2010.

Lorenzo Gasparrini, *Diventare uomini: relazioni maschili senza oppressioni.* Cagli, Settenove, 2018.

Rossella Ghigi, *Fare la differenza: educazione di genere dalla prima infanzia all'età adulta.* Bologna, Il Mulino, 2019.

Boys in care. Supportare i ragazzi* nell'intraprendere professioni di cura, a cura di Daniel Holtermann. [s.n], [s.l], 2019.

Alberto Pellai, *Bulli e pupe: come i maschi possono cambiare come le ragazze possono cambiarli.* Milano, Feltrinelli, 2016.

Clavel & Flannery, 'Single-sex schooling, gender and educational performance: evidence using PISA data,' *British Educational Research Journal,* (2022)

Dáil Éireann, *Education (Admission to Schools) (Co-education) Bill*, debate Vol. 1019 No.4, (2022) https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2022-03-09/14/

Delaney & Devereux, 'It's not just for boys! Understanding Gender Differences in STEM', *UCD Centre for Economic Research Working Paper Series,* (2019)

European Institute for Gender Equality, 'Relevance of Gender in the Policy Area: Education,' (2017) https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/education

Hardford, Fleming and Hyland, '100 years of inequality? Irish educational policy since the foundation of the state,' *International Journal of the History of Education* (2023)

Higher Education Authority *Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education 2016-2021,* (2022). https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2022/03/Gender-Equality-in-Irish-Higher-Education-2016_2021.pdf

Lodge and Lynch (eds.) *Diversity at School*, Institute of Public Administration (2004).

McCoy, Byrne & O'Connor, 'Gender Stereotyping in Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of Boys' and Girls' Mathematics Performance in Ireland,' *UCD Geary WP2020/10, (*2020)

McKeon, 'Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in Irish schools: We Need to Talk about Gender,' *REACH Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland,* Vol. 33.1 (2020), pp. 31-43

Murphy, 'Schools are like old-fashioned factories, and what they produce is gendered individuals,' *Trinity Women's Review,* (2017).

Murray, 'Union wants to address gender imbalance among Irish teachers,' *The Journal,* (2016).

NCAA, 'Background paper and brief for the redevelopment of Senior Cycle SPHE,' (2022) https://ncca.ie/en/resources/background-paper-and-brief-for-the-redevelopment-of-senior-cycle-sphe/

NCAA, 'Gender Politics and Exploring Masculinities in Irish Education,' (2004)

O' Sullivan (eds) et. al., *The Future of SPHE: Problems & Possibilities* (2014).

O'Sullivan, *Letter to the Gender Equality Committee*, ALL Institute Maynooth University (2022)

OECD, *Education Policy Outlook: Ireland*, (2020) https://www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/country-profile-Ireland-2020.pdf

Smyth, 'Single-Sex Education: What Does Research Tell Us', *La mixité scolaire, une thématique (encore) d'actualité?* (2010), No. 171, pp. 47-55

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission *Submission to the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality*, (2020) https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2020/03/IHREC-Submission-to-the-Citizens-Assembly-on-Gender-Equality-March-2020_fin.pdf

European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021, https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/legislative-policy-backgrounds/bulgaria?language_content_entity=en

Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2020, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374492

Gender equality in education- https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/topics/gender-equality-education

Bulgaria pledges adoption of a gender equality law and aims to achieve full equality in 15 years - https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up/commitments/bulgaria

The Bulgarian Educational System and Gender Segregation in the Labour:

Empowerment of Roma women and prevention of early marriages - https://amalipe.bg/en/empowerment-of-roma-women-and-prevention-of-early-marriages/

ALEG (n.d.). *Resources and projects*. Available on https://aleg-romania.eu/en/resources-projects/.

Bucur, M. (2021). Gender Analysis and Gender Ideology: Gender Studies in Romania. *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* (2), 385-407.

Băluță, O. (2020). Egalitatea de gen. Politici publice sau un câmp de luptă discursiv şi politico-religios?. *Revista Transilvania* (11-12), 18-33.

CCR – Curtea constituțională a României. (2020). DECIZIA nr.907 din 16 decembrie 2020 asupra obiecției de neconstituționalitate a dispozițiilor art.7 alin.(1) lit.e), introduse prin articolul unic al Legii pentru modificarea art.7 din Legea educației naționale nr.1/2011. Available on https://www.ccr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Decizie_907_2020.pdf.

Center for Legal Resources. (2020). *Non-Discrimination in Education*. Available at https://www.crj.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Studiu-nediscriminarea-in-educatie_final2020-2.pdf.

CNI - National College of Informatics (2022). *Săptămâna egalității de şanse între femei şi bărbați.* http://cni.nt.edu.ro/new/index.php/saptamana-egalitatii-de-sanse-intre-femei-si-barbati/.

Hotnews.ro. (5 iulie 2018). Strategia de educație parentală, în centrul unui scandal. Părinții şi sindicatele cer Ministerului Educației să o anuleze: Pentru noi, conceptul de familie este definit în Constituția României, nimic mai mult. *Hotnews.ro*. Available on https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-educatie-22550399-strategia-educa-parental-centrul-unui-scandal-rin-sindicatele-cer-ministerului-educa-iei-anuleze.htm

MEC - Ministerul Educației şi Cercetării. (n.d.). *Programul Național 'Educația pentru sănătate în şcoala românească'.* Available on https://gov.ro/fisiere/programe_fisiere/program-educatie-sanatate.pdf.

MECTS - Ministerul Educației, Cercetării, Tineretului şi Sportului (2004). *Programe şcolare revizuite pentru disciplina opțională 'Educație pentru sănătate'.* Available on https://www.isj.sv.edu.ro/images/Docs/Discipline/Biologie/2017/PROGRAME_SCOLARE_Educa%C5%A3ie_pentru_s%C4%83n%C4%83tate.pdf.

MEN – Ministerul Educației Naționale. (2017). *Ordin privind aprobarea programelor şcolare pentru disciplina opțională 'Pregătiți pentru viață. Educație pentru viață şi comunitate'.* Available at https://isj.vs.edu.ro/download/Pregatiti-pentru-viata-si-comunitate_primar_gimnaziu.pdf.

Edumanager.ro*. (2022). *Manual despre egalitatea de gen, adresat cadrelor didactice din învățământul preuniversitar, EGALIS – egalitate de gen prin schimbare socială şi educație.* Available at

https://www.edumanager.ro/manual-despre-egalitatea-de-gen-adresat-cadrelor-didactice-din-invatamntul-preuniversitar/.

Pora, A. (2020). Parlamentul interzice teoriile despre identitatea de gen. Reacții: de la ”poliţia gândirii” la ”e ca în Evul Mediu”. *Europa Liberă*. Available here.

Redacţia. (2021). Cîmpeanu: Ministerul Educaţiei va promova disciplina obligatorie "Educaţie pentru viaţă", pentru clasele V-XII, cu modul obligatoriu de Educaţie sexuală / Părinţii pot face cerere scrisă pentru retragerea copilului, ca la Religie. *Edupedu.ro*. Available on https://www.edupedu.ro/cimpeanu-ministerul-educatiei-va-promova-disciplina-obligatorie-educatie-pentru-viata-pentru-clasele-v-xii-cu-modul-obligatoriu-de-educatie-sexuala-parintii-pot-face-cerere-scri/.

Redacţia. (2022). Ghidul pentru profesori, privind egalitatea de gen, devenit ţinta unei campanii de petiţii, a fost aprobat şi apreciat de Ministerul Educaţiei şi respectă prevederile legale la nivel naţional şi european, spune Coaliţia pentru Egalitate de Gen. *Edupedu.ro*. https://www.edupedu.ro/ghidul-pentru-profesori-privind-egalitatea-de-gen-devenit-tinta-unei-campanii-de-petitii-a-fost-aprobat-si-apreciat-de-ministerul-educatiei-si-respecta-prevederile-legale-la-nivel-national-si-europ/.

Roman, M. (2022). AUR cere Ministerului Educaţiei să renunţe la Strategia Naţională de Educaţie Parentală pe motiv că ”nu are origine naţională” şi că viitorii ”educatori” vor proveni din ONG-uri. *G4Media.ro*. Available on https://www.g4media.ro/aur-cere-ministerului-educatiei-sa-renunte-la-strategia-nationala-de-educatie-parentala-pe-motiv-ca-nu-are-origine-nationala-si-ca-viitorii-educatori-vor-proveni-di.html.

Salvaţi copiii. (n.d.). *Educaţie pentru sănătate*. Available on https://www.salvaticopiii.ro/ce-facem/sanatate/educatie-pentru-sanatate.

SIPOCA 613. (2020). *„România durabilă”. Valurile de cercetare sociologică. RD10. ODD 05 In Depth*. Available on http://romania-durabila.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/RD10-Livrabil-E-Narativ-002.pdf.

Stokes, D.E. (1963) Spatial models of party competition. *The American Political Science Review* (57), 368–377.

TechSoupEurope. (2021). *Meet and Code Awards 2021 Ceremony*. Available at https://www.techsoupeurope.org/meet-and-code-awards-2021-ceremony/.

UNICEF. (2018). *Romania. Education thematic report*. Available on https://open.unicef.org/sites/transparency/files/2020-06/Romania-TP4-2018.pdf.

UNICEF. (2020a). *U-Report survey on gender equality*. Available on https://www.unicef.org/romania/stories/u-report-survey-gender-equality.

UNICEF. (2020b). *ANES and UNICEF partner to ensure equal opportunities for all children in Romania. Available on* https://www.unicef.org/romania/press-releases/anes-and-unicef-partner-ensure-equal-opportunities-all-children-romania.

Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy & Action Plan (GEMSAP) 2022 – 2027

Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (Chapter 540 of the Laws of Malta)

European Commission – Gender Pay Gap in Malta