

GENDER AWARENESS TACKLING STEREOTYPES IN EDUCATION

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER GATE PROJECT

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**Co-funded by
the European Union**

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

GATE: GENDER AWARENESS TACKLING STEREOTYPES IN EDUCATION



In December 2019, the GATE project was launched to develop and to implement innovative practices tackling gender stereotypes in order to foster inclusive education and to promote gender equality starting in primary education. It gathers 6 partners in 5 countries from Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France and Spain.

The objectives are to:

- Raise gender awareness among pupils and teachers
 - Train educational staff on stereotypes and the prevention of gender-based behavior
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- Deconstruct stereotypes among students to prevent discrimination based on gender
 - Promote the good use and dissemination of good practices developed by primary school throughout the European Union.

The implementation of the project was developed in several steps:

1. Create a practice compendium of good practices tackling gender stereotypes at school and in the playground among the participating countries
2. Model these innovative practices into a catalogue of activities, a “Toolbox” to be implemented in different school subjects
3. Train the teachers on the use of the toolbox with their pupils
4. Evaluate the impact of the experimentation

In total, **54 teachers in 5 countries** participated in the project, thus about **1 700 pupils from 9 to 16 years** old were involved.

1

GIVE MORE FLEXIBILITY AND MORE TIME FOR COLLABORATION FOR TEACHERS

One of the main observations regarding the modalities of the training conducted is to give more time and flexibility, and to encourage group collaboration and experience-sharing between the teachers. Considering the GATE Impact Assessment’s findings, which shows quite different contexts and conditions in primary school education in the different countries, the following general recommendations aiming to increase the time for collaboration might be considered:



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DEVELOP KEY COMPETENCES FOR FLEXIBILITY



- Encourage teachers to test innovative pedagogic approaches with their students, build on best practices
- Support teachers for supplementary qualification, recommended and assessed by the national education authorities, familiarizing them with the applicable legal framework including the gender equality topic
- Opening up teachers' curricula to gender issues, and offering them flexibility in the way they teach them, adapting to each student audience
- Stimulate teachers in all school subjects to learn foreign languages in order to be more flexible and confident participating in multicultural initiatives (e.g., English as working language).

CREATE SPACES FOR COLLABORATION:



- Stimulate the regular participation of teachers in exchanges of good educational practices on gender issues within the school, and disseminate these good practices through the creation of a network of expert teachers with other European countries
- Develop the number of projects on the theme of gender, by endeavouring to include European partners in countries where the subject is still sensitive. The dissemination of good practice at European level could be more strongly and concretely increased through the exchange of good practice between teachers
- Motivate teachers to participate in discussion/focus groups and meetings on relevant educational topics (at regional, national and international level)



2

CONTEXT AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE SURROUNDING (THE NECESSITY TO INCLUDE FAMILIES IN THE PROCESS AS WELL AS EDUCATIONAL STAFF)



The coherence, consistency and commitment of the whole learning community is essential when tackling gender stereotypes in education. In order to make the school environment a place where there is no room for gender stereotypes that limit everyone's life expectancy, it is necessary for teachers, administrators, families and non-teaching staff to work in a coordinated and coherent manner.

Learning and, especially, learning in values, happens continuously throughout life and in all spaces and contexts through which students have life experiences. Notably at younger ages, remarkably determinant is the learning carried out in the family environment. Hence, articulating measures to involve and integrate families in the commitment to gender equality is essential for educational initiatives aimed at overcoming gender stereotypes to be effective.

Throughout the experimentation process of the GATE project, it has been observed that the activities related to gender stereotypes and developed in the classroom have a clear impact on families: from



initial resistance and opposition to working on the topic in the classroom to, on the contrary, involvement of families giving continuity to the work developed in class and projecting it in the community.

In addition, in the school environment, students are exposed to learning situations and interactions that go beyond the classroom context. Much of the learning related to values occurs in more informal situations. School transport, cafeteria, library, sports spaces... are spaces in which students interact with non-teaching professionals who must act in coherence with the values that are transmitted in the classroom. Offering appropriate references and models is crucial.



Therefore, the following general recommendations aiming to reinforce the involvement of the surrounding might be followed:

- Allow time for the teaching staff to devise and articulate ways of working cooperatively with other community agents
- Promote school models in which the presence of families is more intense
- Enable lines of work for joint training of families, teachers and non-teaching staff.



3

TRAINING AND GUIDELINES



Within the frame of GATE project, besides the catalogue of activities, it is recommended to provide complementary tools for teachers. It includes guidelines for training and templates for adaptation of the activities to have the intended impact in further relevant projects especially concerning gender stereotypes.

The deliverance of the project presents a number of activities that will potentially create gender awareness among pupils and that potentially will provide teachers with a relevant tool to address issues of gender inequality in school. However, without adapted tools and without thorough introduction to the thematic orientation and the theoretical background, the deliverance may fail to have a lasting impact on pupils as well as teachers.

It is therefore our recommendation that:



- An introduction to the topic of gender inequality and a glossary with vocabulary and terms of reference on the topic may be incorporated
- An online course/instructions on how to work with the deliverables may be developed and may be available on an online-platform as complementary to face-to-face-training
- Templates for a) redidactization of the deliverance be provided on an online-platform and thereby making the deliverables accessible to local needs, b) for peer-to-peer-supervision and reflection thus making the forthcoming development of training and learning a central part of the work with gender inequality.



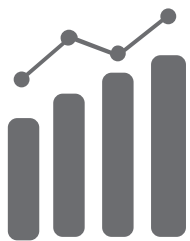
4

REGULAR EVALUATION



Structures for evaluation are a prerequisite for work with gender equality to have an impact. Gender stereotypes in education need recognition on several levels in school culture. The process needs to be evaluated from the management to the specific activity in the classroom. The teachers must regularly be given time and space to reflect and share experiences together with their colleagues in different forums within and outside the school.

For work with gender equality to have an impact on pupils, it is important that the teachers regularly give opportunities for pupils to process their experiences. Evaluation challenges their perspective on gender stereotypes by taking part in other pupils' thoughts and opinions. The evaluation can be performed in several ways depending on the pupils' age, interest, and the teachers' experiences of which way of evaluating suits them the most. Examples of evaluation tools are post-it notes, questionnaires, drawings, and discussions. The evaluation can be done in a digital or an analog format. Both kinds of material are narratives of the pupils, and snap shots of their understanding of gender and gender stereotypes. Based on the evaluation the teachers' get insight into pupils' gender awareness, their need for more education on the topic and ideas about ways of working with gender equality in the future.



The pupils' evaluation together with the teachers' observations and interviews give a wider picture and more perspectives on how pupils think, and act based on their knowledge, values, and experiences. Long-term changes can be achieved through regular systematic evaluation on several levels and in different forums.

Our recommendation will be thus to set up regular assessments on the gender theme, which will allow:

- pupils to analyse their awareness of this issue by comparing their feelings with those of their classmates.
- to be enriched by the views of other pupils and thus increase each person's awareness of the importance of this issue.

5

SUSTAINABILITY AND PEER-TO-PEER TRAINING

Within the frame of GATE project, the interest lays in the ability of the actors to structure clear, shared educational objectives based on the expertise of the partners, peer training and trust.

Our recommendation is based on three steps: to experiment, to model and to develop.

- Offer systemic, calibrated training for members of the educational community, in a curricular logic that combines practice and theory and allows for immediate and appropriate implementation of equality education in all classes, schools, etc., for dissemination throughout society.

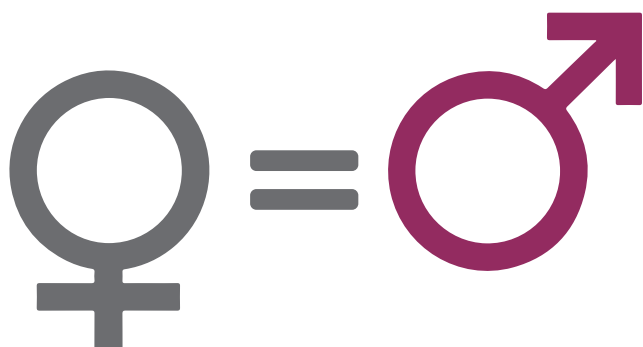


- Encourage the creation of pools of trainers and “peer experts” who are able to provide agile and local training for all members of the educational community, in a logic of massification and in a short period of time for an efficient dissemination.
- Ensure the dissemination of good practices by making available educational resources, indexed in digital work environments (ENT) and especially the eTwinning platform (Europe’s online platform for school education), with a view to encourage sharing and cooperation at several levels (pupils, teachers, school, academy, cooperation between European countries).

- Encourage student and staff mobility to facilitate exchanges and contribute to the development of professional and personal skills (Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027).
- Recognise and highlight the good practices of educational teams by awarding a carefully criterionised label for gender equality in partner countries and even at European level.

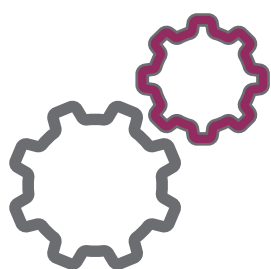


6 POLICY CHANGE AND SUPPORT TO EU GUIDELINES



In order for gender equality to have an impact, the GATE experimentation showed it is necessary to include gender equality into the school curricula in all compulsory education subjects and moreover, to a national training program of the teachers. To this date, gender mainstreaming has been adopted as one of EU priorities but gender training is still optional in most European countries and regions. Our recommendations are to:

- Include gender equality as mandatory training for new teachers and to encourage all educational staff to attend so that this topic is not only addressed or relayed by a few actors. To do so, we propose to develop relays in the schools with teachers and professors already specialized and trained in this topic. Related to the policy recommendations n°3 and n°5, it is crucial to support peer-to-peer training, to create and to promote a European network of teachers specialized on gender.
- Have appropriate documentation to teachers and to provide them educational resources, youth literature and pedagogical activities promoting gender equality.
- Apart from the classroom and the playground and also from an architectural point of view, we encourage local administration to ensure inclusive schools premises.



Finally, this European project also showed the necessity to involve more public institutions and operators by lightening the administrative obligations, to reduce the number of documents requested and to put in place a better structural organization to benefit from European funds

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