



Gender Issues 2008

Gender-Sensitive Education
in the Czech Republic, Poland,
Slovak Republic and Ukraine

■■■ HEINRICH
BÖLL
STIFTUNG
WARSZAWA

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Introduction

It is our great pleasure to present you with the publication *Gender Issues 2008: Gender Sensitive Education in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine*, which is another part of the publishing series initiated last year. The series is a result of cooperation between the Representation of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Poland with partner organisations from the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine, which have undertaken systematic monitoring of the implementation of gender equality politics and adherence to European Union standards in this field.

Starting with the assumption that the implementation of “hard” EU law in the field of gender equality politics is no more important than its realisation in the extent which remains within the competencies of EU member states, we have decided to take a closer look at the education systems in the specific countries. The goal of the analyses conducted in 2008 was finding out to what extent issues of gender equality are taken into account at schools, in teaching programmes, textbooks, during lessons taught by teachers, and revealing the scope of the state’s actions to actively incorporate these issues into the educational system, in accordance with the principle of *gender mainstreaming*, one of the pillars of EU gender equality politics.

The common theme has allowed us to achieve an interesting comparative perspective. We can risk the thesis that gender issues are not systematically incorporated into the schooling and educational system, regardless of whether the country is an EU member state or a neighboring

state. Practices taking into account the perspective of gender equality are rare; such activities are not organised at schools, and schools most often strengthen the stereotypical, traditional division of male and female roles. Additionally, all reports point out that gender-based segregation in the sector of education is a serious problem. It concerns both the choice of the direction of studies by male and female secondary school students (significantly more girls choose studies in the humanities or subjects which prepare them for caretaking duties, while boys choose technical subjects) and segregation among teachers, where, in spite of the feminisation of education, men are mostly present in management positions. This segregation among teachers is, of course, also reflected in their wages.

Educational reforms are currently in progress in Poland and in the Czech Republic, but in both countries little emphasis is placed on issues of the equality of men and women. While authors of the Czech report express hope that the reform will help eliminate gender stereotypes and inequalities from the schooling system, authors of the Polish study are more critical of the reform, pointing out that neither the school nor its reformers are aware of the actual challenges facing European education and of the need to make up for years of delays which Polish education has suffered in the field of gender equality politics. As prof. Magdalena Środa writes, the Polish school educates for a patriarchal and nationalistic society, where male dominance is considered natural. And there is nothing strange about this, since the preamble of the Act on the System of Education contains a stipulation requiring respect for the Christian system of values, and teachers themselves, in a survey carried out for the purposes of this report, point out that they base their choices of textbooks and programmes on whether the role of women and men is presented “in a proper way, in accordance with the teachings of the catholic church” (sic!).

While the ministries of education in Poland and Slovakia are not in the least interested in the topic of gender equality, it is worth noting that

there exist gender equality initiatives in Ukraine and in the Czech Republic. For example, the Ukrainian government has adopted the “State Programme for Strengthening Gender Equality in Ukrainian Society for the period up to 2010”. The Ukrainian Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport is currently preparing the governmental report on the topic of education, which includes the perspective of gender equality. In fact, a special working group has been created. In the Czech Republic a new department of equal opportunities in education was created in July 2008. The department’s goals include preparing the conceptual framework of inclusive education, which would take into account the specific needs of children in difficult life circumstances, preparing the concept of multicultural education and raising the competence of ministry personnel in the area of gender equality. Additionally, the minister of education has created a working group for the equality of men and women, which consists of female and male experts from non-governmental organisations and from the academia.

Neither Poland nor Slovakia can boast of such good practices on the governmental level. In these countries it is non-governmental organisations which deal with gender equality issues in education, and it is thanks to their activities that innovative textbooks, gender lesson scenarios for secondary schools, teacher training programmes etc., have been created. Officials responsible for the system of education will be able to take advantage of the resources prepared by the NGO community, on the condition that there exists political will and – as the authors of the Slovakian report emphasise – as long as this happens in the conditions of partnership.

In this publication we present shortened versions of state reports. In addition to analyses of national systems of education, selected issues, all studies contain recommendations for governments. The publication is addressed not only to decision-makers responsible for educational policies, but also to male and female teaching experts, teachers and the media. We hope that thanks to this publication you will become more thoroughly acquainted with aspects

of gender equality politics in the region, this time with aspects related to the system of education and schooling. We hope that this publication will be an inspiration for further debate on the issues discussed here.

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“Gender Democracy and Women’s Politics”

Warsaw, December 2008

Gender Aspects of Education in the Czech Republic

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Gender Studies, the Czech Republic

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1. A Word of Introduction or Where we are coming from...

Dear readers,

This is a publication about the gender aspects of education in the Czech Republic. Its primary aim is to reflect on the current situation in the education system and bring attention to the fact that it is not gender-neutral. The text also highlights good practices and makes suggestions for future improvements.

Although policy makers and those developing **systemic tools** for the education sector are the main audience of this book, we hope it will be useful also to experts in school administrations, teachers as well as journalists. This publication seeks to open a broad discussion about standards of quality in the education system in the Czech Republic from the perspective of gender equality.

In the first part of the report, the authors use the gender perspective to examine the key areas of the education system. The system itself has been mapped out by Kristýna Ciprová. Next, Irena Smetáčková discusses the curriculum reform and its potential to reduce gender inequalities. She outlines the major barriers that still stand in the way of change and suggests specific processes that could improve the current situation.

The topic of gender segregation in the education sector begged for reflection. Tereza Kynčlová contemplates the symbolic meanings of both vertical and horizontal gender segregation in her contribution. She warns against the traps of essentialism and the inversion of gender stereotypes that result in their reinforcement rather than elimination.

Finally, Linda Sokačová introduces the new Department of Equal Opportunities in Education established at the Ministry of Education in July 2008. The founding of the Department and its activities to date appear to be steps in the right direction but the role it will play in the future remains uncertain, especially if the Ministry leadership changes.

2. Gender aspects of education in the Czech Republic

Education has great power. Education enables people to see their place in the society and in the world, however, it also enables them to change it. On the other hand, our education affirms and consolidates our position in the world (Renzetti, Curran 2005). School thus operates with an enormous potential: it sets and shapes the social, political, and economic values on both formal and informal levels. Gender is a category that plays an important role in forming our worldview. However, gender awareness or reflection is not incorporated into education in a systematic way: non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive educational practices are rare and subjects teaching gender are missing from school curricula. On the contrary, teaching takes place within the confines of gender stereotypes. The differences between men and women tend to be reinforced in the imagination of the students and used to justify the different positions of men and women in the society. In order to eliminate gender stereotypes through education we must examine the education system in the Czech Republic from the gender perspective.

The following subheads briefly describe the way education authorities operate in the Czech Republic and how official educational schemes regulate the contents of instruction.

2.1. The education system in the Czech Republic

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) is one of the country's most important authorities in the education system administration because:

- it develops the conception of the education system
- it is in charge of the education system administration bodies
- it maintains the school register
- it approves School Educational Programmes (curricula)
- approves financial subsidy levels per pupil
- records the internal directives of universities

As Irena Smetáčková (Smetáčková 2008) writes, the Ministry lacks a clear concept of promoting gender equality in education. The details of the current concept can be found in the Ministry's *Priorities and Procedures in the Advocacy of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*. A critical analysis of this document, including policy recommendations by Smetáčková, can be found in the *Shadow Report 2008* (Smetáčková 2008). In addition to MEYS, gender equality in education is supposed to be promoted by the following authorities: The Czech School Inspection, the National Institute for Further Education, the Research Institute on Education, regional and municipal administrations (as the legal bodies establishing schools), and the schools themselves. According to Smetáčková (Smetáčková 2008), gender equality ought to be imbedded not only in the activities of these institutions but also in their processes. However, neither dimension is yet commonplace.

2.2. Curricular documents

The government strategy in the area of education is defined in the **National Programme for the Development of Education**, or in the so-called White Paper that along with Law No. **561/2004 Coll.** (Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education Act – later in the text referred to as the Education Act) institutes a new system of curricular documents. These are developed at two levels – the level of **state** and the level of **school**.

The state level comprises of the **National Programme of Education (NPE, NVP in Czech) and the Framework Educational Program (FEP, RVP in Czech)**. The National Programme of Education (NPE), developed by MEYS, defines initial education as a whole and serves as the basis for the Framework Educational Programs.

The Framework Educational Programmes (FEP) then reflect the National Programme of Education (NPE). FEPs are binding for the School Educational Programmes at the level of schools because they define obligatory “frameworks” for individual (pre-school, basic, and secondary) education levels. The Framework Educational Programmes (FEPs) are also developed by the Ministry of Education (MEYS), which consults them with other Ministries, and are imperative for new textbooks.

The **School Educational Programmes (SEP, ŠVP in Czech)** dictate actual instruction in schools and represent the final ground level of the education system. The School Educational Programmes (SEPs) are created by every school according to the principles of the respective Framework Educational Programmes. SEPs regulate instruction at individual schools and the teaching of different subjects (or subject groups).

As Smetáčková (Smetáčková 2008) points out, all instruction materials and textbooks respond to the formal curriculum. So even though the gender correctness of textbooks has become a point of evaluation, there is no

guarantee that the evaluators have any knowledge of or education in gender issues (Smetáčková 2008).

Thus, the integration of gender into teaching depends more on the educational aims of individual institutions and their teachers, and on the design of each School Educational Programme (SEP). Each institution creates its SEP according to the alleged needs and interests of the students, and according to the local environment and conditions. This makes it possible for a gender-balanced school programme to exist: students need not be differentiated on the basis of their gender, they can have the same ambitions and demands, and could be equally supported. Unfortunately, research and statistics show that this possibility is so far limited to the realm of good will; gender equality is far from reality.

2.3. Gender in education - research and statistics

The Breaking the Waves project undertook a survey research among education counsellors in 2007 (for details see *Implementing the Concept of Gender into Education* or the Open Society website www.otevrenaspolecnost.cz). The aim of the survey was to identify the impact of gender on educational counselling and its results showed that the views, attitudes, and activities of educational counsellors in general were strongly affected by gender stereotypes. Students typically head in directions traditionally associated with their gender due to the stereotypes employed in the their own minds as well as in the minds of their counsellors (whose main job is to assist students in selecting their area of study and career) (Selected Areas... 2007). According to the statistics showing the proportions of boys and girls in secondary schools, the students' future is formed already in elementary school.

The above mentioned study as well as *The Gender Aspects of Student Transfer Among Education Levels* research (Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences, 2005) show that education and career counsellors heavily employed gender stereotypes when evaluating how suitable different careers were for students. Students were ascribed the attributes of physical strength (in the case of men) and of empathy and care (in the case of women) and these attributes were deemed significant for their career choices (Selected Areas, 2007). “Frequently it was administrative work, sales, teaching, medicine, economics, and some others, that were considered equally suitable for both genders” (Selected Areas, 2007, pg. 16). This fact would lead us to assume that the general secondary schools (gymnáziums) as schools not specialised in a particular field, would be attended by approximately the same number of female and male students. On the other hand, we must remember that the general secondary schools are often considered to be institutions that offer education primarily in the area of the humanities, and that is why it is not too surprising that the number of girl students at the general secondary schools is slightly higher than the number of boys. In contrast, we expect field-based profiling of students at vocational and technical secondary schools. The number of girls is higher among technical secondary school students, while there are significantly more boys at vocational institutions. The gender aspect of secondary school selection is best illustrated by the statistics that show the proportionate distribution of students across fields and field groups.

Boys dominate in technical fields and girls dominate in the health care and social science sectors. This trend naturally continues at the university level. The gender distribution among students partially reflects the gender distribution of teachers. At general secondary and other secondary schools there are more women than men among teachers (it would be interesting to see the statistics by different subjects) while men dominate at technical and vocational schools. Secondary education is, in general, feminised, closely reflecting the gender segregation of the labour market. Petr Pavlík and Irena Smetáčková’s analysis shows that: “The

education sector is a generally women-dominated area internally differentiated by school type and level. At the same time, women rarely reach management positions" (Pavlík, Smetáčková 2006; 3). This reality affects financial rewards among teachers. Work in the education sector is less financially attractive in general but, even here, women still earn less than men (same source). The wages of female teachers at elementary and secondary schools are significantly lower than the wages of male teachers, which cannot be explained merely by the disproportionate representation of males in management positions (same source).

2.4. Implementing the concept of gender into education

As the sections above suggest, the majority of activities focused on implementing gender into education are not initiated by government institutions. Government documents and strategies talk about implementing procedures and methods supporting "students' creative thinking, quick responsiveness and independence" and utilising "differential methods of instruction, new organisational formats, [incorporating] integrated subjects, etc." (The Framework Educational Programme for General Secondary Schools (Gymnázium) 2007: 8). It is mainly the projects of different non-profit organisations that foster the gender sensitivity of teachers and of the school environment. The key organisations participating in implementing the concept of gender into education – and especially into teaching practice – are: Open Society (Otevřená společnost, o.p.s.), which carried out Gender in School and Breaking the Waves projects, both of which focused on education, and Žába na prameni, o.s., whose project Equal Opportunities in Teaching Practice is ongoing.

Furthermore, the social-ecological group Nesehnutí held seminars for education professionals in 2005, and Gender Studies co-developed the first

Shadow Report that evaluated the education sector in the Czech Republic. Gender Studies is offering seminars for tertiary professional and secondary vocational schools, and is reaching out to secondary school students via a media project.

Some university and academic departments are also active in the field: The Department of German Languages at the Pedagogical Faculty at the University of South Bohemia, the Gender and Sociology Department and the National Contact Centre – Women and Science, both at the Institute of Sociology at the Czech Academy of Sciences. The following list outlines the most significant NGO initiatives focused on gender in education (in chronological order):

■ 2003

Gender in School or the so-called Implementing of the Concept of Gender into Education project by Open Society aimed at creating tools and the environment for increasing the gender sensitivity in society through raising and educating younger generations. The project sought to change the institutional framework of raising and educating young people and to establish a foundation for gender-sensitive practice in the education sector.

It was divided into three parts, each focusing on a different area of education. Manuals for teachers of civics and the social sciences, and educational materials for teachers-to-be were some of its final outputs. The project also promoted institutional and legislative changes that would better incorporate gender into pedagogic documents, and that would lead to implementing gender mainstreaming throughout the entire sector under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.

(source: <http://www.osops.cz/cz/projekty/genderova-rovnost/gender-ve-skole/>)

2004

Shadow Reports analysing the education sector from the gender perspective have been published regularly since 2004 (the first Report was published by Gender Studies, subsequent ones by Open Society). These concentrate mainly on the work of MEYS and its gender equality advocacy-related activities. Each Shadow Report analyses the situation at the time and makes policy recommendations to MEYS. (individual Reports: <http://www.otevrenaspolecnost.cz/download/files/stinova-zprava.pdf>, <http://www.proequality.cz/res/data/002/000241.pdf>, <http://www.proequality.cz/res/data/005/000588.pdf>)

2005

Social-Ecological group Nesehnutí held two seminars for education workers in 2005 as a part of its project Overcoming Gender Stereotypes and Inequalities via Education. The project included distribution of new information materials, including a brochure specifically for the education sector called Equal Opportunities of Girls and Boys in Education.

(source: http://www.nesehnuti.cz/publikace/vyrocka_05.pdf)

Open Society initiated an **Education Programme** as a part of its **Breaking the Waves** project. The following documents are its main outcomes: Gender Analysis of Czech Education, Current School System Study, Educational Counselling System Study, Educational Counselling Survey, Educational Counselling Survey Results, and the Manual for Gender-Sensitive Education Counselling.

(source: <http://www.osops.cz/cz/projekty/genderova-rovnost/prolomit-vlny/>)

2006

Open Society carried out a **Remuneration of Men and Women in Education Analysis**. The goal of this study was a gender-focused analysis of the remuneration practices for teachers and other educational workers

in the education sector. (source: <http://www.otevrenaspolecnost.cz/cz/projekty/genderova-rovnost/odmenovani-ve-skolstvi/>)

(Žába na prameni) implemented the project **Equal Opportunities in Pedagogical Practice** focused on implementing gender-sensitive teaching in elementary schools, the goal of which was to train teachers in gender issues and to give them a practical and easy-to-grasp set of instructions on how to share their gender knowledge and skills with students. The group held educational seminars for teachers and published a bi-monthly magazine on equal opportunities for elementary and secondary school teachers. The good practices section later on in this publication provides greater detail on this project. (source: <http://www.rppp.cz/index.php?s=o-nas>)

2008

As part of its project **Fit for Change**, Gender Studies offers free tailor-made seminars on gender issues for elementary and secondary schools as well as for universities that are customised according to classroom and subject needs. The good practices section offers more details on this project.

(source: [http://www.genderstudies.cz/aktivity/projekt.shtml?cmd\[2828\]=x-2828-2067197](http://www.genderstudies.cz/aktivity/projekt.shtml?cmd[2828]=x-2828-2067197))

Since 2008, Gender Studies also directly addresses secondary school students via its activity **Sšokem**. **Sšokem** is a section in the Equal Opportunities in Companies newsletter in which student contributors reflect on their experience with discrimination, equal opportunities, gender stereotypes, and related issues.

(source: <http://www.feminismus.cz/fulltext.shtml?x=2104104>)

3. The gender potential of the Framework Educational Programmes

Since the new Education Act passed in 2004, the Czech education sector has been implementing a curriculum reform that represents the most significant change in Czech schooling since the 1970's. Although it has not been unanimously well-received, there is a consensus in the education community that the reform will improve the quality of school education in the long run.

Much is expected of the reform in the area of gender equality that has so far received only marginal attention as a theme. It is not clear whether the changes produced by the reform will really lead to the elimination of gender stereotypes and inequalities because the reform only creates space; a potential that must be utilised via the initiative and possibilities of each schools.

3.1. Framework and School Educational Programmes

As we have mentioned above, the curriculum reform consists in changing the fundamental pedagogic documents. The original teaching plans have been replaced by new Framework Educational Programmes (FEPs). FEPs delimit the contents of instruction at individual school levels in terms of the curriculum and through the definition of outputs [knowledge and skills] students finishing each school level must exhibit.

The Framework Educational Programmes are prepared similarly for three levels in the educational system. Each level has its own document – FEP for

preschool education, FEP for elementary education, FEP for general secondary schools and FEP for vocational and technical secondary schools. The first three documents are prepared by the Research Institute for Education, and the fourth set of documents is developed by the National Institute for Technical Education. Both curricular institutes are under the direct supervision of MEYS, which approves the documents in their final stage. In addition to defining documents for the mainstream student population, special curriculum documents for students with special needs and students with disabilities are developed for special schools.

In contrast with the previous curricula, FEPs put a strong emphasis on the personality of the student. Furthermore, the previous documents were conceived from the teacher's perspective (what school is supposed to teach) while the FEPs set the goals from the perspective of the student (what the student is supposed to know). This shift carries a strong symbolic meaning; it expresses a new theoretical grounding in constructivist pedagogy.

Educational outputs are defined in terms of activities (such as *The student reads texts of appropriate length and difficulty with comprehension*). This approach emphasises skill development over mere passing on of knowledge and information. However, students still need to memorise a great amount of information that serves as a basis for skill acquisition and development.

Teaching takes a novel approach in the FEPs as it focuses on the development of key competencies comprised of skills, knowledge, abilities, attitudes and values. The essential competencies elementary schools are supposed to foster are: learning competency, problem-solving competency, communication competency, social and personal competency, and the civic and working competencies.

As far as the structure of instruction is concerned, FEPs define so-called educational fields, supplementary educational fields, and cross-curricular topics. The existing division of instruction into subjects is being replaced by a division into educational fields (for example *History* or *Education for Democratic Citizenship*). These educational fields are grouped into broader educational fields (*People and Society*) in which mutual integration should occur. Finally, there are the cross-cutting themes that run through different educational areas and fields (*Personal and Social Education*). The educational fields and cross-cutting themes are meant to strengthen the interconnectedness of all the acquired skills and knowledge so that students do not perceive them as isolated units but can apply them to problem-solving in everyday life.

It is also important that the FEP specify outputs and not the manner in which they are achieved; the selection of methods of reaching them are at the schools' discretion. Schools may use not only a variety of teaching methods and forms, but also a variety of contents. The schools' implementation of the FEPs is described in their own School Educational Programmes (SEPs), which have to meet the outputs set out in the FEPs while reflecting the particular location, the composition of the student population, and the ideological profile of the teaching team.

School Educational Plans give a lot of autonomy to the schools. At the same time, SEPs present risks associated with organisational and logistical factors (such as the compatibility of acquired skills in the case of student transfer between schools), or with the burden schools carry (some schools do not appreciate the freedom they have been given and only formally participate in the reform). Finally, the school's responsibility for a unified cognitive socialisation of the youngest generation may be a problem as well (because decentralisation results in a diverse set of skills and knowledge among students leaving school and thus contributes to lowering the consensus in the society in the long run).

3.2. Gender equality in the Framework Educational Programmes

Framework Educational Programmes (FEPs) do not significantly or explicitly lead to reducing gender inequalities. Their educational content however, does include a few points that relate to equality between women and men. For illustration, see the following FEP for general secondary schools:

Cross-curricular subject “Multicultural Education”, contribution to the pupil’s personal development: *to understand, respect, and actively defend the idea of individual responsibility for eliminating discrimination and prejudice against people of different ethnic groups, ethnicities, skin colours, religions, social background, sex and sexual orientation.*

Educational area “Civics and Social Science Fundamentals” contribution to the pupil’s personal development: *awareness and reflection of one’s own behaviour and the behaviour and motivation of others, respecting different value systems, recognising prejudice in judging people, events, social phenomena and processes; and recognising negative stereotypes about the roles of men and women in society.*

Cross-curricular subject “Education towards Thinking in European and Global Contexts”, thematic area “Global issues – causes and consequences: environment and sustainable development - *global environmental problems of the natural and social environments, inequality between men and women in the global context, gender issues.*

This summary makes it clear that gender equality is not given much space in the curricular documents, which are often over 100 pages long. Throughout all the levels of the education system there is barely any definition of an educational outcome that would employ non-stereotypical views of social reality. On the other hand, the documents do include many requirements on respecting other people and groups and that may prevent stereotypes and prejudice from affecting one’s behaviour. Rejection of gender stereotypes and

respecting individuals who do not conform to the existing gender order, such as persons of non-heterosexual sexual orientation for example, could certainly be implicitly subsumed in these fairly general definitions of respect even though the FEPs do not mention non-heterosexuals specifically.

The contents and outcomes regarding gender equality are always mentioned only in the context of subjects and fields directly concerned with human relationships. Gender equality is a broad topic however, and sensitivity to gender stereotypes ought to be developed in all subjects including geography or Czech.

Contrasting individual points of the Framework Educational Programme show there is no unified and internally consistent understanding of gender equality in the programme. On the one hand, the goal of school education is supposed to be the recognition of gender stereotypes and their active dismissal. On the other hand, schools ought to support the development of positive relationships, respect and polite behaviour toward “the other sex.” This goal could be, and probably is, interpreted according to gender stereotypes and results in reinforcing the dichotomy of the gender order that views women and men as two homogenous groups, different (opposite) from each other. This assumption about “two opposite sexes” effectively counteracts the individual approach promoted by the rejection of stereotypes.

Linguistic analysis of the documents further confirms the fact that gender expertise was lacking in the development of the FEPs. It is rather significant that the term “gender” is used only once in the FEP for general secondary schools and only there (in other FEPs, including the FEP for vocational education, “gender” is not mentioned at all). The terms “role” and “sex,” on the other hand, are used quite frequently, which is of course very problematic from the perspective of gender sensitivity because both “role” and “sex” refer to biological and social essentialism. From the perspective of gender sensitivity. Finally, we must mention another feature of the language in the documents – the generic masculine is used consistently throughout the entire texts.

It is important to remember that the FEPs serve the teachers, not students, and therefore it cannot be argued that their gender-insensitive language (and content) is influenced by the age of the student populations.

3.3. Gender equality in school instruction: from FEP to SEP (The Framework Educational Plan to The School Educational Plan)

The point of the FEP is to delimit the boundaries for individual schools and their teachers. In respect to the aims of the curricular reform – to give schools greater autonomy in planning and implementing instruction – the FEP definition of educational contents and methods needs to be sufficiently broad. This approach poses no risk with well-established contents of instruction but with issues that are new in the society there is the danger of varying interpretations of vague definitions. Gender equality is a case in point.

In developing School Educational Plans teachers specify their own interpretations of the FEP outlines they refer to. Two kinds of risk are inherent in this process (of turning FEPs into SEPs). The incorporation of gender equality in the FEPs itself is problematic – gender equality is an inconsistent concept in this document, as we have discussed. The second danger lies in the possibility of the teachers developing a gender-sensitive educational programme without basic knowledge of gender issues. The majority of teachers have not been systematically introduced to gender issues because no compulsory introduction of gender stereotypes in education is a part of pre-graduate or professional development (so-called continuing education) courses.

Without blaming teachers themselves, let us realise that their lack of gender sensitivity naturally leads to interpreting the current FEP according to stereotypical gender roles. The goal stated as *pupils behave considerately toward*

the other sex can easily be understood as: to describe, explain and justify the main differences in behaviour, features, and interests of girls and boys, and to respect and consider them in communication with each group. In this interpretation, “consideration” reinforces stereotypes rather than emphasises of each person's individuality.

The FEPs represent a potential for promoting gender equality in Czech schools. Unfortunately, due to the inconsistency of the interpretation of gender equality in the documents, they hardly fulfil reach this goal. However, the potential of the FEPs can still be utilised in a number of ways, depending on the teacher's understanding of the requirements. In order to improve Czech schools in respect to gender equality, the following conditions must be met:

- current FEPs must be analysed from the gender perspective and resulting recommendations must be incorporated in their update;
- the FEPs must be accompanied by methodological materials that will guide their interpretation and correct transferral of gender equality principles into School Educational Plans and instruction;
- teacher training in theoretical and practical aspects of gender issues must be offered;
- the Czech School Inspection must focus on promoting gender equality in instruction.

Czech schools are currently gaining their first experiences with the implementation of the SEPs and soon the time will come when it will be possible to see how stereotype-free instruction takes place directly on-site. We will also be able to track how open-minded students become with regard to the position of women and men in society. What we can do at the moment is analyse the pedagogic documents (FEPs and SEPs) and look for ways to support schools in this period of transformation. Support in the area of (combating) gender stereotypes is particularly important, because the teachers are not only expected to change the content and form of instruction, but they are asked to change their personal worldview. All of us who have embarked on the path of sensitising others to

gender issues know well from experience that changing one's worldview takes time and effort. MEYS and other organisations in the education system should offer schools support instead of criticising them for maintaining stereotypical ways of thinking and accusing teachers of being unwilling to change.

Department of Equal Opportunities in Education at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS)

In July 2008, a new Department of Equal Opportunities in Education at the Ministry of Education (No. 60) was established under its Social Programmes in Education Section (No. 6). Its main task is to ensure equal opportunities for everyone in the education system including the institution of the Ministry itself. The Department also acts as the main guarantor of MEYS gender policies and gender mainstreaming policies.

The Department, which currently employs six people, was set up at the decision of the Minister. We are yet to see to what extent it will become an integral part of the Ministry and whether it will endure future changes in the Ministry's leadership or any complex changes in the government. At the moment we can say that besides The Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, MEYS is the only Ministry that openly promotes equal opportunities for women and men with the full support of its management and the Minister.

The Department's top priorities are:

- Inclusive Education: developing the concepts of inclusive education and of an open education system that sensitively responds to the specific educational needs of children from underprivileged socio-cultural backgrounds or with health disabilities;

- Intercultural Education;
- MEYS Gender Competency.

Equal opportunities for women and men is one of the Department's top priorities. In addition to engaging its own employees in the mission of the Department, at the beginning of 2008 MEYS established the Working Group for Equality of Women and Men comprised of experts from non-profit, academic, and other organisations. The Working Group and the Department alike were initiated by Minister Ondřej Liška. According to the Ministry, the main goal of the Working Group is to define a plan of priorities in the area of gender that will implement the principle of equal opportunities for women and men in the education and science sectors.

After a few initial meetings, the Working Group was divided into Working Sections that will work independently and meet only at the meetings of the entire Working Group.

1. Working Section (WS): Education I (issues of educational content, curricular documents, gender-sensitive language)
2. WS Continuing Education for Pedagogic Staff
3. WS Science, Research, and Development (including the research of the school system and grant schemes)
4. WS Gender at MEYS (gender audit, promotion, communication, etc.)

The main topics in the gender equality implementation plan for 2008 at MEYS are:

- staff training in gender issues;
- gender-related agendas in internal organisational workings and procedures;
- securing human resources for the implementation of gender policies and issues.

- promotion of the equal opportunities policy in the media and other venues, communicating related activities and their results on the web and via seminars, conferences and campaigns
- integrating equality of women and men into MEYS' grant schemes
- incorporating research and development into MEYS' gender equality priorities
- coordinating activities on gender issues in the areas of education, science, and research
- gradual integration of the idea of gender equality as a "horizontal priority" in all of MEYS' research objectives
- developing provisions that will assist the leadership of the education sector; and possibly counties and municipalities as the school authorities, better promote gender equality in their policies
- developing guidelines for a correct gender-sensitive language in education and science

source: www.msmt.cz.

5. The effects of gender segregation among pedagogic staff on the symbolic perception of the relationships between women and men

Gender segregation in the education sector is a serious problem in the contemporary Czech (but not only Czech) society. It not only produces inequalities only among girl and boy students and male and female teachers at schools; the consequences of gender segregation in education can be found throughout the entire society. Gender segregation in Czech schools runs in several directions: across the fields students choose to study at secondary schools and/ or at universities, and in the composition of pedagogic staff, at both vertical and horizontal levels¹. This article contemplates how gender segregation among teachers reproduces gender stereotypes in patriarchal society on the symbolic level, and how it affects hierarchical views of reality and of relationships among men and women. Though the article promotes the elimination of gender segregation, it discusses a case of its implementation without prior reflection. Using the example of the Men To Schools

¹ Šmídová, Iva, Janoušková, Klára, Kastrňák, Tomáš. Factors Affecting Educational Goals and Educational Segregation of Girls and Boys in the Czech Education System *Sociologický časopis/ Czech Sociological Review*, Praha, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic, vol. 44 (2008), no. 1, pgs. 23-53..

project by the LOM NGO (Open Men's League), the second part of the article discusses the potential risks the strategy of simply raising the numbers of male teachers poses to equality between men and men if the symbolic meanings of masculinity are not carefully considered.

Besides family, school is considered to be the most important formative force in the socialisation process. In the course of this process the human individual is shaped, raised and taught to accept the socio-cultural values and norms of the environment she or he is growing up in; as a social being one is supposed to accept and live up to socially defined expectations. Gender, being inherent in all human activity and thought that help us grasp the world, is an essential component of the socialising process, and therefore social norms, values, and expectations are never gender-free. They are not gender-free nor are they neutral with regard to race, ethnicity, social or religious background, sexual orientation, physical ability, age or language skills. All aspects of the human identity are closely connected with the culture they are negotiated in, and are shaped by the differential power relationships in society².

Knowledge lends power and schooling institutions thus largely define and control the contents and form of knowledge passed on to students via the formal curriculum. Of course, all the implicit messages found in the teaching materials and encoded in the behaviour of the teachers, in the classroom environment or in the discourse on schools and education in general, are just as important. This "hidden" curriculum informs students as much as the official one; students use both as they develop the perceptive framework for viewing and understanding the world³.

² Pavlík, Petr. *Women and Men in the Gender Perspective: Gender Adds a New Insight*. In: Smetáčková, Irena, ed.: *Gender-Sensitive School Management Handbook*. Praha: Open Society, 2007.

³ Renzetti, C. M.; Curran, D. J. *Women, Men and Society (Ženy, muži a společnost)*. Praha: Karolinum, 2003. pg. 262.

As a result of the existence of the hidden curriculum, students (not only in the Czech Republic) often unconsciously absorb the attitudes and gender stereotypes inherent in their culture. The feminisation of the education sector offers only a little chance that students at the elementary school would be taught by comparable numbers of women and men teachers⁴. In the students' minds, teaching at elementary school is likely to become associated with women, and teaching itself is seen as a job suitable for women rather than for men, also because it is connected with raising children and the transferral of cultural patterns – all of which are traditionally ascribed to women. Students' preconceptions about femininity and masculinity as two separate entities will be reinforced. The fact that men frequently occupy management positions in elementary and general secondary schools due to the underrepresentation of men in the sector, will only further consolidate this preconception⁵. At the symbolic level, everything related to women is subservient to male dominance. The typical Western view of the world as a system of hierarchical binary oppositions is here embodied by the institution of the school itself (in addition to other entities), and this conceptualisation of the world is imprinted in the minds of the students through the socialisation process. Currently, the school is a gender-segregated space⁶, and as such it leads to an undesirable reproduction of gender stereotypes and of the status quo in a society where the majority of decision-making positions and positions of power are held by men⁷.

⁴ According to <http://czso.cz/csu/2007edicniplan.nsf/kapitola/10n1-07-2007-2100> there were 62 657 teachers in elementary school in the last school year. The number of men was 10 393. Website viewed on October 22, 2008.

⁵ Details in: Helšusová Václavíková, Lenka. "Teacher Corps" in: Smetáčková, Irena, ed.: *Gender in Schools: Handbook for Teachers and Teachers-to-be*. Praha: Open Society, o.p.s., 2006.

⁶ Jarkovská, Lucie, Smetáčková, Irena. "School as Gendered Space" in: Smetáčková, Irena, ed.: *Gender in School: A Handbook for Men and Women Teachers (Experienced and Teachers-To-Be)*. Praha: Open Society, o.p.s., 2006.

⁷ Bennerová, Lenka, Hejzlarová Eva, Kotišová, Miluš, Kavková Smiggels, Jana, Zářecká, Petra. "Women in Positions of Decision-Making and Power" in: Pavlík, Petr, et al.: *Shadow Report on Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2008*. Praha: Nadace Open Society Fund, 2008, pgs. 50-61.

The under-representation of men in school is typically justified by the low wages in the education sector. This justification makes sense in the traditional gender perspective because the man, as the breadwinner, cannot afford to have such a low-paying job – he would fail to support the family. The social justice perspective, however, turns this reasoning upside down, because single mother teachers need to support their families, too. Gender stereotypes are reflected in the social status of women and men teachers as well. Male teachers usually enjoy the authority of experts while women teachers are typically viewed as something akin to caretakers or governesses. Moreover, women teachers at the elementary school level are usually perceived as people with occupational disorders rather than experts with relevant education⁸.

Gender segregation in the education sector is a source of inequalities between men and women and therefore every democratic government should strive to eliminate it. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has announced that it plans to publish strategies designed to motivate men to become teachers by the end of 2008⁹. In (alleged) collaboration with the Ministry, NGO LOM (League of Open Men) initiated a project called Men to Schools¹⁰ this past summer 2008.

The project's guarantor Václav Šneberger said its goal is not to "appoint men to schools but to create a need and discussion among schools" on the

⁸ Helšusová Václavíková, Lenka. "Teacher Corps" in: Smetáčková, Irena, ed.: *Gender in Schools: A Handbook for Men and Women Teachers (Experienced and Teachers-To-Be)*. Praha: Open Society, o.p.s., 2006, pg. 23.

⁹ http://www.lidovsky.cz/muzi-do-skol-zaveli-ministr-dpq-/ln_domov.asp?c=A080627_101604_1n_domov_bat, Website viewed Oct 13, 2008.

¹⁰ http://web.ilom.cz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=83:mui-do-kol-aneb-kde-vichni-ti-dobi-chlapi-sou&catid=72:mui-do-kol&Itemid=102. Website viewed Oct 13, 2008 and Nov 5, 2008.

issue of gender imbalance¹¹ in schooling institutions. LOM's project aims not to "set quota but to ensure high quality male care" and to "bring [schools]," the qualities of mature, "not feminine" men. The "over-feminisation" of the education sector creates an environment that is unfriendly to boys and men because the all-female composition of the teaching corps "prevents children from experiencing diversity"¹². The project claims to target parents even though its main ideas will be marketed to schools and pre-schools "in the form of intervention and information campaigns" designed to involve men and fathers in running school programs¹³. Šneberger is aware of the lack of social cachet teachers experience but does not think that the arrival of men in feminised schooling institutions could have negative consequences for women teachers. As Václavíková Helšusová points out, among others, in teams where women represent a proportional majority, men tend to be put in management positions. In these situations, the idea of male authority functions as a power mechanism to control environments occupied by women¹⁴.

The Men To Schools programme has the potential to involve men in school activities or in educating youth but from the gender perspective, some of its elements are problematic. First of all, the idea of "mature masculinity" or of a "non-feminine man" is hard to define or describe. Gender is a relational category; masculinity requires some form of femininity in order to exist¹⁵. If LOM truly intends to balance out the

¹¹ Telephone Interview with Václav Šneberger, Nov 5, 2008. Respondent refused to use the term "gender segregation" in favor of „gender imbalance“

¹² Telephone Interview with Václav Šneberger, Nov 5, 2008.

¹³ http://web.ilom.cz/index.php?view=article&catid=54%3Ao-programu-mui-do-kol&id=46%3Ao-programu-mui-do-kol&option=com_content&Itemid=63. Website viewed Oct 13, 2008 and Nov 5, 2008.

¹⁴ Helšusová Václavíková, Lenka. "Teacher Corps" in: Smetáčková, Irena, ed.: *A Handbook for Men and Women, Experienced and Future Teachers*, Open Society, 2006, pg. 22.

¹⁵ Barša, Pavel. *Human Domain and Woman's Desire*. Praha: Slon, 2002..

gender disproportions in the feminised education sector, it must do more than reject the current reality. The organisation needs to reflect upon the social and historical context in which the sector became feminised¹⁶, and upon the type of femininity LOM believes to be represented here. Like femininity, masculinity is not an ahistorical, archetypal and immutable category but it is a variable, time- and place-contingent entity. To reject the “feminine” men in schools who have adjusted to the current conditions in the sector would mean depriving children of gaining an insight into the complexity of gender heterogeneity (and the heterogeneity among men) that LOM, in fact, strives to reach.

The second principal problem in the approach of LOM is that the organisation does not acknowledge the power position of men in patriarchal society; gender is coupled with power. Bringing men teachers to schools, therefore, cannot change the position of women teachers. The position of women teachers would remain the same not, as Václav Šneberger claimed in his phone interview, because of their fear of male competition. The reason would be the fact that the simple arrival of men teachers constitutes the use of power to displace women from an environment that enables them to gain a level of status without threatening existing gender patterns¹⁷.

In the interest of achieving equal opportunities for boys and girls, it is necessary that the men who have chosen the teaching career are aware of and recognise their privilege both in terms of real and symbolic power. Awareness-raising and information campaigns on gender relations in society need to target all levels of the education system: schools (educational

¹⁶ Information on the historical origins of the feminisation of education can be found in: Bahenská, M. *The Beginnings of Women's Emancipation in Bohemia. Girls' Education and Women's Clubs in 19th Century Prague*. Praha: Libri: Slon. 2005.

¹⁷ Helšusová Václavíková, Lenka. “Teacher Corps” in: Smetáčková, Irena, ed.: *Gender in Schools: A Handbook Experienced and Future Teachers*. Praha: Open Society, 2006, pg. 21.

institutions themselves), the authorities that establish them (municipalities, counties), teachers, students, pupils and parents, who are an important audience as well. Educational institutions shape our expectations of ourselves and of the society. In a democratic society our expectations and opportunities should not be predetermined by our sex.

Conclusions: and where we are headed...

Progress toward gender equality in the education system (and consequently in the society as a whole) requires interaction between different factors and social actors.

First of all, the social importance of gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men, and girls and boys, must be recognised.

Next, we need the political will to make the existing curriculum system more efficient. Improving the efficiency of the system requires expert gender analysis of the **Framework Educational Plans** and their update according to the resulting recommendations.

Methodology for the implementation of the Framework Educational Plans via School Educational Plans needs to be developed.

Theoretical and practical courses on gender issues need to become an integral component of teacher training both in the initial and later stages of their professional development.

The Department for Equal Opportunities must have a solid grounding in the structure of the Ministry of School, Youth, and Sports (MEYS, MŠMT in Czech), and a clear set of operational priorities. The Department needs to set and fulfil specific tasks, and have sufficient and competent human resources at its disposal. In its work, the Department should work closely with non-profit organisations specialising in gender issues.

The negative characteristics of the education sector, such as vertical and horizontal segregation or the gender pay gap must be examined with the help of a gender audit, the results of which need to be evaluated with regard to the existing system of gender roles, stereotypes and social order in contemporary society.

Only such an expert analysis will make it possible to develop a plan to eliminate the deeply rooted causes of gender inequalities and to avoid the traps of essentialism.

The path to systemic change that will establish gender equality in education is neither easy nor straight. This publication merely sheds light on some of its key aspects that ought to be included, in our opinion, in the professional public debate.

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Blind to Gender: Equality Education the Polish Way. Report on Equality Education in Primary, Grammar and Secondary Schools

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1. The system of education in Poland – general characteristics

1.1. Educational law - the basic documents

The right to education is provided by Article 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. According to the Constitution, education is obligatory for people up to 18 years of age, free in state-owned schools, and the authorities are obliged to secure universal and equal access to education. Furthermore, the Constitution confirms the right to establish non-public schools of the primary, grammar, secondary and academic level. Indirectly, the system of education is addressed by Article 48, paragraph 1 of the Constitution, which emphasises the parents' right to "raise their children in accordance with their convictions. This education ought to take into account the child's maturity, his or her freedom of conscience and religion, as well as his or her convictions". This is in accordance with similar regulations in international documents¹.

Two most important documents defining the character of the Polish system of education are the Act on the System of Education of 1991 (with amendments), and the Teachers' Charter of 1982 (with amendments).

¹ Guaranteeing parents the right to choose a non-public school – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 13.3; parents' right to raise their children in accordance with their religious and philosophical convictions – The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Additional Protocol, art. 2; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 13.3; see: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 26.3: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

The preamble to the Act on the System of Education² defines the basic objectives and tasks of this system. Peculiarly, it tries to refer to diametrically different systems of values³. It mentions human rights (with references to particular documents⁴), as well as “universal ethical principles” (whatever they might be), which are to constitute a basis for teaching and upbringing. It is worth emphasising, that the preamble stipulates that teaching and upbringing respects the “Christian system of values”. It also quotes the development of responsible attitudes, love of the homeland and respect for the Polish cultural heritage, “at the same time opening up to the values of the cultures of Europe and the world”. It is completed with a statement that “The school ought to provide each pupil and student with conditions necessary for his or her development, prepare him or her to carry out their family and civil duties based on the principles of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice and freedom”. The final result is a strange mixture: rather pompous (which, admittedly, is typical for many preambles), very general and susceptible to all sorts of interpretation.

² The full text of the preamble to the act on the system of education reads as follows: “Education in the Republic of Poland constitutes a shared good of the whole society; it is guided by the principles contained in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, as well as the indications of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Teaching and upbringing serves for the development of responsibility, the love of the homeland and the respect for Polish cultural heritage in young people, at the same time opening up to the values of the cultures of Europe and the world. The school ought to provide each pupil and student with conditions necessary for his or her development, prepare him or her to carry out their family and civil duties based on the principles of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice and freedom.”

³ The preamble to the Polish Constitution has been constructed in a similar manner.

⁴ The act refers to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Convention on the Rights of the Child, but does not mention the – also ratified by Poland – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, articles 13 and 14 of which refer directly to the right to education. The educational documents do not refer to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of Women, of which art. 10 defines obligations of the signatory states concerning education.

Article 1 of the Act on the System of Education specifies the tasks to be fulfilled by the system. Among the 17 listed tasks, there is a group of those connected with equalising chances – e.g. the obligation to provide adequate education for disabled youths, or for socially maladjusted children; to level differences in conditions of teaching, upbringing and care between different regions of the country, and particularly between cities and the countryside. The act mentions education for balanced growth, preparation for active participation in the economic life, and creation of conditions for development of interests and talents. **What is lacking, however, are any references to the principle of equal treatment regardless of sex.**

Article 6 of the Teachers' Charter specifies the teachers' duties. In the points concerning upbringing, there is, once again, a mixture of different systems of values. We can read about supporting pupils in their development, educating and bringing them up in the spirit of patriotism, respect for the Constitution, educating in the climate of freedom of conscience and respect for every human being, shaping attitudes consistent with the ideals of democracy, peace and friendship between people of different nations, races and philosophies of life.

To sum it up: the two basic documents defining the framework of the system of education in their stipulations seem not to notice the issue of equality between women and men; both are “blind to gender” (the word “gender” is not mentioned a single time, by the way). The act on the system of education and the Teachers' Charter refer to concepts, such as freedom, tolerance, respect, civil attitudes, solidarity, justice etc. However, none of those documents

refer directly to the principle of equality between women and men⁵, in spite of the preamble, quoting the UN documents introducing this principle⁶.

1.2. The system of education – basic information

Since the reform of the system of education – commenced in 1999 – Poland has had a three-step schooling system⁷:

- Children between 7 and 13 years of age go to a six-year primary school;
- They then continue their education in an obligatory three-year grammar school; this stage of education finishes with a state exam;
- After grammar school, pupils can choose between a three-year secondary school of a general or specified profile, which ends with an equivalent of A-levels; a four-year technical college, also providing a possibility of sitting A-levels; or a two- to three-year vocational school.

Schooling is obligatory for children between 7 and 18 years of age. In practice, graduates of the schooling system are often 19-20 years old. In 2004, six year olds were included in the system of obligatory one-year preschool preparation. At the moment, the Ministry of Education is working on lowering the age of obligatory schooling to 6 years.

⁵ The Teachers' Charter defines conditions of teachers' work and contains articles referring to privileges connected with maternity leave and breastfeeding.

⁶ See, for example: art.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 3 of the Covenant, art. 2 and 29.1.d of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The latter is particularly important. Art. 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child discusses the focus of the child's education. Point 29.1.d says: "The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin".

⁷ See: the Act on the System of Education, art. 2, art. 9.1

According to the Act on the System of Education, schools and other educational establishments can be public (run mainly by local authorities and tuition-free), or non-public (founded and run by individuals and institutions, who may collect tuition). Non-public schools are subsidised according to the number of pupils (subsidies are paid by local authorities) in the amount equal to the subsidies for public schools.

1.3. Pupils in different types of schools

Data on the gender structure of pupils are published in the reports of the Central Statistical Office (GUS). According to the report entitled “Education and Upbringing in the School Year 2006/2007”⁸:

- There are more boys taught in primary and grammar schools: in primary schools there are on average 94 female pupils to 100 male ones, and in grammar schools – 93. Primary and grammar schools are obligatory, so these proportions reflect the proportions of the sexes in the general population of children this age;
- **There are significantly more boys than girls in special primary and grammar schools:** in the previous school year, for 100 boys in special primary schools there were 59 girls, and in special grammar schools – 55;
- The most popular type of secondary school is the liceum – a general profile secondary school: in the school year 2006/2007, almost a half of all first-year secondary school pupils chose this type of establishment. **In general profile schools there are more girls than boys, but their overrepresentation diminishes**⁹:

⁸ Annual reports on education and upbringing are published by the Central Statistical Office. Those published since the school year 2005/2006 are available from the Centre’s website

⁹ The GUS report states that 39.7% male graduates of primary and vocational schools begun education at general secondary schools; the proportion of girls and boys changed significantly since mid – 1990s: in the school year 1995/1996, in general secondary schools there were 100 boys per 213 girls.

in the school year 2006/2007, in those schools there were 152 girls for 100 boys;

- About 1/3 of students of vocational schools were learning the profession of “metal worker, mechanic of machinery and equipment”. **According to GUS, the number of female students in vocational schools diminishes:** in the last school year they constituted about 28% of the total number of students (in the school year 2000/2001 – over 34%);
- **The number of female students in technical colleges diminishes** as well: at the moment, they constitute about 38.5% of the total number of students. In classes training “medium-level technical staff” over 90% of students were male; 63.5% women choose classes training “other specialities” (e.g. economy technician, administration technician, archive technician);
- In profiled secondary schools (not generally popular), women constitute over 56% of students. Out of the 15 existing profiles, over a half of students chose two: economy and administration (chosen more frequently by females), or information management (more popular with males). As far as other, less popular profiles are concerned, women constitute 85.4% of social work students, and men – 95.6% of mechatronic students.
- In primary and grammar schools for adults, the majority of students are male: in the school year 2006/2007, in primary schools there were 20 women for 100 men (a year before – 33 women), in grammar schools – 32 women (31 in the preceding year);
- In general secondary schools for adults there were 74 women for 100 men.

1.4. Teachers

Teaching is one of the most feminised professions in Poland. Data about the sex of people employed in education can be found in reports published by the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre. In the school year 2002/2003,

there were in total over 730 thousand teachers, of which over 570 thousand were women (about 78%)¹⁰. Of all the people employed in education, over 53 thousand occupied executive positions of different levels (headmasters and headmistresses, deputy head teachers etc.). Over 38 thousand of those were women (about 72%)¹¹. The report does not contain data, which would allow for a detailed analysis of which managerial posts, and in which level of schools were occupied by women.

According to a different report issued by NTTC, concerning teachers of mathematics and physics¹², women constitute 84.5% of maths teachers and 65.4% of physics teachers.

At the same time, the reports express the opinion that the number of male teachers increases along with the age of students and complexity of the material taught¹³. One can also encounter opinions that men in schools occupy a disproportionate number of managerial posts¹⁴.

Feminisation of the teaching profession does not mean that the school becomes a friendlier place for women. Research suggests that female teachers are not free from gender stereotypes, and often become “guardians of stereotypical values connected with masculinity, rather than creators of a female educational culture”¹⁵.

¹⁰ The PIRLS report for 2006 quotes that all the children participating in the research were taught by female teachers.

¹¹ “Nauczyciele w roku szkolnym 2002/2003”, NTTC, Warsaw 2003.

¹² “Nauczyciele matematyki i fizyki w roku szkolnym 2006/2007”, prepared by the Team for Analysis and Forecasting of Teaching Staff, NTTC, Warsaw 2007; the part about statistics aggregated according to sex begins with the sentence: “The teaching profession in Poland is dominated by the fair sex”. [sic!]

¹³ I. Chmura-Rutkowska „Getto nauczycielek – w pułapce stereotypu”. In: *Płeć i rodzaj w edukacji*, Łódź 2005, p. 113.

¹⁴ *Płeć i rodzaj w edukacji*, Łódź 2005, p. 6.

¹⁵ I. Chmura-Rutkowska „Getto nauczycielek – w pułapce stereotypu”. In: *Płeć i rodzaj w edukacji*, Łódź 2005. See also: E. Górnikowska-Zwolak „Nauczycielskie koncepcje ról społecznych kobiety i mężczyzny – czynnik wzmacniający czy osłabiający szanse rozwojowe dziewcząt i chłopców?”, *ibidem*, p. 85-91.

According to the text by Professor Małgorzata Fuszara, published in the on-line periodical uniGENDER, in education, as in several other professions, women encounter a “glass ceiling”, which prevents them from achieving the highest positions and occupying top posts. We are dealing with a pyramid, at the base of which there are many women, whilst at the top there are hardly any. In primary schools, women constitute a vast majority of employees (in 1997 – 84.6%), in secondary schools their number diminishes (65.8%), and in academic establishments the majority of teachers are male (35.6% are female, and 64.4% – male). A similar pyramid can be found among head teachers: about 70% of head teachers in primary schools are women, in secondary schools – 45-55%, and there are scarcely any women among people heading academic schools, particularly public ones¹⁶.

1.5. Exams and research

The reform of education introduced a system of external exams. Pupils are obliged to take:

- A test in the sixth form of primary school, examining the level of pupils' achievements in different areas (reading, writing, reasoning, using information, utilising knowledge in practice). The test cannot be failed – its value is informative, and results may influence general evaluation of a school, but not the situation of a particular pupil. Since 2003, the results are not revealed on the graduation certificate;
- A grammar school test is conducted in the third form of grammar school. It is obligatory. The achieved number of points does not influence graduation;

¹⁶ M. Fuszara. „Kobiety wobec uniwersyteckiej edukacji. Wypisy z historii i kilka uwag na temat współczesności”. In: uniGENDER 1/2006 (2) <http://www.unigender.org/?page=biezacy&issue=01&article=05>

it may, nonetheless, be taken into account during the recruitment process for secondary schools, and is often decisive for admission. Furthermore, aggregate test results influence evaluation of a school. Until now, the test consisted of two parts: humanities and science. Since the school year 2008/2009, pupils will sit a test in a foreign language as well.

As far as secondary schools are concerned, graduates of general and profiled schools, as well as technical colleges, take A-levels (exams evaluating general knowledge). Vocational schools and technical colleges take a vocational test, confirming professional qualifications in particular areas.

External exams are prepared by the Central Examination Board (CEB), which, along with Regional Boards, supervises organisation and course of the exams. Each year, CEB announces national test results. In addition, CEB, along with the Regional Boards, researches various aspects of the system of external exams.

More information about school achievements can be obtained from international research projects. At the moment, Poland participates in two major international projects: PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study)¹⁷ and PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)¹⁸.

The PISA tests allow for comparing results achieved by fifteen-year-olds in Poland with the results of students from other OECD countries. According to the research, girls in Poland coped better than boys with the tasks measuring the ability of comprehending

¹⁷ PIRLS is a research study conducted since 1991 on representative groups of ten year olds. At the moment, 40 countries participate in the programme. Poland joined the programme in 2004; in 2006 the research was conducted on a representative group of about 5500 pupils from 150 schools. A report from PIRLS 2006 was published in 2007. The programme in Poland is coordinated by the Central Examination Board.

¹⁸ The PISA has been organised since 1997 by the OECD. It concerns 15-year old students. The first PISA research study was conducted in Poland and worldwide in 2002, the second in 2003, and the next one in 2006. The PISA tests research three areas: reading and reasoning in humanities, mathematics and reasoning in natural science. The PISA programme in Poland is coordinated by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Science.

scientific problems (on average in OECD countries by 17 points, in Poland by 13 points), **and with reading** (an advantage of 40 points). **Boys were better in mathematics** (9 points), **in tasks involving scientific explanation of natural phenomena** (an advantage of 17 points)¹⁹, **as well as in natural sciences** (particularly in the knowledge discussed in Poland during the courses in physics, chemistry and technology)²⁰. As far as reasoning in natural sciences was concerned (in some OECD countries girls had an advantage in this field, in others – boys did), in Poland the difference of scores was three points in favour of boys, which, considering the scale used by PISA, and according to the authors of the report, is statistically insignificant²¹.

Grammar school exams have been organised since 2002; each year, CEB publishes information about their results on its website. The data has been aggregated according to sex since 2004.

Table: Average grammar school test results according to sex²²:

Year	Humanities		Science	
	Boys on average	Girls on average	Boys on average	Girls on average
2004	25,12 points (50,24%)	28,96 points (58,96%)	24,63 points (49,26%)	24,35 points (48,70%)
2005	31,58 points (63,16%)	34,84 points (69,68%)	24,40 points (48,80%)	24,11 points (48,22%)
2006	29,4 points (58,9%)	33,4 points (66,8%)	23,90 points (47,80%)	23,89 points (47,78%)
2007	29,39 points	33,62 points	25,77 points	24,83 points

¹⁹ „Program Międzynarodowej Oceny Umiejętności Uczniów OECD PISA. Wyniki badania 2006 w Polsce”, p. 22.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 24.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 22.

²² Individual CEB reports differ in precision. Some analyse only the general results, others contain a detailed analysis of results (including aggregation according to gender) for individual parts of the test, which allows not only for examining differences between girls and boys, but for determining in which part of the test those differences occurred.

As we can see, in **the state exam results, as well as in the PISA test results, the gender gap²³ is apparent. Boys systematically achieve lower results than girls in the humanities section – the difference is between 3 and 4 points.** In the science section, boys are slightly better; the differences here are far smaller (in 2006, the difference was 0.01 points).

Krzysztof Konarzewski, who has researched the system of external examinations in Poland²⁴, drew attention to the fact that test results differ from those forecast on the basis of coursework results. According to his research (concerning the results of the tests taken after 6 years of primary school and after grammar school), in external tests girls obtain lower results than those predicted on the basis of their coursework. The research also shows that the results of the external test after primary school are influenced predominantly by the socio-economic status of a pupil, as well as by his or her sex. Significance of those factors is neither constant, nor unequivocal. However, the general tendency observed by professor Konarzewski can be described as follows: “in external exams girls have a lesser advantage over boys [than in the case of their coursework results – A.D.], and offspring from higher social strata – a higher advantage over their peers from lower strata. (...) The results can be summed up by the following metonymy: during an external exam, a son of a doctor and a bank manager gains most, and a daughter of a cleaner and a janitor loses most”²⁵. Girls maintain their advantage over boys, nevertheless it is smaller than the advantage in coursework – particularly in the science part of the test²⁶.

²³ The term “gender gap” refers to systematically occurring differences in statistics regarding achievements of people of different sex.

²⁴ K. Konarzewski, „Czy egzaminy mają płeć?”. In: *Płeć i rodzaj w edukacji*, Łódź 2005.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

²⁶ Professor Konarzewski proposes the following hypothesis to explain the data: according to him, an external exam measures mostly the amount of knowledge and skills, regardless of the manner by which they were acquired. Coursework marks are more reflective of students' motivation, their “readiness to fulfil requirements of the school”. According to this hypothesis, girls are more motivated to learn and are more rewarded by the school (*ibidem*, p. 69).

A-levels

The data from the CEB reports concerning the A-levels look as follows:

- In the reports for 2005 and 2006, there is practically **no information about the sex of examined people**; the only exception is computing: the reports inform that in 2005, computing was chosen by 1.5% of all people taking the A-levels, and in 2006- by 0.8%. **In both years 3% of people taking the computing test were female.**
- In the report for 2007, the percentage of males and females taking the exam in various types of schools was revealed. CEB aggregated the choice of levels according to sex: the advanced level was chosen by 19.7% of women and 8.1% of men. (In the comments we can read: "Only partially can this proportion be explained by a higher number of women in general secondary schools.") The report informs about the choice of subjects by women and men in the obligatory part of the exam (the obligatory part of the A-levels consists of Polish language and literature, one foreign language and one subject of choice from the range defined by CEB).

Table: Subjects chosen by women and men in the obligatory part of the A-levels in May 2007

	Women	Men
Biology	29%	12%
Geography	22%	30%
History	12%	12%
Mathematics	12%	12%
Social sciences	18%	13%

- And finally, the report for 2008 presents proportions of male and female participants, as well as information about the number and results of people taking the A-levels, according to sex. In 2008, the A-levels were passed by 80% of women and 77% of men. A comment to the relevant table reads (rather surprisingly, concerning the lack of data about sex in the result reports from earlier years): **“As each year, women achieved better results than men, maintaining a 3% advantage.”**

A-level reports lack information about the results obtained by women and men. Were they available, comparing them would not be easy – firstly, because A-levels can be taken at two levels of advancement; secondly, because the rules concerning the exams have changed several times in the last few years. However, the enigmatic mention of a stable 3% advantage of girls illustrates that such data do exist somewhere. It would be good to have access to them in the form of easily and publicly available reports.

Even more precious would be precise information about the choice of A-level subjects. The report for 2006 does inform about the choice of the obligatory subject, according to sex; nevertheless its value is incomplete, since we do not know how women and men chose their supplementary subjects²⁷. The data concerning computing indicate that at least in the case of one subject (and not a very popular one) men feel much more confident.

Part of the rationale behind the system of external exams was the fact that their results provide data facilitating analysis of the educational system from different angles and in different dimensions. On that basis, the necessary directions for change can be determined. **The survey of A-level reports**

²⁷ An A-level consists of two parts: in the first, obligatory one, students sit an exam in Polish language and literature, a foreign language and one subject chosen by them from the list determined by CEB. Students must obtain positive results for this test in order to pass the exam. In addition, students can choose one, two or three subjects. The number, type and results of those exams influence chances of admission to the chosen university department (universities determine what exams and at what level should be taken by successful candidates).

shows, once again, that in thinking about education, gender issues are treated as a factor of little importance. The data are scarce, presented in a non-systematic manner, and official publications do not attempt any deeper analysis on their basis.

1.6. Conclusions

Official, publicly available data, both collected by GUS, and dispersed in CEB's reports, reveal areas of evident inequality in the system of education. Boys generally do worse during their exams (particularly in humanities – and not just in Poland), there are less of them in secondary schools of general profile, and – which is extremely unsettling – there are particularly many of them in special schools. **In other words, they seem more susceptible to failure and its adverse effects than girls.** At the same time, there is no research facilitating interpretation of these data, hence the reasons can only be speculated about.

In the science of education it is generally emphasised that teachers' expectations have a large influence upon students' achievements. This concerns expectations from individuals (e.g. connected with convictions about their abilities), as well as groups. Another important factor can be the influence of peer pressure, the values and convictions shared by students. Researchers emphasise that the school is a crossing point for different systems of socialisation: the "official" one, proposed by teachers, and the one resulting from peer pressure²⁸. Therefore, there are two possible paths towards solving the situation of girls and boys in Polish schools. Firstly, attitudes of children and young people of both

²⁸ See e.g. M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha „Nauczycielskie i uczniowskie przekazy socjalizacyjne związane z płcią”. In: *Płeć i rodzaj w edukacji*, pp. 53-62.

sexes towards the school and their possible influence upon achievement ought to be examined. Secondly, it would be worth researching, what, if any, is the possible influence of teachers' convictions about boys being "naughtier" than girls, upon the boys' underachievement²⁹.

The government "Report on Poland's Intellectual Capital" draws attention to those inequalities. The report's authors write, referring to both the PISA research and to the results of Polish exams, that "in most developed countries the manner of teaching is tailor-made for girls" (a sentence so general, that it is hard to decide, how to understand it). They emphasise that not satisfying special educational needs of children (which, according to British research, occur much more often in the case of boys) leads to their "actual discrimination"³⁰. **All this is not much for probably the only government document referring to differences in results achieved by boys and girls.**

The data concerning choice of secondary schools, as well as the test results, seem to suggest the existence of strong convictions about professions and jobs which "suit" women and men³¹ (let us remind – in profiled schools, women constitute 85.4% students of social work, and about 4% of mechatronics).

²⁹ See e.g.: R. Szczepanik, „Nauczyciele wobec zachowań szkolnych uczniów i uczennic starszych klas szkoły podstawowej”. In: *Płeć i rodzaj w edukacji*, pp. 93-107.

³⁰ Report on Poland's intellectual capital, p. 66.

³¹ This is confirmed by the research concerning teacher's convictions – see e.g. E. Górnikowska-Zwolak "Nauczycielskie koncepcje ról społecznych kobiety i mężczyzny – czynnik wzmacniający, czy osłabiający szanse rozwojowe dziewcząt i chłopców?". In: *Płeć i rodzaj w edukacji*, pp. 85-91. The author discusses results of a research conducted by one of her students on a group of female teachers from the Silesia region. The questionnaire contained questions about jobs suitable for women. The results were as follows: a teacher – 64% of positive answers (plus 10% for an educator); a doctor – 33% (particularly a paediatrician); a nurse – 28%; a cleaner – 16,7%, a preschool teacher, a housewife – 15,8% each; a shop assistant – 14,9%; a hairdresser – 13,2%, a secretary – 12,3%, an economist, a dressmaker, a cook – 11,4% each; midwife, divinity teacher – 10,5% each, lawyer – 7,9% (others: a psychologist, a journalist, an artist, a singer, a painter, a beautician – in total less than 10%).

Educational aspirations of girls seem high. At the same time, however – as indicated by reports on women in the job market (including women in academic schools) – their success at school does not necessarily translate into future professional success.

One could risk the following thesis: **the school expects particular behaviour from children – a different type of behavior from boys, and a different one from girls. At the same time, particularly at the earlier stages of education, it rewards mostly the types of behaviour associated with girls: diligence, obedience, broadly defined good behaviour³². In the final analysis, however, it is the “boys” characteristics – individuality, certain defiance and cleverness, which are “rewarded” in the grown-up world.**

³² In the introduction to the book *Płeć i Rodzaj w edukacji*, Mariola Chomczyńska – Rubachas writes: "The school is a place, where the polarised (masculine and feminine) values and systems intertwine and merge. The feminine values – obedience, submission, politeness – are appreciated, particularly at the initial stages of education; rivalry, achievement, domination become valued in the secondary school". p. 6.

2. Good practices

(a) The handbooks *Świat Człowieka* (The Human World) – humanist education for grammar schools [edited by Krystyna Starczewska, PWN, Warsaw 1999]

The grammar school handbooks *Świat Człowieka* (6 volumes – two for each year of teaching) were written by teachers from the Bednarska Schools in Warsaw, and edited by Krystyna Starczewska PhD. The publication is prepared in such a manner that it counteracts stereotypes on different levels, in order to sensitise young people to both living in a community, and to difference. Even if the authors could not find women in a particular period of history, they suggest intellectual exercises illustrating why this was the case. In the volume devoted to the Middle Ages, pupils can find a text about the life of women, and an instruction to look for an answer as to why they did not belong to the public sphere, and why women could not play the roles ascribed to men. This task usually leads to a discussion about the social roles not only in the middle ages, but today as well. Most material about women, their history and actions, including emancipation, can be found in the last two volumes written for the third form of the grammar school. The first of them contains an entire chapter devoted to the idea of women's equality, with quotes from a broad range of sources: historical (facts, law, morals), literary (Virginia Woolf and Eliza Orzeszkowa), and philosophical (John Stuart Mill). Young people can recognise the distinction between nature and culture, find out what changes in moral convictions and the law were necessary for women to start studying, working or voting. A separate sub-chapter is devoted to the history of suffrage, and on its margins there are numerous interesting facts about women in sports, human sexuality and education.

The last volume of *Świat Człowieka* contains as many as five anti-discrimination motives – the concept of human rights, the concept of rebellion (including the year 1968 and the hippie movement), the concept of fighting discrimination (including discrimination due to sex, race, sexual orientation and indication of other types of discrimination), the concepts of globalisation and environmental protection. This volume seems to be the most “courageous” one, as far as attitude towards equality is concerned. It encourages not only students, but teachers as well, to seek further and gain more knowledge about the subject. This is an “added value” of the publication – teachers can, often for the first time, learn more about women's presence in, or rather absence from the public sphere, about the division between sex and gender, and the accompanying relations of power between sexes.

Unfortunately, *Świat Człowieka* was withdrawn from school use, because it did not win renewed ministerial approval.

■ **(b) The publication *Równa Szkoła – edukacja wolna od dyskryminacji (Equal School – discrimination – free education)* [Dom Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej, Gliwice 2008]**

The objective of this textbook is to encourage teachers to critically reflect upon their methods of working with young people. Hence, it was designed as a compendium of knowledge, i.e. a **collection of information, advice, hints and exercises for teachers**, who would like to enrich their classes with the issues of gender equality and counteracting discrimination due to sex, as well as other factors – age, disability, sexual orientation, national and ethnic background etc. The textbook may facilitate preparation of separate classes, modules, programmes of equality education, but we would like the teachers to teach equality between girls and boys during other classes as well, e.g. by commenting on information and illustrations in textbooks which reproduce

stereotypes, or by treating both sexes fairly during PE classes. The handbook consists of six theoretical chapters and three chapters concerning methodology of practical classes concerning prevention of discrimination. The information is supplemented with a list of good practices in the area of anti-discrimination projects, as well as with a broad bibliography and a legal annex.

(c) The PREMA programme

In 2005, thanks to cooperation of seven partner institutions from different countries (including academic establishments) the PREMA project (Promoting Gender Equality in Maths Achievement) was created. The objective of the project is to “deepen the understanding of the factors that require attention in order to reduce the gender difference in mathematics”³³. Its starting point is the observed low attendance of women in maths departments of universities. A short, merely nine-page-long publication created as a part of the project shows how the data from tests can be easily and productively used and compared with data from other sources. The authors of the Polish version of the document summarising the programme’s actions draw attention to the fact that in Poland women are generally better educated than men, nevertheless they choose maths-related studies less often. Furthermore, the authors emphasise that, as far as Poland is concerned, the results achieved in maths tests by women do not vary enough from the men’s to be the main reason for such disproportion. “In the case of Poland, the historical and socio-cultural conditions seem to bear far more significance for the occurrence of those disproportions. [...] In practice, the situation of girls in the context of the educational practice is far

³³ The document: *Kształcenie matematyki z uwzględnieniem płci uczniów*,
(after: <http://prema.iacm.forth.gr/docs/guidelines/PREMA20Guidelines%20-%20Polish.pdf>) p. 4

less advantageous than the test results might indicate. The reason for this is the frequently stereotypical attitude of Polish maths teachers to the role of women in society³⁴. Referring to various research results, the document's authors draw attention to, for example:

- The public discourse, in which people “promoting a return to the traditional role of women in society”, denouncing feminism and treating women's aspirations to professional achievement as something contrary to nature, are still loudly heard;
- The manner of teaching at schools, often varying according to sex. The report emphasises that, for example, technology classes are often organised separately for boys and girls, with different teaching curricula. Boys do DIY and learn basic electrical skills, while girls sew and cook.

The Polish version of the document describing the operation of PREMA makes an interesting read; it indicates possible directions and methods of analysing the gender gap in education and discusses educational good practices facilitating its reduction.

(d) The Group of Sexual Educators Ponton www.ponton.org.pl

An informal volunteer group affiliated to the Federation for Women and Family Planning. Ponton's main activity is sexual education and counselling for young people on the subjects of adolescence, contraception and reproductive health; eradicating stereotypes about sex life, which are common among young people; helping youth reach people and places where they can obtain professional help for their problems.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 5.

■ **(e) WenDo – self-defence and assertiveness for grammar school girls www.wendo.org.pl; www.feminoteka.pl**

WenDo is a method of prevention of violence against women and girls, taught only by women and to women. The Feminoteka Foundation, thanks to grants from the Dutch Mama Cash Foundation, has been conducting a series of classes for grammar school girls, during which participants can learn to feel their own strength, improve their self-confidence and learn the methods of protecting their physical and psychological limits. Apart from this, girls can exercise self-defence techniques – punches, kicks and releases. The classes include substantial work with voice, body and posture. Another important element is cooperation and solidarity within the group, as well as violence-free communication.

■ **(f) The publication *Edukacja bez wykluczenia. ABC wsparcia dla dzieci z rodzin zagrożonych wykluczeniem społecznym. Informator dla nauczycielek i nauczycieli (Education Without Exclusion. ABC of support for children from families threatened with social exclusion. Guide book for teachers)* by Agnieszka Kaim and Agata Gugniwicz [published by the Przestrzenie Dialogu Foundation, Gdańsk 2007]**

The publication and the project are addressed to teachers, educators, trainers and other people working with children and young people. Its main objective is to stimulate public reflection about the situation of children from **non-traditional families** at school, provide educators with the basic knowledge about the subject and equip them with methods of coping with the most common problems resulting from prejudice towards different types of families. Another objective of the project is to prevent social exclusion by influencing the education processes, so that the widest possible group of children can feel confident in their peer group.

**(g) A controversial example in the context of gender education:
Social Programme “School without violence” initiated by two
publishing groups – Media Regionalne and Polskapresse – in 2006**

The objective of the programme is to prevent violence in Polish schools by raising awareness of the problem, changing attitudes towards violence and providing schools with concrete support and tools, which could effectively, and on a systemic level, counteract the phenomenon. Between April 2006 and August 2008, over 2000 texts were published in regional dailies, of which over a half were advice materials and presentations of good practices. The programme's website www.szkolabezprzemocy.pl, very extensive and legible, contains a lot of interesting information about how to cope with school violence, how to define it and who to turn to for help. There are separate sections for young people, teachers and parents. A vocabulary of terms explains the basic concepts connected with violence, there are class scenarios for lessons, a description of a talk with a sexually molested person and many other materials. The only problem – unfortunately a serious one – is that the website, and presumably the entire programme, completely ignores the issue of gender. Once again, we are dealing with a “child”, who has no gender, so regardless of whether they happen to be a girl or a boy, they are to be treated the same. Perhaps the programme “School without violence” could be equipped with “a pair of gender glasses” and translated into a neutral language, at the same time diversifying the proposed solutions depending on the sex of their addressee.

3. Conclusions

At the moment of its EU accession, Poland accepted the obligation to introduce gender mainstreaming into all areas of social and political life – there is no sign of fulfilment of this obligation as far as education is concerned. The EU law does not contain solutions providing for unification of education systems in member countries. However, it emphasises the importance and significance of education, its generality and availability, for the obtaining of equality between women and men in all areas of life.

The preamble to the Act on the System of Education reinforces the stereotypical view of both sexes, and can consequently lead to discriminative attitudes and behaviours towards women: *Education and upbringing ought to respect the Christian system of values*. This is the only regulation of religious character in the entire European Union³⁵. One can speculate about the type of consequences resulting from such a provision. There is a never-ending problem with sexual education for young people. The report merely mentions the issue, so in order to supplement it, the subject requires some elaboration.

According to the Act on Family Planning, the Polish school must “introduce the knowledge about human sex life, the principles of informed and responsible parenthood, the value of the family, life in its ante-natal form and methods and means of birth control.” Hence the presence of “education for living in the family” in the school curriculum from the fifth grade of primary school onwards. In practice, however, there are hardly any classes, because participation in them is not obligatory. Parents decide whether a child will attend the classes. This is a peculiar interpretation of the educational law, because parents have no say about any other teaching material.

³⁵ E. Górnikowska-Zwolak, *Polityka równego statusu kobiet i mężczyzn w unii europejskiej a równość płci w polskim systemie edukacyjnym*, available online: www.zjazdptp.dswe.wroc.pl/Gornikowska.doc

The quoted “respect for the Christian system of values” carries the commonly known consequences connected with introduction of divinity classes into schools. This happened as a result of pressure from the Catholic Church in 1990. Since the general situation in the country was difficult, the government was unwilling to risk conflict with the Church, and reluctantly succumbed to those demands. The subject was introduced to schools on the basis of the instruction of the minister of education on 30/08/1990. Both the manner of the subject’s introduction and the presence of divinity classes in public schools itself were considered illegal by many, but in 1991 the Constitutional Tribunal rejected a complaint from the Ombudswoman Ewa Łętowska, stating that the law had not been violated. Interestingly enough, the Tribunal did not see any contradiction with the prevailing regulations concerning education, which were introduced in the years of deep Communism (e.g. the act on the development of the system of education of 1961), when teaching religion in schools was inconceivable. Its defenders managed to prove that religion was not introduced to schools as institutions, but merely into school buildings.

In 1992, the minister of education issued a decree on conditions and organisation of divinity teaching in public preschools and schools. The then ombudsman Tadeusz Zieliński stated that this decree also broke several democratic rules, in particular the constitutional secularity of the state. His complaint to the Constitutional Tribunal in 1993 was rejected as well.

Teaching of religion in schools was finally approved by the Constitution of 2/04/1997, in particular by its article 53, paragraph 4: “Religion of a church, or another religious congregation permitted by the law, can be taught at schools, providing this does not violate the freedom of consciousness and religion of other people”. It might seem that the word “can” opens a possibility of taking the final decision by way of a legal act. Unfortunately, such interpretation is wrong – constitutionalists are of the opinion that such stipulation signifies merely,

that religion is not an obligatory subject. This means that potential withdrawal of religion from schools would require a change in the Constitution³⁶.

Equality policy should aim at "equalising educational chances for career and professional development of women and men, access to academic and postgraduate education, access to the same teaching programmes and exams, elimination of the traditional roles of women and men at all levels and in all forms of education, equal access to advanced technologies, equal chances in access to scholarships and grants facilitating learning and improving professional qualifications"³⁷. Apart from this, the equality goals in education should provide for inclusion into the mainstream of all marginalised groups: gays and lesbians, ethnic and national minorities, the disabled etc.

Furthermore, equality policy should draw attention to the fact that curricula (and the manner of their implementation) depend on gender. There is a need to raise awareness about the so-called "hidden curricula", both among the teaching staff, and the ministerial decision-makers. Attitudes of teachers should become an important issue, because they directly influence the attitudes of young people (whether pro-equality, or not). Hence the necessity of additional trainings, courses and workshops about equality for the teaching staff. Another aspect of equality policy ought to be the creation of independent research institutes and centres for gender studies. At the same time, the state should take responsibility (assumed, in fact, at the moment of Poland's EU accession) for promoting participation of women in science, and gradually increasing their representation in the academia. The last aspect is women's participation in education management. Due to the obligations resulting from the accession treaty, equality policy ought to aim at equalising the number of women and men

³⁶ One could therefore risk a theory that introducing religion into schools in 1990 by Henryk Samsonowicz was the first step in dismantling the secular school. See: the interview with professor Samsonowicz by Adam Leszczyński, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 28/06/2007.

³⁷ E. Górnikowska-Zwolak, op.cit.

at executive levels of education. Unfortunately, we are dealing with a classic pyramid – at the top (academic) level there are the fewest women, and at the lowest stages of education (preschools and primary schools) – very many. This is connected with feminisation of the teaching profession. Maintaining this state of affairs, combined with the lack of an informed policy capable of changing the status quo, lead to reproduction of stereotypical gender roles and confirmation of the thesis that only men occupy the positions of power. A separate problem is the total absence of homosexual people in education, and particularly in education authorities.

4. Recommendations:

1. The Polish system of education does not allow for aggregating research data according to sex³⁸, so the first recommendation is the introduction of such methods at the local and national level.
2. Education authorities ought to take into account the issue of equality between women and men in all their programmes and actions. They should inspire teachers to discuss topics related to gender equality at schools, and influence the public debate in order to prevent equality from being treated as a marginal and unimportant issue.
3. Teacher training programmes ought to include the broadly understood issues of emancipation and anti-discrimination. Teachers should be sensitised to problems connected with the stereotypical view of gender roles and to significance of teachers' convictions and expectations concerning pupils in the process of socialisation. Another important issue is the language used by teachers.
4. Creation of prophylactic programmes concerning prevention of violence (particularly domestic violence and school violence, with consideration for gender distribution), alcoholism and drug addiction. Programmes ought to be consulted with social partners: teachers, specialists in particular fields, non-governmental organisations.

³⁸ See: the official website of the ministry: <http://www.men.gov.pl>; the analysis and statistics section.

5. Changing the educational contents and textbooks, combined with a change of the language (to non-oppressive and gender neutral). Authors of curricula and textbooks, as well as publishers, ought to take into account the principles of equal treatment of women and men, and refrain from placing in their work any contents, which are discriminating due to sex, age, race, religion or sexual orientation. They should not reinforce stereotypes or preserve the traditional gender role division, which is detrimental to women and other disadvantaged groups. Textbooks should reflect the diversity of the social world, providing advice on how to cope with difference.

6. Creation of an apolitical gender equality competence centre, as a place for research, analysis and evaluation of curricula and textbooks³⁹.

³⁹ See: *Polityka równości płci, Polska 2007. RAPORT*, Warszawa 2008.

Education through the Prism of Gender. Aspects of Key Risks

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Aspekt, the Slovak Republic

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1. Introduction

This study is a contribution to long-term efforts to map and reflect upon gender discourse and gender relations in Slovakia. The inquiry into the issue of *gender equality* in various spheres of society should lay foundations for a more differentiated thinking about gender in society as well as for the formulation of recommendations for both short-term and long-term policy-making. This study, the tenth one from the series *Aspekty*, is one of the outcomes of a long-term cooperation of partner organisations from the Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, and Slovakia with the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Warsaw office. This year the common theme focused on gender aspects of education in the given countries.

Our material sketches out some facets of the overall situation in education in Slovakia from the gender perspective. It mainly reflects the work of NGOs in this field (since the official circles basically do not pay attention to this *problem*). Within the project ruzovyamodrysvet.sk (pinkandblueworld.sk) *Gender Sensitisation in the Educational Process at Elementary and Secondary Schools as Preparation for Future Job Desegregation* (Programme of the European EQUAL Community Initiative) in cooperation with the Institute for Public Affairs and the FOCUS agency, ASPEKT has carried out a gender research (based mostly on focus group interviews with teachers of both sexes) the findings of which were published in the book *The Teaching Profession. Aspects of Gender Equality in School*, and which was the first of its kind in Slovakia¹. It was also in part related to the publication *Equal Pay for Equal Work? Aspects of the Gender Pay Gap* published last year.

¹ The whole project focused on gender sensitisation of society, specifically on gender sensitive education and pedagogy as a possible tool of occupational gender desegregation. Further information on the project in English and the summary of this publication are available on the website www.pinkandblueworld.sk, the whole publication in Slovak is accessible on website of the project www.ruzovyamodrysvet.sk.

In the presented study we identify the situation of the main actors, i.e. teachers as one of the key risk factors in fostering gender equality in the heavily feminised education system. Especially in remuneration, the education system is an exemplification of gender-based inequality and injustice: on the one hand, it affects both women and men in this feminised profession (when compared with other sectors of the national economy), on the other hand it impacts specifically women, when compared with men working in education.

Given the limitations on the scope of the study as well as the lack of other gender research in education, we decided to pay attention to some key risks that, in our opinion, either contribute to the construction and reproduction of several gender inequalities in schools (be it on the part of students, teachers or teaching methods, curricula and the like), or even directly prevent an efficient implementation of gender sensitive pedagogy. In this summary we present the main findings of the research.

The education system and its conceptual model in the Slovak Republic

In the past years, the once state-run education system with a centrally organised management has undergone a significant decentralisation. The public administration reform of elementary and secondary schools in 2002 meant not only a shift away from the state administration but it also brought about change in the system of establishing, management and administration of schools and school facilities, including an important change in funding and ownership of schools. However, new authorities (district and regional governments) were not prepared to fulfil this task: “The achieved degree of application of democratic principles of governance is not adequate (in terms of professional and personnel quality, self-governance bodies, legal consciousness) which makes possible that various *individual, collective, regional, religious and other interests can influence the administration of education.*” (Pišút – Gregušová – Plesch – Šranková, 2002, p. 250)

Given the widespread acceptance of gender prejudices and stereotypes in society it can be assumed that among interests “influencing education” will also be the reinforcement and reproduction of the traditional gender order with its asymmetrical understanding of femininity and masculinity, and a hierarchical gender division of labour. The degree of knowledge, implementation and acceptance of the gender agenda (but also e.g. of the broader human rights agenda) has been rather problematic, especially in the field of education and schooling, and also at the level of central bodies, which have made a commitment to the gender equality agenda in relation to our EU membership. Therefore, the transfer of the gender equality issues

to lower levels of public administration is equally problematic. It can thus be expected that in this sphere it will be difficult to find competent regional actors. However, some opportunities for cooperation of NGOs and gender education experts with educational institutions at the regional level are opening up – also due to the fact that in this case a lengthy process of obtaining approval from distant central bodies will not have to take place.

The process of decentralisation also concerns colleges and universities². At present the education system in Slovakia is divided into two main groups:

- the regional school system of preschools, elementary school, secondary schools, schools for pupils with special learning needs, elementary art schools and language schools,
- colleges and universities (public, state and private).

Schools within the regional system are divided according to their establishing body and consist of church, private and state schools. Most schools are state, but the number of private, and especially church schools, has been growing³. Since 2002 the number of church elementary schools has increased from 94 to 112, the number of church-run secondary comprehensive schools has risen from 38 to 55, in 2007 church schools made up 5% of all elementary schools and 21.8% of all secondary comprehensive schools⁴. Decentralisation potentially creates more space for religious influences to reach also other types of schools at the regional level

² Colleges and universities provide education on the basis of accredited curricula in three levels and on the basis of the systems of credits. In Slovakia the law permits the establishing of public, state and private colleges and universities.

³ Church schools are defined by the *Agreement between the Slovak Republic and religious communities about religious education and schooling* and catholic schools (established by the diocese bishop's office), moreover also by the *Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See on catholic education and schooling*.

⁴ No colleges and universities are church-established, but there are public universities that either have the adjective "catholic" in their name (Catholic University in Ružomberok) or in their charter they declare the religious value orientation (University of Trnava).

(via religious education, school boards and the like). In addition to providing quality education and schooling, one of the goals of church and private schools and school facilities is to provide alternative education in terms of its contents, forms and methods. Beside others, these schools ensure the right of parents to freely choose a school for their children according to their conviction and conscience.

Given the fact that gender equality may not necessarily be compatible with the “conviction and conscience” of parents, but it corresponds with the civic principles of our state, tension arises between parents’ freedom of choice, on the one hand, and adherence to human rights of children, on the other. There is a reasonable assumption that church schools (mostly catholic) will not implement concepts of gender equality and gender sensitive education in their curricula. It is the Catholic Church which, in the current public discourse, is the most ardent advocate of traditional ideas about the role of men and women in the family and society. These worries are also corroborated by the existing practice in teaching of religious and ethical education in schools.

In 1998, the CEDAW Committee reprimanded Slovakia for the existence of gender stereotypical so-called schools for girls. Also this year’s CEDAW shadow report⁵ issued by NGOs underscored the risks related to these schools (which, among other tasks, prepare their students “for marriage”). Although between the years 2001/2002 and 2007/2008 the number of these schools has dropped from 53 (3 church schools) to 3 (0 church schools) and the new law on education abolished them completely, it is still possible that they continue under a less explicit name or with a less explicit curriculum.

⁵ CEDAW Shadow Report (*Tieňová správa pre Výbor pre odstránenie diskriminácie žien*) written by 8 Slovak NGOs. May 2008.

Education and schooling have undergone many changes – in the past 2 years 9 new conceptual models have been approved. As of May 2008 Slovakia has a new law on education (*Act No. 245/2008 on Education and Schooling*). According to this new law, education at elementary and secondary schools is free of charge, and freedom of choice of a school is guaranteed. The law defines, among other issues, the principle of equality of opportunity in education, ban on discrimination and segregation, and also mentions equality of women and men to be the fundamental principle of education and schooling⁶. Basic human rights as defined in Conventions⁷ are listed among the goals of education.

According to the new law (effective from 1 September 2008) education and schooling is based on new state and school curricula. *State Educational Programmes* define the obligatory content of the curriculum and are issued by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. They contain binding guidelines for the elaboration of the school educational program, drafting and evaluation of textbooks and evaluation of schools. *The School Educational Programme* is the main school document and is issued by the director of the school. It must be in line with the principles and goals defined by the law (this compatibility is verified by the State School Inspection)⁸. Elementary education is divided into two stages: *primary* (grades 1-5, the so called first level of elementary school) and *lower secondary* (grades 6-9, the second level of elementary school, i.e.

⁶ Article 3 Point j) speaks about the principle of “preparation for a responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding and tolerance, equality of women and men, brotherhood among nations, national and ethnic groups and religious tolerance” (Act No. 245/2008 Z.z.).

⁷ Article 4 Point g) reads: “to gain and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and principles” and point k) reads: “to obtain all information about the rights of children and skills for their application as defined by The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.”

⁸ It contains the goals of education and schooling, but also educational standards, curricula and guidelines and the like.

middle school). The law stipulates that compulsory school attendance is 10 years (from the age of 6 years, or 7 years in exceptional cases), but no longer than until 16 years of age. There are four types of secondary education: *lower vocational, vocational, comprehensive with a diploma and vocational with a diploma*⁹.

Although the new law mentions the “principle of equality of men and women,” the state educational programmes do not pay attention to gender equality or gender sensitive education. This begs a question: how are the principles declared in the law going to be implemented in concrete educational programmes? Given the current situation characterised by the absence of the gender perspective in education and lack of linkages between the gender and educational policies in Slovakia, there is a significant risk that the gender dimension will not be included in the new programs. Even if they, in some way, might reflect the proclaimed principle, it is likely that it will be rather superficial. Thus far, the entire gender equality agenda has been reduced to a general claim for equality of women and men and “locked” within certain “pertinent” subjects, such as civics, ethics, and the like. The above proclamation may become a springboard to deeper understanding of the issue, nevertheless much depends on the good will and interest of individual teachers, since the gender perspective is inadequately anchored within the system. And yet another issue is gender-sensitive pedagogy, which requires an approach reaching beyond the framework of simple “equality”. From the gender perspective, the most problematic subjects are religion (teaching of this subject is organised by churches, esp. the catholic church) and ethics as well as so-called education for marriage and parenting, because these subjects openly reproduce gender stereotypes. However, the hidden curriculum and

⁹ In addition to elementary and secondary education, the Act also recognises pre-primary and higher professional education.

approach of teachers to a large degree reinforce gender stereotypes regardless of the concrete subject¹⁰.

Slovakia is a country with large – and not only economic and social – regional differences, and the study OECD PISA also pointed to these differences in student achievement. Therefore, the currently implemented model could in fact jeopardise the principle of equal access to education. Several problems could be seen already in the past – for instance the inappropriate assignment of Roma children to special schools or issues related to individual integration of students with special learning needs into elementary schools¹¹. The decentralised system might threaten existence of schools in small localities and children might have to start travelling greater distances to attend school, which could cause problems for children from families with lower social or cultural capital. In the nearest future, it will be important to look at changes in the education system through the prism of gender analysis and to assess their impact. It should also be emphasised that, in general, there are many thus far unused opportunities to mainstream gender into education in Slovakia and also to study the education system from the gender perspective, since many data are still missing, including data on multiple disadvantages.

¹⁰ For a long time, feminist NGOs have been commenting on these risks, for instance in the *Opinion of the Members of the Expert Group for Education and Research, Gender Analysis and Statistics of the Coordination Committee for Women's Issues to the Framework Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See* (2001) and the *CEDAW Shadow Report* (2008). The respective chapter in the Shadow Report was elaborated by the feminist NGO Esfem, which also carried out research on gender stereotypes in sex education textbooks, officially called education for marriage and parenting. In the curriculum of other subjects gender stereotypes do not explicitly occur and the inquiry into the hidden curriculum and approaches of teachers has been thus far limited to some probes initiated by NGOs (ASPEKT, Centrum rodových štúdií, Esfem).

¹¹ The studies carried out thus far show that state financial subsidy per one integrated pupil has led to a race for these children when schools started to compete among themselves. However, due to the lack of qualified teachers and a high number of pupils per one class it is not possible to pay adequate attention to the needs of these pupils, which makes the whole process counterproductive. These facts were emphasized by E. Gallová-Kriglerová in her study entitled *The Impact of Measures for the Improvement of the Situation of Roma Children in Education* (2006). Also the findings of the research carried out by ASPEKT as part of the project pinkandblueworld.sk were similar (Filadelfiová 2008).

3. Education sector within the context of the national economy

3.1. General contexts – the overall labour market situation and relation to the private sphere

The mass entry of women into the world of paid employment in Slovakia happened in the context of the *ideal* visions about building of socialism. However, it should be emphasised that the world of labour fully opened itself up for women as a consequence of a *pragmatic* need for cheap labour. In the period of the rising second wave of the women's movement in the West, Slovak women did not have to fight separately as *women* to gain access to education and paid employment. Nevertheless, the degree of women's participation in the public sphere did not equally lead to changes in stereotypical division of labour between women and men in the private sphere. In many respects this did not happen in the gender division of labour in employment and other public positions either. These facts also influenced women's interest in civil society participation and activities¹² in an important way.

Neither before the year 1989 nor after did the entry of women into the public sphere bring them equal positions with men – be it in the labour

¹² Over a long time span, civil society participation of women has shifted from their various activities as members of clubs and associations before 1948, through strictly ideologically controlled activity of a single women's organisation (Socialist Union of Women) under communism, to a gradual self-understanding and rather hectic development of women's NGOs after the year 1989, but mostly since the 2nd half of the 1990s.

market or in politics. From the gender perspective, the Slovak labour market is characterised by long-term gender inequalities disadvantaging women. Data from 2007 show the following differences:

- economic activity rate of women is 17% lower than that of men (50.5% compared to 67.7%);
- more women than men – almost twice as many – are outside of the labour market (1,160,000 compared to 699,900);
- women's employment rate is 15% lower than that of men (53.1% compared to 68.4%);
- women's unemployment rate is 3% higher than that of men (12.5% compared to 9.8%);
- neither horizontal nor vertical gender labour market segregation has been decreasing, which means:
 - lower share of women in the business sector;
 - considerably higher share of women in services;
 - persistence of “female” and “male” occupations;
 - considerably lower share of women at higher positions and top management;
- women's income is lower than men's in more than one fourth, income in feminised occupations is the lowest;
- part-time work and other flexible types of work organisation are minimal in Slovakia (full-time employment and fixed working hours prevail), and it is mostly women who work part-time.

These gender differences persist in spite of the fact that women's level of education is equal or even higher than that of men. In the labour market, there are more women than men with complete high school education and even more women with college education. Although general education is perceived as an efficient tool of social development and as a powerful tool of emancipation, labour market participation and social mobility at the individual level, it is apparent that these rules do not apply equally to men and women. The

level of education obtained does not predict professional positions and hence the income of women and men in the same fashion. In the labour market, men are usually in a better position not only relative to other men and women with lower education, but also relative to women with the same or even higher level of education. For instance, when we look at remuneration from the perspective of statistical and research data – in the publication *Equal Pay for Equal Work? Aspects of Gender Pay Gap*, discussed mainly in the chapter *The Gender Gap*, we can see that “in Slovakia the growth of women’s educational level does not mean that the gender pay gap is decreasing. Statistical data indicate that even an opposite trend is taking place. The gender pay gap is the highest in the group with the highest level of attained education.” (Filadelfiová, 2007, p. 33)

Therefore, in the labour market educated women have a relative advantage only when compared to women with lower education. This fact is emphasised by Kateřina Lišková and Lucie Jarkovská in their study *Gender Aspects of Czech Education* (2008) and based on their comparison of the educational structure with statistical data on the labour market situation in the Czech Republic. They highlight that the expected “model (higher education = higher income) does not work equally for all social collectivities.” (p. 686), and that the so-called correlation hypothesis is not necessarily valid when it comes to gender (pp. 684-687).

Table: The Structure of Employed Women and Men in Slovakia by Education (1995-2007, in %)

		1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Elementary education	Women	13,7	9,1	8,3	7,3	6,5	6,5	6,0	6,1	5,6
	Men	8,7	5,1	4,5	4,2	3,9	3,9	3,5	3,5	3,6
Vocational training	Women	24,8	26,5	27,7	30,0	25,1	25,1	24,0	24,4	24,3
	Men	40,3	42,4	43,1	43,6	40,5	40,5	37,7	38,1	38,2
Secondary education	Women	5,9	3,2	2,4	2,0	1,7	1,7	2,2	2,2	2,3
	Men	8,6	4,9	3,1	2,6	2,7	2,7	2,8	2,7	2,8
Vocational training with a diploma	Women	2,3	3,3	3,7	3,8	4,0	4,0	3,7	3,8	3,8
	Men	3,9	5,8	5,8	5,9	6,1	6,1	6,4	6,4	6,3
Complete secondary comprehensive education	Women	5,8	7,4	7,0	6,2	6,4	6,4	6,5	6,4	6,1
	Men	2,7	3,6	3,2	2,8	2,8	2,8	2,7	2,8	2,9
Complete secondary technical education	Women	36,4	37,8	37,2	38,3	40,1	40,1	40,5	39,7	39,8
	Men	22,4	26,2	27,5	28,4	29,7	29,7	30,8	30,0	31,1
College education	Women	12,8	12,6	13,7	14,4	15,1	15,1	15,5	16,0	16,9
	Men	14,7	12,1	12,7	12,4	13,8	13,8	15,5	15,9	14,6

Source: *Statistical Yearbooks SR 1995 – 2004* (according to methodology used by Labour Force Survey). Bratislava, ŠÚ SR 1995 - 2004; *Slovstat*. Bratislava, ŠÚ SR 2008 (www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd).

The entry of women into the public sphere does not liberate them from the gender stereotypical perception of the private sphere as the primary area of women's responsibility. Compared to the year 1995¹³ little has changed in the real division of labour in the family and household:

¹³ The first relevant research data on this topic were published in the book *She and He in Slovakia* (data collected in 1995; published in 1996).

- It is women who interrupt their employment to take care of newborn babies (men only exceptionally take parental leave);
- Similarly, it is women who take leave from their employment to take care of their sick children;
- Men spend significantly less time on house chores and childcare (on average, per week, it is 16 hours less when a woman works outside the house);
- Stereotypical division of work into female and male still jobs persists;
- Marriage liberates men from doing housework, while, on the contrary, it increases women's housework;

At the same time, however, ideas about the division of labour in the family and household are visibly changing:

- Ideas about household division of labour do not correspond with the reality – both women and men think that partners should share housework in a more equal way than it happens in reality;
- Women are more supportive of the participatory model (equal sharing of housework by both partners), men prefer the traditional model (the main burden of housework lies on women);
- The difference in ideas about household division of labour is the biggest between young men and young women (people younger than 45 who entered adulthood or grew up after the revolution, and we can see that while women's ideas have changed, men's have remained at the same level) – young women want more of men's participation and equal sharing of household and family responsibilities.

A richer public discourse about women's rights and their position in society which started to develop in the 1990s, mainly due to activities of women's rights advocacy by NGOs¹⁴ and under the influence of the European Union¹⁵,

¹⁴ NGOs such as ASPEKT, Aliancia žien Slovenska, Pro Familia, Fenestra, Esfem, Možnosť voľby, Piata žena.

¹⁵ Even though in the accession process issues related to gender equality played only a marginal role.

has been reflected also in public opinion – between the years 2000 and 2007 the visibility of women's problems and their disadvantaged position considerably increased:

- Nowadays, most women, and also men, are aware of the disadvantaged position of women in both the public and the private sphere;
- Labour market inequalities – such as discrimination in hiring, income difference or general organisation of work that disadvantage women more than men, are ranked at the top of the scale of disadvantages;
- People in Slovakia are also aware of women's double burden by work and family responsibilities;
- Both women and men are aware of the problem of violence against women or of low representation of women in the public sphere and many others.

However, the higher visibility of women's problems is not automatically reflected in a higher sensitivity to the gendered structure of society – many stereotypes about women's and men's roles are still alive:

- Although women's housework load is in general seen as an important barrier to their position in the workplace and employment, and to their active participation in politics, real patterns of behaviour in the domestic sphere practically have not changed – gender division of labour and responsibilities is unequal and the main burden is still on women;
- Although the low participation of women in political decision-making is mostly perceived negatively, at the same time the role of women in politics is not regarded as very important;
- Although women's claims related to employment and politics are seen as valid, homemaking and motherhood are still seen as women's main domains.

3.2. Education is one of the most feminised sectors in Slovakia

When we look at education in the context of other sectors of the economy we can see that from the long-term perspective statistical data offer a stable picture: in Slovakia education is one of the most feminised sectors. The comparison of the proportion of women working in all sectors of the national economy in the past decade shows that the highest number of women worked in the education sector. In some years, the share of women in the education sector was either the highest or the second highest – after health care and social work.

Table: The share of women in particular sectors of the national economy (1997 and 2007, in %)

Sector	1997	2007
Agriculture and Forestry	30,6	27,1
Extraction of raw materials	14,0	5,6
Industry	41,3	37,7
Production and distribution of electricity, gas and water	14,5	18,2
Construction	8,7	7,9
Commerce	57,8	62,2
Hotels and Restaurants	66,2	66,3
Transport, warehousing, postal services and telecommunications	30,0	27,0
Financial brokering	73,9	67,3
Real estate	41,7	41,0
Public administration, defense	47,9	50,6
Education	80,6	79,3
Health care and social work	79,6	83,6
Other public services	49,0	51,6
Total	44,9	46,6

Source: Portal SLOVSTAT. ŠÚ SR, 2008 (www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd).

In 1997, women represented more than 80% of all employees in the education sector and in the past decade this number has changed only slightly. According to statistical data from 2007, the proportion of women working in education was 79.3%.

The degree of feminisation in the sector of education is one of the highest in the EU: only 7 countries have a higher share of women (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia), feminisation of education is in all other countries lower (the lowest percentage of women is in Malta 54.4%, Denmark 55.6%, the Netherlands 60.6% and Greece 60.8%, although even in these countries women make up more than a half of employees of the sector).

3.3. The education sector has one of the lowest average salaries

Another characteristic of our education is that for many years it has had one of the lowest average salaries when compared to other sectors, and little has changed during the past decade. In 1997, education ranked as the fourth lowest paying among 13 sectors, in 2007, it was the fifth lowest. While in 2007 the overall average salary in the economy of the Slovak Republic was 20,156 SKK, in education it was 16,632 SKK. Employees of only four other sectors had lower salaries: hotels and restaurants, agriculture and forestry, construction and other public services.

In the past decade (1997 – 2006), the salary in education decreased even more. In 1997 it constituted about 84% of the overall average salary in the national economy, but in 2007, it was only 82.6%. In Slovakia, remuneration in education is among the lowest and it shows no tendency of improvement. Although in the past decade the salary has increased almost twice, this growth has been slower than in other sectors (e.g. real estate, finances and insurance, transport and telecommunications and the like).

Table: The average salary by sectors and the share of salary in particular sectors in the overall average salary in the national economy (1997 and 2006, in SKK)

Sector of the Economy	Average salary in SKK		% of the overall average salary in the national economy	
	1997	2007	1997	2007
Agriculture and Forestry	7 363	15 766	79,8	78,2
Extraction of raw materials	10 485	22 219	113,6	110,3
Industry	9 197	20 024	99,7	99,4
Production and distribution of electricity, gas and water	12 212	29 769	132,4	147,8
Construction	9 970	15 561	108,1	77,2
Wholesale, retail, repairs	9 825	20 035	106,5	99,4
Hotels and Restaurants	7 743	15 045	83,9	74,7
Transport, warehousing, postal services and telecommunications	10 089	21 270	109,3	105,6
Finances and Insurance	17 886	40 871	193,9	202,9
Real estate	10 710	25 129	116,1	124,7
Public administration, defense, social security	11 240	25 637	121,8	127,2
Education	7 771	16 632	84,2	82,6
Healthcare and social work	8 373	17 540	90,7	87,1
Other public services	7 372	15 442	79,9	76,6
Total	9 226	20 146	100,0	100,0

Source: Portal SLOVSTAT. ŠÚ SR, 2007 (www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd).

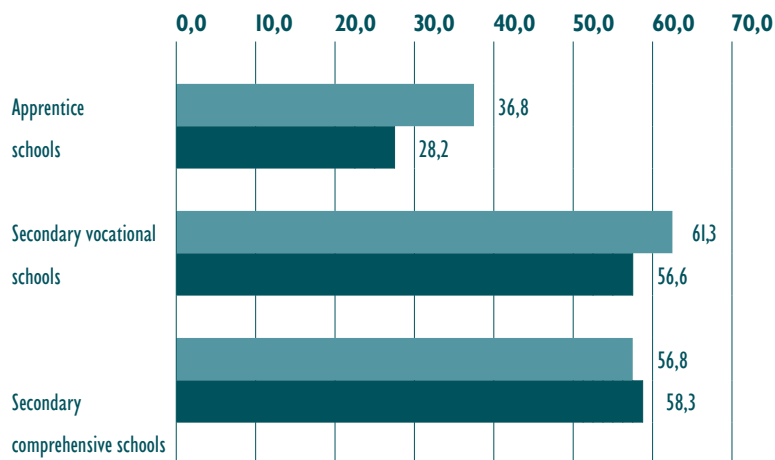
4. Gender differences and inequalities inside the education system

4.1. Gender difference in fields of study

In general, women in Slovakia choose different fields of study than men, and public policy pays only little attention to this fact¹⁶. The difference in the education between women and men is already inscribed in the gender difference in the choice of the type of secondary education: boys more often choose to attend vocational and apprentice training while girls choose diploma-track secondary programs. In 2006, the proportion of girls in apprenticeship was 28.2%, at vocational schools 56.6%, and at comprehensive (college-preparatory) secondary schools it was 58.3%. Compared to the year 2000, the share of girls at comprehensive secondary schools has increased, while their proportion at apprentice and vocational schools has decreased.

¹⁶ There is no targeted strategy and measures to support girls in their choice of technical and scientific fields of study, and boys in their choice of the social studies and humanities. In principle, thus far the only activity focusing on gender occupational segregation have been 2 EQUAL projects funded by the ESF and realized by NGOs (the project pinkandblueworld.sk was evaluated as good practice). Two research projects were directly supported by the EC (Sedová 2008, Píscová 2004).

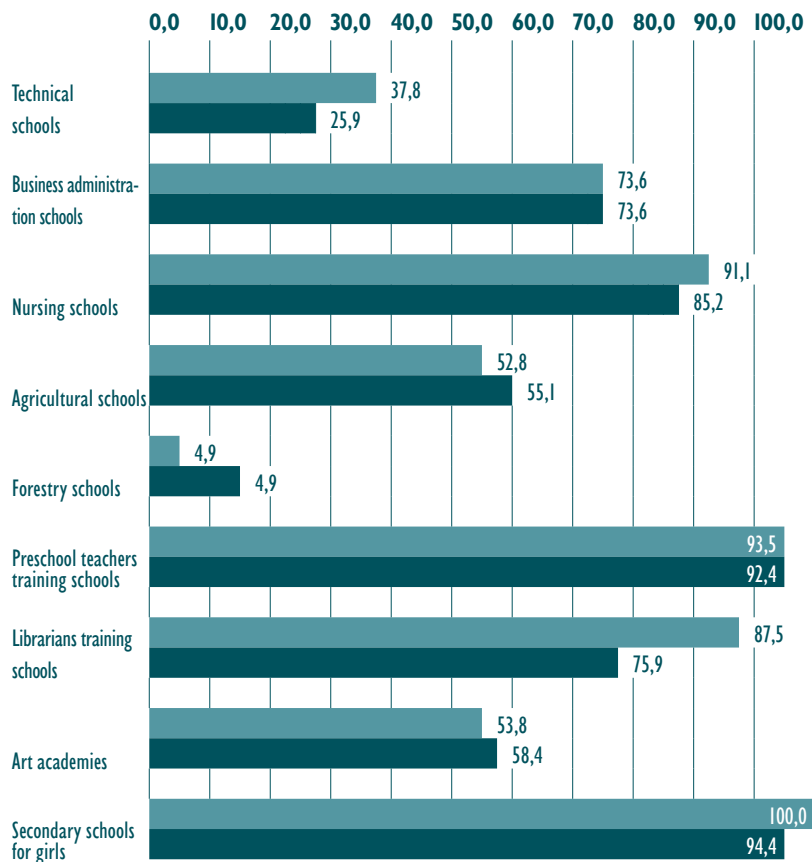
Table: Proportion of girls at secondary school according to the school type
 (2000 and 2006, v %)



Source: *Statistical Yearbook of the SR 2002 and 2007*. Bratislava, ŠÚ SR 2002 and 2007.

Study interests of girls differ from those of boys also within particular types of schools. With regards to vocational training, girls prefer professions like seamstresses, shop assistants, shoemakers, waitresses and cooks, while boys tend to choose technical fields and construction.

Table: Trends in proportion of women among regular students of secondary schools (1995 and 2006, in %)



Source: *Statistical Yearbook SR 1995 and 2007*. Bratislava, ŠÚ SR 1995 and 2007.

Study interests of boys and girls also differ at vocational schools: boys' interest in technical subjects is mirrored in their enrolment in technical and forestry schools (75% and 85% respectively); girls focus more on healthcare and education or business administration. The proportion of girls at secondary nursing schools has, for a long time, averaged at about 90%, at schools for

preschool teachers it is close to 100%. Girls are also a majority at schools for librarians and business administration schools. The number of male and female students is balanced only at agricultural schools and art academies; at other types of schools there is a prevalence of either boys or girls. The comparison of the structure of secondary students in the past decade shows that the study interests of male and female students are rather stable. The data do not show any significant trend of change in the study interests; on the contrary – the proportion of female students at technical schools has even dropped, although these schools best meet the needs of the changing labour market.

Table: Colleges and universities by type – proportion of female students (2000-2006, in %)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
All colleges and universities	49,0	49,7	50,5	51,0	51,6	53,4	54,7
1 Natural sciences	49,9	50,4	49,8	49,7	55,0	56,7	57,3
2 Technological sciences	27,3	27,3	26,6	25,6	24,7	24,2	23,7
3 Agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine	45,1	45,1	44,9	44,7	46,3	47,8	49,9
5 Medical and pharmaceutical sciences	65,6	67,9	72,9	75,0	77,5	79,1	80,4
6, 7 Social sciences	63,2	64,0	64,6	64,5	65,6	66,6	67,5
8 Humanities	55,0	59,3	59,6	59,0	58,1	59,4	60,3
9 Military and defense			51,2	48,6	39,9	40,1	42,2

Source: Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (<http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html>).

A similar gender difference can be seen at colleges and universities. The overall proportion of female college students slightly exceeds that of male students (54.7% in 2006), but their share varies according to the actual field of study. The largest gender difference can be seen at technical colleges, where female students make up about one fourth of the student population (with a

decreasing tendency). On the other hand, 60% of all students of the social sciences, humanities, medical and pharmaceutical sciences are women. At natural sciences colleges, the share of women is 57%. From 2000 to 2006, the proportion of women studying social sciences, humanities, art or medicine increased, while men strengthened their position in the technical fields of study. Over a long period of time, the interests of women in particular fields of study have been significantly different from the study interests of men.

4.2. Formation of different study interests of women and men

The gender difference in study interests is one of the key factors (and also consequences) of the existing gender segregation of the labour market – of course there is a whole plethora of factors at play here such as the structure of the economy, content of work, degree of automation, attitudes of employers, general gender stereotypes in society, and other.

The gender occupational asymmetry, manifested in both horizontal and vertical gender segregation, is complemented and reinforced by the asymmetrical stereotypical division of labour in the household. It is based on the idea of a total difference between women and men (femininity and masculinity) due to which the female and male spheres of activities should be complementary, but at the same time they exclude each other and stand at opposite poles. An important role is played by early childhood socialisation, influences coming from the family and other settings, the media and the overall representation of women and men in the given culture. Attitudes of teachers at all levels of education and schooling (from preschool to college) are also quite influential. What could be relatively easily, and from a short-term perspective, influenced by educational policy is concrete, institutionalised counseling on the choice of occupation (especially at elementary schools and secondary schools).

In Slovakia, no official institution has so far conducted relevant research on the presence of gender stereotypes at various types of schools, and their influence on teachers' perception of school achievement and behaviour of girls and boys. Overall, the gender perspective is only seldom applied in educational or sociological inquiry focusing on the educational process and system. Impulses for research in this field have been coming from NGOs or individual scholars; one of the first studies so far has been the qualitative research carried out within the project pinkandblueworld.sk (Filadelfiová 2008). The analysis of findings of focus group interviews with female teachers (4 groups) and male teachers (1 group) confirmed that despite widespread conviction among teachers about their equal approach towards both girls and boys, gender stereotypical ideas about male and female roles prevail in Slovakia. They influence and shape different behaviour of teachers towards boys and girls. This concerns the teaching style, channelling of interests of pupils or evaluation of reasons of their study successes or failures. These stereotypes are of course perpetuated when they are "confirmed" by children themselves in the style of the self-fulfilling prophecy, which is the most apparent in gender differences in study interests of pupils.

In this research, the starting point of the discussion about knowledge and skills of boys and girls were the findings of an international comparative study PISA from the year 2003¹⁷ according to which boys performed better in mathematics while girls did better in reading¹⁸. The interviewees were

¹⁷ PISA SK 2003 – The National Report. Štátny pedagogický ústav, Bratislava 2005. In 2006, another round of this research project was carried out and the findings showed that little had changed in terms differences between boys and girls in Slovakia – this difference had just slightly decreased. These research findings were also mentioned by the Research Institute of Pedagogy but the gender difference remained at the level of a statement, no concrete steps have been taken.

¹⁸ "In Slovakia, the findings show the biggest difference in performance (19 pts), the same as in Greece and similar to Italy (17 pts). Only Korea shows a bigger gender difference (23 pts)." The research showed that with regards to the higher interest of boy in mathematics, Slovakia is close to other OECD countries. Another important fact is that in reading literacy achievement Slovakia ranked last of all participating EU countries.

asked to speak about their own teaching experiences and to think about possible causes of this difference.

“With regards to math, I would say their performance is about the same, because girls catch up due to their hard work. But boys are smarter at math. Girls catch up with them because they study. So, the final effect is the same. (Female teacher, broader consensus).” (Filadelfiová 2008, p. 87) This statement of an elementary school teacher is an exemplification of the way in which teachers approach their pupils prevalent in the interviews: on the one hand there is a declared equality of approach and evaluation, but on the other hand the “same final effect” obscures the fact that the assumption that girls are *more diligent* (but *less smart*) while boys are *smarter* (but *lazier*) creates an asymmetrical basis for the formation of an interest in the given subject and learning styles, and from a longer-term perspective also for the future decisions about the choice of occupation. *Diligence* may not be sufficient for achieving succeed in the study at a technical college, while *laziness* compensated by *smartness* is often interpreted as a kind of an “Einstein’s effect.” The PISA research also showed that boys in Slovakia regard mathematics as more important for their future work than girls. Opinions about reasons for a greater inclination of boys to technical subjects and girls to humanities and languages were divided into two camps – “natural” causes vs. upbringing and traditional ideas.

Another impulse to speak about equal opportunities for girls and boys was also the discussion about the subject “technical education,” where girls are usually stereotypically assigned tasks like cooking, sawing, childcare, and boys are assigned to a workshop. Given the apparent gender bias of these subjects, it would be quite easy to come up with measures aiming at the principle of equality of opportunity. However, this is hindered by the conviction – prevalent also in the cited research – that it is sufficient to let the pupils choose freely what subject they want to take. What is missing is the reflection on conditions and circumstances under which this “free choice” actually takes place. The same can be said about occupational

choice counselling. Questions related to this issue revealed that teachers completely disregard gender aspects of this decision.

The research carried out within the frames of the project pinkandblueworld.sk confirmed, among others, that elementary school teachers do not reflect on the gender perspective when they deal with their pupils. It confirmed that the overall complete absence of the gender perspective in educational policy in many forms impacts gender relations in education, and in this case perpetuates gender stereotypes pertaining to the choice of the field of study and occupation.

5. Differences in the proportion of women and men in the teaching profession

Part 2 sketched out the situation of all employees in education irrespective of their position (including those who do not teach). Therefore, let us take a look at the particular situation inside the teaching profession and at different school types.

5.1. Women prevail at all types of schools

The table below shows the number of all teachers at different school types and the number of female teachers. In the school year 2007/2008, the total number of elementary school teachers was 30,449 of which 25,986 were women. Out of the total of 6,894 teachers at secondary comprehensive schools 5,126 were women, of the total of 6,376 at secondary vocational schools 4,562 were women, at secondary apprentice schools the number of female teachers was 1,637 out of the total of 2,568 and at colleges and universities it was 4,327 of female teachers of the total number of 9,986 teachers.

In the school year 2007/2008, at all school types there was 41,638 female teachers and 14,563 male teachers (together 56,200 people).

Table: Total numbers of teachers and number of female teachers at different types of schools (2000 – 2007, absolute numbers)

		2000	2005	2007	Difference between 2002 and 2007
	Total	39 745	34 914	30 449	- 9 296 (- 23,4)
Elementary schools	Women	33 246	29 388	25 986	- 7 260 (- 21,8)
Secondary comprehensive schools	Total	6 259	7 568	6 894	+ 637 (+ 9,2)
	Women	4 526	5 572	5 126	+ 600 (+ 11,7)
Secondary vocational schools	Total	9 882	7 869	6 376	- 3 506 (- 35,5)
	Women	6 858	5 437	4 562	- 2 296 (- 33,5)
Secondary apprentice schools	Total	5 805	3 254	2 589	- 3 216 (- 55,4)
	Women	3 857	2 095	1 637	- 2 220 (- 57,6)
	Total	9 535	10 795	9 892	+ 357 (+ 3,6)
Colleges and universities	Women	3 722	4 497	4 327	+ 555 (+ 12,8)

This table showing absolute numbers also indicates a relatively high decrease of the number of teachers at most types of school since 2000. The number of elementary school teachers has decreased by 23.4% and the number of teachers at secondary vocational schools has dropped by 35.5%. The biggest decline has taken place at **secondary apprentice schools** where the number of teachers has diminished by 55.4%. The number of teachers has grown at only two types of schools – **secondary comprehensive schools** (9.2%) and colleges and universities (3.6%).

The comparison of changes in the number of teachers at different school types also indicates another trend: with the exception of secondary apprentice schools the decrease in the number of female teachers was smaller than the overall total drop, i.e. fewer women than men left the system. At those types of schools where the number of all teachers increased (secondary comprehensive schools and colleges) the number of female teachers was higher than the number

of male teachers, i.e. more women than men came in. This difference indicates that since the year 2000 feminisation at all types of schools has deepened, as the following table showing the percentage of female teachers confirms:

Table: Proportion of female teachers out of all teachers by the school type (2000 – 2007, in %)

Type of school	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All elementary school	83,6	83,6	83,8	84,0	83,8	84,2	84,6	85,3
Elementary schools								
2nd level (middle school)	90,2	90,1	90,2	89,3	88,6	88,5	88,0	88,4
Secondary comprehensive schools								
	72,3	73,5	74,5	73,9	72,1	73,6	73,7	74,3
Secondary vocational schools	69,4	69,4	69,0	68,4	69,1	69,1	70,1	71,5
Secondary apprentice schools	66,4	66,6	63,8	64,1	64,6	64,4	62,8	63,2
Colleges and Universities	39,0	39,2	39,4	40,6	41,9	41,7	42,2	43,7

Source: Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (<http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html>).

In 2007, 85.3% of all elementary school teachers were women. Compared to the year 2000, this proportion has grown in 2% (feminisation is even more noticeable at the 1st level of elementary schools where in the 1st to 4th grades the number of women exceeded 88%). Women made up 74.3% of all teachers at secondary comprehensive schools, 71.5% of teachers at secondary vocational schools and 63.2% of teachers at secondary apprentice schools. From the perspective of a male-to-female ratio, all these school types belong to the category of feminised, since the proportion of their female teachers exceeds 60%. The only type of school with less than a half of female teachers is colleges and universities where the proportion of women was 43.7% in the last school year.

5.2. Proportion of female teachers varies according to the school type

A closer look at secondary schools and universities reveals that the proportion of women varies according to the type of school. Among secondary vocational schools, the share of women is the highest at schools of nursing, schools for librarians and schools for preschool teachers – about 80%.

The percentage of female teachers also reaches 80% at business administration schools; at secondary schools for girls and secondary comprehensive schools it is about 75%. There is a significantly lower share of women, but still about 60%, at agricultural schools, art academies and secondary technical schools. At forestry schools female teachers make up less than 30%.

Table: The proportion of female teachers by the type of secondary schools (2000 – 2007, in %)

Type of school	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Comprehensive schools	72,3	73,5	74,5	73,9	72,1	73,6	73,7	74,3
Technical schools	58,7	58,4	57,3	57,2	57,8	58,0	59,3	59,7
Business administration schools	80,0	79,9	80,5	79,9	80,0	79,6	79,6	81,2
Nursing schools	87,9	87,8	87,6	85,3	84,5	83,9	86,6	88,0
Agricultural schools	58,2	58,9	57,4	58,7	55,3	56,5	59,9	59,5
Forestry schools	24,7	27,0	26,8	28,4	28,0	28,6	29,7	28,3
Preschool teacher training schools	77,6	77,7	79,1	77,8	81,1	80,7	80,4	81,3
Art academies	57,6	61,3	58,9	58,5	60,9	58,9	59,8	59,8
Secondary schools for girls	80,3	79,8	79,9	76,4	76,2	82,5	75,4	80,0
Librarian training schools	92,9	93,3	93,3	100,0	100,0	93,5	82,8	80,8
Total	69,4	69,4	69,0	68,4	69,1	69,1	70,1	71,5

Source: Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (<http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html>).

Differences in the proportion of female teachers according to the type of study are visible also at universities. For many years the highest percentage of female lecturers has been present at faculties of economics (more than 50%) and, then, at liberal arts colleges (more than 40%); a lower number of female teachers work at faculties of agriculture (25%). At art and technical colleges the share of women is about one third.

Table: Female and male teachers at public universities and colleges in Slovakia by the type of study (situation of 31 October 2004)

Type of study	Total number	Women	Women	Men	Men	Women
	of teachers	N	%	N	%	%
Liberal arts	6 109	2 698	57,0	3 411	49,6	44,2
Technical	2 949	933	19,7	2 016	29,3	31,6
Economics	1 425	764	16,2	661	9,6	53,6
Agriculture	573	144	3,1	429	6,2	25,1
Arts	556	191	4,0	365	5,3	34,4
All public colleges and universities	11 612	4 730	100,0	6 882	100,0	40,7

Source: Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva, 2005.

These data attest to the fact that the proportion of female teachers is higher in the social sciences and humanities, and lower in the natural sciences and at technical colleges. This inner segregation (as well as overall labour market segregation) is, to a certain degree, an outcome of the different study interests of women and men in Slovakia, although there are certainly also some other factors at play here.

5.3. Gender differences at colleges and universities by teaching positions

When looking at gender differences in education we cannot omit the structure of the teaching bodies at colleges and universities. One rule applies here: the higher the position – the lower the share of women.

Table: Colleges and universities – teachers (2000-2007, in absolute numbers and %)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All teachers	9535	9910	10178	10365	10604	10795	10970	9897
Female teaches	3722	3884	4014	4205	4446	4497	4624	4327
Female teachers in %	39,0	39,2	39,4	40,6	41,9	41,7	42,2	43,7
All professors	938	1017	1088	1228	1398	1497	1568	1452
Female professors	67	105	100	141	196	270	300	299
in %	7,1	10,3	9,2	11,5	14,0	18,0	19,1	20,6
All associate professors	2441	2500	2456	2249	2243	2181	2249	2045
Female associate professors	655	685	704	679	730	708	763	727
in %	26,8	27,4	28,7	30,2	32,5	32,5	33,9	35,6
All lecturers	5412	5654	5823	6024	5992	6176	6223	5660
Female lecturers	2591	2725	2799	2956	2994	3043	3078	2900
in %	47,9	48,2	48,1	49,1	50,0	49,3	49,5	51,2
All other college and universities employees	744	739	811	864	970	941	930	735
Women	409	369	411	429	526	476	483	401
in %	55,0	49,9	50,7	49,7	54,2	50,6	51,9	54,6

Source: Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (<http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html>).

While in 2007 the average share of women at colleges and universities was 43.7% in the overall structure, this percentage differed by teaching position/degree. The share of female professors was less than 21%, at the position of associate professor there were 35.5% of women. The proportion of women exceeded 50% at lower teaching positions. So the trend is apparent – the higher the position, the lower the number of women. However, since 2000 there has been an observable positive trend: the number of women is increasing. The percentage of female associate professors has increased from 26.8% to 35.6%, and the percentage of female professors has grown from 7.1% to 20.6%.

5.4. Gender differences in management positions at colleges and universities

The same tendency can be observed when we look at the position of women and men in the management of colleges and universities¹⁹. There is only a small number of women at the highest management positions, and the topmost position so far accessible to women is the position of the bursar – where the proportion of women and men is equal – and that of the secretary, where women prevail. There is only a small proportion of women at other positions. Until 2006 Slovakia did not have a single female rector. In December 2006, the first female rector was elected to this position at a public university (Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica), additionally there are two appointed female rectors at private universities.

¹⁹ Gender disaggregated data on the number of male vs. female school headmasters and their deputies at lower level schools are not available.

Table: Proportion of women and men among dignitaries of public universities
(2004)

Public universities in the Slovak Republic		
Position	Men	Women
Rector	20	0
Vice-rector	56	17
Bursar	10	9
Dean	78	13
Vice-dean	219	88
Secretary	28	62
Total	411	189

Source: Website of the Ministry of Education SR (<http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?rootId=3>) and selected universities – situation as of 1 September 2004.

5.5. Gender pay gap in the education sector

Despite very low remuneration, the educational sector is not free of the gender pay gap. Women's remuneration in education lags behind that of their male colleagues. In 1996, women's income was 1,624 SKK lower than men's; in 2005 this difference was 4,311 SKK.²⁰ (Barošová 2006) Slovakia has one of the biggest pay gaps in the EU (there are only 2 countries where the difference is bigger – Cyprus and Estonia, Estonia also has the highest degree of feminisation,

²⁰ The stated figures include all women and men working in education. Available data are usually not gender disaggregated. These figures are quoted from a specific study by M. Barošová and the researcher calculated the gender difference from primary sources.

which can attest to a gender disadvantage of employees in education similar to Slovakia)²¹. Over time, there has been no tendency of a decrease in the gender pay gap in this sector. On the contrary, the gender pay gap has grown: in 1996, the gap was 18.5% in favour of men, while in 2005, women's income lagged behind men's by 22.1%. Although this gap is smaller than in other sectors or in the economy as whole, the difference of more than one fifth can still be regarded as big (see also Filadelfiová 2007).

Data on gender differences in the teaching profession presented in Part 3.2 show that the education system as a whole is marked by a severe gender segregation which, due to unequal valuation of "male" and "female" work, pushes education to the lowest ranks of the imaginary hierarchy of occupation. They also show that there are some other problems related to a pronounced horizontal (by the school type) and vertical (by the level in the system and position in management) segregation.

²¹ According to the newest Eurostat data, investments of the Slovak Republic into education are 4.3 % GNP – for instance in Denmark it is 6.7%, in Hungary 5.5 % and in Sweden 6.6 %.

6. Problems and characteristics of the teaching profession

The analysis of the teaching profession highlighted many problems related to the education sector. First of all, it is marked by feminisation and related low remuneration, lagging behind the average salary in the Slovak economy. An insight into the sector confirmed different degrees of feminisation varying by the type and specialisation of schools and persistence of several gender differences. The prevalence of women is highest at elementary schools; it is slightly lower at secondary schools, and at colleges and universities the proportion of women is less than a half. Relative to their overall number, women in the education system are underrepresented in managerial positions. The gender pay gap is also manifested within the education system. Due to organisational changes, the number of teachers is dropping. Education in Slovakia, in terms of its personnel, is growing older, which is related to the general demographic trend, but also to the fact that many young people do not go into teaching (most graduates of teacher colleges never even start teaching). Studies from the past years confirm the prevalent sentiments of teachers that their profession is undervalued and its social prestige is declining²².

²² This is confirmed by findings of the research study carried out by ASPEKT (Filadelfiová 2008) but also by other studies, for instance the publication of the Methodical Pedagogical Centre in Prešov *Profesijný rozvoj učiteľa* (2006) (Professional Development of the Teacher), or by analyses conducted by the Institute of Information and Prognosis in Education (ÚIPŠ) *Kvalifikovanosť pedagogických zamestnancov a odbornosť vyučovania v regionálnom školstve* (2001 a 2006) (The Qualification of Teachers and the Quality of Teaching in the Regional School System). The ÚIPŠ analysis from the year 2006 identified these types of problems: unclear professional status and identity of teachers, aging of teachers, feminisation of the profession, lack of qualified teachers and their unequal level of qualification in different regions, low attractiveness of

One part of this study deals with the teaching profession as a public policy issue. It reflects on problems in gender equality policy, employment and education and schooling. As their comparison reveals, there is almost no correspondence between these policies. Although two strategic documents on gender equality²³ mention the labour market, they do not contain clearly formulated priorities or measures. The issue of labour market segregation became, for the first time, part of policy goals through the *National Action Plan of Employment 2002-2006*. However, this document contained little more than the principles formulated in the Lisbon Strategy transferred to the national level; the proposed measures remained formalistic and they did not correspond to the stated goals. So far, the dismantling of gender segregation of the labour market has never been a serious public policy goal in Slovakia.

Formally, a lot of attention is paid to the teaching profession as such. Thus far, each Memorandum of the Government has declared its importance for the society, mentioned its problems and commitment to improvement. Nevertheless, the *Concept of the Professional Development of Teachers in the Career System*, the first project which aims to confront the problems of teachers by improving their professional qualifications, was only approved in April 2007.²⁴

the teaching profession and inadequate quality of the human resources management strategy in the sector. It should be noted that, in spite of the emphasised feminisation of the profession, this analysis uses only the masculinum to speak about all teachers, which also attests to the absence of the gender perspective in education research.

²³ New priorities for the coming period will be part of the National Strategy of Gender Equality (in preparation).

²⁴ The document declares compliance with the National Program of Education and Schooling SR for the coming 15-20 years, with the Lisbon Strategy, the Copenhagen Declaration and Memorandum on Life-long Learning. Its main goal is "the improvement of professional competencies and qualities of teachers" and "adequate valuation of their work taking into account the need to adequately recognise their work and bestow prestige upon the teaching profession". Among the principles of the *Conception* are: the right and duty of teachers to develop their professional competencies, freedom to choose a career path, responsibility of the state and establishing body of the school for professional growth of teachers, linkages between their professional development with their career and remuneration, multiple sources of funding for teachers' education and equal chances of

Given the fact that the teaching profession, especially at lower levels of schools, is understood as some “extension” of women’s gender role in childcare, the question of “professionalisation” is related to deeper issues connected with the status of women and men, gender division of labour, and valuation of “female” and “male” work in society. However, the *Conception* contains no gender perspective. It sketches out a career path developing in a linear fashion, and hence more in line with the “male” rather than “female” work biography. There is a danger that this will not resolve problems related to feminisation (more precisely: gender-based problems) of this profession and improve the situation of women, but that it will simply suppress feminisation by giving more advantages to the already advantaged men. It can be reasonably assumed that the selection of offered career paths will not adhere to the principle of gender equality. It seems that in many respects the teaching profession reinforces the stereotypical gender division of labour – also in the private sphere. For instance, the research carried out by ASPEKT (Filadelfiová 2008) showed that both public opinion and teachers themselves regard the possibility of work-life balance arrangements as one of the few real advantages of their profession. At the same time, this means that it is expected that female teachers will play a larger role in their homes, which could – if no special measures are taken – preclude their adequate career advancement. From the perspective of the presence of gender stereotypes in society, it is symptomatic that male teachers perceived the possibility of balancing their professional and private duties as an advantage only for their female colleagues and not for themselves. This, but also other moments (for instance the persistent perception of men as breadwinners), indicate that the gender bias in the teaching profession reinforces gender stereotypes of teachers – in relation to themselves and to their students.

all categories of teachers. The document introduces a 4-tiered career system (beginning teacher, teacher, teacher with the first attestation, and teacher with the second attestation) and the option to choose between 3 career paths (maintenance of standard competencies, acquiring of expert competencies and acquiring of specialised or management competencies).

7. Conclusions

In our study on key problems of gender equality and gender-sensitive pedagogy in the education system in Slovakia we mentioned not only risks but also possibilities to address. For instance, we arrived at the conclusion that one of the key risks is the lack of attention paid by the official circles (Ministry of Education, research institutions, education institutions) to these issues in a well-informed, systematic and continuous fashion, and that the education system is rather strictly hierarchically organised. On the other hand, it is true that these issues are being dealt with by NGOs and individual experts who have initiated various activities directly in the school setting (a pilot project at an elementary school, cooperation with methodical centres, training and lectures for teachers, courses on gender sensitive education for students of teachers' colleges and the like). These resources can be used in the future, but this would require cooperation on the basis of partnership, not just the "utilisation" of know-how.

We came to the conclusion that the **biggest shortcomings are related to the absence of better and consistent interconnection between gender and education policies**, and this concerns both gender-sensitive pedagogy and the situation of the key actors – teachers. If the ascertained problems and characteristics of the teaching profession are not reflected and resolved from the gender perspective, gender equality and gender sensitivity in school will remain illusionary.

8. Recommendations²⁵

1. Systematic interconnectedness of gender and educational policies in terms of their content, form, institutional support and implementation at the national and regional levels. It is necessary to develop gender policies as cutting across sectors as it is important to interlink them with other social policies such as the employment policy.
2. Consistent, non-formalistic and concrete steps aiming at implementation of EU policy and international human rights commitments.
3. Strengthening of the social status of the teaching profession in a gender-sensitive and equitable manner.
4. Creation of an institutional background and tools:
 - Strengthening and development of the cross-sectoral dimension of the existing Department of Gender Equality and Equality of Opportunity at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, or creation of a new body with a cross-sectoral jurisdiction and institutional support of the gender agenda also in cooperation with the Government Council for Gender Equality and its committees (development of possibilities of evaluation and monitoring e.g., through gender audit).
 - Creation and strengthening of mechanisms of gender mainstreaming in schooling and education and monitoring of their implementation.

²⁵ Since this year's chapter for the CEDAW Shadow Report was elaborated by the NGO EsFem, therefore we also adopt recommendations from the Report. The first recommendations focused specifically on the CEDAW: to ensure consequent observance of Articles 5 and 10 and include information about CEDAW into human rights education at all levels of schools.

- Creation of the Department of Gender Equality at the Ministry of Education.
- Support for cooperation between and among public administration bodies and state institutions (e.g. the State Institute of Pedagogy, Methodical Centres, Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education) in the area of gender-sensitive education and gender equality in general and NGOs on the basis of partnership i.e. also with financial participation of NGOs.

5. Creation of content:

- Exploration of possibilities of introduction of a concrete gender equality and gender sensitivity dimension to existing and planned official documents.
- Gradual (top-down) introduction of gender sensitive language in official documents and working materials; creation of basic rules and recommendations of its usage. The presence of gender-sensitive language contributes to visibility of gender issues.
- Support for and development of gender research in general and gender analyses of education in particular (e.g. the analysis of particular steps of implementation of the reform from the gender perspective, analyses of curricula, textbooks and the like).
- Support for publication and dissemination of study literature and materials on gender-sensitive education; support for various forms of promotion of gender-sensitive education²⁶.

²⁶ For instance, parts of the project pinkandblueworld.sk is a web portal or gender sensitive theater productions for children and grown-ups.

- Support for creation of gender sensitive teaching methods for working with textbooks and other teaching aids that are often marked by gender asymmetry and stereotypes.
- Inclusion of information about contribution of women to science, art, culture and human history into curricula in ways that make it an integral part of education as a whole and not just its “separate” chapter.
- Inclusion of gender-sensitive pedagogy into curricula at teachers’ colleges and overall improvement of the quality of both undergraduate and graduate education at these colleges.
- Inclusion of gender-sensitive pedagogy into further education of teachers in the form of long-term education, not just short-term measures.

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Complete list of references is added to the Slovak version of this study.

Gender-Sensitive Education in Ukraine: Achievements, Gaps and Challenges

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1. Introduction

In contemporary society, gender equality is one of the decisive factors of good governance, social security, sustainable development, empowering civil society and strengthening democracy.

During the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), Ukraine made a commitment to institute gender equality in all spheres of social life. Nowadays, Ukraine has a strong legal framework which guarantees the equality of women and men. Considerable progress has also been made in the establishment of institutional mechanisms ensuring gender equality. However, in everyday life, gender equality has not taken effect as yet – in practice, women and men do not have equal rights. The persisting low level of participation of women in the decision-making process, high level of segregation on the labour market, violence against women, the high mortality rate of men, society's bias against men doing housework or carrying out their duties in children's upbringing – all show the existence of gender inequality in society.

Despite significant changes which occurred in the social roles performed by women and men in contemporary society, patriarchal gender stereotypes still dominate in Ukraine. The existence of these stereotypes is one of the factors which hinder the further development of democracy in which all citizens – women and men – would take equal part in the economy, decision-making and in social, cultural and public life.

Bearing this in mind, we can say that gender-sensitive education at all levels of the educational process plays a crucial role in the creation of civil gender-sensitive awareness and attitudes as well as in changing the gender stereotypes of society. It is also known that gender-sensitive education is an instrument of gender socialisation of an individual.

International consensus about the priorities of education emphasises the importance of reaching gender justice in this sector. The Millennium Development

Goals emphasise the importance of reaching a two fold objective:

1. gender parity: achieving equal participation of girls and boys in all forms of education, relative to the different age groups; 2) gender equality: ensuring the equality of girls and boys in the learning process, ensuring gender equality within the system of education, within the teaching profession (gender equality in employment), in curricula and training courses (norms and values transmitted in the learning process) as well as in engaging parents in the educational process.
2. We can characterise this two-fold objective as *quantitative* and *qualitative* respectively. In order to evaluate the progress in the domain of gender-sensitive education, it is necessary to carry out both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis. Attaining gender parity is only one step towards gender equality in education. The existence of an education system with an equal proportion of boys and girls does not entail automatically that education will be based on the principle of gender equality. Gender approach in education should include: the right to education (access and participation), as well as rights in the educational process (gender-sensitive environment, process and results) and rights acquired through education (good educational results, which link gender-sensitive education with the broader processes of gender justice).

Since 1995 gender-sensitive education has significantly developed in Ukraine. The aim of this report is to study the degree of development of gender-sensitive education in Ukraine and to demonstrate its achievements, gaps and challenges. The report is based both on quantitative and qualitative indicators. The quantitative assessment of the level of development of gender-sensitive education includes statistical data on the Gender Parity Index (GPI) among students of educational establishments in Ukraine, data on gender segregation of teaching professionals in pre-school establishments, schools and higher education establishments, a list

of courses offered at Ukrainian universities and information about projects carried out by non-governmental organisations.

The qualitative assessment of the level of development of gender-sensitive education includes an analysis of the current concept of gender-sensitive education in Ukraine, a content-analysis of textbooks used in primary and secondary schools, as well as the results of expert interviews carried out among scientists, researchers, officials responsible for introducing gender-sensitive education in the country because of their posts, lecturers of higher education establishments and teachers of general education schools.

The report presents conclusions about the obstacles which hinder the establishment of effective gender-sensitive education, as well as recommendations for the further development of gender-sensitive education in Ukraine.

Education system in Ukraine

The system of educational establishments in Ukraine consists of: 1) pre-school establishments; 2) general education establishments, of the first degree (primary schools); 3) general education establishments of the second degree (lower secondary schools); 4) general education establishments of the third degree (upper secondary schools); 5) vocational-technical establishments; 6) higher education establishments.

According to the status of higher education establishments four levels of accreditation were distinguished: I – vocational schools, II – colleges and other establishments of a corresponding level, III and IV – academies, universities, institutes, conservatories.

Higher education establishments prepare specialists with the following degrees:

- Junior Specialist – awarded by vocational schools and other higher education establishments of the I level of accreditation;
- Bachelor – awarded by colleges, and other higher education establishments of the II-IV level of accreditation;
- Specialist, Master – awarded by higher education establishments of the III-IV level accreditation.

3. The question of gender parity in the Ukrainian education system

The problem of gender-sensitive education is an urgent public issue in Ukraine, widely discussed in scientific and general publications. However, the Ukrainian society cannot increase its awareness of the changes in gender relations with full speed, because there is no appropriate system of acquiring knowledge in this matter. It is precisely for this reason that teaching methods and technologies which take the gender component into account become especially important when it comes to personality formation. Education based on the gender approach helps to form egalitarian awareness of future citizens, supports the implementation of the principle of equal rights and opportunities, whereas patriarchal thinking slows down the development of society, lowers its dynamics and negatively influences personality formation¹.

We should distinguish the scope of gender parity and gender equality. Gender parity is concerned with ensuring equal participation of girls and boys in all forms of education, based on their representation rate in different age groups. The right to education is one of the fundamental human rights. And it requires equal access to quality education for all.

Gender parity is essential but it is not sufficient. Gender equality is a more complex notion, and therefore it is more difficult to measure it. Fully-developed gender equality in the domain of education involves not only boys

¹ Kobylianska L.S. "Gender-sensitive education in Ukraine: reality and prospects II" Educational Issues. Volume of Science and Methodology (2004), Issue 36, p.4

and girls having equal opportunities in obtaining education, but also ensuring the equality of girls and boys in the educational process, equality within the system of education, within the access to the teaching profession (equality in employment) and in engaging parents in the educational process.

To analyse the issue of gender parity we use the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the students of Ukrainian educational establishments of different levels, as presented by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine in 2008.

The Gender Parity Index shows the proportion of boys and girls enrolled at school (the numerical concept of GPI).

Parity is a purely numerical concept. Achieving gender parity in education means that the same proportion of boys and girls relative to their age groups are included in the education system and fully participate in this system. Parity is measured by the ratio of the number of female to male students.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is widely used to evaluate gender differences. The Gender Parity Index is calculated as the ratio of female-to-male values of a given indicator.

$$\text{GPI} = \frac{\text{value of an indicator for girls}}{\text{value of an indicator for boys}}$$

The GPI value of less than unity indicates an advantage in favour of boys. The GPI value close to the unity implies that parity has been partially achieved. It is sometimes considered that parity has been achieved if the GPI falls between 0.97 and 1.03. The GPI of more than unity indicates an advantage in favour of girls.

Therefore, the analysis of the table prepared by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine brings us to the following conclusions about gender parity in Ukrainian education.

From the 2000/2001 to the 2006/2007 academic year there has been a drop in the GPI in pre-school education in Ukraine from 0.922 to 0.916 in favour of the participation of boys.

The indicators in the primary education show greater parity, but still there has been a change in favour of boys from 0.950 to 0.949 between 2000/2001 and 2006/2007.

The value of the GPI at the level of lower secondary education is higher. However, between the 2000/2001 and 2006/2007 academic years there has been a slight drop in favour of boys as well (from 0.956 to 0.953).

Starting with the upper secondary education, the situation is completely opposite: in the 2000/2001 academic year the GPI value was 0.920 but in 2006/2007 it increased to as high as 1.123. This, in turn, shows that girls are more numerous in this part of the education path.

As far as higher education in Ukraine is concerned, the Gender Parity Index with some slight fluctuations shows that girls were more numerous at all levels in 2006/2007.

Gender parity itself was reached only at the second level of higher education in the 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 academic years.

The change in the GPI among the students in favour of girls is a sign of gender inversion, which is going to have its consequences: such a tendency can also have a negative character.

The Gender Parity Index among students at different levels was calculated on the basis of statistical data published by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine in its annual reports.

4. The question of gender equality in the Ukrainian education system

4.1. Ensuring the equality of girls and boys in the process of learning

The conducted studies² demonstrate a lack of gender approach in teaching, show that the principle of gender justice in the educational process in secondary schools is not observed and that the teaching staff, in general, in Ukraine has the possibility to implement (but does not do so) the state policy of ensuring gender equality in society by an educational process which is properly organised in this direction.

The remaining indications of stereotypes rooted at schools are: dividing boys and girls during the classes of Physical Education and Design and Technology; lack of a gender component in curricula and textbooks; teachers' treating children not simply as students, but as boys and girls.

In the context of gender socialisation issues, what we find particularly interesting is the return to the practice of obtaining secondary education in educational establishments where boys and girls study separately. Does this fact not sustain the widely held belief that there are some fundamental differences between the psychology of men and women, their behaviour and the role in life for them? On the other hand, can anyone be sure that co-education sustains

² Hubina S. L. *Including gender approach as a warrant of quality educational process in general education establishments.* www.intkonf.org/category/arhiv/prostir-i-chas-suchasnoyi-nauki-25-27-kvitnya-2007roku/pedagogika

gender equality and creates a proper base for further interpersonal contacts between children?

The question of the gender approach in education can be considered to be the least developed in the research on Ukrainian teachers. We also have to take into account that the education system remains very conservative and is not very willing to adopt gender novelties. At the current stage of development of Ukrainian education we have to learn not only to clearly differentiate between the particularities of gender and gender-role approach in education, but also understand early enough the effectiveness of gender-sensitive education and its utmost importance for full and harmonious development both of individuals and of the whole society.

4.2. Gender equality within education system and in the access to the teaching profession

The analysis of statistical data on teachers in pre-school education demonstrates the overwhelming dominance of women in this field³.

- Total number of educators in pre-school establishments at the end of 2007 – 131 693, of which 129 942 are women, constituting 98.67%.
- Total number of educators in pre-school establishments in towns and cities at the end of 2007 – 104 747, of which 104 256 are women, constituting 99.53%.
- Total number of educators in pre-school establishments in the countryside at the end of 2007 – 26 946, of which 25 692 are women, constituting 95.35%.

³ *Pre-school establishments in Ukraine in 2007. Statistical report.* State Statistics Committee of Ukraine. Kyiv 2008.

We can therefore notice that in the system of pre-school education there is gender inequality in the composition of the teaching staff in favour of women.

Unfortunately, no current data on gender segregation of teaching professionals at schools and higher education establishments are available. We can only quote some general data. As of September 1, 2002, women accounted for 80% of staff in general education schools (up to 100% of female staff among Ukrainian Language and Literature, History, Chemistry and Biology teachers, 75% of women among school headmasters, up to 80% among deputy headmasters), 70% in vocational technical schools, 66% in profiled extra-scholastic establishments (clubs of regional tourism, technical science, natural ecology, artistic creativity, stations of young naturalists, art schools etc.)⁴.

In higher education establishments the structure of career hierarchy is an example of a male model of management and dominance of men. A great majority of managerial positions in higher educational establishments are held by men, although in general, the education system in Ukraine is sufficiently feminised. In higher educational establishments like in a mirror we can see the actual male dominance as the basis of gender culture of the society.

The feminisation of the teaching profession is a complex socio-pedagogical issue which has not been sufficiently analysed. It has a significant impact on the character of functioning and development of education system and, consequently, on the whole society. Other psychological and pedagogical aspects of this problem which have not been sufficiently studied are: the feminisation of teaching staff and students accepting the female model of behaviour as the dominant one; the feminisation of the teaching process; gender-role specificity of the psychological climate created among

⁴ Stakhnevych A. I. *Participation of women in building civil society in Ukraine (the 90s of 20th century - beginning of the 21st century)*. Author's abstract for the Candidate of Sciences thesis in History. <http://www.lib.ua-ru.net/inode/17966.html>

the teaching staff; the specificity of conflicts and their resolution resulting from the feminisation of education system etc.

Recently, the structure of teaching staff has undergone some changes with respect to the age of teachers. The proportion of teachers up to 30 years old and from 31 to 40 years old has dropped. They account for 22.7% and 27.5% of the general number of teachers respectively. The proportion of teachers from 41 to 50 years old has not changed and amounts to 26.5 %. The proportion of teachers from 51 to 55 and above 55 years old has increased to some extent and amounts to 11.3% and 12%, respectively. These data were published by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in an informational-analytical survey for the Second All-Ukrainian Congress of Educational Specialists (2001).

The aging of the teaching staff is a source of a series of problems which influence the effectiveness of teaching as well as the introduction of gender-sensitive education at schools. The more so if we take into account that a significant part of young teachers abandon the sector of education. According to a study by Razumkov Centre (April 2002), almost one third of the students of pedagogical institutes do not intend to be teachers after graduation: 26 % of them stated this is highly unlikely, 5.5% that they definitely are not going to work in the teaching profession. Moreover, one fifth of them (19.5%) still have not made their decision. Only less than one third of students (30.5%) consider working as a teacher to be their vocation⁵. The new generation of specialists does not seem to find pedagogical work attractive or prestigious.

The rise in the proportion of teachers in Ukraine with more than 20 years of work experience raises the problem of priorities in pedagogical activity connected with outdated psychological, pedagogical and methodological knowledge. The teachers of this age group – their proportion amounts to

⁵ *The Education System in Ukraine: Current Situation and Prospects of Development*. Analytical Study by Razumkov Centre // National Security and Defence. 2002, N^o 4, p. 46.

almost 40% – gained their professional education under the ideology of a totalitarian state⁶. There is no doubt as to the fact that this category of teachers is not gender-sensitive.

4.3. Ensuring gender equality in educational curricula, textbooks and the process of learning

In Ukraine there is no consensus among students, teachers and other stakeholders about how to understand gender-sensitive education. There are very different concepts in literature: some researchers understand gender-sensitive education as a different approach to teaching boys and girls, others as gender-role education, still others as sexual education etc.

Indeed, one researcher holds the opinion that gender-sensitive education should take care of the following tasks in the socialisation process: teaching institutional values, norms and principles of cross-sex communication to young people; constructing physical identity; presenting the particularities of female and male psychology⁷.

In our opinion, however, the objective of gender-sensitive education should be to make young people familiar with modern gender values and stereotypes in the educational process. Unfortunately, the stereotypes of traditional society, incompatible with the needs of modern society, are still widespread in Ukraine. But the lives and social roles of women and men are changing more quickly than stereotypes formed in the past. The contemporary society no longer needs such a sharp division of roles in the

⁶ L. Pukhovska. *The Course of Education*, 2004, N^o 1. <http://pleyady.kiev.ua/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=129>

⁷ V. Kravets. *Gender Pedagogy*. Termopil: Dzhura, 2003, p. 174.

domain of production and housekeeping as existed in traditional society. Nowadays, men and women mutually exchange social roles. And the social roles should be harmonised, men and women should be able to exchange their roles and learn from one another. The ideal of modern society is the freedom of personal development. Traditional stereotypes should not impede the process of personal fulfilment. Society in turn should create an appropriate environment in which neither women nor men are hampered by stereotypes in their choice of ways and spheres of self-realisation.

“The direction of the gendered society in the new century and the new millennium is not for women and men to become increasingly *similar*, but for them to become more *equal*. For those traits and behaviours heretofore labelled as masculine and feminine – competence and compassion, ambition and affection – to be accepted as distinctly human qualities, accessible to both women and men who are grown-up enough to claim them. It suggests a form of gender proteanism – a temperamental and psychological flexibility, the ability to adapt to one’s environment with a full range of emotions and abilities. (...) Such a transformation does not require that men and women become more like each other, but, rather, more deeply and fully themselves”⁸.

According to the specialists in the sociology of education, pedagogy and culturology, a *hidden curriculum* can be found at schools. This term can be defined as a system of metacommunication practices which constitute a means of control. This means that education is race-, class-, and undoubtedly, gender-stereotyped. The low level of gender awareness in Ukraine can be explained by historical factors: the communist ideal of the USSR times declared (and nothing more!) the equality of women and men and repressed any kind of gender difference. Since 1991 the Ukrainian society has been undergoing a complex process of transformation, the sphere of gender equality included.

⁸ Micheal S. Kimmel. *The Gendered Society*. Oxford University Press US, 2004, p. 293.

Gender bias can be an important factor both in family life and in education. Gender stereotypes abound in behaviour, pictures, books, textbooks and TV programmes, which constitute the main components of the hidden curriculum.

In order to analyse the evolution of views on gender issues, we can quote a content-analysis of "Bukvar" (ABC book) and textbooks for 2nd-4th classes of primary school: "Matematyka", "Ridna Mova", "Chytanka" and "Ya i Ukraina"⁹. The image of the mother starts to play a leading role in the textbooks. In "Bukvar" it is presented 92 times. As can be seen in "Bukvar" (Lutsyuk, Prots', Savshak, Lviv 2004), the country is identified with mother ("Ukraine – our only mother"), and the mother teaches the native language ("Ukrainian language as a mother tongue"). The mother is a sensible guardian of moral principles. Often the mother is shown as a weak woman, who worked a lot and has fallen ill. And although her image is positive, the researchers V. Haydenko and I. Predborska ask if it is reasonable to make the mother ill in order to feel sorry for her afterwards. The feeling of pity itself makes a child perceive another individual as less important. And while the figure of the mother dominates in "Bukvar", the figure of the father appears only 16 times (Pryshchepa, Kolesnichenko, Kyiv 2003). "Bukvar" does not specify if the father takes part in the process of upbringing.

Even if male activity is underrepresented in the textbook, it is still considered important for the family, while women deal with everyday work (in "Bukvar" "mum and sister are putting aprons on", whereas "dad bought a computer for the whole family"). In the "Ridna Mova" and "Chytanka" textbooks for 2nd-4th classes of primary school mother remains the leading central figure, however, as children grow up, figures of men become more and more numerous.

⁹ V. Haydenko, I. Predborska. *Ukrainian Primary School Textbooks: the Hidden Curriculum and Gender Stereotypes // Gender Pedagogy*. Khrestomatia. Textbook. Sumy: University Book. 2006, p.223-238.

The lives of men are presented as socially important: they build houses and plant trees. Men work as doctors or scientists. Girls continue to carry out traditional roles and duties: they give flowers to boys-astronauts, or are waiting for boys returning from long journeys. In textbooks women are nannies, seamstresses, hair dressers – they work in professions which do not require higher education.

Gender stereotypes can be also found in mathematics textbooks. Even in the texts of exercises we can find stereotypical female everyday tasks: making marinades and dumplings, baking cakes, feeding fowl – all of which women perform not for self-realisation but for someone else. So in the mathematics textbook for 3rd class the mother gathers 26 cucumbers (p. 24), two sisters make 24 dumplings (p. 64), two groups of girls bake cookies and a landlady keeps 208 fowl.

The content-analysis shows **that Ukrainian textbooks for primary schools are gender-stereotyped**. Gender differences are emphasised both in scientific (mathematics textbooks) and humanistic subjects (“Ridna Mova”, “Chytanka”, “Ya i Ukraina”).

Since childhood, the female child is oriented at emotional and expressive kinds of activity, important for the family and the household, whereas the male child – at instrumental and social activity. This in turn forms the basis for the appearance of discrimination in different spheres of life, especially in the sphere of education.

In stories and pictures, boys and men are presented as active figures, even if it means being mischievous: they let in a snake, mend a bike, plant a tree, annoy a rooster etc. Women and girls usually only accompany the activity of the “stronger” sex: they hold the trees planted by boys, watch their actions, talk about them. Girls usually have to do with a certain set of circumstances, with activities that happened without their will and participation. Men and boys are presented as energetic and active, whereas women and girls as passive, dependent and taken care of by someone else.

The ratio of the frequency with which men (boys) and women (girls) appear in the texts, titles and illustrations in traditional and egalitarian (partner) roles shows a slight but visible tendency towards changes in gender relations. Instead of the stereotype – he is active, she is serving – we find them performing similar activities: a female student uses the computer just as her male peer. A girl, just like a boy, plants a tree, no longer only helping to hold it, etc.

The preference for stereotypical kinds of activities can also be found in the text of mathematical exercises and illustrations for primary schools (Bohdanovych M. V. *Matematyka: Textbook for the 1st class. 3rd edition, revised* – Kyiv: Osvita 2007, 160 pp.), where the division into male and female spheres of activity remains unchanged (at least in 15% of instructions for maths exercises for the 1st class; 30% for the 2nd, 22% for the 3rd and 28% for the 4th).

Let us emphasise that even when authors want to maintain a balance while presenting the sexes (K. Z. Huz, V. R. Ilchenko, S.I. Sobakar *Me and Ukraine. The environment. Textbook for the 1st class. Poltava: Dovkillya 2007*), they continue to picture boys as active in discovering the social space and girls as those who follow them.

The textbooks are firm in presenting the idea that household duties are performed by the female sex (in 1:2 ratio). A similar hidden curriculum, as shown by psychological and pedagogical research, can be noticed at all levels of secondary education.

However, we can also record some shifts in the perception of gender positions of the representatives of both sexes. And so, especially, in the "Pervotsvit" textbook for the 1st class, written by two women, the authors consciously try to avoid stereotypical roles of men and women.

The secondary school textbooks allow more space for male roles both in the illustrations and in the texts. Gender analysis of school textbooks for science, biology and humanistic subjects led the researchers to the conclusion that they were compiled without consideration for gender balance (N. Horodnova, S. Vykhor). The number of male figures is particularly dominant in Ukrainian

literature textbooks: 70% in the 5th class; 74% in the 6th class, 65% in the 7th class; 79% in the 8th class; 76% in the 9th class; while for the female figures the numbers are: 23% in the 5th class; 26% in the 6th class; 35% in the 7th class; 21% in the 8th class; 28% in the 9th class.

Female figures inspire the feeling of pity or contempt in the students, whereas male heroes can be the object of admiration, pride, indignation or hatred. Male readers have a wide choice of heroes to identify with, whereas girls have no such choice. The resulting data on division of gender roles lead to the conclusion that among the textbooks analysed there are none which present appealing images of women, or a balanced ratio of representatives of both sexes.

The proportion of male and female figures in the Ukrainian language textbooks for 5th-9th class is as follows: pictures of men and boys – up to 98 %, of women and girls – up to 37%; in the text materials – up to 77% of men and boys, and up to 35% of women and girls (N. Horodnova 2006).

P. Frolov (2001), a Ukrainian psychologist, considers textbooks to be a pool of gender models of individuals, a “theatre” of gender relations and gender strategies and emphasises that authors should vividly realise what changes in attitudes can be brought about by suggested texts and how interaction with the surrounding world may depend on what is stressed or promoted in the textbook. For example, in the textbook entitled “World History” for the 9th class just 4% of illustrations show women (Queen Victoria). All of the rest show men – famous people or imaginary characters. The majority of men are presented in military uniforms or with the attributes of power (N. Horodnova 2006).

History textbooks for lower and upper secondary schools include hidden gender asymmetry, perpetuate stereotypes about the dominating role of men in the structures of politics and power and diminish the role of women in the historical process. Men are pictured or mentioned in the texts several tens of times more often than women, which demonstrates the lack of gender balance.

It can be, therefore, seen that in everyday practice of school education in Ukraine patriarchal gender stereotypes are taking roots because of elements of covert or overt gender discrimination. An overt form of discrimination is the existence of separate school programmes taught exclusively to boys or girls. In Ukrainian schools this is typical of Physical Education and Design and Technology classes. Girls are traditionally taught to carry out household duties, such as cooking or sewing, while boys learn carpentry and metalwork. A covert form of discrimination is the presence of gender stereotypes in school textbooks and other didactic materials, as well as their transmission through the teacher's behaviour during classes.

Gender methodology is a new methodology in education. The emergence of gender-sensitive education methodology is linked with the growing contradiction between patriarchal stereotypes perpetuated in the interaction of sexes and real transformations of gender relations in contemporary Ukrainian society.

Gender-sensitive education allows individuals to develop an egalitarian consciousness in the system of socio-cultural interrelations based on the parity principle. It is gender-sensitive education that helps to root out biodeterministic views on the essence of the "female" and "male" and to study the character of gender role stereotypes¹⁰.

¹⁰ O. Tsukor, I. Ivanova. *The Basics of Gender-sensitive education*. A textbook for the headmaster: Pleyady 2007, N^o 10, p. 34-47

4.4. Gender-sensitive education in the Ukrainian education system

Systemic gender-sensitive education in Ukraine is absent from pre-school establishments and from general education establishments. In some pre-school establishments for children, teachers-enthusiasts try to include the gender approach in the educational process. However, very often, because of their lack of professionalism they help create, reinforce and perpetuate patriarchal stereotypes.

Ukraine has adopted the State Programme of Strengthening Gender Equality in Ukrainian Society for the period up to 2010.

So far out of all the educational events for general education establishments planned within the State Programme of Strengthening Gender Equality only two have been carried out: a Gender Awareness Class was held in the general education establishments in September 10, 2007, and in November a competition of papers on gender-related issues was conducted among the students of 10th and 11th classes as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students. We have not obtained any information as to the quality of the class and the competition.

The situation concerning gender-sensitive education is much better when it comes to the higher education system. Sensitivity to issues of gender started to develop at the end of the 20th century and began to gain concrete forms in the first years of the 21st century. A significant number of books and textbooks on gender-sensitive education issues have been published over the last years.

The first course in gender-related issues was approved by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine in 1993. And ten years later – the UNDP Gender in Development Programme became a comprehensive project within which a whole series of programmes was elaborated to be introduced into the Ukrainian education system.

In the first half of the 90s of the past century Kharkiv and Odesa Centres for Gender Studies were for a long time the main centres of gender-sensitive education in Ukraine. They were later joined by Sumy Gender Centre, the National University of Lviv, Mykolaiv State University, the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and other higher education establishments.

In 1999 the UNDP started to carry out the project "Gender-Sensitive Education", which included the elaboration of educational programmes and methodological textbooks with a gender component. The project envisaged not only the creation of new programmes and textbooks, but first of all a gender analysis of the existing traditional programmes and textbooks. For example, a study of the curricula of the humanities at the Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University was carried out within the project.

In order to activate gender-sensitive education in higher education, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine with the financial support of Canada-Ukraine Gender Fund carried out a nationwide competition of teaching curricula on gender-related issues in spring 2004 (the Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine of March 15, 2004). The objective of the competition was to establish a degree of gender-related knowledge in higher education establishments in Ukraine, share the experience of elaborating teaching curricula on gender-related issues, provide a scientific-methodological evaluation of these taking into consideration the contemporary scientific and methodological requirements as to the level of gender knowledge. The best works were compiled into a *Reader (Khrestomatia)*, which provides methodological recommendations on the structure and content of the curricula on gender-related issues. *The Reader of Teaching Curricula of Gender Development*¹¹ constitutes an important step in the development of gender-sensitive education. The *Reader's* uniqueness lies in the fact that it compiles

¹¹ *Khrestomatia navchalnykh program gendernoho rozvytku*. Kyiv: Floriant 2004, 386 pp.

published teaching curricula of a broad gender spectrum and undoubtedly plays an essential role in gender-sensitive education.

Courses on gender-related issues are taught in many higher education establishments in Ukraine. The Department of Sociology of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy offers the following courses on the subject:

- Introduction to Gender Studies;
- Gender Issues in Sweden;
- Gender and Economics;
- Gender and Politics;
- International Human Rights Protection and Gender Dimension;
- Gender and Visual Culture;
- Masculinity and Male Studies.

Karazin Kharkiv National University offers the following courses in this field:

- Sociology of Gender;
- Gender, Class and Ethnos in Political Behaviour;
- Gender Inequality;
- Gender Structure of Contemporary Society;
- Gender Aspects of Communication;
- Linguistic Gender Studies;
- Gender in Cyberspace;
- Gender Issues in Philosophy;
- Philosophy of Feminism;
- Gender in Contemporary Philosophy;
- Introduction to Gender Studies;
- gender modules within the course in Philosophical Anthropology;
- gender modules within the course in the History of Philosophical Psychology;
- Sex and Culture;
- Gender Studies in Psychology;

- Gender and the Mass Media;
- Introduction to Gender Linguistics;
- Feminist Theory of Visual Studies within the course of Visual Studies;
- Sociology of the Body;
- Gender Studies in Ancient/Archaic Culture.

The Zukovsky National Aerospace University "Kharkiv Aviation Institute" offers the following courses on gender-related issues:

- Gender Modules within the course of Philosophy of Contemporary Education.

The National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" offers the following courses on gender-related issues:

- Gender Aspects of Economic Development of Society;
- Gender as a Factor of Social Differentiation.

Courses on gender-related issues are also offered in Petro Mohyla Mykolayiv State University of Humanities, in Zhytomyr State University, in Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukrainian Catholic University of Lviv, National Academy of Management of Kyiv, Chernivtsi National University, Karazin Kharkiv National University, Volhyn Lesya Ukrainka State University and others.

However, simply conducting theoretical courses on gender-related issues is not enough to overcome patriarchal gender stereotypes present in society. What is important for the analysis of gender-sensitive education is firstly that educational institutions reflect the gender stratification of society and culture in general, and are themselves an example of the unequal status of women and men. Women usually hold the positions of lecturers, secretaries and other staff, whereas men are school headmasters and university rectors. Secondly, educational institutions do not only provide, but also restrict career opportunities. Students can notice on the examples of those who teach them every day that men are in the management while women perform services. In addition, different subjects and fields are clearly identified by the students with the sex of the lecturer. This in turn determines the choice of profession depending on the

sex. Thirdly, the stereotypical image of men as normal, active and successful, and women as invisible, marginal, passive and dependent – is still reflected in the teaching process at the level of secondary and higher education¹².

The Ministry of Ukraine for Family, Youth and Sport is currently preparing a state report on gender-sensitive education. On September 24, 2008, the Working Group for the preparation and writing of the State Report “Gender-Sensitive Education and Promotion in Ukraine” held a meeting during which the mechanism and methodology of writing the report were considered, a preliminary timeline was set and the project discussed. The Working Group also discussed the draft questionnaires “About Gender-Sensitive Education” which are to be distributed at schools and higher education establishments.

¹² Smolar L.O. "Progress and Prospects of Female and Gender Studies in Ukraine". Education Issues. Scientific-Methodological Review. 2004, Issue 36, p. 29.

The role of non-governmental organisations in gender- sensitive education

The active agents of civil society (NGOs protecting human rights, especially of women and men, informational-educational centres, centres for gender studies) are trying to bridge the gap in gender-sensitive education.

The website of the Ukrainian Women's Fund lists information about 140 Ukrainian women's NGOs. At least 80% of them in one way or another deal with the issue of gender-sensitive education.

We have to mention that thanks to the activity of NGOs there exist different examples of successful gender integration in Ukrainian education. The programme entitled "Empowering Education" is such an example. The initiative of the project came from the Women's Information and Consulting Centre (Kyiv) and three women's civil organisations – "Female Initiative" Centre (Simferopol), Women's Consulting Centre of Zakarpattia (Uzhhorod), and the "Legacy" Centre (Kyiv). In 1997, these and other organisations created the All-Ukrainian Association of Empowered Education and Communication¹³.

The methodology and approach of empowered education received a positive response from the Institute of Improving the Qualifications of Leading Teaching Professionals of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine and educational establishments in which the programme was introduced. Many organisations

¹³ <http://www.civicua.org/catalogue/view.html?q=201687>

and initiators of this type of education help to implement the principles of empowered education locally on a voluntary basis. Currently this experience is most effectively institutionalised in the Crimea, where last year, the programme entitled “The Basis of Dialogue” was included in the State Programme of Gender Transformations, and since September 2008 it has been a voluntary programme for schools in the peninsula¹⁴.

The project “Civil Education in Ukraine”, implemented with the financial support of the European Commission, can be quoted as another example. The project is aimed at developing the subject of civil education as well its components in Ukraine. It is carried out in four pilot Oblasts – of Vinnytsia, Volhyn, Kyiv and Kherson and its expected result is the publication of programmes and textbooks recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science. One of the components of the project is the module of “social justice and equal opportunities” aimed at strengthening the aspects related to gender and social justice in civil education in Ukraine¹⁵.

Kharkiv Women’s Organisation “KRONA” in 2000-2006 carried out the project “Creation and Development of Regional Women’s Educational Centres in Ukraine” within the “Ukraine in Europe” programme which promoted the empowerment of Ukrainian women through education. The project was aimed at helping women to find their role in society, to activate their awareness and own resources, gain confidence in their own abilities, develop a sense of responsibility for the improvement of their lives. The project was financed by Heinrich Böll Foundation (Germany).

In 2006-2008 “KRONA” carried out the project “Women’s Educational Centres in Ukraine” within the international programme “Our New Europe – Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine / Gender Democracy and

¹⁴ Suslova O. *What’s new in Ukrainian education?* // Informational-educational publications “Ya” – March 2007/19. p. 23.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

Women's Politics" with the assistance of Heinrich Böll Foundation (Regional Office in Poland). The aim of the project was to foster the development of female activism in different regions of Ukraine, engage women in public work and politics, activate the female leaders of social movements, establish cooperation and support among them, promote social thought on the role of women in the decision-making processes and their participation in state governing, help to ensure equal rights and opportunities of women and men. Within the project the organisation conducted educational training sessions, roundtable meetings, discussions, summer schools on innovative technologies for women and youth from different regions of Ukraine and conferences. It also published the informational-educational magazine "Ya" and released other informational-methodological publications.

However, although the amount of work carried out by non-governmental organisations in the field of gender-sensitive education is substantial, it cannot bridge the gap in gender-sensitive education which should be provided by official educational establishments. In addition, it seems impossible to analyse all the methodological materials used by the activists of non-governmental organisations, because they are dispersed among all the separate organisations.

6. The results of in-depth interviews on gender-sensitive education in Ukraine

From July to October 2008, 20 in-depth interviews based on a standardised questionnaire were carried out within the project “Gender-Sensitive Education in Ukraine: Achievements, Gaps and Challenges”.

The experts included:

- researchers and leaders of civil organisations who carry out specialist gender-related research (later referred to as specialists) – 4 people;
- state officials who are supposed to assist the implementation of gender-sensitive education in Ukraine because of their position (later referred to as officials) – 5 people;
- lecturers of higher education establishments and scientists from institutes of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine – 6 people;
- teachers of general education schools – 5 people.

There were 18 women and 2 men among the respondents.

6.1.

General conclusions

I. In all groups of respondents there were divergences in defining the nature of gender and the content of gender-sensitive education. The specialists were the group which had the most comprehensive idea about gender-

related issues, as could have been expected. However, even in this group, not everyone was able to define basic notions.

The group which was the least knowledgeable about gender-related issues were officials and teachers of general education schools. The former were only aware of the fact that Ukraine has signed agreements with the EU according to which it is supposed to introduce this kind of education. The teachers emphasised that there no information was available.

In the context of gender-related issues, the respondents usually mentioned different approaches to teaching boys and girls, sexual education, but less frequently gender equality. Contemporary gender values were not mentioned practically at all.

2. The analysis of the answers given by the respondents to the questions about the form and extent of gender-sensitive education leads to the conclusion that systemic gender-sensitive education does not exist in higher education – at some universities there are courses conducted by enthusiasts, but there is no state policy aimed at introducing such education. The state of affairs is even worse in general education schools, where most teachers are not familiar with gender-related issues, while different topics in different subjects still include elements of gender-sensitive education.

3. Only the specialists, several lecturers and scientists were able to define the tasks of gender-sensitive education. Teachers and officials see it only as promotion of certain ideas.

4. The education system is not ready to introduce gender-sensitive education – there is a lack of qualified lecturers and teachers, textbooks, methodological materials. The officials insist that programmes do exist, but teachers and lecturers claim there are no programmes on gender-sensitive education.

The majority of respondents expressed their worry that lecturers or teachers who are not qualified enough would implant their own stereotypes instead of carrying out the tasks of education.

Among the most frequently cited negative consequences were problems which can appear in families, among the positive ones – improving the everyday culture of Ukrainians and the opportunities for self-development of women.

5. In the opinion of respondents gender-sensitive education should be implemented by the state, but in reality only enthusiasts and social organisations are involved.

6. The attitude towards gender-related issues is ambiguous. Some respondents are convinced it is an important and urgent problem, others consider it exaggerated and claim that it has no relevance for the Ukrainian mentality.

Those who consider gender-sensitive education important usually mention its significance for the development of family, production sector, politics and culture.

7. Conclusions

The last decade of the 20th century was marked by increasing urgency of the issue of gender-sensitive education in Ukraine – it is widely discussed in public discourse, pedagogical literature, books and magazines. Since 1995 a whole series of programmes and textbooks have been published and practically all key universities of Ukraine have introduced courses on gender-related issues.

However, gender-sensitive education in Ukraine is still not sufficiently effective. Systemic gender-sensitive education is absent from pre-school and general education establishments. On the contrary, we can find the so-called *hidden curriculum* there, through which teachers and educators help to create, reinforce and perpetuate patriarchal stereotypes. Ukrainian textbooks for primary and secondary school present a stereotyped image of men as active and successful, and of women as invisible, marginal, passive and dependent, which strengthens the stereotypes of gender asymmetry and hierarchy.

Although many higher education establishments in Ukraine have introduced courses on gender-related issues, the gender stratification which exists in these establishments mirrors the unequal status of women and men in society and strengthens the stereotype of unequal access for the two sexes to high positions and the decision-making process.

The first reason for the ineffectiveness of gender-sensitive education in Ukraine is the absence of political will of the administration of the Ministry of Education and Culture concerning institutional changes in the domain of gender politics.

The second reason is the absence of a single, comprehensive concept of gender-sensitive education. For example, the texts of different programmes do not distinguish between such terms as gender-role education, sexual education and gender-sensitive education.

In-depth interviews revealed that there is no consensus between specialists, teachers and officials about the understanding of gender-sensitive education. In the context of gender-related issues, the respondents usually mentioned different approaches to teaching boys and girls, sexual education, but less frequently gender equality. Transmitting contemporary gender values and stereotypes in the teaching process were not mentioned practically at all.

The third reason is that there is no state programme of gender-sensitive education. Because of the great variety of educational programmes and methodological literature, teachers decide what to teach only at their own discretion.

The fourth reason is that there is a shortage of qualified teaching professionals at schools and higher education establishments.

The active agents of civil society (NGOs protecting human rights, especially of women and men) are trying to integrate the gender dimension into education. But the training sessions which they conduct are fragmentary, do not have a common methodological and didactic basis and cannot bridge the gap in the Ukrainian education system.

8. Recommendations

In order for gender-sensitive education to become systematic and effective in Ukraine it is necessary to:

- Elaborate a single, comprehensive concept of gender-sensitive education.
- Carry out a gender analysis of all legal documents regulating the educational process in Ukraine, elaborate and adopt new standards free from gender inequality.
- Carry out a gender analysis of existing textbooks, coursebooks and other kinds of didactic materials and exclude from the teaching process those which transmit the stereotypes of gender asymmetry and hierarchy.
- Train or retrain specialists who would be able to put into practice the ideas of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in a correct, accessible, appropriate and, therefore, effective way.
- Elaborate curricula and effective methods of teaching that take into account the gender component for educational establishments at all levels of the educational system.
- Elaborate specialised classes on gender-sensitive education and introduce them in pre-school institutions and schools.
- Teach higher education establishments how to provide courses in gender studies which meet contemporary criteria.
- Introduce the gender component into the educational standards of all specialisations in the system of higher and vocational education and also in the programmes of improving the qualifications of state officials and deputies at all levels.

About authors

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About the Heinrich Böll Foundation Regional Office Warsaw

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The Foundation's basic objective, both in Germany and abroad, is civil education aimed at supporting formation of democratic attitudes, social and political activism and understanding between nations. Its key values are: ecology, democracy, solidarity and nonviolence.

The Foundation is particularly devoted to building a democratic society based on respect for the rights of immigrants and the principles of gender democracy, understood as a domination-free relation between women and men. Both those principles constitute a basis for cooperation inside the Foundation, as well as in all areas of its public operation.

International operation of the Foundation involves cooperation with over 160 partner organisations from 60 countries on 4 continents, as well as running 27 foreign branches.

For over 15 years, the Foundation has been active in Central Europe, including Poland. In the 1990's, the Foundation mainly supported projects of partner organisations working towards human rights, equal opportunity for women and men, and balanced development of the natural environment. The Polish branch of the Foundation inaugurated its operation at the beginning of 2002, when the negotiations before EU accession of the countries of Central Europe reached their final stages. One of the tasks of the Polish branch was to

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At the moment in Central Europe the Foundation implements the programme entitled “Our New Europe”, aimed at reaching an agreement between the “old” and the “new” members of the European Union and their neighbours on the principle issues of European politics. The programme is divided into regional components: “Dialogue Forum Europe”, “Gender Democracy and Women’s Politics” and “Energy Policy and Protecting the Climate”, as well as national components: “Democratic Ukraine” and “Integrated Development of Rural Areas”. The Foundation’s operation across the region is divided between the regional office in Warsaw, the national office in Prague, and the currently organised branch in Kiev.

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