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**Gender in national education documents and teaching resources,
and in teacher's pedagogical approaches and everyday teaching
practices in Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary –
Comparative report – 2019**

Summary

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 2019, Towards Gender Sensitive Education: Brno, Budapest, Vienna

<https://gendersensed.eu/>

Towards gender sensitive education' is a three-year project of five organisations from three EU countries united in a strategic partnership: Masaryk University (Czech Republic), Gender Information Centre NORA (Czech Republic), Hungarian Women's Lobby (Hungary), Eötvös Loránd University (Hungary) and Verein EfEU (Austria).

The motivation for this project stems from the observation that gender equality is one of the fundamental values of the European Union, but that in education, the reality is far from realizing that ideal.

Research¹ shows that education reproduces gender inequalities in different ways, including via the official curricula, the hidden curricula, the way in which teachers treat girls and boys differently based on their own gender stereotypes and beliefs about the right gender order in society, the socialization of children among peers, and steering children towards gender-based educational and career choices.

These educational practices lead to the reinforcement of gender-related inequalities in society, to gender-specific performance patterns and possibly disadvantageous career choices for women, to the internalization of 'male' dominance and 'female' submission in social, personal and professional relationships.

These observations were more than sufficient to set up a comprehensive transnational research project, which resulted in a series of recommendations by the researchers from the three participating countries on the content and methodologies for the gender training courses for teachers and aspiring teachers. In the following phase, the content and methodologies will be developed and tested through pilot projects. This report first examines the results of the theoretical research on national education and gender equality documents (laws and strategies), on curricula for pupils and students, on curricula and syllabi for teacher trainings at universities and on manuals and guidelines on gender issues in education. This is followed by the reports of the focus groups and the school observations. To conclude, a series of recommendations are formulated for the courses.

The comparative research shows many similarities but even more differences between the three countries in terms of gender-related education policies, regulations and learning contents.

In general, Austria is the most advanced. Unfortunately, today in the three countries concerned, we are seeing political opposition from conservative and populist parties to everything related to gender, with repercussions for education in different ways.

¹ See academic bibliography, 'Gender in national education documents and teaching resources, and in teacher's pedagogical approaches and everyday teaching practices in Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary' – Comparative report – Dorottya Rédei & Réka Sáfrány 2019, Brno, Budapest, Vienna –p. 125

In Czech Republic, there has been little to no progress on gender equality in education in recent years. In Hungary the least attention, expertise and political will have been devoted to gender equality in education: almost no progress was made between 1990 and 2010. The government considers that gender studies should be eliminated from higher education. Even teachers, school leaders, students and parents start to adopt that discourse.

It turned out that most teachers in Austria, Czech Republic and Hungary have little to no gender sensitivity. They are rather wary or hostile to the concept. Teachers have to be familiarized with notions of gender, gender equality, diversity, intersectionality and anti-discrimination. They have to understand why gender is relevant in education. They should be made aware that it is their duty to protect pupils and students from sexism and gender-based violence in school, and that supporting, encouraging and strengthening students in their gender identities in non-stereotypical ways are important duties for teachers. It is also important that it becomes clear for them that the curriculum is not a 'value-free', 'objective' or 'gender-neutral' description of teaching content.

However, it is crucial not to make teachers feel that they are expected to carry the 'burden' of gender-sensitive education on their individual shoulders or that they are blamed for reproducing gender inequality. They need the supportive institutional framework of the school. Schools have to be encouraged to do what they can to move their school towards adopting a whole-school approach to gender equality.

A selection from the national reports

The Austrian teacher trainer group suggested that pupils' learning worlds (media, apps, YouTube, platforms) and learning spaces should be involved in the evolution towards gender sensitive thinking and behavior. External role models and experts could play a part in this. For the teachers in the focus group it was new information that there was a legal framework for gender-sensitive education.

The Czech partners find it important to proceed from an 'educational' role and build on the assumption that gender-sensitive education is a more efficient tool for transferring key competences for future professional life.

The participants of the focus group with teacher trainees conceived of gender as a dualist notion of two opposite sexes. They were aware of the stereotypical expectations imposed on both sexes and regarded this as something which has an influence on them as well as on pupils at school. However, they hardly recognized the more structural and social dimensions of gender inequality in education.

The students of the Hungarian focus group expressed their need for further knowledge and methodological training in several fields. They realized that sexuality was a very important issue in education, and that was the field where they seemed to feel most incompetent as future teachers. It is important to include this topic in the course and connect it with gender. They are also not prepared to deal with gender-based violence and harassment in schools. They expected to acquire practical methods and solutions, but therefore they themselves have to develop a gender awareness first.