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Work package 2: Mapping the EU / Needs Assessment

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Aims of the deliverable

Deliverable 2.2 (D6) presents the executive summary of the country analysis and EU assessment developed under WP2. The deliverables I presented in English. However, the executive summary in each national language will be provided in KINDER website.

The deliverable also presents the brochure developed by the project, which will help disseminate the project goals.





Portugal

Executive-summary

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KINDER project (GA 101005800) was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)

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The **KINDER** Project (Grant 101005800, REC/DGJustice EC) is being developed by a research team from the Centre for Social Studies (University of Coimbra), under the coordination of Dr. Tatiana Moura and aims to strengthen the European effort to combat gender stereotypes, focusing on early childhood education (children aged 3 to 6) and the first cycle of compulsory education (children aged 7 to 12).

It began on 1 January 2021, has a duration of two years and international partnerships with Spain and Croatia. The project is based on the premise that stereotypical ideas about gender roles (constructed from childhood) are at the root of the profound inequalities between men and women throughout

life. And despite national and European Union efforts around gender equality, stereotypes persist and influence the lives and future choices of boys and girls across Europe. In Portugal, this project has a partnership with the CIG - Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality.

The "KINDER" project aims, in short, to develop methodologies to transform attitudes and behaviours regarding gender norms and practices, focusing on kindergartens and primary schools (1st and 2nd cycles), contributing to raising awareness about the benefits of promoting equitable and non-violent behaviour from an early age, both in school systems and in the family environment. Its specific objects are:

- ✓ **Raise awareness** of the need for an EU approach to combat the persistence of gender stereotypes from an early age in education systems;
- ✓ **Target the potential reproduction and transmission of gender stereotypes** by professionals in kindergarten and elementary schools at national level;
- ✓ **Promote changes in attitudes towards gender stereotypes and sexism** from an early age in and out of schools;
- ✓ **Develop Pedagogical Material for teachers and non-teaching staff** on gender sensitive pedagogy to promote gender equality and combat gender stereotypes;
- ✓ **Encourage public authorities** in mainstreaming gender neutral and inclusive education at national and EU level.

Within this framework, the first phase of the project included a mapping at national level entitled "Educational policies, pedagogical practices of reference: a look at the promotion of Gender Equality in Pre-school and Basic Education (1st and 2nd cycles) in Portugal", using the main references for the promotion of gender equality as a starting point.



The document presents, in a first moment, a survey of international and national references on gender equality between men and women, as well as educational references where the promotion of gender equality is presented as a structuring and integrating domain of the action. In a second moment, we reflect on the policies issued by the State to implement the decentralization and municipalization of education, in the context of educational policies. In a third moment, we address the reference documents issued by the Ministry of Education, starting with Education *for Citizenship*, where we highlight the creation of a working group composed of experts in the area of Citizenship and Education to outline a National Strategy for Education for Citizenship, to be implemented by schools and guidelines for the promotion of gender equality from 3 to 12 years. Then, and to give tone to the *profile of students for the twenty-first century* and essential skills and curriculum flexibility, we deepen the educational policies around the processes of autonomy and curriculum development. Finally, we share examples of reference practices identified in Portugal and conclusions/recommendations, based on the survey we conducted, as well as interviews with personalities working in this area in the education axis.

Based on the mission of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), "the idea prevails that all human beings, regardless of gender, are free to increase and progress in their skills, whether personal or professional, as well as to be able to make their choices without constraints so often mandated by stereotypes and prejudices, rigid conceptions of the social roles granted to men and women". (CIG) Education and communication are two fundamental areas that present themselves as

an essential vehicle to reinforce these conceptions, a dimension of coadjuvant questioning and transformation.

In an era of permanent change and in which challenges are becoming a constant in our schools, it is becoming increasingly urgent to carry out studies/projects that contribute to reflection/action allowing equality between women and men to be seen in the world as a human rights issue and a condition of social justice, essential for societies to become more modern and more equitable. The guardianship, state bodies and, in particular, schools (educational community), have the responsibility to actively intensify initiatives and actions in favour of equality between women and men. The *Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Schooling* (PASEO) expects the school to instill in students responsibility and integrity, curiosity, demand, innovation, reflection capacity, citizenship and freedom. The skills areas to be developed are of a cognitive, metacognitive, social and emotional nature, in various areas: languages and texts, information and communication, reasoning and problem solving, critical and creative thinking, personal development and autonomy, environment, scientific, technical and technological knowledge. Gender equality is an important and transversal domain, in various dimensions, among others, "Humanistic basis - The school empowers young people with knowledge and values for the construction of a fairer society, centered on the person, human dignity and action on the world as a common good to be preserved". (Martins, 2017)



It is in the light of this context, that we consider the need:

- **(re)thinking and reinforcing strategies** and methods applied in Schools;
- **promote critical reflections and spaces for collaboration** in initial and continuing training that lead to the development of transformative methodologies, attitudes and behaviours on gender norms and practices.
- **Thinking about opportunities for the child to experience**, think, intervene, observe and make decisions;
- **Integrate gender equality activities** in contexts that respond to their needs and interests. In these contexts they learn, among other things, how to construct gender identity;
- **To work in articulation and in a transversal way** this theme with pre-school children, because they will be the adults of tomorrow. It remains to leave the idea that pre-school education is central to the construction of gender identity and to obtain an attitude of equality in relation to gender;
- **Accredit training actions on diversified themes**, both face-to-face and distance learning;
- **Hold training workshops and sign protocols** with different entities, especially with the CFAEs;
- **Involve other central and local government entities** such as ministries, interdepartmental teams, municipalities, education and training institutions, etc. in the implementation of activities to promote gender equality;
- **Monitor implemented processes** related to gender equality within educational and training institutions;
- **Train education professionals**, more specifically operational assistants, nursery school teachers and primary and secondary school teachers;
- **To build new tools and materials** aimed at gender equality training for learning contexts (Pre-school, 1st and 2nd cycle) and training contexts (initial and continuous);
- **Disseminate and promote quality materials** produced under funded projects in order to be useful resources, capable of being used in the training that is given on various gender equality issues, framed within the national strategy of education for citizenship;
- **Promote and develop actions in the educational context**, involving the children's families;
- **Promoting gender equality in teacher training and educational contexts** as a structuring basis for any other area of citizenship;



- **To provide greater coordination** between the management bodies of the School Clusters regarding the design, implementation, development and evaluation of the impact of projects in the educational context;
- **Promote spaces for reflection and discussion** in schools on the theme of gender equality;
- **Implement projects that meet the educational projects**, according to the school culture, in order to promote the involvement of the various educational stakeholders.
- **Create partnerships between Higher Education institutions and school clusters**, with a focus on initial teacher training, in articulation with other courses that have an intervention in schools;
- **Create partnerships between Higher Education institutions and the CFAE** in order to promote bridges, spaces and times of work in collaboration with the initial and continuing training of teachers;
- **Promote the dissemination of materials and good practices on gender equality** and combating stereotypes in the most varied educational contexts, highlighting other learning environments, holding workshops, among other initiatives;
- **Promote active listening among teachers**, in a close relationship with the community and education policies, responding to the education system.

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Spain

Executive-summary

Cepaim Foundation

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KINDER project (GA 101005800) was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)

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Spain has a solid legislation on gender equality and diversity in early education. Nevertheless, the solid legislative initiatives do not necessarily imply that:

- Laws/norms are correctly implemented;
- Formal equality turns automatically to substantive equality.
- Laws/norms are undisputed.

In this executive summary we will discuss to two first points in this report. Concerning this last point, gender equality and diversity principles and initiatives are under attack, in Spain and in Europe, with anti-gender movements that take different forms. In Spain, one of them is the so-called “parental pin”, supported by the far-right party Vox. It consists of the possibility for students’ parents or legal guardians to deny a student's attendance at supplementary activities outside the formal curriculum. It is seen as an extension of the right of parents to govern the moral and religious education of their

children. Thus, in Spain, it has been proposed to veto activities related to issues of gender identity, feminism or sexual diversity.

In order to analyse the different initiatives on coeducation, equality, diversity and intersectionality in early education we used qualitative data, gathered as follows:

- 1) Desk research on the coeducation, equality, diversity and intersectionality in early education in Spain.
- 3) Review and analysis of educational materials and initiatives from a gender and intersectional perspective.
- 4) Individual interviews with experts in education/policy makers/trainers in the field of education (9 individual interviews).
- 5) Meeting with regional policy makers and training director of the Department of Education, Universities, Science (Region of Madrid).

Obstacles, constraints, and limitations of public policies, programs and initiatives on coeducation and diversity

In early childhood education, concern about gender issues has focused until recent years mainly on the differences between male and female socialisation of pupils (especially in the case of girls). The most frequently addressed issues have been sexism in children's stories and boys' and girls' games. After a loss of interest in the subject of the eighties and nineties (Abril y Romero 2008), in recent years there has been a new interest on the issue, characterized by an intense normative production, and – at least partial – a reconceptualization of the concept of coeducation. Such reconceptualization led to the adoption of an intersectional lens to move towards inclusive education that allows to identify the interaction of multiple factors that lead to discriminatory processes in schools towards different student groups. Especially in the case in gender identity and sexual orientation, there are several initiatives both at normative level (regional level) and projects implementation.

The obstacles and constraints named by the interviewees and reported in the literature go on the same direction and can be summarised as follows:

- Teachers' training in gender+¹ perspective
- Legislative measures don't automatically assure implementation
- Temporality of contracts for teachers
- Bureaucratization and fragmentation in schools
- Role of the management team

Teachers' training in gender perspective

Training, both initial and in-service, is the most quoted field that need to be improved. Initial university training with gender+ perspective is generally weak, not uniform across the country, optional and depends on the will of specific professors.

In-service training on gender+ is also optional (in-service training is compulsory, but the content is optional), unevenly distributed across regions, many times difficult to apply for teachers since it is not always based on practical cases.

The SKOLAE PROGRAMMA² as good practice – NAVARRA REGION

- The programme is **ambitious** and has a good architecture.
 - o The training programme is designed around **concrete objectives** organized around each stage of growth.
 - o The training programme is designed around 3 fields in order to create a transformation at different levels: personal, relational and contextual.
- The training programme is **compulsory** for teachers and all of them received it.
- It is a clear **political challenge**, with a lot of efforts put in communication both at the school and the family level that is part of the transformative approach.
- The changes are **visible** in educational centres.

¹ We use "gender+" to refer to gender and other inequalities.

² <https://www.educacion.navarra.es/documents/27590/1325202/Libro+SKOLAE+CAST+web.pdf/1ba58d8b-d13b-4f2d-0fc1-9c5e99d5946e>

Materials for gender+ training

According to the results of the mapping on gender+ initiatives in schools, we detected a great availability of **materials for teachers and educators**. Nevertheless, the materials are not classified and the quality is very uneven.

Another point raised by our interviewed experts is the risk that the didactic manuals are used by professionals that didn't receive specific training. In this case, the superficial aspects of the activities can be reproduced, but without managing an in-depth reading of the phenomenon, the consequences of a specific activity are not manageable and can create further suffering.

Legislative measures don't automatically assure implementation

Legislative initiatives need to be properly implemented in order to build educational centres that use a gender+ perspective in their activities. Mainstreaming the gender approach is a declared objective in practically all the plans/initiatives considered. Nevertheless, all the interviewees expressed frustration because of the gap between recognized principles underpinning a coeducational school and the level of implementation. Coeducational plan, promoted by the majority of the autonomous Communities, do not result in operational policies at school level and/or they depend almost exclusively on specific persons' commitment.

Temporality of contracts for teachers

According to the trade union Comisiones Obreras [FECCOO 2019], following the cuts in expenditure for education in the last decade, there have been two main effects: the destruction of jobs and an increase in temporary and partial employment³. The precarization of the teaching and school staff is especially serious when considering rural schools and disadvantaged urban schools: in these cases, the great turnover of teachers combined with the lack of resources makes difficult to run medium- and long-term projects. These centres will tend to reproduce social inequalities since they don't have the human and material resources to plan educational activities even if the initiatives are proposed and implemented by third sector organizations.

³ In addition to these consequences, we have to add the ageing of the workforces, which has been the result of their reduction, the limitation of the Public Employment Offer, the non-application of the reduction of the working day for the over 55s and the end of the bonus for early retirement.

Bureaucratization and fragmentation in schools

According to the field research and to the UGT Education Sector (trade Union)⁴ there is a need for a less bureaucratized school, with more time for teaching, innovation and research. In this sense, it considered "essential" to unify the legislation that regulates the life of schools, or to simplify and specify documents, both institutional and pedagogical, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and fragmentation.

Another important aspect underlined by our interviewees is that, because of bureaucratization, but also for the pandemic and changes in legislation, mechanisms of participation of parents/guardians to the life of centres have been diminishing. This is particularly strong since ICT are more and more important in the relationship between schools and families/legal guardians. Many low-income families do not have access to ICT and they are not able to maintain and nourish a fluent communication with the school that could allow building a common educational project.

Role of the management team

The management team of educational centres play a big role in implementing educational project with a gender+ perspective. Indeed, coeducational schools depend to a large extent on the specific composition of the management team and teaching staff of a specific school. When the management team is motivated and trained in gender+ perspective, the whole school itself incorporates such perspective, which becomes structural and visible.

Analysis of public policy frameworks for Education, Gender Equality and Childhood

When we talk about education in equality, in Spain the most used concept is coeducation. The concept started as educating boys and girls in equality, but the framework is being broadened: according to some perspectives, it means also about educating to the differences, considering the intersectional approach. Diversity in terms of sex, gender, social class, race, religion, functional diversity, sexual option, among others, that should be understood as equalizing rights and not as segregating differences and homogenizing process.

In Spain, the state is responsible for education and for offering all pupils free compulsory education from 4 to 16 years of age. The stage from 4 to 6 is not compulsory, while education is compulsory from 6 to 16 years of age. The Ministry of Education and Professional Training is responsible for central administration, namely the national government defines overall

⁴ <https://www.europapress.es/sociedad/noticia-ugt-pide-escuela-menos-burocracia-mas-tiempo-docencia-20210621111527.html>

framework policies and the autonomous communities handle most day-to-day policy-making and administer the great majority of funding.

The legislative perspective in gender and equality is indisputable: gender equality is a core element, at least at discursive level, in all legislative initiatives. Nevertheless, its application, the instruments and funding are not always proper. Concerning education, different laws have been passed since 1980 (after Franco's dictatorship). The LOGSE (Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo, 1990) is the landmark, since it is the law that establishes the principles aimed at building a coeducational system. Other 3 laws on education were passed in the last 15 years: LOE (LEY ORGÁNICA 2/2006 de Educación) and LOMCE-(Ley Orgánica 8/2013 para la mejora de la calidad educativa) have been very deficient in coeducational matters, approaching this issue from a mere declaration of intentions. In 2020 the Organic law 3/2020 LOMLOE was passed. also known as Celaa Law under the name of the minister that promoted it. On gender equality the LOMLOE Law emphasizes the promotion of equality between men and women, being one of the transversal elements in all areas of knowledge. It adopts a gender equality approach through coeducation and promotes at all educational stages the learning of effective equality between women and men, the prevention of gender violence and respect for affective-sexual diversity, introducing in secondary education the educational and vocational guidance of students with an inclusive and non-sexist perspective. Educational centres must necessarily include and justify in their educational project the measures they develop to favour and train in equality at all educational stages, including education for the elimination of gender violence, respect for identities, cultures, sexualities and their diversity, and active participation to make equality a reality. Curricula and textbooks and other educational materials will have to promote the equal value of women and men and do not contain sexist or discriminatory stereotypes. Likewise, this content will be included in initial teacher training programmes.

Among other contents, the Organic Law 8/2021, of 4 June, on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents against violence regulates the specialised initial and in-service training of professionals who have regular contact with minors. Among the general criteria applied in the frame of the superior interest of the child, the law recognizes the "Promotion of equal treatment of boys and girls through co-education and the promotion of equitable education and the deconstruction of gender roles and stereotypes" (art. 4). The law develops various measures for the prevention and early detection of violence in schools.

Analysis of Public-School Plans at National/regional/City Level

National plans

At the national level, in Spain there are no plans as such on education since such initiatives are based at regional level. The **National Plan to Reduce Early School Leaving (2014-2020)** and **Spain 2050. Rationale and proposals for a long-term national strategy** do not entail the gender perspective

Autonomous Community Framework

There are Strategic Plans for Gender Equality in Education or coeducation, or regional plans/programmes that contains measures on education with gender equality perspective in 10 autonomous communities: Andalusia, the Basque Country, the Canary Islands, Navarre, Valencia, Balearic Islands, Cataluña, Extremadura, Galicia and Castilla la Mancha.

Concerning other intersecting inequalities, like gender identity and sexual options, there are solid juridical bases in many regions. Apart from the coeducational plans approved and implemented in the different Autonomous Communities, there are other legal instruments that can have educational importance and entail measures in this field.

- ✓ Regions with legislative initiative on Trans rights: País Vasco,
- ✓ Regions with legislative initiative on LGBTI rights: Cataluña, Extremadura, Galicia, Murcia.
- ✓ Regions with legislative initiative on LGBTI and Trans rights: Andalucía, Aragón, Baleares, Comunidad Valenciana, Navarra, Madrid.
- ✓ Regions with no legislative initiatives on LGTBI and Trans rights: Asturias, Cantabria, Ceuta, La Rioja, Castilla y León, Castilla La Mancha, Melilla

Navarra region: SKOLAE programme

In this section we present the SKOLAE programme since it the most complete we could find, involving all teachers in training programmes for children from 0 to 18 years of age. The Coeducation Plan 2017-2021 for the Educational Centres and Communities of Navarre sets the basis for the SKOLAE programme, that will be described below.

The plan has been developed with the collaboration of different experts, like teachers from the SKOLAE pilot schools, professionals, businesswomen, university teachers and experts in education, co-education, equality, sexology, sexual diversity, leadership and empowerment, feminists from trade unions and activists for the empowerment of women and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. The Navarre coeducation plan aims to integrate equality in the education system by proposing a coeducational itinerary for all stages.

The **SKOLAE programme** has among its principles to educate in the construction of one's own life project from the early stages of life. This means an education in feminism or feminist education, that is learning to build life projects in freedom and equality.

The main learning, competencies and cross-cutting contents proposed are:

- to form a critical conscience in the face of inequalities, this means identifying and analyzing existing gender inequalities and take responsibility for their transformation;
- to favor autonomy, personal independence and employment, where care work and employment are emphasized as the basis for this autonomy,
- guiding students to the construction of a full life project, overcoming gender stereotypes and any other limiting conditioning factors;
- empowerment, leadership and social participation as essential elements in recognizing one's own capacity for decision making and motivating collective work;
- highlight sexual education and fair treatment, including the recognition, acceptance and respect for diversities, bodies, identities and affective bonds;

The aim is to promote gender equality and feminism through a systemic action in which all educational dimensions and processes (teachers, contents, languages, spaces, social relations, families, community) have a place and adopt a commitment to transforming power structures. The co-educational school also aims at integrating cross-cutting content throughout all school stages:

- Eliminate all violence against women and girls.
- To make women and their contributions visible.
- Learning to respect identities, cultures, sexualities and their diversity.
- Learn new egalitarian masculinities and empowered femininities.
- Participate in the environment by making equality a reality.

The program is being implemented in 221 schools in Navarre, but it has been recently under attack. The Skolae coeducation plan will continue to be extended from September in public and funded centers in Navarre. The program has the protection of the Foral Law of Equality, approved in 2019, and will also have the support of the Foral Decree of Coeducation, which is in the process of allegations and will be in force next 2021-22. This has been assured by the Department of Education after the Supreme Court rejected the appeal filed by the Regional Government against the resolution of the TSJN that annulled Skolae due to a procedural error.

School level

Schools have different instruments to set the basis and guide their educational project. The main instruments that can entail a coeducational and/or interseccional perspective are:

- The Annual General Programming (PGA) or Annual Center Plan (PAC).
- The Coexistence Plan (Plan de convivencia).
- The Equality Plan (Plan de igualdad).

Great differences have to be found at school level:

- Gender equative contents and instruments depend on each school. The general educational perspective can be found in the “General annual programming”, a document defined by the school board with the participation of the parent’s association.
- Although stated by law, coeducation depends to a large extent on the school principles’ and/or specific professors.
- Third sector organizations play a crucial role in proposing and implementing innovative projects at any stage.

Good practices put in place by schools and kindergartens regarding the promotion of gender equality and questioning gender stereotypes

There are many different projects put in place by schools and kindergartens. In this summary, we focus **especially on** the playgrounds that have been the centre of various interventions to transform them in inclusive spaces.

Some examples

Manual by the Col·lectiu Punt6 i coeducació (2020). Patios coeducativos. Guía para la transformación feminista de los espacios educativos.
https://issuu.com/patioscoeducativos/docs/libropatioscoeducativos_09-04-2020_cast

- Inclusive playground [Patios inclusivos] project (2017), Pandora Mirabilia
<https://www.pandoramirabilia.net/project/red-de-patios-inclusivos-y-sostenibles/>

Concerning materials on Gender Equality, Children, Stereotypes and gender inclusive methodologies, in Spain there are a lot of manuals, books and stories for children with coeducational and diversity perspective.

Here some examples:

- ✓ Sánchez Sáinz M., Penna Tosso M., de la Rosa Rodríguez B. (2015), CCOO Enseñanza. Somos como somos. 12 inclusiones, 12 transformaciones. [https://eprints.ucm.es/id/eprint/39014/2/2060425-Somos como somos 12 inclusiones, 12 transformaciones.pdf](https://eprints.ucm.es/id/eprint/39014/2/2060425-Somos%20como%20somos%2012%20inclusiones,%2012%20transformaciones.pdf)
- ✓ Rochi (Mercedes Sánchez Sáinz), Polvorilla (Melani Penna Tosso), Bol (Belén de la Rosa Rodríguez) (2020). El mundo raro de Mermel. Propuestas didácticas para abordar las diversidades en Infantil y Primaria. Canarias: Federación de Enseñanza de CCOO. [https://www3.gobiernodecanarias.org/medusa/ecoescuela/educarparalaigualdad/files/2020/05/el mundo raro de mermel -materiales-de-aula.pdf](https://www3.gobiernodecanarias.org/medusa/ecoescuela/educarparalaigualdad/files/2020/05/el_mundo_raro_de_mermel_-_materiales-de-aula.pdf)
- ✓ Chrysallis. Asociación de Familias de Menores Trans* (2021). GUÍA PARA DOCENTES. Educación en Diversidad e Igualdad. <https://chrysallis.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/GUIA-PARA-DOCENTES.-Educacion-en-Diversidad-e-Igualdad.pdf>
- ✓ Monasterio C., Pandora Mirabilia (2021). Audiocuento: La vida privada de los superhéroes (Héroes en zapatillas). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KftYKi7n-1U&t=35s>
- ✓ Moreover, between 2020 and 2021 we could count at least 7 congresses on coeducation in the country, confirming that it is a very present and vibrant approach in the teaching and academic community.

Recommendations

How should the training be?

Initial teachers' training:

- Compulsory
- Theory + practical/experiential part.
- Entail an intersectional approach.

Different interviewees emphasise that the **in-service training** processes should:

- Have a practical orientation (workshops with an experiential part),
- Carried out in the school itself, based on real cases of school life and on collaboration between teachers and with experts;
- Give instruments to introduce the gender perspective in the different subjects.
- Be organized in three levels, according to an initial diagnosis: beginners, intermediate and advanced in order to avoid repetition of contents.

In other words, the articulation between theory and practice should be one of the guiding principles of the training programme.

Material with gender+ perspective

There are a lot of materials and manuals, they generally have a good availability from different website, but, at the same time, there is no recent mapping so it is difficult to navigate among them and know which ones are appropriate for each need/situation.

- Design and implement a project to map all material on education with gender+ perspective.
- Revision and update of all curricula materials used in the classrooms with gender+ perspective.

Long-term project with gender+ perspective

- Short Project produces short-term consequences: Long-term project are needed in order to change the general gender+ culture in a specific school centre and they can continue even if the rotation of teachers is high.



kinder



Croatia

Executive-summary

Status-M

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Main characteristics of Croatian educational system

Preschool education

The prevailing organisational form of the preschool education is that of the kindergarten, in which children spend from five to ten hours per day.

According to the National Curricula Framework, preschool education is a first level of education system which is not obligated. It is divided in three educational cycles: from 6 months to 1 year, from 1 year to 3 years, and from 3 years to the moment that child is entering the school system. Since 1st October 2014 one year of preschool before going into school has become obligatory to every child.

According to the Eurydice report on preschool education (2011) Croatia has had between 70 and 79% children between the age of 4 and the starting age of compulsory education enrolled in any type of preschool program.¹ On average in the EU-28, 93% of children at this age are already in some preschool program. In the same Eurydice report it is noted that Croatia has very low participation in preschool programs of children under the age of 3: approximately 15%.² This data could lead to a conclusion that preschool education is not available to every child in Croatia. Another dimension that is showing the availability of education is accessibility, which means that education should be: all-encompassing, free-of-

charge and include parental freedom of choice³. Preschool education in Croatia is not free of charge for parents. All preschool programs have their economic prices, and different local communities are financing some percent of that price, while the rest of the amount is left on parents.

Primary education

Primary and lower secondary education is organised as a single structure system. Elementary schooling, lasting eight years, is the compulsory part of education in the Republic of Croatia for children between the ages of seven and fifteen, and corresponds to the ISCED levels 1 and 2.

Elementary school is divided into two levels: the first level comprises grades 1 to 4, and the second grades 5 to 8. The curriculum is comprehensive and compulsory for all the children. These two levels differ in the form in which a curriculum is delivered. The curricula in grades 1 to 4 are organised into seven teaching subjects, which are taught by a single teacher (the so-called class-teacher). The rate of success in completing the elementary school education is very high. Almost all enrolled pupils complete their elementary education and of those who have completed it continue their education in higher secondary schools (ISCED level 3).

¹The goal of Europe-wide benchmark i.e. by 2020 is that at least 95 % of children between the age of 4 and the starting age of compulsory education should be participating in early childhood education.

² For example, Denmark has 74%, Netherlands and Sweden a little more than 50%. Around 20 countries in EU have better percentage of participation in preschool programs than Croatia.

³ Tomaševski, K. (2001). Human Rights obligations: making education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. Gotenburg: NovumGrafiska AB. [Searched 18th February 2021 on: http://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf](http://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf).

Mapping National initiatives and public policies on early childhood development and gender equality

Gender equality in Croatian society: short overview

According to the data of Eurofond, women spend approximately 26 hours weekly working nonpaid jobs, while that number for men is 9. An inequality at the labour market is also readable from the statistics that 33.9% of women (and only 9.7% of men) in the age 20- 64 years old in 2018 claim that the reason for their work inactivity is care for another family member. Already mentioned problem of low availability of preschool education, especially for children under the age of 4 in Croatia, is contributing to the high number of women that are inactive at the labour market in order to take care of a child.

Regarding education, gender stereotypes and gender roles are important factors for girls and boys, and men and women, in the process of choosing their education and future profession. For example, in year 2018 there were only 34.4 % of women in industrial and craft schools, while in art schools there were 72.8 % of them. Girls have lower expectations of themselves regarding their academic achievement in mathematics and in physics, while boys have lower expectations of themselves in the field of Croatian language.

An important topic to raise, except structural gender inequality that is present at the systematic level, are gender stereotypes and prejudices that are main part of parenting and family life. According to the results of UNICEF research made in 2020⁴, girls of all ages are more involved in the housework than boys. Meanwhile, boys are more often involved in playing video games and watching television. Same differences are found regarding out-of-home activities. Boys are more often included in sport, and girls in religious activities. The same research reports that girls are more worried about future of the family and social relationships between family members than boys, that is suggesting that they are gradually taking over their feminine gender role. Research results also show that with aging girls are more dissatisfied with relations with their classmates and feel less secure on their way from school to home, which is indicating that they are more often exposed to different violent behaviors in schools and on their way from school to home.

⁴ Ajduković, M., Rajhvan Bulat, L., Sušac, N. & Vejmelka, L. (2020). Subjektivna dobrobit djece u Hrvatskoj. Zagreb: UNICEF.

Conclusion of the analysis

Croatia has aligned its legal system with international documents that are guaranteeing promoting and protecting gender equality in all spheres of society, education included. Main documents at national policy level regarding gender equality are acting in few main fields: *Non-discrimination and equality in legal framework, Elimination of violence against women and girls, Political inclusion and representation, Right to work, and Harmonization of family and work life.*

Regarding education in general, there is still no focus of policy to work towards creating gender sensitive education or including gender equality content into it. There is no systematic approach to teaching and discussing gender issues with preschool children or children in lower primary education level. Topics of gender equality come into some educational institutions only through short term projects or project initiatives, and they mostly stay at the level that children learn that they all have equal rights no matter differences among them. Key educational preschool and elementary school programs incorporate gender equality issues in the area of education for human rights. More specifically, into schools, those topics are part of two subjects that are included in schools interdisciplinary: health education and civic education. However, unfortunately, the decision if preschool teachers and teachers will work on those topics is left completely to them.

Research on gender equality in preschool and primary education in Croatia

This research overall goal was to examine the situation regarding gender equality in preschool and primary school education. The research had three specific research goals:

1. To examine *the approach and an interest* of relevant stakeholders (educational institutions, preschool teachers, teachers, parents) for promoting and educating for gender equality.
2. To examine *the level of preparation (knowledge, skills)* of relevant stakeholders (preschool teachers, teachers, parents) for promoting and educating for gender equality.
3. To examine *values and attitudes* of relevant stakeholders (preschool teachers, teachers, parents) for promoting and educating for gender equality

Altogether, the questionnaire was fulfilled by 33 people already working in kindergartens and schools, 15 students of preschool education and primary school education and 34 parents.

The research has been conducted via online questionnaires that were designed for the need of this research.

As one of the research goals was to examine *the approach and an interest* of relevant stakeholders (educational institutions, preschool teachers, teachers, parents) for promoting and educating for gender equality. Both students and practitioners claim that they have been in contact with the topic of gender equality *rarely*, while most of the parents think that for them it happened *often*. But on the other side, when they are asked about interest of an educational institutions about a gender equality education, ***all three groups agreed that institutions mostly implement content that is part of an obligated curricula, and rarely include anything else.*** Students, practitioners and parents, ***all believe that the problem is a lack of systematic approach towards a gender equality education, which leaves its implementation just on the interest and motivation of individuals. From the research results it could be concluded that students, practitioners and parents talk about the gender equality promotion in two main ways – a passive and an active.*** While talking about a passive approach, participants explained their behavior as being a good model and not implementing gender inequality actions in their everyday work or behaviors. Some of them mention more active approach like talking and discussing with children about gender equality or reacting on the situations of gender inequality by creating critical thinking of children. ***When they were asked to give examples of how they could be a part of a promotion of gender equality they most often came up with active approach ideas, but when they talk about what they actually do in order to raise awareness of children for gender (in)equality issues, they most often use a passive approach.*** Seeing a passive approach as an only way of promoting gender equality goes so far that some research participants feel that they do not have to discuss those issues at their workplace because there are only female employees there so they “don’t have that kind of problems of gender inequality”. Finally, all groups that were included in the research see other groups as those whose support they could use to be better promoters and educators of gender equality. They also mention ministry, educational agency and nongovernmental organizations. ***They are aware that this topic is something that should be squeezed through all levels and layers of the educational system and that should be discussed with children from all main stakeholders who are part of their upbringing.***

Another goal of the research was to examine *the level of preparation (knowledge, skills)* of relevant stakeholders (preschool teachers, teachers, parents) for promoting and educating for gender equality. ***Even though all three groups have a feeling that they have a good knowledge and skills about gender equality and that they are pretty much ready to teach others about it, some answers to open questions indicate that that is not a case.*** Further on, practitioners and students were asked about their preparation in different dimensions of gender equality education. Both groups said that ***during their formal or nonformal education they meet more often with topics of nonviolent conflict resolution and human/children rights. The topic they meet the least is sex /gender equality.*** Very rarely practitioners were also educated in the field of discrimination and stereotypes and prejudice, and students with the topic of a peer violence. ***It could be concluded that both students and practitioners feel more prepared for recognitions***

of different situations of inequality, but are not well prepared for taking an active approach in promoting gender equality or in reacting in the situations of gender-based discrimination.

Finally, the last specific goal of the research was aiming to examine *values and attitudes* of relevant stakeholders (preschool teachers, teachers, parents) for promoting and educating for gender equality. All three groups decided that they somewhat agree that kindergarten, schools and parents are raising children according to the principles of the gender equality. ***Practitioners believe that an education for gender equality is something that is important, but that there are some more crucial problems that should be discussed. They, both with students, find those topics relevant just in the situations that are close to them, therefore in the problems of including male teachers in their work.*** Very important part of children upbringing are values of their parents. Further on, a quarter of parents *somewhat agree* or *agree* that girls are more into cooking and baking than boys and that boys need more sport activities within a week. Those attitudes are readable from some behaviors that parents reported, such as that a third of parents once or few times over the week justify some behavior of a child by saying: *that is normal for him, he is a boy or that is normal for her, she is a girl*, or a fifth of all research participants every week or even more often compare a child with a parent of the same sex in the situation when a child is doing something typical for that gender (esc. when girl is cleaning you say: just like her mum). ***To conclude, parents feel that they meet with the topic about gender equality often and that they know a lot about it, but going more deep into their everyday life and values, it is readable that some of them are not compactly aware what gender equal behavior should be.***

An overall recommendation is that an educational system, on all levels (preschool education, primary education, secondary education, higher education, an initial education of teachers and preschool teachers) **should take more systematic approach in implementing education for gender equality**, align with what is written in main educational documents.

Meanwhile, **nongovernmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders should organize more educations and workshops in the field of gender equality** for all groups that are in direct contact with children: preschool teachers, teachers, students that will be preschool teachers, students that will be teachers and parents, in order to fill gaps in the knowledge and skills of those groups.



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KINDER is a Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in Children Education targeting the educational professionals working with children between the ages of 3 to 12 years old.

KINDER aims to tackle the urgency of developing an effective and innovative program and training curricula for professionals working with children at preschool (aged 3-6) and from the first cycles of basic compulsory education (7-12 years old). The project will be implemented in 3 European countries – Portugal, Spain and Croatia.

our objectives

1. Raise awareness on the need for an EU approach to tackling the persistence of gender stereotypes from early ages in the education systems;
2. Target professional's potential reproduction and transmission of gender stereotypes in kindergarten and basic schools at national levels;
3. Promote attitude changes regarding gender stereotypes and sexism from an early age in and outside schools;
4. Develop Educational Material for teachers and school staff on gender-responsive pedagogy to promote gender equality and combat gender stereotypes;
5. Foster public authorities in mainstreaming gender-neutral and inclusive education at national and EU levels.

our contributions

- KINDER strategy will equip teachers with knowledge, skills, and attitudes for a gender-responsive pedagogy in the EU region.
- KINDER pedagogical approach fosters the equal sharing of care and will target the gender segregation in career and occupational choices.
- KINDER educational materials will be suitable to be used by both public and private kindergartens and primary schools. Our main effort is the institutionalization of program K at the country levels.
- KINDER will support school management and national public authorities to mainstream gender issues at early age levels.