

EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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Education is universally acknowledged to benefit individuals and promote sustainable development. It should be noted the education system's responsibility to educate pupils/students for active participation in the various aspects of life, be they political, civic, social or cultural, and at all levels – local, regional and national.

Educating females and males produces similar increases in their subsequent earnings and expands future opportunities and choices for both boys and girls. Specialists value education as one of the strongest determinants of poverty [3]. People with higher education face a risk of poverty 6 times lower than those with general secondary education and 10 times lower than those with primary secondary education or no education.

Moldova ranks 23rd of 153 countries in the 2020 World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Gender Gap Report, illustrating important gains in terms of gender equality in recent years, particularly in Health and Survival (ranking 1st) and Economic Participation and Opportunity (ranking 19th) sectors. However, according to the mentioned above Global Reports on Gender GAP Index, the country shows increasing gender disparities in education: ranking 37 (2006) and ranking 61 (2019) [5, 6].

According to the Education Code (2014), the mission of education is focused on: satisfaction of the educational requirements of the individual and of the society; promoting intercultural dialogue, the spirit of tolerance, non-discrimination and social inclusion and other. Republic of Moldova has made important progress in terms of advancing near universal enrollment of both boys and girls in primary education and in secondary education.

According to statistics, the enrollment of girls and boys in tertiary education is lower compared to upper secondary education. At the same time, there are by 11% more girls than boys in tertiary

education. [8]. Based on current data and previous research, we note that at different level of tertiary education – girls continue to outperform boys in terms of enrollment and educational attainment. Since 2009/2010, the proportion of women tertiary graduates (high education) have fluctuated around the 60% mark, without any significant increase or decrease. 32% of graduates are women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes in tertiary education (2008-2018) [7].

The top three areas of study at the tertiary level for women in Moldova are Languages; Education; followed by Journalism and information; while for men it is Transport services; Forestry and Engineering and engineering activities (2019) [5]. At the same time, the share of the population (20-24 years old), who have secondary professional or tertiary education, 2019, is with 6.6% lower than in the EU (78.0%:83.6%). But participation in early education% of children (4-6 years), 2018 in Moldova is higher than in the EU (97.2%:95.3%) [9].

At the same time, young men aged 18-24 ages old leave earlier the education system than young women of the same age [8]. However, the NEET group (young people who are not in employment, education or training) contains a higher proportion of women (22.8 %) than men (16.5%) aged 15-24 [4], partly because men of this age are employed (even informally) or intend to migrate to a much greater extent. Girls tend to drop out of school due to family duties and lack of money while boys do so because of a “desire to work”, but also much lower desire to learn and learning difficulties. This trend can be explained by pressure of social norms, including gender norms, that contributed to traditional division of tasks: girls are oriented to family responsibility, and boys – to the labor market due to the traditional role of breadwinner.

We find that some discrepancies identified are due to the fact that men traditionally predominate in sectors of the economy where wages are higher, while women make up the majority in the social sector, where wages are low. At the same time, the choice of specialties is also made according to the existing stereotypes regarding professions "more suitable" for women or men.

We noted that equality between women and men is perceived as a premise and indicator of sustainable development focused on people [1]. Achieving gender equality in education means that boys and girls will have equal rights and responsibilities, opportunities to realize their full human rights and contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political development. Equality between women and men and the gender perspective must be incorporated at all levels of the education system from the earliest age.

The gender perspective focuses particularly on gender-based differences in status and power, and considers how such discrimination shapes the immediate needs, as well as the long-term interests, of women and men. Thus, in education context, gender perspective is about integration a gender dimension in education policy, educational approaches and practices, monitoring and evaluation process, so that women and men, girls and boys benefit equally.

We conclude the following:

Special attention should be focused on promoting a holistic approach to informal and formal education in education institutions – an approach that includes life-skills programmes, covers human rights, human dignity and gender equality, develops self-esteem and self-respect, and encourages informed decision making, thus preparing girls and boys for community and family life.

It is necessary to explore the gender dimension in course programme content and general curriculum development (particularly for scientific and technological subjects); taking account, in planning curricula, of girls' and boys' interests and preferences in respect of learning and teaching styles, for the purpose of fostering academic success and broadening the range of educational and career options. Also, it is important to evaluate the education environment in the institutions in order to avoid any types of discriminations, sexual harassment and prevent and create the gender-friendly environment and culture.

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