



GenderEd



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Combating gender stereotypes in education and career guidance

National Diagnostic Report (Lithuania)

This research was conducted within the framework of the European programme entitled GenderEd, which is coordinated by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and co-financed by the European Union. It was carried out in parallel in four European countries. This report presents and discusses the research results from Lithuania.

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Introduction

Project information

A research was carried out within the framework of the European project GENDER-ED: combating gender stereotypes in education and career guidance". The main aim of the project is to address the stereotyping of educational and career choices and to promote gender equality in education and career guidance.

The main objective of the study is to identify behaviour and attitudes that determine gender stereotyping in education and career guidance in four EU countries (Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania and Romania). Each partner country has carried out the study at the national level using the same methodology.

The study focuses on the impact of schools, teachers and curricula in perpetuating and challenging stereotyping of the behaviour and expectations of girls and boys, their perceptions and career choices.

Background

On the basis of research data (Francis 2002, Athanasiadou 2002, Deligianni-Kouimtzi 2010), gender stereotypes greatly influence career choices of girls and boys studies and frequently reflect the traditional gender roles ("feminine" and "masculine" occupations). Stereotypes are widespread beliefs that a particular group has certain characteristics and behaviour patterns. A stereotype is a rigid, simplistic caricature of a particular group of people which in one way or the other can affect individuals by limiting them on their academic achievement (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011). Inflexible stereotypes become a problem when they "force" a family or a school community to ignore the academic talents of girls and boys and thereby limit their access to education or career choice. According to Francis and Skelton (2005) and Wessel (2005), gender stereotypes affect the career choice decisions of girls and boys, women and men leading to the existing vertical and horizontal gender segregation both in education and the labour market in the European Union.

Although the gender gap since 2006 has decreased (Gender Gap Report 2015) and the level of education of women in Europe outnumbers that of men, gender stereotyping still significantly affects educational choices. On the one hand women are under-represented in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) on the other hand men do not choose studies or occupations related with nursing, care and social sphere. Choices of studies are directly related with career opportunities and directly influence the horizontal segregation in the labour market. Only 4.9% of the primary school teachers are men (Eurostat 2015; Eacea 2015), but the STEM fields are exclusively dominated by men.

Gender segregation in the education and labour areas is the result of social processes, where parents teach their children to follow and conform to gender stereotypes and to assume stereotypical gender roles. Teachers and the school community further reinforce the stereotype-based education process and career choices (Caprile M. et al. 2012). Stereotypical choices in education and career reflect and promote consolidation of gender roles in the European society.

The role of men in society is linked with professional success, achievements, economic stability and the role of male breadwinner. So the man is primarily responsible for providing for the family. Therefore, young men choosing professions are principally motivated by the prestige of the profession, economic guarantees and the possibility to climb the career ladder. On the contrary, women in society are defined by their traditional identity as keepers of hearth, and, in a modern society, conversely, as emancipated women (Deligianni-Kouimtzi 2010). This is associated with the academic success, non-traditional career choices and combining family and working life. However, with strong public "pressure" to sacrifice one's career and focus on motherhood and family, makes women choose "convenient" professions or to work part-time, according to a flexible schedule, and to assume a complementary role of someone who supplements the family's budget. Consequently, based on the role attributed to women by society affected by stereotypical norms, girls and boys are encouraged and expected to have different priorities and abilities, and to make different choices in the fields of education and career.

The studies have shown that teachers also play a significant part in either supporting or challenging stereotypes, both during lessons and breaks. This may reflect in different expectations with respect to girls and boys; their use of language, behaviour; how much time of the lesson is devoted to girls and boys and the content such attention; assessment of behaviour according to gender, etc.

A similar approach applies to career guidance.

Study methodology

Mixed qualitative methods were used for the study: focus groups with teachers, pupils, classroom observation and source analysis. The methods and study approaches used were audited and approved by an external expert from Cyprus University.

The target study group:

- 13–16 year old pupils;
- teachers;
- career advisors.

Classroom observation

This method is used to identify to what extent gender stereotypes are rooted in the school environment/community; to examine directly how gender stereotypes are encouraged and how they are challenged during lessons and breaks. Stereotypical behaviour may be so “normal” among pupils and teachers that they may not be able to identify it as stereotypical and evaluate it. Observation is the best way to explore the behaviour which is difficult to describe, e.g., during interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An external observer can identify the stereotypes and stereotypical behaviour/practices. Also, this method provides researchers with practical examples which can be used as a reference point for further actions in the study.

One progymnasium and three gymnasiums took part in the study. The geographic distribution was ensured: city, town, district centre, district.

Observation: 4 lessons /subjects x 2 grades x 4 schools (32 hours of observation).

Classes in various subjects were observed: STEM fields (mathematics, physics, biology, technology), social science (history and geography), and humanities (Lithuanian, English, art, ethics).

The observer applied the following rules:

- Remain silent; avoid any intervention as if s/he was not there.
- Maintain confidentiality and refrain from any discussions with others on what has been observed.
- Remain impartial.
- Hold a written record of what was happening in the lesson in an objective, impartial way and without including any personal judgment. Record factual circumstances.

Focus groups

Focus groups with the teachers and pupils were used to identify attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender stereotypes and influence career choices.

Two focus groups with pupils

- One focus group in the city (I FC), one focus group in the district (II FC).
- Gender balance: 9 pupils (5 girls and 4 boys), 7 pupils (3 girls and 4 boys)
- Pupils in I FC were from different grades, so that the sample would be boarder.

One focus group with teachers

- Different subject teachers, including STEM fields (mathematics, information technology), social science (PE) and humanities (Lithuanian and English languages).
- Gender balance: 7 teachers (6 female and 1 male) gender balance was not ensured due to exclusively female staff in the school.

One interview with a career consultant

- 1 interview with a career consultant of a gymnasium in a city.

Source analysis

This method consisted of the analysis of legal regulations, actual situation in Lithuania, and literature, i.e. content analysis of two textbooks in order to examine the influence of the teaching material in consolidating/challenging the stereotypical behaviours and expectations of girls and boys.

One textbook in the field of social sciences (geography) and one textbook in the field humanities (Lithuanian language) was analysed.

Study ethics

The approved study ethics was observed.

Protection of anonymity and confidentiality of study participants: Information collected during the study was only used for the purposes of the study; it was not transferred to any third party. The real names of the participants in the activities were excluded and/or were not used in publicly available information. Audio material recorded during the study was stored in the digital format and was accessible only to the researcher using the identification code. After performing the necessary study activities, such material was deleted. The study did not seek to collect any personal information, so no such information was collected. If during the study any such information were collected, such information, together with other information collected during the study, would be processed and stored in accordance with applicable legal acts and the principles of anonymity and confidentiality; it would in no way be publicly disclosed or transferred to any third parties.

Participation in the project was on a voluntary basis and each participant had the right to withdraw from the project at any time.

Consents from school principals were obtained for the activities in the schools and all the material was coordinated with the school administration.

National Background

Gender equality in education and in the labour market

The Lithuanian education system consists of: 1) formal education (primary, basic [lower secondary], and secondary [higher secondary] education, formal vocational education and training, and higher education); 2) non-formal education (pre-school, pre-primary, other non-formal education [also education which supplements formal education] and adult education); 3) informal learning (self-directed learning based on the information obtained from various sources and the learner's practical experience); 4) education support (vocational guidance, education information assistance, psychological assistance, social and pedagogical assistance, special pedagogical and special assistance, health care at school, consultancy assistance, assistance in qualification training of teachers, and other assistance).

In Lithuania, like in the rest of the European Union, women are more educated than men. There are more female employees than male employees in gymnasiums and higher education institutions, meanwhile there are slightly more male than female pupils in primary and basic education schools and vocational education and training schools. At the beginning of the 2016/2017 academic year, there were 48.5% female and 51.5% male pupils in the pre-school education institutions; 49.1% female and 50.9% male pupils in general education¹ schools; 43.1% female and 56.9% male pupils in vocational education and training schools; 54% female and 49% male pupils in colleges, and 57.6% female and 42.4% male pupils in universities.²

Statistical data on the choices of the fields of study in Lithuania reveal a clear gender asymmetry – certain occupations are female-dominated or male-dominated. Since traditionally the society usually perceives certain occupations as suitable for women and others suitable for men, the choice of studies for young female and male adults is restricted by the femininity or masculinity aspect.

Table 1. Distribution of female and male students by study areas in 2015³

Study area	Female (%)	Male (%)
Education	76.9	23.1
Humanities and art	76.2	23.8
Social sciences, journalism and information	73.4	26.6
Business, administration and law	65.3	34.7
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	59.7	40.3
Information and communication technologies	11.0	89.0
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	26.6	73.4
Agriculture and veterinary	25.9	74.1

¹ The Order “On the approval of the general education plans for the basic and secondary education curricula for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic year” of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – General Education Plans) indicate the following areas of the general education curriculum: moral education, languages, mathematics, natural science education, social education, art, information technology, technology, physical education, training of general competences and life skills (human safety, health education, ethnic culture, etc.). Both female and male pupils equally study these areas between grades 5 and 10, i.e. from 11 to 16 years of age. General education plans stipulate that the pupils, who complete the basic education curriculum continue learning under the secondary education curriculum, which accommodates individual learning plans. In grades 11 and 12, i.e. from 17 to 18 years of age, pupils learn according to the plans which correspond to their individual needs and aims. Depending on their aims pupils may choose to study the subjects at higher or lower levels. For example, some pupils study STEM fields, others – humanities at a higher level. The choices differ significantly between girls and boys, however the statistics on this is not collected/available.

² Education 2016, Statistics Lithuania, 2017.

³ Moterys ir vyrai Lietuvoje 2016 /Women and Men in Lithuania 2016, Statistics Lithuania, 2017.

The information provided in Table 1 shows that the majority of female students choose a career in the fields of education (76.9%), humanities and art (76.2%), social sciences (73.4%) and health care (84.5%). Male-dominated fields are engineering, manufacturing and construction (73.4%), agriculture and veterinary (74.1%). A considerable disparity between the number of male and female students is also in computer sciences. Although this difference in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics is 19.4%, in the field of information and communication technologies male students make 89% while female students make only 11%.

The female-dominated field of education studies determines female-dominated education system in Lithuania. According to Statistics Lithuania, the majority (87.7%) of teachers in the general education system are women. In vocational education and training institutions women account for 69.2% of lecturers, in colleges - 67%, and in universities – 52.6%. Although there are more women with doctoral degrees, the number of male professors exceeds that of female professors. This shows that in pursuing their professional careers women face obstacles potentially caused by a gender gap. For example, among full members of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, which unites the most prominent Lithuanian scholars and scholars whose activities are connected with Lithuania, there are 113 men and only 8 women⁴.

Distribution by gender in the fields of science leads to occupational gender segregation. Health care and social work are the most female-dominated areas of economic activities with 85.3% of women among the employees of these sectors, they are closely followed by those of education (78.7%) and accommodation and food services (78.8%). The most male-dominated areas of economic activities are construction (90.6%) and transport and storage (75%).

Table 3. Distribution of female and male employees by economic activities in 2015⁵

Economic activity	Female (%)	Male (%)
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	35.7	64.3
Construction	9.4	90.6
Manufacturing	41.5	58.5
Wholesale and retail industry; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	56.8	43.2
Transport and storage	25.0	75.0
Accommodation and food services	78.8	21.2
Information and communication	48.4	51.6
Financial and insurance activities	74.8	25.2
Real estate activities	45.7	54.3
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	54.6	45.4
Education	78.7	21.43
Health care and social work	85.3	14.7
Arts, entertainment and recreation	65.3	34.7
Other activities	73.7	26.3

Even in the female-dominated sectors of economic activities, they hold lower positions by occupational groups. The gender gap is particularly visible by occupational groups. Among the “specialist” category, there are twice as many women (32%) as there are men (14.3%). Office clerks, employees of the services sector and sales assistants are a few other occupational groups where the number of women is significantly higher than that of

⁴ List of full members of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences is available at <http://www.lma.lt/akademijos-nariu-sarasas>

⁵ Ibid 2.

men. Meanwhile men dominate in such occupations as managers, skilled craft and related trades workers, operators of equipment and machinery, and assemblers.

Table 4. Employees by occupational groups in 2016⁶

Occupational group	Female (%)	Male (%)
Managers	7.1	11.5
Specialists	32.0	14.3
Technicians and junior specialists	10.9	8.1
Office clerks	6.2	2.1
Employees of the services sector and sales assistants	20.0	7.7
Skilled employees in agriculture, forestry and fishery	4.0	6.7
Skilled craft and related trades workers	5.7	22.6
Operators of equipment and machinery, assemblers	3.9	17.9
Unskilled workers	10.2	8.5
Armed forces personnel	0.0	0.6

The choice of economic activities and the occupational group are directly connected to the salary. Women and men do not receive equal pay in any economic activity and only in transport and storage sector women earn 9% more than men. Even in the female-dominated areas women earn less than male employees in the same area, e.g. in the economic activities of health care and social work where female employees account for 85.3% of all employees, they, however, earn 24.4% less than their counterparts who work in the same area. The biggest gap remains in the finance and insurance activities where women earn 37% less than men. According to Statistics Lithuania, the gender pay gap in 2016 in the public sector was 13.7% and in the private sector – 17.6%. This not only leads to the increase in the gender pay gap, but also the increase in the risk for women to find themselves on the brink of poverty (in particular in single person households, i.e. single mothers or senior women) and directly affects the gender gap in the amounts of pensions.

Legal regulation of gender equality

The principle of gender equality is entrenched in the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (hereinafter – Law)⁷. The aim of the Law is to ensure the exercise of equal rights of women and men entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and to prohibit any discrimination on the grounds of sex. This Law establishes a duty of state and municipal institutions and agencies, educational establishments and research and higher education institutions to implement equal rights for women and men. It even details the measures, such as those in Article 5(2) of the law: educational and research establishments must, within their competence, ensure that curricula and textbooks do not propagate discrimination against women and men. However, such regulation is absent from the documents directly related with education. The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania⁸ only speaks about the principle of equal opportunities, which means that the educational system is fair, it ensures each individual access to education, opportunity for attainment of a general education level and a primary qualification and creates conditions for in-service education or gaining a new qualification. The Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania⁹ mentions the principle of equality, but it is not detailed or in any way related to gender; there are no references either to the Law or the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania in it. The Law on Vocational Education and Training of the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, No. VIII-947, 1 December 1998.

⁸ Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania No. XI-1281, 17 March 2011.

⁹ Law on Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Lithuania, No. XII-2534, 29 June 2016.

Republic of Lithuania¹⁰ indicates the principle of equal treatment as one of the principles of the system, which means that the system must be socially just, must ensure equality of persons, irrespective of their sex, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions or views; it must ensure that each person would be able to obtain qualification and conditions would be provided to acquire additional competences. Similarly, the principle of equal treatment is defined in the Law on Non-formal Adult Education of the Republic of Lithuania. Even the State Education Strategy 2013–2022¹¹, which recognises that the general education sector is exclusively dominated by female employees and that positive male role models for comprehensive education of children and young people are in short supply, mentions neither the Law nor the principle of gender equality or any measures.

The principle of equal treatment means that the provisions of the law must be applied in accordance with this principle. However, with respect to equal opportunities for women and men, this principle is not sufficient to eliminate inequality and to promote *de facto* equality between women and men. In particular since the principle of equal opportunities for women and men is even absent from the education system at the *de jure* level. Based on the above statistics it is clear that the Law alone, which stipulates the entrenchment of gender equality, infringement of which incurs criminal liability, is not sufficient, because *de facto* women compared to men still occupy a lower position in the Lithuanian society. This shows that there is insufficient legislation in Lithuania to tackle this problem. Programmes are required to take real action in promoting gender equality. A strategic approach, clearly and specifically defined problems, clear objectives, specific defined measures, indicators, monitoring and reporting, involvement and cooperation of stakeholders, consistent coordination, and proper financing – all are very important factors in achieving *de facto* gender equality. Specific measures should be applied to include the principle of gender equality horizontally throughout all areas and levels of education.

Four state programmes for equal opportunities for women and men (hereinafter – equal opportunities programme) have been prepared in Lithuania. Their main aim is to solve the problems related to equal treatment of men and women in all areas. The first equal opportunities programme was launched in 2003. Currently the State Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021¹² is implemented. Its strategic objective is to promote equality between men and women consistently, in an integral manner, and systematically in all fields and to eliminate the gender gap. The equal opportunities programme aims to promote equal opportunities between women and men in the area of employment and labour, to seek balanced participation of women and men in decision-making and holding top positions, to increase the efficiency of institutional mechanisms for equality between women and men, and to promote gender mainstreaming. The following objectives are planned for the last aim (to promote gender mainstreaming) in the area of education and science:

- To encourage young women and men choose “non-traditional” study areas and occupations for women and men;
- To encouraging men to acquire higher education;
- To promote non-discriminatory approach to women and men in the textbooks and other teaching material.

The above are the areas of education and science which need active measures against gender inequality, because of a clear gender asymmetry between students – certain occupations are either female-dominated or male-dominated, there are more female students in the higher education system and the gap is increasing, and school textbooks are full of examples of stereotypical female and male roles.

Action plans are prepared for the implementation of equal opportunities programmes. The 2015–2017 Implementation Plan of the State Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2015–2021,¹³ stipulates the measures to be taken by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania:

- To prepare recommendations for higher education and research institutions regarding entrenching of equal opportunities for female and male researchers and to monitor implementation.
- To implement gender equality projects provided in the pending Action Plan for Popularisation of Science and Technology.

¹⁰ Law on Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Lithuania, No. XIII-888, 14 December 2017.

¹¹ State Education Strategy 2013–2022, No XII-745, 23 December 2013.

¹² State Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021, 2015.

¹³ The 2015–2017 Implementation Plan of the State Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2015–2021, 2015.

- To supplement the methodological material aimed at career education for students of general education schools and vocational education and training institutions with the information about gender equality in the planning and pursuing a career.
- To submit proposals to higher education institutions regarding the implementation of gender equality measures in order to attract more men to higher education institutions and to seek gender balance in various fields of study.
- To supplement textbook evaluation criteria with a provision that the content of textbooks should avoid a stereotyped approach to gender roles.
- To integrate the topic of equal opportunities for women and men and non-stereotypical approach to genders at seminars for textbook authors and evaluators.

Programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science in relation to gender equality

The action plans for equal opportunities programmes contain the tasks for the Ministry of Education and Science (Ministry) which cover the implementation of gender equality. However, the principle of gender equality is poorly integrated in the orders of the Minister of Education and Science and the main education plans of the Ministry.

No objectives in relation to gender equality are provided for in the general education plans for basic and secondary education for 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 approved by the order of the Minister of Education and Science¹⁴. However, in one chapter on gender, culture and society of the non-formal education programme “On the approval of the Preparation for Family Life and Sexuality Education Programme” approved by the order of the Minister in 2007¹⁵ (hereinafter – Programme) topics related to gender equality are integrated:

- Equivalence and equity of women and men;
- Premises for discrimination on grounds of sex;
- (Re)creation of gender stereotypes in advertising and mass culture;
- Legal mechanisms which ensure gender equality.

The Programme serves two purposes – educational and preventive. *Educational purpose* – to prepare young people for life and marriage, to provide information about family life, to provide a holistic notion of sexuality, and to nurture mature and moral persons who respect human life from the moment of its conception, capable of mature interpersonal relations, nurturing sexual health and being resilient in an adverse environment. It is likely that during the implementation of the Programme, e.g during the preparation of young people for marriage and family life, traditional gender roles in the family which are standard and prevalent in Lithuanian society may be enforced. Such assumption is reinforced by the aim of the Programme to nurture a moral person. A moral person is associated with the teachings of the Catholic Church, which are associated with traditional roles of men and women as the only “correct” roles. Thus the educational aim of the Programme further deepens gender inequality than diminishes it.

Preventive purpose – to prevent early sexual relations and the associated problems, sexual exploitation and harassment, and discrimination on grounds of sex. The gender equality dimension integrated in the preventive purpose is prevention of discrimination on grounds of sex. Thus the two purposes of the programme contradict each other.

From 1 September 2017, the Programme was replaced with the Health and Sexuality Education, and Preparation for Family Life Programme¹⁶ (hereinafter – Programme2), in which topics related to gender equality are also integrated:

- The influence of gender stereotypes on stigmatisation and discrimination of the groups of society;

¹⁴ Ibid 1.

¹⁵ On the approval of the Preparation for Family Life and Sexuality Education Programme, No. ISAK-179, 7 February 2007.

¹⁶ Health and Sexuality Education, and Preparation for Family Life Programme, No V-941, 25 October 2016.

- The importance of equivalence of people, sharing their responsibilities and duties in a family;
- The influence of gender stereotypes on self-perception and sexual expression;
- The diversity of roles of men and women in the family, community and society, opportunities for their expression;
- Critical assessment of the stereotypes of a perfect male or female body.

In order to implement the measure “To supplement textbook evaluation criteria that the content of textbooks would avoid stereotyped approach to gender roles”, in 2015 the model for textbook content evaluation criteria was supplemented by identifying the evaluation criterion which ensures non-discriminatory approach to women and men in textbooks and teaching material¹⁷ and one seminar was organised for textbooks evaluators. No further actions were planned by the Ministry of Education and Science.

In 2015, supplementary methodological material “Gender equality dimension in career education of pupils”¹⁸ for teachers was prepared together with separate material for pupils as well as a list of visual material about the “non-traditional” female and male professions¹⁹. Neither any further publicity of this information nor further measures have been planned.

The measures specified in the equal opportunities programme which the Ministry must implement are very important, but the fulfilment of specific obligations presented as obligations under the equal opportunities programme is not sufficient. In addition, the measures are fragmented, lack coherence and continuity, lack the aspect of monitoring and accountability. There is, in particular, the lack of information about implementation and sources of financing of the measures and the opportunities. So they rather remain *ad hoc* than a coherent and effective action toward *de facto* and *de jure* gender equality.

The principle of gender equality was integrated in the 2007–2013 Human Resource Development Action Programme²⁰. In this programme the principle of equality between women and men included a few key points: equal opportunities of women and men to be economically independent, equal representation in decision-making, opportunities for combining work and family commitments, and elimination of all forms of violence against women and gender stereotypes. Annual reports were prepared within the framework of this programme. In one report – 2012 Report on the Implementation of the Human Resource Development Action Programme²¹ – the project “Promotion of gender equality in science (LYMOS)” implemented by the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences is indicated. The project received a grant of EUR 579,200 and lasted 26 months (until 15 February 2013). During the project the following was carried out:

- On the basis of the overview of the experience of evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative indicators in science in Lithuania performed by experts, recommendations were prepared as to what methods would best reveal the gender equality situation in science in Lithuania and the methodology for the evaluation of the gender equality situation in science on the basis of which indicators were proposed to evaluate the gender equality situation in science in Lithuania objectively (descriptions of quantitative and qualitative indicators have been prepared).
- Main indicators were indicated for identifying the obstacles which restrict broader participation of women in science, particularly in the top research and managerial positions.
- A model for monitoring gender equality in science was created and recommendations were prepared for its integration into the already existing higher education and research monitoring and analysis system.
- A new version of the strategy for equal opportunities for men and women in science was developed and a book (study) “Promotion of gender equality in science” was published.

¹⁷ The evaluation criterion of suitability of the material to values which are instilled: 1.4. 1.4. The text and visual material does not contain any negative gender stereotypes, girls and boys, women and men are represented impartially. <https://sodas.ugdome.lt/bylos/GENERAL/cacabfa9-191c-42e0-8f0f-2bb4b2fd7e48.pdf>

¹⁸ The gender dimension in career education of pupils <http://www.mukis.lt/download/1087/informacija.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://www.mukis.lt/lt/vyru-ne-moteru-hgad.html>

²⁰ 2007–2013 Human Resource Development Action Programme, 2013.

²¹ 2012 Report on the Implementation of the Human Resource Development Action Programme.

- During the implementation of a project, financial support measures for scientists and other researchers who returned after maternity/paternity leave were applied.
- A survey of the opinions of doctoral students and holders of doctoral degrees at the institutions of higher education of Lithuania was conducted to promote equal opportunities in the STEM fields of science and a study to assess the impact of financial support measures and training on target groups. Based on the results of the study, training material was prepared. A total of 40 members (31 women and 9 men) trained their career management competences with the help of the following modules: self-evaluation, self-confidence, leadership, creativity, personal development, planning, project and financial activities, teamwork and leadership, communication and cooperation, and public relations.
- 82 project participants (69 women and 13 men) participated in short-term training dedicated to the promotion of gender equality in science.

The project helped to maintain the working female researchers in the science system, attracted talented women to science, and contributed to resolving current problems of gender equality in the national science system and the community of researchers. For the first time in Lithuania the problem of gender equality in science was considered in a complex manner. There is still a shortage of the activities whereby the problem of inequality of men and women would be addressed using various measures and real actions.

School curricula

When drawing up their teaching plans, the schools in Lithuania rely on the documents and orders of the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter – Ministry). So if legal acts which govern education and science and the documents of the Ministry do not include the gender dimension, it will not be included in the school plans, which schools observe in their activities.

For example, the teaching plan for 2015–2017 of one of the schools participating in the project provides for a single programme – Sexuality Education and Preparation for Family Life Programme – set out in the documents of the Ministry which deals with gender equity. Due to various speculations on the definition of gender, confusion with gender diversity, etc. this subject is very sensitive, not considered a priority, so school communities do not include it on a voluntary basis in their teaching plans. In order the schools could implement the programmes on gender equality, this issue must become part of the activities of the Ministry. The issue of educating the society also remains very important.

Qualitative research data analysis

Gender stereotypes

Stereotypical perceptions

The data collected during the focus group interviews show that gender-stereotypical thinking is characteristic among pupils. When describing a female pupils emphasise such stereotypical features as gentleness, humbleness, modesty and empathy,

Ema: “<...>I would describe a girl as a very gentle creature interested in feelings, emotions.”

Miglė: “<...> girls rely more on emotional intelligence and use intuition for everything”

Lukas: “<...> women are guided more by emotions”

They describe a young male as straightforward, tenacious, with logical thinking, etc.

Miglė: “<...> men generally... they, of course, frequently try to show their strength.”

Ema: “<...>I would describe a guy as a kind of an honourable creature who respects himself. Self-confident, strong ... mmm... Perhaps eloquent and seeking to achieve something in their career.”

Lukas: “<...> men are more [guided by *author’s note] logic”

Pupils also tend to describe gender by emphasising differences in appearance or conduct. They attribute more humble and modest behaviour to girls and more negative behaviour to boys.

Rokas: “Women wear skirts and men don’t <...> and [girls *author’s note] wear earrings”

Edita: “[girls *author’s note] are more beautiful than guys”

Joana: “[guys *author’s note] do all sorts of nonsense, talk beside the point”

It is interesting that the stereotypes of pupils varied geographically.²² Pupils from districts are more open and directly described the “obvious” stereotypes associated with looks and behaviour,

Rokas: “They are just interested in makeup that’s all.”

Lukas: “<...> I still think that a girl should show restraint not be too forward<...> Well, we, men or boys don’t like such girls, who are too forward, jump on the guy.”

In the meantime, gender stereotypes indicated by pupils in the cities were more subtle and less related to appearance or conduct and were related more with hobbies and interests.

²² One focus group organised in a city (I FC) and the other in a district (II FC).

Stereotypical thinking is reinforced by the attitudes of teachers. Although teachers, like other members of the public, declare that they do not discriminate against and do not divide, in practice, the discussion highlighted a number of stereotypical attitudes directly related to different expectations of teachers' behavioural "standards" for girls and boys.

Julija: *"They [guys *author's note] are more sincere and open."*

Diana: *"<...> for the boys, by their nature they tend to want to be the centre of attention, don't want to be pushed aside, invisible."*

Ramunė: *"<...> it's sometimes easier to deal with them [guys *author's note] <...> without any intrigues."*

Ramunė: *"After all girls are perhaps more understanding, more helpful."*

Algimantas: *"<...> when you need to put up a net, then guys of course do more serious stuff, i.e. put up poles."*

There are teachers who consider stereotypical thinking as a value and emphasize it, they do not consider it as harmful.

Julija: *"<...> if you need to push desks, then I'd invite the guys <...>"*

Ausra: *"<...> I ask the boys to do it, whether it is to carry a desk or you need masculine strength, height."*

Sonata: *"<...> where it is necessary to carry something, you would not get some Rasa, Viltė to go and get the books. You say 'well guys who will help'. We do so naturally."*

Stereotypical perceptions can be felt and noticed by pupils themselves, especially when it comes to learning.

Emā: *"I think that it depends on the teacher, not on the subject. There are indeed girls who are good at Physics, better than some boys, but this is [a stereotype *author's note] that girls don't do well at exact sciences."*

Emā: *"<...> for example, regarding motors [internal combustion *author's note], when they asked about them, say, in our class all [*girls], well those who raised their hands, but they, for instance, didn't ask the girls, but boys and they [*boys] went quiet, they didn't say anything. And then <...> they said, guys, you don't know anything, you have some girls here, dadada... The guys are not obliged to know about cars or about engines... people are entirely different."*

Miglė: *"There is a topic, we will be learning this or that and I [girl *author's note] devoted a lot of my time, got ready, because I want to learn because I like it now. <...> I want to tell the teacher so she could see how interested I am. But she would not listen to me, because she said: 'you'd better talk guys'"*

Miglė: *"Well I understand, of course, that a man would lift more weight than a woman. Yes, but, for example when playing volleyball, they immediately would say, you, girls, go and learn and to the boys – you can play here, although some guys, for example, are hardly serving a ball."*

First of all, teachers do not identify one or other type of behaviour as stereotypical or discriminatory, although some recognise certain attitudes as stereotypical, they present it as the fact without noting that this should be changed, etc.

Ramunė: *“I have noticed that some smaller jobs, such as cleaning the chalkboard, are preferred by the girls they offer to do it themselves or the boys say: well, girls are more accustomed to cleaning, so let them do it. This means that cleaning is a woman’s job.”*

Julija: *“For example, computer technology... if something goes wrong, the computer crashes down or similar, then immediately and naturally everyone looks at the boys that they should help with it.”*

Ramunė: *“<...> in one classroom they were arranging desks for a group work, <...> so <...> the girls waited while the boys... they said ‘gentlemen, as always’.”*

Teachers interpret the same behaviour of girls and boys differently. They treat the girls’ aspirations to participate in the school self-government as negative, inappropriate behaviour, at the same time the participation of boys in self-government is viewed as positive, inherent. Expectations with respect to the girls and boys are very different.

Teachers consider that the girls are more talkative, capricious, “demanding everything and raising hell because of nothing”, so teachers often tell them off in class for making noise, “quieten them down”, although it was clearly the guys who were making the noise. But at the same time this is expected of them, the girls, they should be calm, tidy and attentive, so if a guy does something wrong, he is made to sit with the girls, because they are calm and orderly, therefore, they would discipline the boy. Girls and boys are often held to double standards and their behaviour is treated differently both during school and extra-curricular activities.

It is obvious that the teachers’ statements about appearance and behaviour match the traditional male and female roles prevailing in society.

Breaking stereotypes

Nonetheless, the discussions revealed critical attitudes of some pupils to gender stereotypes. Pupils are aware that the different behaviour of girls and boys is determined by established perceptions in society and they understand that it is not mandatory to act in accordance with these perceptions.

They note that attitudes to gender roles in society change in the course of history, they themselves break stereotypes, but in the general context are often guided by stereotypical perceptions.

Vilius: *“<...> The main difference between a man and a woman is biological, biological body structure. Indeed, there is no more difference. Although, <...> women rely more on emotions and men – on logic, it is worth mentioning this here.”*

Only personal experience, with examples of non-stereotypical behaviour or interest in specifically feminist, gender equality themes promote non-stereotypical attitudes and pose challenge to gender stereotypes of pupils.

Edita: *“My mom drives a truck.<...> I would drive one.”*

Ema: *“ [for a girl *author’s note] appearance is perhaps important to some extent, who wishes to be wise and to achieve something. Who wishes to be financially independent.”*

Gabija: *“<...> finally we are all different and a guy may be gentle, not necessarily strong and so forth.”*

Miglė: *“Fifty years ago, I believe, after the war there was still the same order that only men can be sovereigns and only they can have the biggest influence, because they are more logical. It was thought that women were affected too much by emotion and thus they were pushed aside.”*

Lukas: *“There is this stereotype that if it is a guy, he must know everything about cars, about computers, but, for example, a guy could be into history, he may loves history so much that he is not interested in cars.”*

Vilius: *“<...> it’s about children...it’s absolutely about upbringing, there is, for example, a perception that the mother alone should not be left to do everything involving a child. Both parents must contribute equally to the child’s upbringing. It can’t be the case that the husband is working and the wife is sitting at home <...>”*

Lukas: *“I don’t think that those girls should be underestimated so much [it’s presumed that the girls know nothing about machinery *author’s note]”*

When during the discussion the experience and environment were assessed from the point of view of gender, pupils began to draw attention to the inequalities noted above. Different expectations and behavioural standards applicable to girls and boys.

Miglė: *“<...> for example when my brother was sixteen, he could stay longer outdoors, while I could not be out that long I had to come home earlier, because it was dangerous for a girl to be alone. This perhaps gives more freedom to the guys than to the girls. Meanwhile they would say to the girls: ‘you are a girl, you can’t wonder around like guys. I felt this <...> that my brother was allowed slightly more freedom.”*

Ingrida: *“<...> when we were small and my brother played with cars, I also liked to play with cars. But he wouldn’t allow me. He would throw dolls at me and say, ‘play with those, you are a girl’. And I was not allowed to play with him, and they would say, ‘go play with your friends’.”*

Pupils also identified that certain perceptions (for example, that the boys must know and understand machinery and they are interested in it) constrained and adversely affected the pupils and their learning outcomes.

Miglė: *“you [guy *author’s note] must know about it, because otherwise you will lose your self-esteem.”*

Teachers also had examples of non-stereotypical behaviour, but they did not distinguish it or used it as an example. Where certain achievements are attributed to a pupil according to their abilities, within the overall context this is not connected with breaking gender stereotypes.

Ramunė: *“<...> there is a girl, too, who is responsible for these activities, and it appears she is the best at information technology subjects and the guys say right away that she will put things right.”*

Algimantas: *“<...>, when it came to writing a list nicely, <...> everyone looked at one boy, because he has nice handwriting and he’s all right ... he is already being recognized, as I understand, that his handwriting is nice <...>.”*

When assessing specific situations teachers pointed out the fact that gender characteristics traditionally attributed to one gender may be displayed in the other gender, but this is viewed more as an individual trait rather than a trait shared by both genders.

Sonata: “If anything has to be done ... traditionally the girls are perhaps more active. They are frequently possibly more active, more courteous, more sociable, but there are also boys who are very willing and show initiative.”

Julija: “<...> I wanted to say that the girls seem to carry out work more thoroughly, but now I have very diligent boys.”

Through practical examples teachers identify that diversity is important, that certain public expectations with respect to women and men are incorrect, but they hardly identify this as gender stereotypes or discrimination on grounds of gender.

Algimantas: “<...> I have young riflemen and am heading towards stronger integration of girls with the Military Academy and the military service, because they have good conditions there and they survive, and those who survive, I really talked to them, they liked it very much.”

Algimantas: “<...> men perhaps are necessary, but certainly not... There is a shortage of men, but there must be salaries for women too, because they are in the role of teachers... They must be praised, maybe they should go higher than men. They are creative, men don't weave in and out, but women, I appreciate their qualities.”

Sonata: “I don't think that men and women should be paid differently for the same work, I categorically disagree with it, but I admit that we need men in schools, so under such conditions we would not attract them.”

Although examples from the personal life of pupils, their interest in the gender topic or a deeper discussion on the topic encourage them to identify stereotypical behaviour and break stereotypes, unfortunately, among teachers non-stereotypical examples are more associated with individual exclusive characteristics of people.

Also, in the classroom teachers are not inclined to extend the debate when it comes to gender stereotypes, because they do not have information on gender topics, stereotypes and discrimination. For example when analysing the question as to why Queen of England Elizabeth I found it difficult to consolidate power, teachers had an opportunity to start and develop the topic on gender stereotypes and this would have been an excellent example of discussing a “non-stereotypical profession” and the related challenges.

Gender stereotypes and profession

Stereotypical perceptions

Stereotypical thinking and gender stereotypes in schools affect pupils' approach to professions that they believe are suitable for them. When male respondents were asked about the occupation of a nursery school teacher (dominated by women), they said that they would not be able to work with children and have not even given it a thought, while girls stated that they would not wish to work in the field of information technology (dominated by men).

Jonas: “Well, if I had to be a nursery school teacher, I would really not be able to be one <...> there is so much involved in minding each child <...> For me some monotonous work, in IT would be better.”

Working with children is associated with the responsibility assigned to women and maternal love and the occupation of a nursery school teacher is clearly associated with stereotypical femininity.

*Rokas: “[Would you work as an educator in a nursery school? *author’s note] I wouldn’t <...> women must do this job <...> Women carry at all times, when they are born ... <...> the salary is small. They earn the minimum wage and do the job.”*

Vilius: “I, for instance, would very much like to be a teacher. <...>. But I could not be a teacher in a nursery school, because – and I think the majority of men would not be able to do the job – and I think that the majority of men could not be the teachers in a nursery school, because women are able to provide that feminine warmth, for example, again men teach stamina, certain values, qualities, while mothers mostly provide that maternal love.”

Judging from the pupils’ statements, it can be assumed that male pupils are not interested in the area of working with children while female pupils are not interested in the area of information technology. It is likely that this is determined by prevailing gender stereotypes, i.e. stereotypically male and female professions.

*Linus: “[Are there male and female jobs? *author’s note]. So yes, they are.”*

Rokas: “So a man would not be a cook. <...> There are [male] chefs, but not cooks.”

In terms of the labour market, stereotypical characteristics prevail, although positive characteristics are attributed to women – that they are more responsible and observant – but at the same time they are more emotional and therefore men should lead and be managers. Not knowing what certain occupations entail affects choices considerably. Furthermore, although speaking about specific “female” occupations it is emphasized that the job is difficult and demanding, within the overall context, there is an opinion that women choose easier jobs.

Rokas: “Men work more, men have more work, while women do easier jobs.”

Breaking the stereotypes

Because of personal interest, self-education and non-stereotypical examples in the society, pupils recognize gender stereotypes, emphasise non-stereotypical approaches and challenge the gender stereotypes.

Linus: “My father works for a mechanic, who works with his wife. And the wife possibly understands more than the husband.”

Edita: “How should I know, both women and men can do the same work <...> not only women are hairdressers... men can be hairdressers too.”

*Milda: “My dad does the same thing [drives a truck like her schoolmate’s mother *author’s note], it makes no difference who does it...”*

Lukas: “The managing director of Maxima is one of the most successful women, she has the best business. And I don’t believe there is any difference as to whether a woman or a man manages a company.”

Miglė: “In order for a girl to find herself, so to say, on a par with a guy she must work three times as much to prove herself, just because she is a girl.”

During the discussions the pupils raised the topic of the gender pay gap on their own initiative. However, they were most surprised that this situation exists in Lithuania, which was a cause of great dissatisfaction for them and they felt it was an injustice.

Miglė: “<...> men and women work the same amount of time <...> and do as much work; perhaps sometimes women have even more complex roles to play, but the man gets more money.”

Jonas: “I don’t quite understand why this is so. Why... when you have the same job as a man why do you earn less?”

When discussing the differences in salaries, pupils sought the reasons for it and drew attention to the prevailing perception in society regarding the stereotypical view of men as the breadwinner.

Miglė: “<...> because a man must feel that he is the strong sex, the pillar of the family and sometimes women are prevented from being the same too and sometimes it happens naturally. There is this euro and eighty four cents because of the prevailing image of the family, that only a man can be that strongest link which then feeds into everything else.”

Lukas: “Perhaps to a certain extent this comes from the family that where a husband earns more, the wife earns less, so he builds on it and thinks it must be like that... if he has his own business, so he will do like this – that a woman should earn less than a man.”

The pressure in respect to boys being the family’s breadwinners and pursue this was discussed.

Lukas: ““Perhaps this is slightly normal, because it could come from the family or from the surroundings, there is a stereotype, I think there is an attitude that if the woman earns more than a man, he should be seriously ashamed of it.”

Miglė: “<...> it will always be like this if it comes from a family where the woman earns more, attention will always be on the man that he earns less than his wife, how could it be possible ... but nobody will praise the woman for being smart and earning a lot. That sixteen cent difference... you can earn that much, more than your husband. Yet... the man is most important – they would say you are some sort of a loser...[*if you don’t earn more than a woman].”

Teachers are not inclined to see themselves as playing an important role in the choice of careers by pupils, unless in exceptional cases.

Violeta: “The headmasters have some influence and the deputy principal sometimes influences the choice or change, for example, they suggest to the weaker female pupils that they choose technology, dance or another easier subject.”

Ramunė: “And I have noticed that in choosing a profession, guys pay attention to the different occupations and what they will earn, this is the first criterion, while female pupils follow their intuition, their heart and seek a profession in which they could realize themselves.”

However, some teachers reinforced the stereotype of the man as the breadwinner confirming that the characteristic of a male profession is a good salary.

*Violeta: “<...> We need to get men [into schools *author’s note]. And in order to attract men, they are all... no matter what equal rights we will talk about, a husband must really look after the children, at least the children. If the wife can earn. That’s it... A man must get a normal salary <...>”*

Teachers also spoke about the wage differences.

Violeta: “<...> girls frequently mention that nevertheless girls, women earn less than boys, therefore women often talk about going abroad, men know that women are discriminated against in this area <...>”

However in a deeper discussion they did not relate it to gender stereotypes, but rather to the prestige of the profession.

However, among pupils and teachers the opinion that there are occupations more suitable for girls and those that are more suitable for boys both due to their different characteristics and family responsibilities prevails.

Textbook content analysis

- Gender-neutral language is most commonly used in the teaching material. Masculine gender words are mostly used in examples, descriptions and characteristics.
For example, the task which asks to describe characteristics lists potential professions (policeman, athlete teacher, student, physician, soldier, researcher, etc.) using masculine nouns to name the profession (Textbook for Lithuanian Language and Literature, grade 6, Part 1, Gitana Notrimaitė-Muzikevičienė, Inga Gresienė, Saulius Žukas, Baltos Lankos, 2017).
- The visual material is exclusively dominated by men as entrepreneurs, politicians or researchers, while women are very rarely shown, generally depicting them with the family or doing household chores.
- There are more characters or examples from the literary works by male rather than female authors. More tasks and time are allocated for their examination and analysis. They are also presented as having more power and force.
For example, when analysing ancient antiquity myths, the focus is solely on Gods, their role and influence without mentioning Goddesses. Tasks also focus only on Gods and heroes. Only a few texts mention Athena, but she is neither analysed nor examined in detail in the tasks, it is not encouraged to take interest in her and her influence.
When analysing Lithuanian mythological creatures, mostly male creatures such as Thunder, Devil, etc. are analysed. If a female deity is described only negative characteristics are specified (Textbook for Lithuanian Language and Literature, grade 6, Part 1, Gitana Notrimaitė-Muzikevičienė, Inga Gresienė, Saulius Žukas, Baltos Lankos, 2017).
- Stereotypical examples of professions are presented in the teaching material, especially for career guidance: images of nurses and office administrators depict women, while those of architects or engineers depict men (Career Guidance, pupil’s book, Lithuanian Centre of Non-formal Youth Education).

The textbook content analysis has showed that prevailing gender stereotypes in society reflect in the teaching material, furthermore no attempts to question or break them are made.

Recommendations and suggestions

- Implementation of gender equality must be included not only in the Government programmes of the Republic of Lithuania, but also in the programmes of the Ministry responsible for education and must be evaluated by experts in order to plan specific measures and to provide financing for the implementation of these measures.
- The topic of gender equality must be included in the education programmes prepared by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, curricula, subject syllabuses and plans. Inclusion of the topic of gender equality in these documents will be a prerequisite for including it in textbooks, recommendations for teachers, qualification training and lessons.
- The topic of gender equality must be included in the content of teacher training and qualification training, because both new teachers and those already employed are not familiar with gender equality, gender stereotypes or discrimination on grounds of gender and are directly responsible for the repetition and enforcement of stereotypes in schools.
- Teaching material and material of career guidance consultants must also be updated with the aspects of gender equality by incorporating the gender equality topics into the content, presenting non-stereotypical examples and using gender-sensitive language.
- Overall dissemination of information about gender stereotypes and their impact among different target audiences is also very important.

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