UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO’s top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations’ specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.

The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations’ specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.
GENDER IN EDUCATION NETWORK IN ASIA-PACIFIC (GENIA) TOOLKIT

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION
Foreword

Education is a powerful tool that can help to break stigma and encourage inclusiveness. For decades, UNESCO has convened with civil society organizations, national programmes, educators, teachers and parents to ensure inclusive, equitable, quality education for a diverse range of learners through a myriad of programmes that provide innovative solutions. Gender equality is a priority at UNESCO. Providing girls and boys, women and men, with the same opportunities to access education that is safe from gender-based violence, unbiased in its curriculum and empowers girls and women to take up leadership roles, is necessary to building a world that is more just and balanced.

The work of UNESCO feeds directly into Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 and 5, along with the Education 2030 Agenda, which aim to ensure that “girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education.” Great strides have been made towards achieving these goals. Nevertheless, more girls than boys remain out of school; 16 million girls will never set foot in a classroom and women account for two-thirds of the 750 million adults without basic literacy skills. Participation alone will not improve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming throughout the entire education process will facilitate closing the gap of economic and political disparities between men and women, boys and girls. This is an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education policies and programmes, so that girls, boys, women, and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

The GENIA Toolkit was originally designed in 2003 when the Gender in Education Network in Asia Pacific was established (few gender in education resources were available at that time). In its fifth iteration, the GENIA Toolkit has expanded past the classroom. While it is critical to consider curriculum, assessment and pedagogy in gender mainstreaming, these approaches must be strengthened by clearly articulated policies. To assist educators, administrators and teachers in conceptualizing their impact on the education system, this toolkit includes examples of gender-responsive policies and national education sector plans.

The GENIA Toolkit is a powerful resource to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the classroom and education system. A myriad of users, including educators, administrators and teachers, can utilize the tools to spark discussions among their peers and apply technique to their practice. The toolkit touches on four themes: concepts; gender-responsive education policy; mainstreaming gender equality in education, and capacity building.

As UNESCO continues to uphold the value of gender equality in education, it is our hope that resources like the GENIA Toolkit will empower policy-makers, administrators and teachers to make all levels of education more inclusive for diverse learners.

Shigeru Aoyagi
Director
UNESCO Bangkok
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This publication is the fifth revised edition of the Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit, which is updated regularly to reflect the most recent developments in gender in education. This edition has been shaped by gender specialists across the Asia-Pacific region who have contributed their expertise. The Toolkit was produced by the Section for Inclusive Quality Education at UNESCO Bangkok.

The fifth edition was revised and updated by Ingrid Lewis and Juliette Myers, based on original content by David Clarke. The Toolkit revision process was coordinated and led by Kyungah Bang (Programme Officer, Section for Inclusive Quality Education of UNESCO Bangkok) under the overall guidance of Maki Hayashikawa (Chief, Section for Inclusive Quality Education of UNESCO Bangkok).

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Introduction

Under the new Sustainable Development Goal agenda, gender equality and education are important concerns. The achievement of gender equality requires girls, boys, women and men to access their right to good quality education and training throughout their lives. Education can empower people to participate actively in their societies, access better economic opportunities and build healthy, happy lives and communities.

This updated and expanded version of the GENIA Toolkit is designed for use by gender focal points and education planners and implementers. It introduces key concepts and theoretical debates, and outlines practical approaches for mainstreaming gender equality throughout the education system, and within education policy.

The toolkit is designed to be used selectively, depending on the user’s needs. It can be used as a self-study tool. Readers can select topics that they have identified as priority learning areas to help them improve their own understanding and practical capacity.

The toolkit can also be used by trainers to facilitate training sessions. Trainers can choose tools from the kit that best match the needs of their trainees. It may be useful to conduct a simple pre-training needs assessment to help you identify your trainees’ experiences and strengths, and the areas they most want or need to learn about or gain confidence in.

Trainers are encouraged to adapt the materials. Each tool provides useful information, suggested activities, and short recommended reading lists. References for sources cited in the training are provided in endnotes.

Trainers will need to decide how much information to share with trainees, and design training sessions with a good mix of presentations and active learning, so that they demonstrate learner-centred, inclusive approaches to teaching and learning. This toolkit – as the name suggests – provides a collection of tools for trainers to dip into, rather than a prescriptive training course that needs to be followed step-by-step and word-for-word.