



From gender practices to gender policy: a participatory case study of Armenian public school community

Harutyun Vermishyan
Sona Balasanyan

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1. Executive Summary

Throughout the time of working with the school, we tried to demonstrate how gender-reflexivity (starting from self-reflection of teachers) could help the school in achieving their overall objectives in teaching and learning, as well as in setting higher standards for the pupils' quality of life. All of the project based discussions with the school teaching personnel were directed to the development of gender equality objectives and a gender equality scheme (contested within the gender policy) through consultation and gender impact assessment (starting with self-evaluations). Basic generated idea was that the school had crucial role to play in ensuring that girls and boys benefit from equality of opportunity in all areas of their school life and beyond. Progress in project activities showed that there is a crucial need in addressing the challenge of stereotyping. It was highlighted that this affects viewpoints on the curriculum, and, future career, citizenship, personal, social and health education of the pupils. Strong emphasis was put on the importance of the school to set a framework, which tackled the factors that affect pupil attainment, including (i) gender, (ii) social class/socio-economic status. The discussion with teachers on challenging gender environment and stereotypes was extremely important. It has to be noted that the teachers and the school principle were extremely open to discussion and possible change. Throughout participative in-group and individual discussions with teachers it became clear, that gender stereotyping prevents some boys engaging with schools and limits girls' and boys' ability to pursue their interest and talents equally and accordingly. On the other hand, the school faced the problem of unisex classrooms in case of physics mathematics and humanities specialized high school classes. The school was also challenged by the advanced worldviews of the pupils and difficult behaviours, as well as pupil's training. Boy underachievement issue was also a common school problem. All of the teachers accepted that girls as a group were achieving better results than boys and this problem, as well as the other problems had to be addressed by the gender policy. Pupils' attainment rate was higher for girls than the boys even though the school tried to take certain controlling measures enrolling the parents. Moreover, the situation was complex as certain groups of boys did as well as girls, whilst other groups of boys performed very badly. Girls were seen as being less integrated in sports and physical education compared to boys. Work with the school showed that family had a very important impact on gender beliefs and attitudes common at the school (among schoolchildren) and this in reference to the families of

pupils', as well as the families of teachers or teachers' family status, hence the gender policy had to address these issues as well. Information was collected on possible activities or initiatives that would school support the school.

Gender sensitive curriculum was another very important topic for discussions and for setting priorities. Namely, the school accepted that public authorities are responsible for national school curriculum and the text-books, but we dedicated time and efforts to make the school teaching staff believe that their own classrooms and teaching attitudes are very important and the school had to accept itself as a policy maker organization.

Finally, the school also set priorities in the "Every child matters" approach that was to be represented in the final gender policy in details.

2. Problem Description and Research Purpose

Problem Description

Public school in Armenia represents a predominantly feminine teaching community¹. Meanwhile, education has the basic role of social reproduction. Taking into account the masculine patterns of the Armenian society the core research question here were the following:

- How and in which circumstances the feminine school community actually produced/reproduced masculinity?
- How to prevent the workout of masculine social structures within the school by producing an efficient school gender policy?

The answer to the question rested within the daily school practices highly problematic in terms of gender stereotypes.

The complexity of school management refers to teaching and management staff, governing bodies, parents and the pupils, and most importantly it deals with strategic planning, policies and procedures, codes of ethics in order to maintain the due course of school functioning. The school we worked with was an example of how the school community did not realize the importance of policies (including gender policy) for not only their pupils, but for every representative of the school community and the society as whole.

Qualitative research directed to the investigation of Armenian women teachers' gender perception of gender socialization and school gender environment showed that these women needed self-reflection and guidance principles in their not only educational, but also school social practices². The school illustrated a good example on how the school community in Armenia needed strong consultation on the school management elements and concrete steps towards the design and implementation of policies and procedures. In particular, it needed a gender policy in order to maintain gender balanced and healthy environment in an already misbalanced gender environment (women teachers predominating in schools, masculine social structures predominating within the society).

¹ Official statistical data provided by the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Education for 2012-2013 year shows that the ratio between men and women teachers in Yerevan public schools was almost 1 to 8. See the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Education and Science official website // <http://stat.amedu.am/?section=content&id=37&year=2012> ;<http://stat.amedu.am/?section=content&id=27&year=2012> (05.04.2014)

² Being a H. Boell scholarship holder S. Balasanyan conducted a research entitled "The teacher: A woman (The Case of Yerevan City)". Her research showed that feminine teaching community of the Armenian school is led by maternal instincts, feminine problems of dealing with masculinity social structures and gender stereotypes rather than the professional ethics. The research based article is in print.

It has to be noted, that the school we worked with emphasized the need for advice and was already disappointed by the researchers who attained it, gathered information and left without any change or added value to school activities. This point made us realize how sharp is the problem of participation of the researchers in the school life. A whole branch of participative and also action research was seen to be missing even based on a single case study.

Schools in developed countries have already recognized the importance of having gender policy. Many overseas schools all over the world have already implemented gender policies that touch various aspects of school life (curriculum and teaching, admissions and discipline, personal development and growth, realization and success, attitudes, parenting and community partnership) actually directed to the formation of healthy societies without gender pathologies deeply rooted within school environments. The basic problem was the ‘translation’ of such success into Armenian (fitting the accepted principles worldwide into the Armenian school context).

The Purpose of the Research

The basic purpose of the project was to realize a participatory case study with the aim of designing a gender policy that would reflect and guide the actual daily gender practices of the school helping the school to overcome gender-related problems.

The research conducted in the frames of the research project concentrated on a single school (case). One public school was selected and we worked together with the school community members (principle, headteacher and teachers) in a participatory environment. The teaching and administrative staff of the school were directly enrolled in the design process of their school gender policy. This presupposed:

- Revealing of the specific gender environment of the school (gender statistics, teaching staff appearances, pupils’ gender socialization preconditions).
- Examination of the curriculum content in line with gender attitudes/beliefs/stereotypes of the teaching staff (the teachers reflect their gender perceptions in the framework of the subjects thought by them).
- Creation of the gender equality scheme (GES).
- Design of the GES based gender policy and drawing perspectives for the policy realization/implementation.

3. Research Methodology

A participatory case study of an Armenian single public school community in Yerevan indicated a case study model research that engaged the teaching and management staff of the school, pupils in all of the phases of the research including conceptualization of the school gender environment, data gathering the actual data based design of the gender policy. The school was selected taking into account the motivation of the school to participate in the project. The critique from the school community representatives was welcomed throughout the research, as the policy implementation would ideally lead the school gender practices later on (after the end of the project). The research hence was drawn on the perspectives of the school community, but it also contributed to their self-reflection and comprehension of their gender policy and future development of gender sensitive curriculum and environment. The research was based on the partnership approach in which the school community was actively engaged. The participation of the school community and the efforts of the researchers were directed to:

- Ongoing planning of the research and data gathering (desk review, curriculum content analysis, group discussions and individual interviews)
- Data analysis, GES creation and gender policy design.

Activities:

- ***Realization of internet based research and contacting the schools overseas***- we unified an exemplary gender policies catalogue and envisioned the specific framework for the policy to be created in a participatory manner.
- ***Participatory problem definition***- we and the school community members analyzed the current state of the situation. We portrayed the gender environment of the school through the desk review, curriculum discussions (both individual and in-group), retrospection of the past experience and self-reflection.
- ***Identification of gender equality objectives***-through self-evaluation techniques and self-reflection the school community members (teaching and management staff) collaborated with us to identify why they needed a gender policy.
- ***Discussion of “gender and every child matter” issue***- the teaching staff and the we were engaged in the process of envisioning the individual dimension of gender equity policy.
- ***Reflection of the gender stereotypes***- based on the activities performed we organized individual and group discussions with the school community members discussing their daily observations with them regarding the stereotype-driven gender perceptions and the ways/possibilities/necessities of overcoming the formers.

- ***Envisioning the daily work challenges***- the project participants were individually and in-group involved in an extensive discussion of the school everyday life and the local/situational sexual bullying and misbalance in gender role distribution/perception.
- ***Finalizing of the self-evaluation report and creation of the GES***- bases on the performed activities a self-evaluation report was finalized based on the records kept throughout the already performed activities. The report hence reflected the current state of the situation, aspects of the issue (stereotypes, daily work challenges, “every child matters” issues). Based on the self-evaluation report the GES was created.
- ***Actual design of the gender policy and approving of the former by the school principal***- based on the gender policy catalogue and participative case study outputs (self-evaluation report including the GES) the policy was put into the framework envisioned and prepared by the us and the school community members (teachers, principle, headteacher).
- ***Discussion of the possibilities and perspective of the policy realization and implementation***- the policy was discussed and its contribution to the gender sensitivity curriculum development was envisioned.

4. Gender Equality Scheme

Vision and values

- Our school promotes gender equality and eliminates discrimination on the grounds of gender with the commitment of constructing a gender-balanced healthy environment. Gender equality is rooted in our attempts of promoting equalities and valuing the individuality of every child in our school.

School context

- Our school is committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. This includes recognizing where appropriate the different needs of the pupils and ensuring that these are addressed. The school does not tolerate bullying of any kind.
- In common with many primary schools, the school workforce is mainly female. Within this context, we aim to give careful consideration of how we can promote gender equality, and cater for the minority and majority in each class and within the staff.
- We try to ensure that classes are equally balanced with regard to gender. We pay attention to unisex classes (physics mathematics (primarily boys) and humanities (primarily) girls) to ensure their engagement with the broader outer-class school environment having the formation of gender-balanced classes as a long term goal.
- The gender balance is also considered when pupils are divided into ability groups/sets.
- We understand that our pupils are receiving much internet and mass media based information that in line with positively affecting their studies, also causes undesirable effect on their perceptions of gender roles, behavior and relationships among sexes. We try to maintain a friendly environment to be informed on pupil's concerns and be able to address their informational/clarification needs. We try to make the school environment interesting for them and also to create their school environment as the major important knowledge based environment in their life.
- We try to make the pupils familiar not only to their own rights, but also to their responsibilities emphasizing the need for respect of other's rights.
- We prevent our pupils from a stratified environment where the socioeconomic status of the pupils might give privilege to the pupils from rich families.
- We face boy underachievement issue and try to realize activities increasing the achievement among boys.
- We try to create an environment where pupils do not need to create gender based leadership groups leaving other pupils out of their 'privileged' groups.

- We understand that we need to challenge our own understanding of gender equality because of the effects of masculine society within which our school operates.

Other school policies

- This Gender Equality Scheme (GES) will fit in with the school's core values and with other school policies. A lot of policies to be created later on will potentially impact the areas relating to gender, for example the anti-bullying policy, the behaviour policy and the sex and relationships education policy. As school policies are revised and updated, or new policies introduced, they will be reviewed to consider if there are any gender equality considerations that should be incorporated in the gender policy.

Aims of the Scheme

- Our school seeks to promote gender equality in all aspects of its work, including
 - ✓ Teaching and learning,
 - ✓ Curriculum,
 - ✓ Policy development,
 - ✓ School ethos,
 - ✓ Partnership with parents, carers, social workers, psychologists and the community.
- The school also aims to promote gender equality and eliminate gender discrimination in its role as an employer, including
 - ✓ Recruitment, retention and promotion,
 - ✓ Training and career advancement,
 - ✓ Equal pay,
 - ✓ Challenging sexual harassment and homophobia.

Key Responsibilities

- Our school principle is responsible for:
 - ✓ Ensuring the Gender Equality Scheme (GES) is implemented.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for:
 - ✓ Implementing the Scheme,
 - ✓ Ensuring teaching and supporting staff have access to appropriate training on gender equality and raising boys' achievement (a set priority),
 - ✓ Identifying members of staff to lead on gender equality and lead seminars on the topic for other staff representatives.
- The Head Teacher has responsibility for gender equality and will consult with stakeholders through for example:

- ✓ Ensure curriculum management teams review school policy and practice from a gender equality perspective.
- ✓ Communicate widely with researchers, social workers, psychologists,
- ✓ Working with teachers focusing on at least one strategy which will address the aims of the school's Gender Equality Scheme.
- Teachers are expected to:
 - ✓ Have high expectations of both genders in terms of behaviour, standards of work and presentation.
 - ✓ Avoid gender bias in, for example:
 - Allocation of groups for practical activities for classroom duties,
 - Teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction.
 - ✓ Promote gender equality in the classroom, for example by:
 - Consideration of size and composition of groups according to task, including mixed or single sex groups within subject areas for a specific reason.
 - Engaging unisex classrooms to broader school environment not to isolate the classroom from gender balanced environment.
 - Positively involving quiet and less confident girls and boys.
 - Involving pupils in discussions about gender.
 - Challenging stereotypes and promoting positive gender images.
 - Continually conduct literature review on the topic to conceptualize our school context gender related issues.
 - ✓ Use flexible range of teaching and learning styles, to raise achievement of both genders, taking on board what is known about key features that raise boys' achievement.

Learning and teaching

- Our school encourages a flexible range of learning and teaching styles, including those that are known to be key features of raising boys' achievement such as:
 - ✓ Providing a range of activities in each lesson,
 - ✓ Encouraging pupils to discuss work together,
 - ✓ Encouraging risk-taking,
 - ✓ Giving regular positive feedback,
 - ✓ Allowing time for reflection and review,
 - ✓ Promoting in-class as well as between-class collaboration.

Curriculum

- Gender equality will be promoted through the curriculum, for example:
 - ✓ Gradually inviting male lecturers/speakers in order to break the stereotype of a woman teachers among pupils.
 - ✓ Incorporating into the curriculum positive role models demonstrating the achievements of men and women in non stereotypical contexts (e.g. women scientists and engineers, men in caring roles, household division of labour, bus driver women, hero women etc.).
 - ✓ Work on combating stereotypical views, for example using drama to counter gender stereotypes, and provide both sexes with opportunities to empathize with problems the other may face.
 - ✓ Highlighting bias found in books for discussion with pupils and promoting discussion among them.
- Curriculum planning and resources will take account of gender equality, for example:
 - ✓ Resources, especially older books, will be checked for gender bias.
 - ✓ Learning outcomes being clear and shared with pupils, especially boys need to be well aware of the purpose and do-good potential of the tasks. Our experience shows that boys tend to be practical thinkers very much being influenced by the ‘unfair’ socioeconomic environment of our society, as well as migration issues (not seeing their future in the country). On the other hand, some girls tend to be ‘conformists’ and we will need to promote their self-confidence and highlight their individuality. We will try to keep a good balance between active and passive pupils in order to let both groups benefit from a group work.

School ethos

- The school culture and environment will promote equality through such strategies as:
 - ✓ Promoting a culture of caring masculinity,
 - ✓ Pupils will be encouraged to reject violence and aggression and openly express feelings without fear of embarrassment,
 - ✓ We will use assemblies to help celebrate achievements, raise issues of gender equality,
 - ✓ Using posters and displays to promote gender equality.
- Gender will be considered in assessment, recording and reporting of pupils’ achievements, for example:

- ✓ Setting challenging but achievable short-term targets, action plans will be developed to address this.
- ✓ Celebrating wide ranging achievements of women, men, girls and boys regardless of their sexual orientation. We will gradually invite promising young people to represent their ‘success stories’.

Partnership with parents and carers

- Our school’s Gender Equality Scheme (GES) will be shared with parents, carers who can support the school in a range of ways, such as:
 - ✓ Through the academic mentoring scheme which target key leaders amongst the boys and the girls who are at risk of disassociating from the school’s values, involving parents/carers and people from the local community.
 - ✓ Encouraging male and female parents/carers to participate in the school and after-school activities, as well as in the events organized by the school.
 - ✓ Including specific issues, such as improving organizational skills of boys and how these could be supported at home, in the home-school agreement.

This scheme will be reviewed in April and revised in August 2017

Date

Signatures

5. School Gender Equality Policy

Date of issue: February 2015

Review Date: August 2017

Foreword:

- At our school we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for staff, pupils and all those receiving services from the school, irrespective of gender. The achievement of all pupils and students will be monitored on the basis of gender and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.
- We will aim to provide our pupils with a firm foundation which will enable them to fulfill their potential, regardless of gender stereotypes.
- We will eliminate and assure equity by fulfilling our duties as an employer.
- We believe that gender balanced school environment and gender sensitive teaching and learning is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn and teach.
- This policy outlines how we will promote the gender equality in our school and set out our priorities action plan for the next 3 years.

Social context

- We understand that there are widespread problems across our country in regards to gender and even the conceptualization of the ‘term’ itself, but we will contribute in dissemination of the socially important meaning of gender equity and emphasize the context specific issues we meet.
- In our activities we see that both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs and such stereotyping has to be understood in reference to the pupils, broader school community, parents and the community of researchers and professionals with whom we will maintain ties to ensure that the school operated in accordance to the policy and the gender equality scheme underpinning the latter.

The general duty

- In accordance with our school’s values, we welcome the statutory Gender Equality Scheme. In compliance with the scheme we will:
 - ✓ Eliminate gender related bullying.
 - ✓ Eliminate discrimination among pupils directly regarding gender as well as socioeconomic status of the pupils.
 - ✓ Promote gender equality.

- No pupil has to be treated less favorably than other pupils on grounds of gender. By gender related bullying we refer to behavior or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to self-esteem of the recipient or subject (to be created further: Anti-Bullying policy)
- We refer to 'gender' as contested within wider social roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognize and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.
- We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.
- Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

The specific duties

- We welcome the responsibility to think and act more strategically about gender equality. To meet the specific duties we have prepared and aim at implementing Gender Equality Action Plan which contains our current objectives. This is attached to and forms an essential part of this policy.
- In order to realized the action plan we will:
 - ✓ Collect and analyze school data and other gender equality relevant information,
 - ✓ including data about our local area,
 - ✓ Consult all staff, pupils, parents and relevant local communities,
 - ✓ Review other school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they,
 - ✓ might impact on gender equality,
 - ✓ Ensure the school community is accountable,
 - ✓ and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality,
 - ✓ Assess and address the causes of any gender pay gap,
 - ✓ Publish and implement the Action Plan with our proposed objectives and actions.
- We will:
 - ✓ Report on progress and set further objectives where necessary.
 - ✓ Review and revise the Policy and Action Plan at least every two years.

Single sex provision (where relevant)

- Where we provide for one sex only, this is to help meet the different needs of boys and girls (men and women), needs often arising out of historical and current stereotyping and unjust gender discrimination, or where there is an issue of physical intimacy or embarrassment to be considered. We do not provide activities, classes, facilities, benefits or services for one sex only if this would amount to less favourable treatment of the other sex, or where it would promote gender stereotyping and gender inequality. We do not deny one sex the same opportunities as the other and where we provide for one sex only we ensure there are equivalent and proportionate facilities, benefits or services for the other sex. We do not offer different curriculum choices to boys and girls, and where there are curriculum options we ensure that these are not in such a way that boys and girls are steered into making choices based on gender stereotypes. If requests for additional single sex activities, facilities or provision which appear to maintain or promote gender inequalities come from pupils, families or the community, these will be considered.

Breaches of the gender equality policy

- We understand that eliminating gender discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality is in part an education function and a matter of cultural change.
- This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.
- The policy will be available by e-mail, or in an enlarged print version, on request to the school principle.

Signed:

School Principle

Date:

Gender Equality Policy review date: August 2016

Gender Equality Action Plan follows attached to this policy

6. Gender Equality Action Plan

Priority	Action Required	Success Criteria	Timescale	Responsible person
Law achievement of boys	Staff training, 2 Seminars on the issue worldwide and possible solutions	Boys make greater progress in performance	September 2015-September 2016	Head teacher
Design a students' needs (related to gender environment) assessment form	Design a questionnaire for long-term use, conduct a literature review, organize a group discussions with parents and teachers, pilot the questionnaire	The Annual Survey of student's needs	Starting May 2015, First survey to be conducted October 2015	School Principle
Gathering school statistics taking gender balance into strong consideration	Trainings for staff to enhance research skills	Staff gathers data on pupils' self-esteem, goal-setting and other issues taking gender into strong consideration	Starting August 2015	Teachers' Research Exercise Group
Collaboration with researchers, social workers and psychologists	At least two speakers invited annually providing lecture on the topic (Gender in school environment) to the staff	The teaching and management staff engage actively with the discussion of gender issues	Starting September 2015	Head Teacher
Forming pupil discussion groups and engaging unisex classrooms in a broader school environment	One group discussion organized each term	The pupils are engage actively with the discussion and this promotes a creation of a gender-balanced environment	Starting November 2015	Teaching Staff

7. Recommendations

Leadership, management and governance

- Carefully monitoring of the implementation of this policy and its related procedures and strategies, creation of new policies and in general creating a policy driven management infrastructure in order to improve school practices is essential.
- Responsibilities need to be fulfilled to ensure that this policy is successfully implemented and that all those who work in the school understand what they are to do and have relevant training and support.
- The success of the school in implementing the policy can result a good example on how the school are themselves active policy making organizations. Further dissemination of the information and sharing the experience will be desirable.
- Self-reflection of a school teaching staff is currently the basic and very important way of coping with the challenge of gender bias and stereotyping, both inside and outside the classroom. It is very important to question the things which are seen as ‘normal’ due to the daily routine. For example, there are certain beliefs e.g. the girls mature sooner than boys, genetic bases of intelligence are making the pupils unequal from the beginning, the state/government is responsible for creating policies etc., that need to be overcome.
- Teaching staff have a crucial role in promoting gender equality. The effectiveness of gender policy will be judged by how successfully they encourage, support and enable boys and girls to reach their full potential, by how they ensure that boys and girls have full and equal access to the curriculum and by how that promote gender equality through learning and teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care and guidance. The contributions of school principals, school communities, parents, researchers are very important.
- Designing of strategic plans, codes of practices, as well as policies contributing to the gender equality policy realization are very important.

The school's commitment to gender equality.

- The school needs to fulfil its commitment to gender equality by promoting an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect among all members of the school community, regardless of gender., reflect on gender stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning striving to eliminate sexual and sexist bullying and prevent underachievement.

Curriculum/learning and teaching

- Ensuring that the curriculum is balanced and broadly based is very important, though everyone knows how critical are the text books in terms of gender sensitivity the school should not be regarded as a passive side of the process. The teachers have to be encouraged to criticize and provide healthy solutions that might fulfill the gaps created by unideal textbooks challenging stereotypes.
- Inviting male/speakers and lecturers to the classrooms may help break the women teacher stereotype among the students.
- Inviting prospective young people of both sexes to the schools to illustrate success stories promote pupil's learning.

Achievement/attainment/assessment/progress

- By no means high expectations have to be referred to all pupils regardless the boy underachievement issue that is common worldwide.

Attendance

- The school has to monitor attendance by gender and use data to develop strategies to address poor attendance.

Behavior

- Substantial literature review, inviting speakers from outside to talk with the teachers about gender related behavioral patterns is important.
- Teaching staff has to be encouraged to generate research skills and realize observations of pupils' behavior. Time after time, real need based experiments may provide a 'gold-standard' on the way of seeking solutions.

Community/parental consultation

- School may be very important agents for commitment to gender equality by working in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community to develop positive attitudes to gender issues.

No criticism, action and a bottom-up approach

- The schools and the teachers are tired of being criticized despite the fact that they are realizing a very hard and very unfairly paid work seeking for help, rather than criticism. This recommendation is addressed to research community that is hence invited into the field of participatory and action research in Armenian educational environment that is very much needed as it could be seen based on the participatory case study that we realized.

8. Conclusion

Participatory approach towards the gender-related issues in the Armenian schools produces results. The project revealed that the school was 'open' to discussions and was seeking advice and support in realizing the problems and finding solutions. The teachers involved in the project were not refusing self-reflection and self-evaluation. On the contrary, they were continually pointing that by discussing the issues with us they were listening to themselves which has to be regarded as a very important achievement of the project. When writing the gender equality policy with us school teachers, the head teacher and the principal were not only paying attention to their own stereotyped views, but they were enjoying the process of writing a policy and knowing how to create it addressing their own problems.

Based on the realized project we can conclude, that

- the school had lack of experience with dealing with outer-class, outer-curriculum issues, but meantime the school was open for change and was seeking support,
- the teachers had no research skills, but they had and still have the willingness to learn,
- the teachers did not highlighted crucial gender issues, but the deeper they analyzed the school the more visible the problems were becoming to them.

The project was pioneering because due to the former for the first time an Armenian public schools currently has a finalized gender equality policy, as well as an idea on how the school itself might be seen as a very important policy making organization. Hence, the project implemented a bottom-up approach towards the problem of gender equality in the Armenian schools and a conclusion was made, that the approach has a number of advantages promoting small-scale, but actual change.

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10. Annexes

Annex 1. Discussions with teachers_ themes

1. Describing the pupils
 - 1.1. Please give a general view of your pupils (description, image, types, achievement)
Separately address problems of girls and boys.
 - 1.2. What difficulties do you experience in communicating with the pupils (boys and girls). How do they interact with each other, how will you describe this process of interaction (girls-girls, boys-boys, girls-boys)?

What are the main reason underneath these descriptions provided by you?
2. Based on the descriptions, how would you reflect on your attitude toward the boys and the girls?
 - 2.1. With whom do you keep in touch with the most? Why?
 - 2.2. Which type of the pupils do you dislike?
 - 2.3. When teaching do you differentiate between boys and girls, so you give yourself an account of difference, why, in which circumstances?
3. How does the gender balance of the classroom affect the teaching and learning process and the school community in general?
4. How do you see school-parent/carer collaboration, how do you regulate the roles in pupils' socialization/upbringing?
5. Is it reasonable in terms of pedagogy to treat the boys and girls equally, why? Why not?
6. In your opinion, does the curriculum express the qualities of self of the pupils? Why yes, why not, in what ways? Is this curriculum of interest to new generation?
7. What needs to be changed in the curriculum to make it more sensitive? If no change happens, what is the role of a teacher? Why, How?
8. What the school needs today? How would you yourself change the school? What is needed for the schools to become better?
9. Now let us look at gender policies worldwide and discuss the policies, compare the contexts of policies, recognize our own problems based on the worldwide experience. This is an ongoing process, hence be free to examine the policies deeply and critically also out of our discussions.

Questions to think about out of the discussions

(for teachers)

How do you see the problems and solutions in regards to:

1. Gender balance in classrooms
2. Pupils' attainment
3. Pupils' achievement
4. Pupils' appearance, dressing, self-performance
5. Bullying
6. Collaboration with parents/carers
7. Possible initiatives
8. Pupils' needs assessment and 'every child matters principle'