

SEMINAR ON GENDER EQUALITY

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*This seminar was organized by the European Commission in cooperation with the Turkish Government in order to share expertise on this sensitive item. European experts were invited to bring their expertise. **The text below reflects the Dutch situation and is not meant as a description of, or blueprint for Turkey.** Every country and culture has its own ways in developing gender equality. Contexts, histories, threats and opportunities differ widely. EU-countries cannot say how Turkey must handle; it can tell what minimum standards in Europe are; we may inspire each other and provide some expertise. LW*

A combined hand out of

'A short history of gender equality in the Netherlands' (Ankara plenary note 7/10/08)

'Gender equality in education: a case for both men and women' (workshop on education 8/10/08)

Followed by a background discussion paper

More information: www.laukwoltring.nl

MOTTO: GENDER EQUALITY IS ABOUT WOMEN AND MEN

- Gender equality: both men & women need freedom to develop and express a personal interpretation of their femininity and masculinity with respect for others: in families, couples, alone, lesbian or homosexual.
- Women carry a double burden (work & children). Goals: justice; room for their qualities and sharing work in raising children, healthcare, education with men.
- Men may want to broaden their life, free themselves from restricting goals and life conditions, share the burden of paid work, have more time and space for fatherhood. Pressures on men are sometimes hidden. Their ways of coping with their inheritance and stress are more obvious.
- More men are concerned fathers, but many men stay behind; resist or neglect the female case or give in a bit, saying political correct things, without really changing their full time paid work perspective.
- One sided male development leads to one sided & short-sight decision making (look at the financial crisis).
- Societies can prosper and win, female & male qualities are needed
- Men may be part of the problem, but they are also part of the solution, so address them like that more than just complaints and attacks.

GENDER EQUALITY IS MORE THAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Equality is also about the right stimuli & challenges, protection (only when needed), adequate treatment and equal responsibilities.
- Equal opportunities in education needs a look at how sex (nature) *and* gender (nurture, society) result in restricted or full maturation. *We have choices here! (Biology is just the raw material that needs development: in what direction?)*
- On average boys and girls face different developmental tasks *in some aspects*. Same opportunities, ok! But same treatment in schools may lead different outcome (do not put girls in a male format or boys in a female format). This is not a plea for separate schools, but for sensitivity on differential development and learning styles. There are big overlaps.
- So: from emancipation of women (arrears and suppression) to adequate education for both sexes.

THE NETHERLANDS: FROM SEGREGATION TO MIXED SCHOOLS AND FURTHER

In this note a short history of gender equality in Dutch education on primary and secondary level from single

sex schools to co-education and now sensitivity for sex and gender; a sequence of bridging the gaps and new challenges and points of discussion

DUTCH EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY: 20TH CENTURY TILL '90^{IES}: BIG PROGRESS

- Early 20th century:
 - ♀ vote, but poor education, separate schools, poor perspectives in paid work and higher education; economic dependency.
 - Strong segregation by class, religion and sex.
 - In the Netherlands much emancipation through education
 - First religion: the right of own schools by separate religious communities in and outside Christianity under same end terms monitored and controlled by government agencies¹
 - Later class (obligatory schooling for all, gradually till 16 years, and now 18)
 - Much later: sex & gender
- 1950+:
 - More co-education, boys still dominant.
 - Girls' perspective: marriage & motherhood (loosing job) or low paid care work.
- 1970+:
 - Emancipation: sexual rights; more specific attention to girls in education on what they need for self-determination (life skills & access to labor market);
 - More ambitions & perspectives on labor market & in career choice.
 - (Many female and male teachers are cooperative on emancipation).

DUTCH EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY: '90^{IES} AND NOW... A MIXED SUCCESS...

- Quantitative disadvantages girls disappeared, now qualitative differences.
- *(Important context: schools for 2nd level, professional and higher education grew much bigger after educational and managerial reforms. Status of teachers dropped. Trend: lower wages & qualification of most teachers)*
- Girls cope better with large schools than boys, girls have better levels and faster school careers.
- Girls have in some aspects more assertiveness but: more girls and boys tend more to traditional study- and career choices than they did in the '70^{ies} and '80^{ies}
- Less male teachers (dramatic at 1st level & now trend at 2nd level too)
- More boy problems on 1st level, many fall out in 2nd level, certificates take longer. In general: boys stay behind (also in technical studies). *'We have lost the boys and men somewhere in the process...'*
 - Islamic girls: lower levels, also by class & ethnical position, but progressing. They try to escape marriage by staying at school. Hard to find a 'modern Islamic man'
 - Many Islamic boys lag far behind or fall out. They *have* problems and turn inside or externalize and a minority *causes* (big) problems

GENDER ITEMS IN DUTCH EDUCATION NOW: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, GENDERED LEVEL AND OTHER PROBLEMS

- Opportunities in school are equal. No more specific attention for sex: *"Every pupil is different"*, but still gendered treatment, stimuli, environment & perspectives.
- Hidden: *'Girls are easier to handle and do better, boys mean trouble'*

¹ Dutch society was then dominated by one interpretation of Christianity (Protestantism); Catholics were lower educated and had lower paid work. Dutch democracy gained much weight when Catholics and Protestants (including different interpretations) but also people from other religions or nonreligious people had the right to found their own schools if – and only if – they delivered the same level of competence on different subjects and end terms.

- Level problems:
 - Girls arithmetic/maths; low self acceptance, self esteem may lead to low ambition.
 - Boys language and arithmetic/maths; low self acceptance, bluff, acted-as-if self-esteem, conduct problems, *“School is for men not a place to be”*.
- Few men in educational professions
- Lack of varied and versatile male role models; many female teachers have problems with boys; mixed teams perform better.
- Boys perform less in schools; 15-20% are at risk; trend: more. Message to society: *“Use them or loose them (and they will turn against us)”*
- **In education no reduction to being male or female.** There are many overlaps; boys and girls are much more than just their sex, but feeling for sex & gender is still needed

GENDER ITEMS IN DUTCH EDUCATION NOW: ONE SIDED STUDY AND CAREER CHOICES

- Girls and boys make one sided study & career choices (some relapse).
- Causes (out of many...) on **Structural** level:
 - Organisation and regulation of education, routes and planned choice moments
 - Too early choices (pupils have influence on the path that they will follow, but have to choose before they have a clear view on their own qualities, potential and the consequences of their choice; this is also a matter of maturation)
 - Feminisation primary schools (sometimes a ‘hidden gendered curriculum’) combined with a sometimes low or biased gender awareness of female teachers
 - Emphasis on language (accent on verbal-emotional strategies)
 - Attention for ‘life skills’ has dropped in Dutch schools. After movement ‘back to the basics’ (more emphasis on language and arithmetic/mathematic) skills as swimming, self-defense, social skills, traffic, healthy food, sexual education etc. gradually vanish from the school terms)
- Causes (out of many...) on **Symbolical** level:
 - Image of jobs, careers, motherhood, fatherhood, care. Attributions.
 - Not enough many sided (male) role models
 - Teachers are less aware (then they were) of their gender specific behavior
- Causes (out of many...) on **Psychological** level:
 - Self image, self acceptance and self esteem (sometimes too low to go new directions)
 - Lack of positive expectations from parents and teachers
 - Imagery in the media leading to low self acceptance and low self esteem in girls and boys

GENDER ITEMS IN DUTCH EDUCATION NOW: CONTEXT AND BACKGROUNDS

- Qualitative gender equality (in education and elsewhere) somehow got lost in the dark, due to:
 - Last government rulings were more vague then before; nice goals lacked well structured targets and time paths. New government tries to address the problems a bit more...
 - Commercialisation of educational support structures (short term profits, less long term visions)
- Knowledge economy needs more pupils with technological backgrounds (law, economy or communication is not enough...)
- Gender discussion tends to narrow to economics & careers.
- Care for children, sick & elderly has a low status. Not all can be economized and professionalized. This item is sometimes marginalised.
- Womens’s studies are now gender studies, but have little positive attention to boy’s and male development, motives and dilemma’s

KEY QUESTIONS

- How to broaden girls' choices in education and prepare for careers?
- How to keep boys at school and be complete and successful in a balanced life (work, care, self...?)
- How to address the division of care/paid work (in society, in families and in individuals)
- How to address the restrictive male culture
- These are all barriers for gender equality but in schools hardly an item anymore

MEASURES ADVISED

- More attention by teachers and career advisors for:
 - future choices between work and care (by girls and boys)
 - career choices: girls & technology / (boys & care: practice periods)
- Research on school methods
- Upgrading teachers position; more boys in teacher academies (now 5% or less)
- More Dutch language education and support for parents from other cultures

But:

- Still poor attention on boys in schools
- Research needed for more adequate education boys and girls

DISCUSSION

- Gender equality is about Women and men. It's about opportunities, stimuli and responsibilities. Societies must look for win-win, or there will be much resistance and much energy is lost. Some friction is inevitable of course, but men will not follow female emancipation automatically.
- When parents have low rearing skills they need more support. Some tasks shift to school. Back-to-basics (language and arithmetics) may result in even bigger problems. Qualification of teachers (female and male) is essential, not only in the basics, but also life skills with feeling for gender issues!
- Protection ICT-influence and making young people able to defend themselves. Protection against sexual violence remains important.
- If societies & only money-based economies neglect rearing children, education, health & care: trouble ahead (population pyramid changes!)
- Men can be disciplined (army), forced to work, seduced with money to a career. This does not apply for basic attachment, care and family life. Therefore we have to dig deeper into their development, their motives and their dilemma's, and take them as serious as women's....
- Broader orientation men in education, career choice and father-hood rights may help to lift barriers for double burdened women.
- Broader orientation of men in society: less short-sighted decisions (financial crisis); better for rearing, education, care and environment

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

More information:

Background discussion paper (next pages)

Dutch report in preparation on 4-yearly report under UN-CEDAW-treaty, made by Sardes by government order Dutch Ministry of Education, DCE (2006)

And: www.laukwoltring.nl (more on boys development. Bi-lingual; backgrounds, tips, many resources)

(Background paper on two PPoint presentations (Tuesday 7/10 in Plenary session and Wednesday 8/10 in Workshop on Education)

GENDER EQUALITY, A CASE FOR BOTH WOMEN AND MEN

A report from the Netherlands

Lauk Woltring *Gender issues, Male development* ; Innovations & Consultancy www.laukwoltring.nl

Gender equality is about human rights. It offers both women and men the same possibilities and opportunities to develop themselves fully into well balanced human beings and to give content and meaning to their manliness and femininity as long as it does not harm others like children or each other. Be it alone, in couples, homosexual or lesbian.

Men and women are human beings having the same human rights, but they are not the same. They are different in some ways, biologically like their role in procreation, but *on average* also in the way they develop and in their preferences.

Giving them the same treatment will result in different outcome: when women are treated like men, they will not reach their potential, will get double burdened, they and society may suffer. When men are threatened like women, they will not develop in a way in which they learn to direct their energy .. On the other hand: there are big overlaps. Being male or female is only one aspect of being a human, so we need **more sensitivity for sex and gender instead of reducing each other to being male or female.**

Gender equality is more than giving the same opportunities. It is also about stimulation, protection, a good learning environment with broad examples for both men and women, and it is about adequate treatment. It's about sex (nature) and gender (nurture, positions, perspectives, society), both resulting in maturity. When we give boys and girls in schools only the same opportunities and treatment we will get a different outcome. We need adequate education for both sexes, doing their preferential behavior right (that gives them self acceptance and self confidence) **and** giving them stimuli to broaden their horizon and develop also those qualities that do need extra attention.

In the Netherlands the gender debate tends to get narrowed to just access to education and positions on the labor market and in politics. Gender equality is more than just offering women the same formats as men, especially in the economy and public life. Under current conditions this neglects all basic needs of society that are not (or badly) paid for (raising and educating children, health and care for the disabled, and elderly). Cynically said: Do men and women have the same opportunities to neglect children?

Our economy tends to push to its margins all activities that are not profitable and/or calculable in money. In these margins we find more women than men. If women enter the labor market in mass numbers – as nowadays policy asks for – there will be problems in staffing education, healthcare and other care organizations. Until now much of this work was done by women. Replacement by professionalization of rearing children and unpaid care is limited in content (attachment, binding, continuity of human contact) finance and available workforce. As many European countries the population in the Netherlands gets older and does not grow anymore. The population pyramid tends to shift drastically. Future import of workforce

from outside Europe is limited (not only because of reduced public support and intercultural stress, but also because Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia will have their own economic growth).

Many women in the Netherlands do not want to work more than 3, maximum 4 days. The tendency is to stay at home a big part of the week at least until new born babies have matured a bit, and make only part-time use of professional childcare. Contact with (little) children is highly valued. Many men want to work shorter than full time. Gender equality is also about giving men more opportunities to develop and enjoy their full potential in private space, their fatherhood and their responsibilities, also able to live a life in which paid activities, private life and social responsibilities are more in balance .

Society loses a lot of energy when girls get no or limited entrance to for example the labor market and when (young) men do not learn how to direct their energies..

Nowadays divorce is no longer caused by family possessions, family interests or third sexual parties, but by problems in the division of care (rearing children & housekeeping <-> and paid labor).

Societies prosper when men and women work together and share responsibilities. Societies fall short when both sexes are isolated in their own gendered positions. Current dominant (but reduced and restricted) masculine views on management are often based on 'divide and control'. Production processes are divided into small controllable units with restricted input and output and short term profit and other incentives. The general view, long term perspective, environment, the responsibility for the next generations and the human connection get sometimes lost in the process. Where this can lead us to is at the moment visible in the financial crisis in the Western Countries where male bankers, isolated from real life, were able to put at risk whole economies ("*When Lehman Brothers had had some sisters in the board...What would have happened?*") . Of course female directors are no guarantee, but the sexual inequality in the top is striking) .

In the UN-treaty on Gender Equality/Women's Rights the states who are party in this treaty express their wish in par. 5 to ban discriminatory prejudices based on inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or stereotype roles of men and women, and that education passes on a just concept on motherhood as a social function, a common responsibility of men and women in raising and the development of children with children's interest as predominant issue. Par.10 is about equal opportunities.

Non-discrimination and equal rights in terms of opportunities is not enough for education. Education is also about appropriate stimuli, measures arrangements steps action.