Concept Note

Regional Experts Meeting

Assessing Gender Issues in Pre-service and In-service Teacher Training in Asia

19-20 November 2015
Pullman Bangkok Grande Sukhumvit, Bangkok, Thailand

Background

The Dakar Framework for Action highlights the need for learning content and materials to encourage and support gender equality and respect. Therefore, gender-responsive curricula have great potential to build knowledge and skills that support learners to examine dominant power structures, question gender stereotypes, promote positive gender relations, and advance towards gender equality.1 The 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report2 found, however, that gender bias in textbooks remains pervasive in many countries. This bias can affect children’s self-esteem, lower their engagement in schools and limit their expectations about their future opportunities, including career options.3

Nonetheless, a coherent approach to gender mainstreaming is needed where all components and processes of the education sector mutually support gender equality goals. For gender equality to be a ‘lived’ reality in classrooms, teachers themselves must be gender sensitive and practice gender-responsive teaching. To do so, teachers must be provided with appropriate gender-sensitive education and training, both pre- and in-service, so that they can play a critical role in eliminating all forms of gender-related discriminations in and beyond the classrooms.

Gender assessments of curriculum and student textbooks have been undertaken in Asia4 and elsewhere, and can be important impetus for curricular modifications and revisions at the school level. Sector-wide gender assessments appear to be relatively uncommon in the region, although studies have been undertaken of different aspects including human resources, decision-making and other processes. However, there have been limited gender assessments of teacher training materials and other resources used in the teaching practice.

UNESCO’s Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) has initiated a five-year project “Enhancing Girl’s and Women’s Right to Quality Education through Gender Sensitive Policy Making, Teacher Development and Pedagogy” targeting five countries in Asia (Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan) with support from China/HNA Funds-in-Trust.

As part of this project, UNESCO Bangkok is organizing a regional experts meeting to take stock of gender issues in teacher education in the participating countries, and assist with the development of diagnostic tools to assess gender issues in pre-service and in-service teacher education, with a particular focus on identifying and redressing gaps, stereotypes and bias in curriculum materials including curricula/syllabi, teacher support materials, and students’ textbooks in core subjects at basic education level (Grades 1-9).

Draft gender assessment frameworks will be prepared prior to the meeting, drawing on a review of existing tools and practice in the region and other settings.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this experts meeting are to:

1. Review the status of participating countries in undertaking gender assessments in the education sector in general, and curriculum materials used in pre-service and in-service teacher training in particular.
2. Review and provide inputs for improving the draft instruments for national gender assessments of curriculum materials including curricula/syllabi, teacher support materials, and students’ textbooks in core subjects.
3. Develop action plans for taking forward the gender assessment in participating countries, including the overall scope of work, methodology, timelines, persons responsible and budget.

**Expected outputs and outcomes**

Outcomes and outputs expected of the meeting include:

1. Enhanced understanding of approaches to analyze gender issues in teacher education and instructional materials, curricula/syllabi and students’ textbooks
2. Agreed framework for the gender assessment tools, including templates for a tool to analyze teacher education curriculum, student curriculum, and student textbooks for core subjects at basic education level (Grades 1-9).
3. Action plans to conduct gender assessment in the participating countries.

**Dates and Venue**

The meeting will be held on 19 - 20 November 2015 at Pullman Bangkok Grande Sukhumvit in Bangkok, Thailand.
Language

English will be the main language of the meeting.

Participants

The meeting will bring together approximately 35-40 participants. They include four to five people from each project country: one official from the Ministry of Education with gender coordination roles, one education planner from the Ministry of Education, one teacher educator from a teacher education institution, one researcher who will lead the gender assessment in teacher education in the country and one UNESCO staff from respective Field Office. These country teams are expected to lead and implement the gender assessment in their respective countries in 2016. Other experts and resource persons will also be invited to contribute to the technical discussions, share information and experiences, and promote broader links to global and regional initiatives.

All expenses (roundtrip economy airfare, accommodation and meals for the duration of the meeting) of the participants will be covered by UNESCO Bangkok.

Meeting modality

The meeting will serve as a platform for participants to discuss and share key gender issues in their respective countries. Prior to the meeting, the country team will be asked to complete a survey questionnaire and prepare a short country presentation to share the status of any gender assessments that have been previously carried out in the education sector, and with a priority to focus on pre- and in-service teacher training in particular. Participants should bring copies of their gender assessment reports to the meeting.

The meeting will be structured in both plenary and group sessions to review the draft gender frameworks for the assessment. Inputs from all participants will be used to develop further the instruments that will be used in the project to analyze teacher education curriculum, student curriculum, and student textbooks for core subjects at basic education level (Grades 1-9).

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