

***Career ROCKET: Respect, Opportunities,  
Choice, Knowledge, Equality and  
Training***



**Summary Report on the finalist schools  
participating in the National Competition  
“School Free of Gender Stereotypes”**

**Author: Four Elements, Greece**



## Introduction

In the framework of *Workstream 4: Promote GE Culture in Schools* of the Career Rocket project, the first national competition of “School free of Gender Stereotypes” was organized in Greece by Four Elements NGO. In total, 17 junior high schools and high schools (Lyceums) in Athens, Thessaloniki and Volos in Greece participated, while 10 of them stood out for their actions. Participating schools were asked to fill in a questionnaire with twelve questions on the different activities organized by their school in order to promote equal educational and professional opportunities to male and female students.

## Main findings

To begin with, it seems that most schools have taken measures to ensure that all students are exposed to issues related to gender equality, elimination of discriminations and career guidance. This has happened both during classes but also through projects that students were encouraged to participate in. The collaboration of schools with social actors and organisations that support human rights and gender equality was also quite beneficial.

Schools state that they have ensured equal participation of all students in student boards and educational as well as research programmes and activities regardless of their gender. Parents are also equally represented in parent-teacher associations, regardless of their gender or ethnicity. Some of the participating schools exhibited remarkable actions towards this end, such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Experimental High School of Athens that ensures equal participation in school clubs (Mathematics and Literature Club, Robotics Club). Male and female students equally represent the school in European competitions in Physics, Chemistry, and Biology, as well as in the national competitions of the Hellenic Mathematical Society.

When it comes to career days, schools not only participate in such actions but some of them have also developed their own initiatives, such as the social enterprise developed by the students of

the 2nd Experimental High School of Athens. This action helped students develop entrepreneurial skills and also aimed at creating a mentoring scheme through which students receive career guidance from experienced professionals. Regarding research and educational programmes, it seems that all schools encourage the participation of their students in these projects based on their qualities, talents and interests and not their gender and ethnicity.

In order to complement the knowledge that their students receive through these projects, schools also organise visits to organisations such as CERN in Geneva or the Museum of Science and Technology in Munich. All the above show that schools, apart from using the traditional methods of career guidance that may include speeches from career counselors or reference to the principles of human rights and gender equality during classes, also engage in activities beyond the conventional class in order to inspire and motivate their students.

Although it seems that all these key concepts are discussed and students are made aware of the importance of gender equality, it seems that teachers receive little or no training on these issues. There were schools, like the 1st High School of Volos, in which students and teachers participated in awareness raising programmes regarding gender equality as well as gender equality for refugees. Also, the 56th Junior High School of Athens mentioned that its teachers' association has participated in training programmes on gender equality and also develops similar European Union's projects KA01 towards this direction. However, there is still room for improvement in the training of educational staff, as the need for additional formal or informal training for teachers and students on gender issues is evident.

Regarding the participation of parents in actions promoting gender equality, human rights and career guidance, there were not many instances of parents' involvement. Although schools are open to that, parents' participation mostly involved giving speeches regarding their profession to students as part of career guidance events. Schools also mentioned that parents did not provide any suggestions to them on similar actions indicating that parents' engagement and participation could be improved.

## Conclusions

To sum up, it seems that schools that participated in the competition seem to be aware of the importance of gender issues and gender equality for their students' behavior, development and career choices. This seems to have an impact on the student community as schools reported zero tolerance to any type of violence and also commented on the peaceful collaboration among students of different gender and backgrounds.

Although results seem to be encouraging, further steps need to be taken especially with regard to extracurricular activities and collaboration of schools with organisations that promote gender equality, volunteering and human rights so students, teachers and parents enrich their knowledge on gender issues and increase their critical thinking abilities. Schools could also play an important role in motivating both students and parents to participate in such actions and also make suggestions for further action to be taken in order to promote a school, work environment and subsequently society free of gender stereotypes.

From the detailed analysis of the finalists' applications to the national competition, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Experimental High School of Athens seems to pave the way in various fields that can contribute to the creation of an inclusive school environment. Recognizing the effort of all participating schools in applying tools and measures to enhance the school environment from a gender equality perspective, we deservedly award the 2<sup>nd</sup> Experimental High School of Athens the label of "School Free of Gender Stereotypes" and hope that this competition will motivate more schools to act upon ensuring equal opportunities for all.