

PROJECT

“Career ROCKET: Respect, Opportunities, Choice, Knowledge, Equality and Training”

(RACHETA - Respect, Alegere, Cunoaștere, Hotărâre, Egalitate, Training, Angajare)

ID proiect: **JUST/2015/RGEN/AG/ROLE/9706**

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WS1

Analysis of school curricula and development of guides and training tools for teachers, educators and students

ACTIVITY 1.2

Analysis of school curricula of all mandatory subjects for primary (1-4) basic (5-8) and secondary (9-12) education levels.

ENGLISH ABSTRACT

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Bucharest, October 2017

The structure of Romania's school system

Education in Romania is compulsory for 11 years, from the Preparatory Grade in primary school to Grade 10 of upper secondary education. Most students in these grades attend public schools, with only approximately 1% enrolled in private institutions.

Student selection into different education programmes starts early in Romania, at the age of 14. At the end of lower secondary education (Grade 8), Romanian students take a national examination, which assesses their performance in mathematics and Romanian language and literature. Results in this exam, their average grade at the end of each year of lower secondary and students' individual school choices determine the upper secondary school and the type of programme students will attend.

Students may be assigned to one of three types of high school: technological, theoretical and "vocational". Technological high schools combine academic and vocational programmes. The theoretical and vocational high schools both follow an academic programme, but the latter have a special focus on arts, sports, theology or the military. At the end of upper secondary education, students from all three types of high school must pass the baccalaureate examination if they wish to access tertiary education.

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Education in Romania is based on a free-tuition, egalitarian system. Access to free education is guaranteed by Article 32 in the Constitution of Romania. Education is regulated and enforced by the Ministry of National Education. Each step has its own form of organization and is subject to different laws and directives. Education in Romania is compulsory for 11 years (from the preparatory school year to the tenth grade). With the exception of kindergarten (preschool) and tertiary education (university) the private sector has a very low presence in the Romanian education system.

Elementary school includes primary school (the preparatory school year and the next 4 grades of primary school) and then four more grades (grades 5-8 of gymnasium). Most elementary schools are public; the Ministry of Education's statistics show less than 2% of elementary school students attend private school. Education is free in public schools (including some books and auxiliary materials), but not entirely (some textbooks, notebooks, pencils and uniforms may be required to be purchased).

A class (*clasă*) can have up to 30 students (25 is considered optimum), and there can be as few as one class per grade or as many as twenty classes per grade. Usually each group has its own [classroom](#). Each group has its own designation, usually the grade followed by a letter of the alphabet (for example, VII A means that the student is in the 7th grade in the 'A' class).

Gymnasium. Classes are reshaped at the end of the 4th grade, often based on academic performances. Many schools have special classes (such as intensive English classes or Informatics classes, providing one or two more courses in these subjects). Selection for such classes is done based on local tests. Assessing the students' performance is also different between primary and gymnasium cycles. Starting with the 5th grade, students have a different teacher (*profesor*) for each subject. Furthermore, each class has a teacher designated to be class principal (*diriginte*), besides teaching his or hers usual subject. Additional counseling may be provided by a special counselor (*consilier pe probleme de educație* – counselor on educational issues) or by a school psychologist.

Curriculum in elementary school. There are up to 15 compulsory subjects (usually 8–13) and up to 5 optional subjects (usually 1 or 2). These optional subjects are chosen by the school and imposed on the student – they are known as School Decided Curriculum (*Curriculum la Decizia Școlii* – CDS) and are

usually extensions to the compulsory subjects. For the duration of the elementary school, each student must take:

- 8 years of mathematics, Romanian, music, art and physical education;
- up to 8 years of religion (usually Eastern Orthodox; some other religions or denominations also accepted, optional);
- 5 years of geography and history;
- 6 years in the first foreign language (usually French, English or German);
- 4 years in the second foreign language (usually English, French, German, very seldom Spanish, Italian, Russian or Portuguese);
- 4 years of civic education;
- 2 years of science (if we don't include Environmental Knowledge which is 2 years);
- 4 years of biology;
- 3 years of physics;
- 2 years of chemistry;
- 1 year of Latin language;
- 4 years of IT (optionally)

High Schools. At the end of the 8th grade (usually corresponding to age 14 or 15) a nationwide test is taken by all students called *Evaluarea Națională* (The National Test) and can be taken only once, in June. The subjects are Romanian Language and Literature and Mathematics (and additionally the language of the school for ethnic minority schools or classes and for bi-lingual schools). Many high schools provide classes with intensive study of a foreign language, such as English, French, German or Spanish; a two-part examination (Grammar/Vocabulary and Speaking) is required for them. The passing mark is 5 for each of the exams. The finishing grade (also known as the admission grade) is computed, taking into account for 20% an average of all the Yearly General Averages starting with year 5 and for the rest of 80% the mark obtained at the National Test (1-10, 10 being the highest, not rounded, precision 0.01). High school enrolment is conditioned on passing the National Test and participating in the National Computerized Repartition. High school studies are four years in length, two compulsory (9th and 10th year), two non-compulsory (11th and 12th year). There are no exams between the 10th and the 11 years. There is also a lower frequency program taking 5 years for those wishing to attend high school after abandoning at an earlier age.

Other introductory aspects:

- Addressing gender mainstreaming in education in strategic documents with focus on national gender equality strategies (2010-2012 and 2014-2017);
- Main elements of the gender dimension in education
- Gender approach in school textbooks

Analysis of the curricula from the gender perspective

The education experts involved in the process of analyzing the curricula from the gender perspective have had a special work instrument at their disposal (**the worksheet for curricula analysis**), conceived in order to facilitate the analysis based on some key indicators:

- The curricula analysis from the perspective of the structure elements (the frame objectives of the curriculum, the explicit character from the perspective of gender of the objectives, the gender component of the learning activities, language, curricular standards with gender potential)
- The analysis of the didactic process from the gender perspective (through the aspects that refer to awareness of the gender issue, aspects regarding the gender perspective at the level of textbooks)
- Approaching the gender dimension. Conclusions and recommendations (Awareness of the gender dimension in education and through the gender dimension in the curricular products)

The education experts have been kindly asked to go over each of the aspects presented in the worksheet for curricula analysis and answer the questions in as much detail so that they achieve a thorough analysis, taking into consideration the way in which the various topics can be found in the school curricula, lesson plans, methods and instruments used.

In conclusion worksheets for curricula analysis have been completed for 10 school subjects:

- Primary education;
- Romanian;
- Social-human subjects (psychology and philosophy)
- geography;
- chemistry;
- biology and natural sciences;
- English;
- Physical education and sport;
- Constitution

FIȘA DE ANALIZĂ¹

WORKSHEET FOR CURRICULA ANALYSIS

Disciplina/ <i>School subject</i>	
Nivel școlar/ <i>School level</i>	
Romanian	English
Componentele curriculei	Curricula components
Obiectivele cadru ale programei/curriculei se referă explicit sau implicit la dimensiunea de gen? Dacă DA, care sunt acestea?	<i>Do the program / curricular framework objectives explicitly or implicitly refer to the gender dimension? If YES, what are they?</i>
Obiectivele de referință se referă explicit sau implicit la dimensiunea de gen? Dacă DA, care sunt acestea? Menționați dacă la nivelul obiectivelor de referință există formulări cu potențial de gen.	<i>Are the reference objectives explicitly or implicitly related to the gender dimension? If YES, what are they? Specify whether there are gender-specific formulations at this level.</i>
Există activități de învățare recomandate care iau în considerare dimensiunea de gen? Care sunt acestea?	<i>Are there any recommended learning activities that take into account the gender dimension? Which are these</i>
Sunt conținuturile diferențiate pentru fete și băieți? Explicitați	<i>Are the different contents for girls and boys? Please, explain.</i>
Centrarea activităților pe copil ia în considerare dimensiunea de gen, diferențiind activitățile în funcție de nevoi considerate diferite? Explicitați.	<i>Does child-centered approach focus on gender dimension and take in consideration different activities according to different needs? Please, explain.</i>

¹ The worksheet for curricula analysis is based on the following works:

- “Manifestari explicite și implicite ale genului în programele și manualele școlare”- Grünberg, Laura și Doina-Olga Stefanescu, 2002, în, Vlasceanu, Lazăr (coord), Școala la răscruce. Schimbare și continuitate în curriculum învățământului obligatoriu. Studiu de impact. Iași: Polirom. ISBN 973-681-062-3
- "Perspective asupra dimensiunii de gen în educație", Institutul de Științe ale Educației, UNICEFReprezentanța în România, București: MarLink, 2004 (ISBN: 973-8411-30-0); Authors: Magdalena Balica, Ciprian Fartușnic, Irina Horga, Mihaela Jigău, Lucian Voinea; în http://nou2.ise.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/coperta_dimensiunea_de_gen_in_educatie1.jpg

<p>Există sugestii pentru autorii de manuale? Sunt aspectele de gen semnalate explicit? Dacă DA, prin ce anume?</p>	<p>Are there any suggestions in the curricula for manual authors? Are gender issues explicitly mentioned? If YES, what?</p>
<p>Cum contribuie sugestiile pentru profesor sau pentru autorii de manual la construcția identității de gen? Este problema identității de gen abordată explicit? Dintre programele care conțin indicații pentru autorii de manuale care are sugestii cu potențial de gen? În ce constau acestea?</p>	<p>How do suggestions for teachers or manual authors contribute to the construction of gender identity? Is the issue of gender identity explicitly addressed? Of the programs that contain guidelines for manual authors who have suggestions with gender potential? What do they consist of?</p>
<p>Limbaajul general folosit exprimă, explicit sau implicit, poziții referitoare la diferențe de gen?</p>	<p>Does the language used explicitly or implicitly refer to gender differences?</p>
<p>Sunt standardele curriculare cu potențial de gen? Standardele cu curriculare au formulări asemănătoare sau identice pentru discipline aflate în aceeași arie curriculară? Sunt standardele curriculare formulate explicit pentru fiecare disciplină? Sunt standardele curriculare ușor de identificat în ceea ce privește disciplina pentru care au fost formulate?</p>	<p>Do curricular standards have gender potential? Curricular standards have similar or identical terms for disciplines in the same curricular area? Are curricular standards explicitly formulated for each discipline? Are curricular standards easily identifiable with regard to the discipline for which they were formulated?</p>
<p>Au descriptorii de performanță potențial de gen? În cazul în care standardele curriculare au un potențial de gen, la nivelul descriptorilor se regăsesc prevederi separate pentru fete și băieți? Există descriptorii de performanță asociați notelor pe care le primesc elevii din învățământul gimnazial și liceal?</p>	<p>Do the curriculum performance descriptors have gender potential? If curricular standards have gender potential, do descriptors contain separate provisions for girls and boys? Are there performance descriptors associated with the scores received by students from secondary school and high school?</p>
<p>Analiza procesului didactic din perspectiva de gen:</p>	<p>Teaching process analysis from gender perspective:</p>
<p>În ce măsură curricula face posibilă în activitatea didactică abordarea următoarelor aspecte privind problematica de gen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egalitate de gen • Rolurile tradiționale ale femeilor și bărbaților în familie și societate • Imaginea actuală a femeilor și bărbaților în literatură, mass-media și în societate • Femei: oameni de știință, scriitori, artiști, personalități publice • Violența de gen • Inegalitatea de gen pe piața muncii 	<p>To what extent does the curriculum make it possible in the didactic activity to approach the following aspects of gender:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality • Traditional female and male roles in the family and society • Contemporary images of men and women in literature, media and society • Female scientists, writers, artists and public figures • Gender based violence • Gender inequality in the labour market • Gender stereotypes and professional development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotipuri de gen și dezvoltare profesională • Relațiile dintre femei și bărbați în familie și societate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships between men and women in family and society
<p>Aspecte care se referă la conștientizarea problematicii de gen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • valorificarea genului în practica educativă, • strategii didactice care oferă oportunități egale de învățare pentru ambele genuri, • învățarea prin cooperare • stimularea parteneriatului de gen ș.a.; 	<p>Aspects related to gender awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender mainstreaming in educational practice, • teaching strategies that offer equal learning opportunities for both genres, • learning through cooperation, • stimulating gender partnerships and others;
<p>În ce măsură ați identifica la nivelul manualelor școlare aspecte referitoare la perspectiva de gen, în termeni de:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prezența/absența stereotipurilor și a discriminărilor de gen • Modalităților de valorificare educațională a perspectivei de gen • Reprezentarea echilibrată pe genuri la nivelul imaginilor și textelor selectate • Varietatea sarcinilor de învățare din perspectiva de gen etc. 	<p>To what extent did you identify issues related to the gender perspective in the textbooks in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence / absence of stereotypes and gender discrimination • Modalities of educational capitalization of the gender perspective • Balanced gender representation at selected image and text levels • Variety of learning tasks from a gender perspective, etc.
<p>Abordarea dimensiunii de gen (probleme și recomandări)</p>	<p>Gender dimension approach (issues and recomantations)</p>
<p>Conștientizarea dimensiunii de gen în educație</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neîncredere sau indiferență față de abordarea dimensiunii de gen în procesul didactic, mai ales în cadrul anumitor discipline (ca relevanță/ beneficii, oportunitate) • Dimensiunea de gen în practica educațională curentă nu este valorificată • Transformarea frecventă a atributelor de gen, asociate fetelor sau băieților, în <i>etichetări</i>, cu consecințe negative asupra dezvoltării imaginii de sine a elevilor, inclusiv asupra identității de gen • Există prejudecata că, prin afirmarea diferențelor de gen există riscul de discriminare • Experiența de viață a elevilor nu este valorificată în procesul de învățare 	<p>Awareness of the gender dimension in education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistrust or indifference towards addressing the gender dimension in the didactic process, especially within certain disciplines (as relevance / benefits, opportunity) • The gender dimension in current educational practice is not exploited • Frequent transformation of gender attributes associated with girls or boys into labels, with negative consequences on the development of students' self-image, including gender identity • There is a bias that there is a risk of discrimination by affirming gender differences • Student life experience is not used in the learning process

Dimensiunea de gen în produsele curriculare	The gender dimension in curricular products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dimensiunea de gen este valorificată la nivelul produselor curriculare (programe școlare, manuale școlare, materiale auxiliare) în sensul promovării echității, parteneriatului și emancipării de gen • Dimensiunea de gen este luată în calcul în construirea sarcinilor de învățare din manualele școlare • Este conștientizat rolul potențial al disciplinei în realizarea educației de gen și a importanței acestui tip de educație la toate nivelurile de școlarizare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gender dimension is exploited at the level of curricular products (school curricula, school textbooks, auxiliary materials) in the sense of promoting equity, partnership and gender empowerment • The gender dimension is taken into account in building learning tasks in school textbooks • Is aware of the potential role of the discipline in achieving gender education and the importance of this type of education at all levels of schooling

Conclusions / Recommendations

Based on the worksheets for the curricula analysis one can conclude that the gender issue does not represent an explicit objective at the level of the written curriculum. Even though the documents of educational policy concern the principle of ensuring equal chances in general, without direct reference to the equality of gender, the gender potential of some school subjects is insufficiently used at the level of the contents put forward by school curricula and through the approaches encountered in the textbooks.

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The gender dimension of the didactical methodologies used in class:

- The type of didactic strategies mostly used is a traditional one, based on presentation methods, centred on the teacher's activity. This pattern does not bring any explicit gender discrimination; however, it relies on the degree at which the teacher is preoccupied with this aspect and it does not stimulate social interaction among students. Neither does it promote an active and critical attitude towards the influences taken by students in the process of their psycho-individual development. Implicitly, the learning situations that imply gender awareness processes are ignored and not put a value on in the spirit of partnership and active participation of girls and boys.
- The distance between the learning situations in school and those in real life, out of school, is still significant, with negative effects on the level of using the competences acquired in school. On this account, the behavior related to gender is also affected.
- Social, professional and intellectual success models are still mostly masculine, as the school implicitly promotes a series of gender stereotypes.
- Most of the contents, although they might be used for their dimension regarding the gender potential, are only rarely approached from this perspective.

The gender potential of curricular standards

- Curricular standards could be formulated explicitly from the gender perspective. For example, for the Romanian and civic education classes, where differences between people are discussed, the issue of the gender differences could be introduced;
- Curricular standards have similar or identical sentencing for school subjects belonging to the same curricular area.

Reference objectives / specific competences refer to the gender dimension only implicitly, although each school subject has a gender potential which is put a value on only at the extent that the teacher is interested in this approach.

The school subject	Topics with gender potential from the school curriculum
Romanian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The topics for the 9th grade: Family, Scenes from today's and yesterday's life, Ethical and civic confrontations, Personalities, examples and models. - The epic and drama literary works that are studied offer the possibility to discuss about the woman's status in today's society. Comparisons can be made between literary works that belong to different ages, between different types of novels, for example the objective and the subjective novel, between literary works written by male writers or female writers, between the woman's status in the past and in the present etc. - Case studies: theme, stylistic and vision diversity in the works of great classic writers or in the interwar novels.
English	<p>At the level of the specific competences there are sentences with gender potential such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Adjusting the form of the message to the communicative situation according to the formal/informal style used by the interlocutor (specific competence) " - "Writing a report about a group activity/individual project/daily activities etc. (specific competence)." <p>Analyzing the topics recommended by the curriculum for English, grade 9, we could say that there are suggestions that make the approach of the specified aspects regarding the gender issue. These topics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Inter-human/interpersonal relationships" - "Lifestyles in the England-Saxon world from the diachronic and synchronic perspective " - "Aspects of the contemporary life (social, literary, technical, ecological)" - "Aspects related to professions and the professional future" - "Activities from the daily life" <p>For all the topics listed above there could be lesson plans that focus on gender issues from one perspective or another.</p>
Geography	No specific competence reaches the gender issue although, for the 10 th or the

The school subject	Topics with gender potential from the school curriculum
	<p>11th grade, we can introduce this aspect within some contents regarding population. For example, for the 10th grade:</p> <p>The specific competence: Identifying the specificity of the social-human competence in the current characteristics of the natural environment – we will promote values and attitudes such as: positive attitude towards society, culture, civilization, or respect for the human diversity.</p> <p>As contents, we can reach the issue of gender during lessons focused on: natural balance, population structure, population, natural resources and sustainable development.</p>
Chemistry	<p>At the level of the specific competences, the statements with gender potential are implicit or do not exist.</p> <p>In the educational practice of chemistry, significant contribution has been brought by research, analyses and scientific discovery carried out / made by scientists, both men and women.</p> <p>The gender difference is less important in the field of chemistry/physics as long as there is perseverent cooperation, respect and gender equality. If there were not cooperation and there were discrimination, the development of chemistry / physics would be impossible.</p> <p>For chemistry / physics / science, the gender dimension is not taken into consideration in school textbooks when setting learning tasks.</p> <p>The potential role of science is not internalized when building gender education.</p>
Psychology	<p>The reference objectives implicitly refer to the gender dimension. Here are examples of topics with gender potential in the school curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The topics studied for the structure and development of personality, temperament, aptitudes, intelligence, character. - Individual differences when manifesting the personality; stages in personality development. <p>Gender differences in curricular products are excluded, the gender dimension being ignored when building learning tasks.</p>

The school subject	Topics with gender potential from the school curriculum
Philosophy/Logic	<p>Topics with gender potential for Logic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing cooperation with the others, favored by the identification and elimination of different barriers in communication. - Critical reference to premises, presuppositions and implications of communication. - Developing competences of rational dialogue, of negotiation and solving conflicts in belonging groups. - Critical reference to arguments and counterarguments in conversation, debate, public discourse and mass media. <p>Topics with gender potential for Philosophy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arguing different positions as regards the ratio identity – alteration in defining the person. - Using argumentation, text analysis etc. in characterizing the issue of liberty, responsibility, equality and justice. <p>There are social-human school subjects which by their nature fruitfully use the gender dimension as a fundamental element of reaching specific aims: philosophy, sociology, psychology or civic education. As regards the others (economy, entrepreneurial education, logic) it depend on the didactic planning made by the teacher to point out the importance of this topic where the case.</p> <p>However, learning tasks at the level of textbooks are not explicitly differentiated according to the gender perspective, but the planning of some learning activities to raise awareness of this issue is not prevented either.</p>
Biology/ Natural Sciences	<p>The Biology curriculum makes the approach of some aspects regarding the gender issue possible in the didactic activity. Thus, there can be debates regarding the equality of gender in different types of lessons carried out with the students, discussions regarding the importance of women and men in society, starting from some hereditary concepts. The field of biology also allows by means of methodological suggestions: debates, case studies, problem-raising processes, modelation, comparisons between structure and function, as well as identification of great female and male biologists.</p>

The school subject	Topics with gender potential from the school curriculum
Physical education and sport	<p>Implicit references to the gender dimension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying the system of specific rules for organizing and practicing physical education and sport activities and adopting a behavior appropriate to interpersonal and group relationships. - Putting a value on body language for expressing and understanding ideas, emotional states and the aesthetics. <p>The references above represent a small part of the curriculum, but the topics can be used within the implemented curriculum.</p> <p>Although the topics with gender potential cannot be the object of the activity themselves, by the nature of the activity, at the physical education and sport class the teacher can make references to any of these.</p> <p>Raising awareness on the gender issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the didactic strategy offers equal learning opportunities for both genders. • within the sportive activities and team games, learning through cooperation and stimulating the gender partnership are emphasized. • sportive activities need to consider the “average functional values specific of the age and sex”.

Analyzing the curricula, textbooks and additional materials, one can make the remark that the gender dimension is not very strongly highlighted at the level of the curricular products as means of promoting equity, partnership or gender emancipation. But this weak use is especially at an explicit level, because at an implicit level things look better as regards English by the instructions to work in teams and groups and by the wide variety of the topics proposed for discussion, topics that are in conformity with the reality of these days. As regards the awareness of the potential role of the school subject in building gender education we believe we are going in the right direction. Nevertheless, there still are a lot of things that can be done, achieve and become aware of for building a very correct vision on acceptance of gender differences.

In certain contexts, the creative and innovative role of the teacher in the process of approaching various contents and/or methods from a gender perspective is outlined.

The absence of the gender specifics in textbooks and/or curricula which very often teachers refer to is often mistaken for gender equality.

Recommendations

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School textbooks and additional products:

- The focus needs to be on the common features of the two sexes and not on the differences, developing identical ranges of features that do not exclude and do not prefer any of the sexes;
- The mutual role exchange needs to be highlighted, more than their complementarity;
- It is recommended that the suggested characters have multiple identities by combining several characteristics: a doctor mother, a medical assistant father;
- The gender perspective in education does not imply only the approach of some specific contents, but also methodological approaches of using girls' and boys' life experience, of identifying and building stereotypes and gender discrimination, of promoting gender cooperation and partnership.

Awareness of the gender dimension in education

- Lack of trust or indifference to approaching the gender dimension in the teaching process, especially within certain subjects (as concerns the relevance/benefits, opportunity).
- The gender dimension in current educational practice is not put value on.
- The frequent change of gender attributes, associated with either girls or boys, into *labels*, with negative consequences on students' development of their self-image, including on the gender identity.
- There is this prejudice that asserting gender differences means discriminating.
- Students' life experience is not efficiently used in the learning process.

The gender dimension in curricular products

- The gender dimension is used at the level of curricular products (school curricula, school textbooks, additional materials) with the aim of promoting gender equity, partnership and emancipation.
- The gender dimension is taken into consideration when building learning tasks in school textbooks.
- The potential role of the school subject in achieving gender education and of the importance of this type of education at all levels of school instruction is realized.

Teachers' role in promoting the gender dimension

- Active (and creative) involvement in the learning process through the use of as many experiences in learning situations with gender potential, and not least through the diversification of the learning sources.
- Stimulating dialogues about gender during the lessons, with a focus on promoting gender equity and partnership.
- Active involvement on behalf of students in the learning process, with a focus on students' interests and previous experience: what they want to learn, what they would like to read, what they dream of, what they talk about etc.