



# GENDER-RELATED CHALLENGES IN EUROPEAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS

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**IRS - FLAVIA PESCE**

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The logo for the Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (IRS) is located at the bottom left. It consists of the text 'ISTITUTO PER LA RICERCA SOCIALE' in a blue, sans-serif font, stacked vertically. To the right of this text is the lowercase letters 'irs' in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font.The logo for the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) is located at the bottom right. It features a stylized purple figure of a person with arms raised, holding a scale. To the right of the figure, the acronym 'MIGS' is written in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below 'MIGS', the full name 'MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

MIGS  
MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES

# BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

## EDUCATION



A means through which women and men can improve productivity, knowledge and skills throughout their lives to afford, inter alia, better paid jobs, and reduce the risk of social exclusion



A catalyst for the achievement of fundamental rights and social change, is a condition for better integration into the labour market, and for lowering chances of poverty and social exclusion



A strong potential to promote social and professional empowerment and to sensitise students, and teachers, to the issue of gender equality

# BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

**Awareness of gender equality as an educational issue has increased over the last few years**

Women have higher levels of attainment in education

Women have enhanced their participation and achievements in traditionally male-defined subject

**HOWEVER**

Mainstreaming gender equality in education and training policy remains a crucial issue in a number of EU countries, where equal access to education is usually taken for granted

# BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

**Gender discriminations and imbalances still remain in European education systems**

- Gender segregation in study fields and career choices;
- gender and different achievement in school;
- gender and early school leaving;
- the feminisation of the teaching profession;
- gender aspects of immigration and education.
- gender stereotypes in textbooks and teaching materials
- few training to address gender-related topics

**HOW TO ADDRESS THIS SITUATION?**

# ***BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT***

**GENDER DISCRIMINATIONS AND IMBALANCES STILL REMAIN IN EUROPEAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS, FOR EXAMPLE:**

- Gender segregation in study fields and career choices;
- gender and different achievement in school;
- gender and early school leaving;
- the feminisation of the teaching profession;
- gender aspects of immigration and education.

# ***GENDER SEGREGATION IN STUDY FIELDS AND CAREER CHOICES***

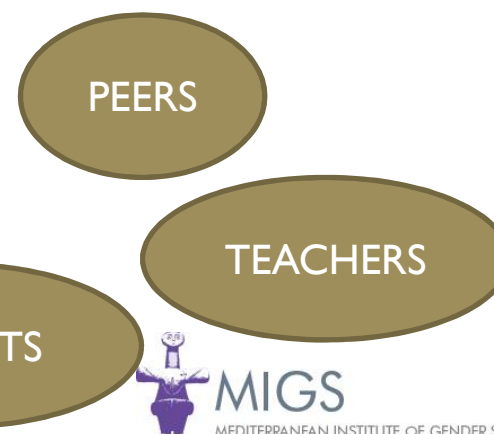
- ★ A labeling of study and professional areas persists between boys and girls in the EU-28
- ★ In tertiary education, women are still under-represented in some study fields, in particular natural sciences, mathematics, computing and engineering
- ★ Also in upper secondary vocational education science, technology, engineering and construction are more likely to be seen as "male domains", while girls are more likely than men to study health and welfare, education, humanities, languages, arts and to enroll in teacher training.

# GENDER SEGREGATION IN STUDY FIELDS AND CAREER CHOICES

The choice of the study field, and the consequent differences in knowledge, skills and abilities stemming from education and training

- have repercussions on the future employability and profession of students
- lead to over/under-representation of men or women in some sectors and occupations
- often place women in lower-paid and lower-status occupations

! The root causes of segregation and gender-stereotypes in education and career choices can be traced back to the **persisting labeling of study and working fields are “feminine” or “masculine”**.





# GENDER AND DIFFERENT ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL

- ★ According to PISA, boys are more likely than girls to have low skills and to be defined as having special educational needs in mathematics, reading and science
  - ★ Reading attitudes and behavior are highly gendered and, on average, girls tend to read for enjoyment and for personal interests, while boys, on average, seem to regard reading as a “feminine” activity and not valuing it as much as girls.
  - ★ The higher the socio-economic class, the least visible the differences in attainments between boys and girls
- ! The roots of these performance gaps can be traced back **gender stereotypes and gender roles imposed during the socialisation process**, which can affect the way young men and women perceive their potentialities, abilities and performance in school



# ***GENDER AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING***

**Early school leaving in the EU context refers to the number of young people aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education or less and not in education and training**

## **CONSEQUENCES**

- On a country's economic growth and employment, on productivity and competitiveness, fuel poverty and social exclusion.
- At the individual level, lack skills and qualifications and persistency of problems on the labour market

# GENDER AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

- ★ Gender patterns are at play in terms of early school leaving rates. These are indeed higher amongst boys than amongst girls in almost all member states
- ★ Middle class and upper class boys, across cultures, seem to be less likely than boys coming from more disadvantaged backgrounds to leave school prematurely
- ★ Working class boys (and girls, but to a lesser degree) from all types of ethnic backgrounds are most likely to leave school early, in particular in case of employment opportunities that offer an immediate financial gain

! The main reasons behind early school leaving may be due to economic and cultural reasons, or to care responsibilities outside school (i.e. for girls pregnancy or early marriage). Moreover, the socio-emotional climate of the school might lead to early school leaving, in particular for boys rather than for girls

# ***THE FEMINISATION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION***

**Differences in educational choices between women and men are also reflected in the teaching profession**

- women tend indeed to concentrate in study fields such as humanities and social sciences
- women attain a much higher education degree in teaching compared to men
- women are over-represented as teachers in primary and lower secondary education
- moreover the number of women teachers at upper secondary level has increased in most countries
- the representation of women within decision-making positions in this professional category is rather low, especially in tertiary education

# ***THE FEMINISATION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION***

## **CONSEQUENCES**

- The lack of men teachers in primary and secondary education might reinforce stereotyped gender roles in the classroom
- Women are over-represented in relatively lower status positions that are sometimes identified with care-giving (such as primary teaching), whereas men are concentrated in better-paid, higher-status positions (in academia) that hold greater influence in policy and decision-making

# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL

Violence in schools is a persistent phenomenon, with severe consequences on school attendance (in some cases it may lead to early drop-out), class performance, students' self-confidence and may even lead to forms of depression

## MAIN FORMS OF VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL



# ***GENDER ASPECTS OF IMMIGRATION AND EDUCATION***

2015 Education and Monitoring Report of the European Commission



**The share of underachievement amongst foreign-born students is almost twice as high as it is amongst the native-born**

In some countries underachievement in education seems to decrease among second-generations immigrant students in comparison with first-generation



**RESULT OF SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS.**



# GENDER ASPECTS OF IMMIGRATION AND EDUCATION

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PERFORMANCES FOLLOW A TRADITIONAL GENDER PATTERN

- ★ Immigrant girls perform better than boys at school (except in Mathematics where performances are equal)
  - ethnic minorities women's greater desire for emancipation
  - women from ethnic minorities are asked to play the role of "pipelines" between the family, the community and society as a whole
  - girls as the agents who can realise the family's dreams of social climbing
- ★ Immigrant girls' achievements are still significantly lower compared with those of their female nonimmigrant peers
- ★ Only a minority of them enters non-vocational secondary school streams and go on to attain university degrees
- ★ They also have higher dropout rates compared to those of young local girls