

Developing Curricula for Gender Equality and Quality Basic Education

A Beyond Access Project Policy Paper ¹

This paper brings together sets of ideas and recommendations for achieving approaches to curriculum and pedagogy for good quality, and gender equitable, basic education. To do this it draws on key ideas and policy recommendations developed by participants at the international seminar: Curriculum for Gender Equality and Quality Basic Education, on the 16 September 2003 at the Institute of Education, University of London. The seminar participants were drawn from three constituencies: policy makers (agencies and government), researchers and academics; and non-governmental organisations and practitioners. The seminar was held as part of the Beyond Access: Gender, Education and Development Project launched in April 2003 which aims to share, develop and improve understandings of how to achieve gender equitable education and meet the 2005 Millennium Development Goal on eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education².

At the Millennium Summit of the UN one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set aimed at gender equality in education. Goal 3 was broadly framed and aimed to 'Promote gender equality and empower women'. Within the goal, the target by which the goal was to be measured was set quite narrowly in the following terms: 'Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels by 2015 (UN 2000). Eliminating gender disparity is generally understood to mean only overcoming barriers to equal access to and sometimes achievement in schooling for girls and boys. Gender parity is measured by whether or not there are equal numbers of girls and boys in a population enrolled in school or completing school. The disjunction between the wide framing of the goal and the extremely narrow focus of the target has occasioned considerable discussion and debate (MDG Task Force, 2004). There is therefore an urgent need to widen the target and addressing the uneven quality of education provided, the high levels of dropout and the difficulties many children (the majority in some societies) have in progressing beyond a few years of formal schooling. In other words, those working on achieving education for all need to look "beyond access".

Whilst the UN itself acknowledges that the success of all goals is contingent on the success of the education goals, it is unlikely that the 2005 target will be met in more than a handful of countries. According to the Global Campaign for Education's 2003 Report, 'A Fair Chance', some 88 countries would need to dramatically accelerate progress in order to meet the 2005 goal. UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003-4 estimates the figure to be around 70 countries. But instead of focusing on the almost certain 'failure' of 2005, the Beyond Access project, and this paper with its focus on curriculum and pedagogy, seeks to highlight good practice and bring together the different actors striving for the goal. The project also aims to broaden the focus from gender parity to ensure that those working for education for

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all by 2015 include concerns for gender-sensitive, quality education that will provide benefits for life.

Introduction

Assumptions about gender are central both to the way a curriculum defines what knowledge is considered valuable and appropriate to be taught at school and the approaches to learning and teaching which underpin a curriculum. This paper explores:

1) Rights, gender equality and curriculum

The curriculum is a key piece of national legislation which raises questions about rights, particularly who defines what is to be taught and how it is to be delivered, and whether women are part of this process. Gender equality concerns highlight the importance of asking questions regarding what girls are being taught about themselves in formal schooling, whether education institutions allow girls effective participation and whether the existing situations of girls and women are enhanced or diminished by the schooling they receive.

2) Gender equality and curriculum decision making

Women and girls are not a single category and care needs to be taken that a broad range of views of different women and girls are included in curriculum development and review processes. The presence of women in decision-making bodies at national and local government level has had an extremely beneficial effect on shaping a curriculum that is responsive to diverse needs.

3) Curriculum, quality basic education and gender inequality in social relations

Definitions of quality education in many contexts do not take account of gender equality as a key component of curriculum quality. But curriculum policy has been developed in a number of countries (South Africa and Madhya Pradesh, India) that stresses the importance of critical self-awareness amongst learners and indicates the potential for curriculum documents to be centrally concerned with equality issues. Teachers are key to developing understandings of gender equality. Teacher education programmes have been developed in Mozambique in the context of HIV/AIDS that reflect on gender equality issues as a key theme throughout the programme, rather than in a single session. This contributes to a deeper understanding. This approach is useful both as a response to the pandemic, but also more generally. Approaches to reviewing learning materials that are limited to checklists of images of women and men are too limited. Curriculum reviewers need to take care with developing an understanding how learners and teachers respond to different forms of materials.

Today millions of girls who attend school are the first in their families ever to do so. For many of them gender inequality is a feature of the political, economic and social conditions in which they live and often pervades their educational experience. Given extensive gender inequality worldwide, but also widespread commitment to challenge and overcome this, improving decision-making concerning curriculum policy and gender equality is an important challenge.

These questions concern not only the content of the curriculum, but also the processes of curriculum development and the forms of consultation and debate which underpin the choice of ideas, documents and materials, which comprise a curriculum and its process of review. The questions also concern the identities of teachers who are so central to the delivery of the curriculum. How do teachers, who are themselves located within gendered social relations, translate curriculum documents into classroom practices and learning outcomes? And how do these practices influence further curriculum development, particularly with regard to gender equality?

1. Curriculum, gender equality and rights

The term curriculum signals knowledge considered valuable and appropriate to be taught in schools. It encompasses policy statements as well as syllabi used by teachers. Curriculum concerns subjects that are taught and the hierarchies between subjects – what is considered core or high status and what is considered optional, peripheral or low status. There are gendered dimensions to the status of certain subjects. Often subjects in which women and girls cluster either as learners or teachers have lower status than those in which men and boys cluster.

Curriculum also concerns teaching approaches, themselves embedded in ideas about how children learn in which gender generally plays a significant role. For example there are widespread assumptions about girls' aptitude to learn languages and boys' aptitude to learn mathematics. But these assumptions and the research that substantiates them are often closely linked to particular social and political contexts.

Teaching and learning materials, evaluation and assessment procedures and language policy are all components of curriculum and all have gender dimensions. Curriculum, therefore, is both a set of documents and a set of practices. The context in which decisions are taken about curriculum content, learning and teaching is one in which our assumptions about gender form a part of our understandings of the world and our place in it. Thus a curriculum is a gendered document. It can express ideas about gender equality if this is a matter of considerable contemporary concern or it can reproduce (maybe unknowingly) practices marked by gender inequality. A curriculum will also reproduce ideas about caste, class, religious, ethnic and national identities, divisions and inequalities. These often intersect with ideas about gender in complex ways.

The 'hidden curriculum' refers to the ethos of a school and the social practices outside formal lessons, for example in the playground, during meals times or in extra-curricular activities. The hidden curriculum often has a bearing on the nature of what is learnt. It is sometimes very difficult to identify how the hidden curriculum works. However it is important to look seriously at this, because commitments to gender equality in the curriculum and classroom might be undermined by practices in the wider school experience, which teachers do not necessarily scrutinise. Taking account of the role of gender in the dynamics of the learning processes in the formal and the hidden curriculum is an important key to achieving the Millennium Development Goal for Gender Equity in Education. Avoiding discussion of the gendered features of curriculum is not taking a neutral position.

International efforts to expand basic education and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have emphasized the economic arguments for girls'

schooling in terms of, for example, increased benefits for all through lower child mortality and improved child health. But there is now also a stronger voice for education as a right for each and every girl regardless of whether the wider social benefits can be easily documented. Education as a right entails government responsibility to ensure appropriate legislation exists and that quality norms (which implicitly or explicitly have a gender equality focus) are met at all levels of the education system. Many states' Constitutions commit them to providing education for all children. The curriculum is a key policy document through which the state expresses this commitment. Whilst a variety of Declarations and Conventions provide written support for ideas about gender equality and human rights, the ways in which these values can form a part of the process of putting a curriculum into practice have been hardly considered. This is an important area for governments, NGOs and community based organizations to consider. There is not a single model demonstrating how this might be done, but Box 1 outlines some recommendations.

BOX 1

Rights, gender equality and questions about curriculum

- **Rights and participation:** *Who* (which groups) are defining what it is to be taught and how it is to be delivered? (To what extent are women a part of this?)
- **Rights and conceptions of the person:** *What* are girls being taught about who they are in their education?
- **Rights and institutions:** *Do* the processes in which education is institutionalised and delivered allow girls' effective participation? Are girls'/women's existing situations enhanced or diminished through the education they receive?

Yates 2003

Many studies of the process of curriculum reform show how tensions exist between a curriculum based on universal core rights for every one and a culturally relativist approach where governments or social movements (in which women may or may not have a voice) determine curriculum and what is considered appropriate for ideas about men (masculinity) and women (femininity). In thinking about these cases it is useful to ask questions about who benefits from a particular form of curriculum arrangement in a particular context. Experiences from Western Europe, North America and Australia highlight how important it is to keep this question under constant review. In these societies where there has been a long history of gender equality in access to schooling, equality in access to the curriculum is still elusive for many groups. (Box 2)

BOX 2 perspectives from the UK, North America and Australia.

- In all these societies historically and in the contemporary period there are connections between gender, power and knowledge. Generally, until very recently and only for some groups, girls and women have been less able to gain access to high-status knowledge and the power that accompanies it
- Gendered power relations have marked the ways in which decisions have been taken about what is taught to whom.

- The implication is that it is important to make as much of the curriculum as possible compulsory for as long as possible so that girls carry on studying traditionally male subjects, e.g. maths and science (even if they do not always enjoy them). This will give them access to the choice of jobs which require those subjects. Putting girls into gender segregated subjects like domestic science reduces the impulse for equality.

Paechter 2003

A central issue, thus, is whether general curriculum development in the direction of economic or political objectives - set by governments, for example - represents a barrier to girls' self-development or a key to its realisation. When trying to decide about this, it is important to ask who precisely benefits when gender questions are raised in connection to debates about curriculum. Trying to answer this adds an important layer of complexity to questions of rights in education, signifying the multiple dimensions of which policy needs to take account.

2. Gender equality and curriculum decision-making

Gender equality needs to be considered as part of the process of reflecting on decision-making about curriculum. Curriculum reform has been widespread over the last ten years and has been linked both with redefinitions of a country's position in relation to the global economy and with a reconstitution of national identity, sometimes linked with building elements of international understanding. Definitions of women's identity are often key to both processes. Sometimes a marked xenophobia will inscribe certain women as belonging appropriately and others as alien outsiders. More inclusive curricula might seek to build an understanding of the lives of different groups of women and men.

A curriculum is usually a powerful piece of national legislation, given that schools are such a key site of national aspiration and expenditure. When governments change, particularly after prolonged struggles for independence or national liberation, there are often moves to amend the curriculum. Social movements in several countries (for example South Africa, Brazil and India) have been powerful influences for change and innovation in the curriculum. What are some of the implications of this widespread trend for curriculum reform for girls, women and gender equity in general and to what extent have women and girls from a range of backgrounds played a significant role in curriculum reform processes?

'Participation' and 'consultation' by stakeholders and users are important dimensions of curriculum planning and development processes in attempts to define the kind of education a society wants. But we must always question the nature of the participation and consultation and be clear about whose voices are loudest. What principles are useful when deciding valuable aspects of decision-making concerning curricula? Who decides what girls should or should not learn and who has the right to talk on behalf of girls and women in local, national and international arenas? To what degree are girls able to be full and informed parties to discussions about their own futures? Practices differ according to context and situation but the rhetoric of participation often obscures decision-making processes which are top-down or tokenistic in relation to

girls and women. In national curriculum development processes the voices of girls in the classroom and village are often faint and diluted.

Women and girls are not a homogenous category and a one-size curriculum will not fit all. With a wide range of women participating in decision making about curriculum development the possibility emerges of greater flexibility and 'fit' with many different girls' lives. Women decision makers are important advocates for girls who are struggling to remain in school, as the detail from Madhya Pradesh in India shows (Box 3). Camfed, an international NGO working in Africa, reports that young women who have completed school are important advocates arguing for an expansion of girls' education in their villages.

BOX 3 Conditions for expanded decision making and participation in Madhya Pradesh, India – a government approach.

- The government of Madhya Pradesh has to take account of diverse environmental and social demography for improving girls' education
- The state has had to balance a focus on girls' issues with addressing the inequalities outside the school (and all this without marking out girls even further)
- Reservation of 30% posts in local government for women has re-shaped girls' perceptions of adult women and facilitated linkages between the school curriculum and social aspiration.
- Care needs to be paid to the conditions that encourage discussion about gender equality in the curriculum e.g. freedom of speech and support from government officials

Sharma 2003

The kind of education that girls and women want is shaped by their experience and expectations of what they can do with education in the future. Demand may be for formal schooling, which provides the national curriculum in a prestige language and gives access to subjects which are seen to bring status and recognition. The expectations of girls and their parents regarding the curriculum they study may be formed through social, economic or political constraints in the immediate environment or deduced from development rhetoric about the benefits schooling brings for individuals and society. Sometimes girls' and women's expectations are hampered by their limited knowledge of social policies. When involving women and girls in decision-making it is necessary to provide insights that go beyond the immediate and familiar context so that decision-making is well informed. Formal schooling must not be at the expense of the knowledge and the skills that girls and women have of their local context, but being responsive to these particularities needs to go together with an education that helps girls to realise their freedoms and self-hood.

At national and cross-national level there are many organizations working to influence curriculum change and draw attention to aspects of the gender equality agenda in this

process, for example Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Global Campaign for Education (GCE), international and local NGOs, Education International and teacher unions in many countries. In many countries NGO and INGO networks and organizations are seeking to make governments accountable to society drawing on existing instruments of public accountability, through for example participation in national education planning processes (e.g. Tanzania civil society participation in the development of the Primary Education Development Plan) and budget tracking and monitoring (e.g. civil society monitoring in Malawi, Kenya and Philippines). Commitments to participation in government plans or in international strategies can be used by strong civil society organizations to lobby and campaign for access to decision-making processes. Education networks and national coalitions are negotiating political space in national decision-making forums through an ongoing process of lobbying and making linkages across regions and globally. To date these linkages have not been primarily concerned with gendered aspects of curriculum, given the importance of securing good quality provision. But in some cases social mobilisation to get girls into school cannot be sustained because schools do not change curriculum to make social practices in school welcoming and inclusive for girls. Without considering some of the gender dynamics of what is taught we are failing to take full strategic account of what can be gained by popular mobilisation in the run up to 2005 and the MDG, as the case study from Mali makes clear (Box 4).

BOX 4 NGO mobilisation to get girls into school, Northern Mali.

- Working with animatrices (community animators to monitor girls' attendance and retention) to understand the gender dynamics in the local communities, such as male-dominated PTAs which are difficult to influence, and the importance of mothers' decisions in getting girls to school.
- The presence of animatrices successfully boosted girls' enrolment figures but this has been achieved at the cost of a much greater workload for their mothers (due to efforts put in by women to creating girl-friendly classrooms and loss of labour at home)
- Creation of girl-friendly classrooms can also reinforce gender stereotypes with girls responsible for all the cleaning and water collection at school
- Many animatrices have found complex gender messages difficult to understand and accept. These are often framed in alienating language. Many animatrices believe women, even when educated, should remain in a caretaker role at home, whether or not this is what they choose
- This is one factor why the animatrice programme has been successful only in concern with access to schooling rather than in developing high-quality, appropriate education
- Curriculum change relies on presence of respected women/men in the community who understand girls' needs and can negotiate with government (an important role for NGOs, parents and community leaders).

Sanou 2003

The importance of the links between communities, NGOs and governments is a key issue in thinking about decision-making concerning gender and the curriculum. But a different set of questions emerges when governments are fragile or non-existent. What are the options available for lobbying for gender equitable curriculum processes and

practices in countries where no officially recognized government exists (e.g. South Sudan)? And who controls the curriculum in conflict-affected or post-conflict countries (e.g. Iraq)? These questions need to be considered together with those that relate to more stable settings, as there may well be lessons in societies emerging from conflict – for instance, South Africa or Northern Ireland – for countries where levels of conflict are still acute.

3. Curriculum, Quality basic education and gender inequality in social relations

Quality means increasing girls' demand for education and parents' demands for their daughters. Increasing demand is linked to perceived relevance and quality of education. These perceptions are linked to social and political relations, themselves subject to change over time. There are three key components of quality that link to concerns with gender equality – aspects of curriculum content, teacher education and learning resources. But all of these need to be placed within a changing social and historical context.

Ideas about human rights, national development, cultural affirmation and curriculum do not exist outside time, history or society. Gender equity in the curriculum cannot be viewed as an isolated set of actions. Curriculum as policy and practice connects with other dimensions of schooling where gender inequalities are often marked, such as teacher/student relations (where ethnicity and class may also be factors), the physical environment (where inattention to the provision of e.g. girls' toilets or access ramps for wheelchair users results in unjust exclusion). Gendered relations between learners will also have a bearing on curriculum decisions. For example, in classes where girls are not encouraged to speak, their learning may be hindered, as it may also be in classes where teachers direct a great deal of time to holding the attention of boys. Curriculum decisions also have a bearing on social structures, relationships and actions beyond school in households and the community environment where gender plays an important role. Curriculum can affect these relationships, but curriculum decisions might also be affected by what is considered important in out of school settings.

Curriculum decisions may or may not accord with views of parents regarding what should be taught in school. For example, views of parents and teachers regarding appropriate forms of behaviour for boys and girls at a particular age will affect how the curriculum is viewed, developed and put into practice. Whilst such divisive issues often receive little attention, they can strongly influence the way in which teachers implement curriculum in the classroom and the way it is experienced and perceived as a practice by students. For example significant differences have been documented regarding the views of different groups on the appropriate language of instruction for girls and boys, the ways in which history is taught, and the nature and amount of sport in school. The practice of the curriculum is thus embedded in a gendered social, cultural, economic and political context which has been shaped by historical processes and practices, including those relating to teacher education, and is subject to the dynamics of change.

In thinking about quality and the content of curriculum questions need to be posed about what schooling offers girls, especially girls living in poor and marginalized contexts. Many contributors to the Beyond Access seminar discussion highlighted

how curriculum should provide access to liberating and awareness-raising literacy learning processes. Through these, women and girls can develop the necessary confidence and skill base to use their learning to change their situation. The Madhya Pradesh approach outlined by Amita Sharma emphasises the need to empower girls as a group but also as individuals, and to problematise the curriculum so that discussion of values and politics is included. Amita Sharma also stressed how important it is that room for 'imagination' is secured in developing a curriculum. Processes and spaces for selecting content which stimulates critical consciousness should not be ignored.

However it is not always easy to balance these concerns with those of a wider national definition of quality education. With nationally developed and produced core curriculum bulging with subject areas, it is often difficult to ensure gender issues a place. South Africa (Box 5) provides an example of how different views about quality came into alliance to secure space for gender equality in the written documents on curriculum, although the need to turn this into practice is still a challenge.

BOX Securing a gender equality focus in the South Africa Curriculum

- In South Africa mobilization and agreement by teachers with very different perspectives on their profession was key to securing aspects of a gender equitable emphasis.
- Without significant political authority and adequate resources curriculum policy change is difficult to secure and gender equality concerns will remain mainly symbolic.
- Gender and education networks will be very important in sustaining and monitoring the curriculum initiatives

Chisholm 2003

A second aspect of quality concerns teacher education. Whatever the content of a curriculum teachers are key actors in mediating and implementing its aims. In some curriculum designs teachers are viewed as simply the tools to deliver a pre-determined knowledge and competencies; learners are often seen as 'empty vessels' to be filled appropriately. In this view, gender is often assumed and based on a homogenous standard 'male' category. In other designs teachers are viewed as interpreters of forms of knowledge to learners in a specific context. In this position knowledge may be seen to have gender dimensions, for example claims are sometimes made about the importance of social context to the ways girls understand science and maths. Learners may also be viewed as having gendered identities, thus assumptions that girls cannot learn maths or science might underpin the kinds of interpretations teachers make about different approaches to learning. A third approach to curriculum design positions teachers as facilitators and guides to children's learning. In this position the teacher has an obligation to overcome some of the gendered inequalities in a society through facilitating children's learning beyond those barriers.

The curriculum is only as good as the teachers who implement it and many teachers are disempowered by the content of the curriculum itself, by bureaucratic constraints, by power structures or by the curriculum's assumptions of what their roles should be. In many education systems women teachers have lower status and lower pay than

their male colleagues. Sometimes initiatives to promote the employment of women teachers, by reducing the qualifications they need for entry into the profession, confirm assumptions about women's inferiority in a wider society. These forms of discrimination point to the need for knowledge about the deep-seated nature of gender inequality to be incorporated into teacher development programmes.

Teacher education – ITE, CPD continuous professional development, Inset – are crucial in understanding the way teachers relate to the curriculum, both as a document and as a social practice. Teachers also need resources to be able to implement the curriculum. Taking into account the values, aims and processes of teacher education and its relation to a specific curriculum helps develop understanding about how teachers actually make sense of the curriculum. The gendered dynamics of this process are extremely important as the example of working with teachers on gender equality and the HIV/AIDS epidemic shows. Box 6 outlines some recommendations about how to deal with divergent views regarding gender equality on the part of parents, male and female learners, teachers, and teacher educators.

BOX 6 Lessons from an HIV/AIDS programme, Mozambique

- HIV/AIDS and attitudes to sexuality are gendered and affect curriculum in HIV/AIDS education
- Schools are problematic spaces. They are often arenas where masculinities and femininities are 'performed' - that is the words and actions of teachers and learners enforce dominant ideas about being 'a real man' or 'a good girl'
- But schools are also transformative places and can be used for HIV/AIDS education that challenges gender stereotypes and inequalities, especially if didactic modes of teaching are avoided and more facilitative techniques, possibly using extra-curricular space, are used
- Teacher educators need to take time to understand the values, processes and aims of the teacher education programme they are working in and its relation to a curriculum for gender equality. Sometimes the form of teacher education linked to a particular programme does not encourage understanding of gender equality issues, but working a theme of gender equality through a whole programme of teacher education is much more effective than a single session on gender in building understanding
- A cadre of better-resourced and more specialist personal social education teachers with good understandings of gender equality as a process needs to be developed in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic

Thorpe 2003

It is clear that issues of HIV/AIDS awareness and education for prevention are linked to issues concerning the identities of learners and teachers. Teacher education that engages with issues of quality, equality and curriculum development needs to take seriously how it works with participants to shape this vision. Amita Sharma argued that, whoever the teacher is, there is an urgent need for the development of a new kind of teacher – one who draws legitimacy from the community and from the learners themselves. A woman teacher in this position requires much support as a public employee to fulfill this role. Teacher education to develop the self-confidence and local responsiveness for this role is needed.

The focus on changing teacher education and understanding curriculum as a practice within the schools brings us again to the need to consider families and especially mothers. Teachers, however comprehensive and participative the curriculum, are not the only source of knowledge or the only facilitators of learning. Schools and teachers need to open up to the resources of the local community where issues of gender inequality might come sharply into focus and would need considerable discussion and examination. Research and NGO experience suggests that men dominate school management committees yet women dominate the more 'domestic' side of improving classroom environment (see Box 4). Teacher professional development that enables teachers to work with and through some of these gender dynamics of local school management seems crucial for supporting aspects of the situated practice of curriculum change discussed earlier. Opening up the school as part of its surrounding community is one move towards understanding and changing violence and abuse of girls by teachers and peers, and we are only slowly coming to appreciate the extent of this problem.

A last aspect of quality concerns learning materials. Gender analysis of textbooks has become in many instances nothing more than a checklist of what images show. This work is of limited usefulness in understanding how children learn about gender, which is a much more complex process than merely responding to images in a preconditioned way. The bigger messages of the textbooks and how learners and teachers read them has not yet been the subject of extensive discussion. Readers often develop multiple responses to image and text and can work at the same time with an understanding of what the society requires them to understand through a picture and with alternate readings that might challenge this. Research that takes these different layers of understanding into account is needed as different kinds of materials are assembled to support gender equality initiatives.

Quality thus has many dimensions, of which content, teachers' approach to their work, and learning resources are just some. But clearly gender equality is an important component of thinking about quality.

4. Key Actions for making curricula more gender equitable

Ignoring the gendered processes through which decisions are taken about curriculum content and development will reinforce a status quo and slow down progress to reaching the MDG for gender equality in education. To ensure that decision making is based on rights to gender equity, and the curriculum practices are gender equitable the following recommendations need to be adopted:

Developing curriculum policy:

- Ensure widespread consultation in drawing up a curriculum; facilitate participation by groups who may be marginalized because of language or social practice. Consider how gender equality issues have been raised through the discussion
- Pose questions through the curriculum design process regarding what decisions mean for women and girls
- Lobby for adequate resources to support the gender equality input into curriculum design

- Develop networks between governments and NGOs and across national boundaries to share experiences of what works and the reasons for this.

Supporting curriculum development and review:

- Ensure adequate resources are allocated to involve learners, teachers, parents, NGOs, CBOs and employers in the process of curriculum review and development as a matter of course and make sure the processes are gender equitable with regard to who can attend and speak at meetings or write submissions
- Work within teacher education programmes to develop an understanding of the dynamics of gender equality in learning and teaching and in the hidden curriculum. Avoid a ‘one off’ session on ‘gender’. But if this is the only way to include a focus on gender such an approach is better than nothing

Review learning materials to consider what particular sections of text and pictures mean to learners from particular contexts and how these might develop understanding of gender equality.

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