



Papua New Guinea
Department of Education



GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION POLICY

Guidelines for Implementation

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Secretary's Message

In Papua New Guinea, and throughout the world, attention is focused on the status of women and the need to improve opportunities for women and girls to participate in all aspects of economic, social and political life.

Schools have a special role in promoting gender equity between girls and boys. They are responsible for ensuring that what is taught and learned contributes in a positive way to the lives of both girls and boys. As educators, we must ensure that female students and male students have equal access to the knowledge and skills that schools provide. We must provide for equal participation of females and males in classrooms. This is what gender equity in education means.

Developing gender equity in schools and a curriculum which supports the interests of both girls and boys, requires the commitment of educators at all levels of education. The Gender Equity in Education Policy provides a framework of principles and practices that will improve the life chances of all school children regardless of whether they are males or females.

I urge all educational authorities to work together in implementing this policy so that all students receive the best possible education.



Dr. JOSEPH PAGELIO
Secretary for Education



GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION POLICY

PREAMBLE

In Papua New Guinea, and throughout the world, attention has focused on the status of women generally and on the need to improve the condition of their lives, and highlights the benefits of a society where women and men participate as equals in all parts of economic, social and political life (Papua New Guinea Human Development Report, 1998). Schools have a role and a responsibility to contribute to the achievement of equality between males and females and in improving conditions of life for girls and women¹. All schools in Papua New Guinea should ensure that what is being taught and learned does justice to girls and women, as well as boys and men, taking account of and respecting the range of cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and positive differences found in society in Papua New Guinea. What is taught and learned should be equally valuable for female students and male students and value both females and males equally.

INTRODUCTION

The Education system of Papua New Guinea has the responsibility to provide high quality, equitable education that meets the needs of both female and male students. Gender equity should be fundamental to all educational policies and practices. The Gender Equity in Education Policy has been developed so that no students in the education system of Papua New Guinea are disadvantaged on the basis of gender.

To assist personnel to understand terms in this policy, 'gender' refers to those behaviours and attitudes which are cultural accepted as appropriate ways of being a woman (femininity) and ways of being a man (masculinity). The sex of a person is biologically determined, where ways of being a man or a woman are learned: they are constructed, reinforced, maintained and reconstructed over time through social and cultural practices. Such constructions of gender vary across cultures, social class and time.

Equity means fairness and without bias. In social exchange fairness exists when persons who have made the largest contributions receive relatively large rewards, those who have made small contributions receive small rewards, and so on. In a social context equity also involves conscience or principles of natural justice. This can result in people being given different treatment if this is considered fair or just. Therefore some people may be recognised as more deserving than others. The basis on which preferential treatment is made is important in

¹ All schools in Papua New Guinea should ensure that what is being taught and learned does justice to girls and women, as well as boys and men, taking account of and respecting the range of cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and positive differences found in society in Papua New Guinea.

judging whether a case is just or unjust. It can vary according to basic beliefs or political persuasion.

Equity is not maintained where there is discrimination. Discrimination involves treating the sexes differently in ways that suggest that one is inherently inferior to the other. Being treated differently in areas of learning and related activities can and does affect the distribution of political, economic and social benefits and influence.

Equality is different from equity. Equality means every person receiving the same treatment regardless of who or where he or she may be. Equity is the means. Equality is the goal.

The education system in Papua New Guinea has a role and responsibility in contributing to a socially just society. It can do this by ensuring equal and fair access to, participation in and outcomes from the education provided for female and male students. In order that all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the development of the country, men's and women's aspirations, achievements and life choices must not be constrained by gender.

Understanding gender equity in education enables students and educators to recognise and remedy the constraints and inequalities that may result from not understanding constructions of gender.

The Gender Equity in Education Policy aims to develop every individual to her or his full potential².

BACKGROUND

The Constitution of Papua New Guinea embodies the government's commitment to equality for both women and men within family, community and society. It supports the idea of human development, which encourages every person to be dynamically involved in the process of freeing himself or herself from every form of domination and oppression so that each man or woman will have the opportunity to develop as a whole person in relation to others.

The Government subscribes to and has endorsed a range of international Conventions such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1962), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Education for All (United Nations Declaration 1990) and the Beijing Declaration (1995) which called for the mainstreaming of gender issues. The Papua New Guinea Platform

² The Gender Equity in Education Policy aims to develop every individual to her or his full potential.

for Action was written as a result of the information in these documents. The National Education Plan 2005-2014 provides a wide range of approaches to address issues of gender equity.

The Education Reform aims to develop in all students the full potential of their talents and abilities. This reform aims to promote self-confidence, optimism and self-esteem. Education must prepare young Papua New Guineans to be active and informed citizens, flexible and adaptable to meet the changing social and economic needs of the country. Education must develop skills in a range of learning areas. It must promote respect for others, for learning and for the diverse cultural heritage of this country. It is essential that all students including those in single-sex schools participate fully in programs in schools designed to meet the objectives of the National Policy. The Gender Equity in Education Policy has an important role in enhancing and promoting these goals.

Inherent within this Gender Equity in Education Policy is the understanding that gender equity will be implemented within all education workplaces. Affirmative action and positive discrimination, supported by an Equal Employment Opportunities Policy, will ensure that women in education are provided with opportunities to participate in decision making and be representatives to the highest levels and that professional development activities will support emerging women managers in their new roles.

EDUCATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The National Education System encourages, supports and promotes the following values and principles as being essential to the development and implementation of quality curriculum and educational experiences for male and female students.

Principles

- All students have the ability to achieve their full potential; being either male or females does not determine the capacity to learn.
- Equality of opportunity and outcomes in education for female and male students may require that girls and boys get some preferential treatment at least for a period of time.
- Strategies to improve the quality of education of female students should be based on the recognition that action is required at the elementary, primary, secondary and the tertiary levels.

- Strategies to improve the quality of education for female students should be based on an understanding that neither boys nor girls are the same individually or as a group, having different needs and coming from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Values

- Both female students and male students should value each other and be valued equally in all aspects of schooling.
- High quality education for female students as well as for male students is a professional responsibility for all educators in all elementary, primary and secondary schools, school systems and all tertiary institutions.
- Schooling for girls and boys should reflect the entitlements of all women, in their own right, to personal respect and personal safety, economic security, and participation in and influence over decisions which affect their lives.

AIMS

The Gender Equity in Education Strategic Plan (2009-2014) has been developed to support, assist and facilitate implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy. The plan is available throughout the National Department of Education, Head Office, Provincial Offices and Local Education Authorities, to all schools, elementary, primary, secondary, tertiary and all teacher training institutions to support and assist all personnel, education systems and institutes to implement the Gender Equity in Education Policy in accordance with the following aims to:

- educate female and male students for a satisfying, responsible and productive life, including work inside and outside the home.
- provide a curriculum which, in content, language and methodology meets the educational needs and rights of female students as well as male students.
- acknowledge and respect positive cultural values and individual differences.
- provide a curriculum which challenges unfair cultural practices and which recognises the contribution to society of the full range of women as well as the contributions of diverse groups of men.

- Encourage the development of positive attitudes and behaviours in male and female students which promote social responsibility, empathy, and sensitive, equal and non-violent relationships.
- Provide a challenging learning environment which is socially and culturally supportive and physically comfortable for female as well as male students.
- Prepare female students and male students for their rights to personal respect and safety and provide an environment that is safe and free from all forms of harassment and violence.
- Provide finances and personnel resources to ensure that the capacities of male and female students are fully and equally realised.
- Acknowledge that effective change and lasting improvements needed in schools will require awareness, understanding and acceptance of the educational needs of female students on the part of students, parents, teachers and administrators.
- Ensure institutional support for addressing the educational needs of female students.
- Encourage support of parents and community members.
- Ensure women are supported in areas where curriculum is the responsibility of the community both financially and materially through NDoE professional development and other strategies.

OBJECTIVES

In preparing male and female students for satisfying, responsible and productive lives the National Education System will:

- Develop curricula, resources and courses, which are gender inclusive in content, language, teaching and assessment methodology.
- Promote awareness of gender equity issues in all school communities through its curriculum documents, courses and assessment procedures.
- Advise on appropriate policies, processes and gender inclusive practices.

- Provide curricula enabling male and female students to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge to participate fully in work in all its different situations, both unpaid and paid.
- Provide curricula which facilitate challenging learning environments which are socially and culturally appropriate, supportive and physically comfortable for both girls and boys.
- Develop curricula designed to advocate attitudes and behaviours in the school community, which promote social responsibility, empathy, sensitivity and equal and non-violent relationships.
- Develop curricula designed to contribute to a safe and supportive learning environment free from all forms of sexual harassment.
- Develop pre service and in-service training in gender equity for teachers, administrators, NDoE personnel as well as ancillary staff.
- Ensure that all the above objectives are included in all curricula, policies and practices in the tertiary education sector.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The National Department of Education Head Office and Provincial and Local Education Authorities and all education institutions.

A national policy acknowledges that meeting the educational rights and needs of girls and boys is a responsibility of the nation as a whole and requires a shared commitment by all authorities responsible for education, acting in collaboration. A national policy, based on principles of collaboration and partnership, necessarily involves commitment and agreement from the various parties responsible for schooling: the National Department of Education, the Provincial Department of Education, Local Authorities and non-government school authorities.

The Systems Level

The National Department of Education represents all Divisions within the NDoE. The gender desk is situated within the Human Resources and Organisation Development (HROD) Division. The Gender Equity Strategy Officer has a leading, coordinating role to play in the implementation of plans and strategies and provision of a range of support measures in the implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy.

Those responsible for Staff Professional Development and In-service have the responsibility to

- provide leadership in the system-wide implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy and gender equity in general.
- provide appropriate professional development at all levels about the Gender Equity in Education Policy.
- ensure that the Gender Equity in Education Policy is reflected in all NDoE documentation, structure and plans.
- provide sufficient funding and support personnel corresponding with requirements for implementation of the policy which will include a wide range of professional development, action research and in schools support activities.
- facilitate the monitoring, review and reporting of the implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy.
- implement affirmative action that will increase female participation in decision making and ensure female representation on all educational committees such as the Top Management Team, Board of Studies et cetera.
- support all institutions responsible for teacher education in Papua New Guinea to ensure that the principles of gender equity inform all pre-service and in service teacher training.
- support all education and training institutions to ensure the Gender Equity in Education Policy informs all courses and is implemented through policy, programs and practices.

- encourage and support balanced enrolments of female and male students at all levels of education.
- support the capacity of schools to respond flexibly to the implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy and strategic plan within their diverse communities.
- respond to schools needs for system-level programs and initiatives which contribute to and support teachers in implementing gender equity strategies.
- work collaboratively with schools to set targets at the provincial level for changes based on gender equity principles and values that improve outcomes for female as well as male students.
- collaborate and negotiate with donor agencies and financial supporters so that education facilities take into account the Gender Equity in Education Policy in providing infrastructure and related support, including students and teacher boarding accommodation.
- liaise between public investment programs and the gender desk to ensure coordination and links between NDoE personnel and donor agencies.
- collect and collate sex disaggregated data to assist with planning for educational improvement.
- provide research to enable accurate and timely identification of emerging educational issues with regard to gender equity.
- Prepare annual action plans to monitor and evaluate progress.

All Standards officers have the responsibility to

- identify and access professional development and current research on gender equity in education to increase their knowledge and skills to enable them to correctly support the implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy.
- develop very clear understandings of the construction of gender, gender equity, gender inclusive curriculum, as well as recommended teaching and assessment methodology.

- use this knowledge and understanding to constructively support teachers in the field to develop their skills to ensure that gender equity principles and practices are included in all work environments and practices.
- ensure that all standards instruments used reflect the Gender Equity in Education Policy and are gender inclusive and fair and promote equity and fairness.
- become role models and demonstrate in their own work that they promote and support improvement in education for both girls and boys through gender equity strategies.
- identify and disseminate best gender inclusive practices at local, community and national level.

All Guidance Officers have the responsibility to

- identify and access professional development and current research on gender equity in education to increase their knowledge and skills to ensure that all their work takes into account the Gender Equity in Education Policy.
- develop very clear understandings of the construction of gender, gender equity and gender inclusive curriculum to enhance the ways in which their own practices change to ensure gender equity in all their interactions with students.
- ensure that intellectual demands on female students are not lowered through channelling them into courses which reduce their career and life options. Female students should be offered the broadest possible career options.
- understanding that women comprise a substantial proportion of those who are illiterate, living in poverty, and may also be the breadwinners. The links between poverty, gender and educational outcomes need to be taken into account when advising students on curriculum choices.
- ensure that throughout all their interactions with students they strive to give each student the best possible advice regardless of gender.

Those involved in Curriculum Development have the responsibility to

- develop and provide curriculum that is gender inclusive in content, language, and recommended teaching methodologies and assessment instruments.
- develop and provide curriculum which in content, methodology and language meets the education needs and entitlements of girls as well as boys, and which recognises the contributions of women, as well as that of men, in the development of society.
- provide curriculum materials which do not include stereotypes, change information about women in lessons and place appropriate role models in as teachers.
- initiate fundamental re-working of what knowledge is valued in the curriculum and how it is taught. This requires focus on areas of knowledge which have until the present been excluded or misrepresented.
- develop and provide curriculum which challenge unfair cultural practices for girls and women, and for boys and men.
- develop and provide curriculum that take into account changing family roles, for example there are more women in the paid workforce and, in some cases, they are the head of the household.
- develop and provide curriculum which provide opportunities for students to learn about positive relationships and to develop attitudes and behaviours in the school community such as social responsibility, empathy, sensitivity and equal and non-violent relationships.
- develop and provide curriculum in teachers' training colleges and tertiary institutes that are gender inclusive and reflect values, principles, aims and objectives of the Gender Equity in Education Policy.

The school level

Principals³ have the responsibility to

- provide leadership in the school community in identifying community and school factors where gender equity and equality need to be addressed and promoted.

³ Principals includes ALL heads of institutions and schools at ALL levels of schooling, elementary, primary, secondary, tertiary and teacher training colleges and other tertiary institutes.

- plan and manage, with the school community, improvements to the range and quality of teaching and learning programs for students to ensure that the gender equity policy and gender inclusive curriculum and practices are implemented.
- assist teachers to identify and access professional development activities and resources that will improve gender equity in all areas of schooling.
- collect and disaggregate data on a range of gender issues.
- use data on students' achievements and retention and the quality of their participation in school life as a basis for developing strategies for and monitoring of, implementation of gender equity policies, procedures and practices.
- maintain learning environments that are safe and free from all forms of violence and sexual harassment.
- take responsibility for improving the outcomes of education for both female students and male students.
- encourage participation and decision making by women in the community on school committees and boards to ensure equity and equality of participation.

School staff have the responsibility to

- ensure that the Gender Equity in Education Policy and principles are reflected in all school documentation and plans for the future.
- ensure that all members of the schools community are informed of the Gender Equity in Education Policy and have access to professional development on issues of gender equity and the gender inclusive curriculum and are involved in the process of its implementation.
- plan, implement and monitor strategies based on the Gender Equity in Education Policy through school-based policy, procedures, program and practices.
- encourage all members of the school community, including parents, to participate in professional development activities.
- contribute to data collection relating to implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Policy.
- monitor, review and report to NDoE as appropriate on the implementation of Gender Equity in Education Policy within the school.

GLOSSARY

Gender

Gender refers to those behaviours and attitudes, which are culturally accepted as appropriate ways of being a woman and ways of being a man. Whereas the sex of a person is biologically determined, ways of being a woman or man are learned; they are constructed, reinforced, maintained and reconstructed over time and through social practice. Constructions of gender vary across cultures, social class and time.

Equity

Equity means fairness without bias. In social exchange fairness exists when persons who have made the largest contributions receive relatively large rewards, those who make small contributions receive small rewards, and so on. This can result in people being given different treatment if this is considered fair or just. Therefore some people may be recognised as more deserving than others. The basis on which preferential treatment is made is important in judging whether a case is just or unjust. It can vary according to basic beliefs or political persuasion

In pursuing gender equity, it is not sufficient to pursue outcomes statistically equal for girls and boys as groups. In overcoming educational inequalities between the sexes, the entitlement of every individual to the conditions for successful schooling is recognised. This will require that schools select, organise and transmit knowledge in ways that do not entail disadvantage to students because they are female. At the same time schools are required to provide conditions necessary to enable all students to progressively extend their own knowledge and understanding of the world. They are required to enable students to extend their awareness of options in the world beyond school and in pursuing learning.

Equality

Equality is different from equity. Equality means every person receiving the same treatment regardless of who or where he or she may be.

Empathy

Empathy means to have understanding, compassion and sympathy for, and identify with, another person's feelings.

Culture

Culture is the complex set of learned and shared experiences, which embraces the beliefs, values, ideals, customs, language, laws, artistic products and symbols of a group. Throughout time all people and societies and cultures change; the response to change will vary from one individual to another and from one society to another. It must be recognised that culture is largely socially constructed, is dynamic and changes over time.

Gender Inclusive Curriculum

A Gender Inclusive Curriculum is defined as a curriculum, which by its content, language and methods gives equal value and validity to girls' and women's, boys and men's knowledge and experiences. The purpose of a gender inclusive curriculum is that it will enhance the education of both boys and girls by broadening the base of understanding and knowledge currently being presented in schools and raising the status of, and opportunities for, women and girls in our society. In the long term, the presentation of a set of values which includes the feminine as well as the masculine will lead to a more humane, balanced and socially just society.

Diversity

Variations between individuals or groups of people; a range of differences between people or groups of people.

Bias or gender bias

This is a stated position, an assumption or situation, which shows a preferred view or treatment of one sex over the other.

Constraints

Restriction or limitation on a person, to stop a person from being able to do what they want to do.

Aspirations

To have goals or objectives, hopes or desires, targets or ambitions.

Sex Disaggregated data

Sex disaggregated data is a collection of data that is sorted by sex such as enrolment, attendance, withdrawals, assessment, subject choice.

Sensitivity

Sensitivity means to have consideration, concern and care about another person and treat them with kindness.

Institutional support

Support provided by NDoE or the particular educational institute in which implementation is taking place with particular support from those in key decision making positions.

Social context

The background or circumstances in the community or society.

Principles of natural justice

Main beliefs, values or philosophy about what is fair and right.

Political persuasion

Political point of view or beliefs.

Challenges unfair practices

This phrase means to ask if it is fair for example when girls are expected to take on a number of domestic tasks, which may stop them from completing their homework or even from attending school.

Public investment program

Programs provided through a range of non-government and donor organisations.

Gender desk

The name that has been given to the NDoE position of the officer responsible for Gender programs. The gender equity strategy officer is employed by the NDoE to provide a range of services and activities including conducting gender equity professional development activities and supporting the implementation of the Gender Equity in Education Strategic Plan (2009-2014).

Stereotypes

Sets of ideas about a group of people, which are applied to every member of the group whether they fit, or not. Stereotypes can be positive, but they are usually too simple to be true and are quite often wrong.

