

GENDER EQUITY

STORIES TO LIVE, STORIES TO THINK ABOUT



INTRODUCTION ON THE ORIGINS

This educational proposal originates from the Connecting Worlds international project. Many teachers asked us to make the activities from the Connecting Worlds online platform available so that they could carry them out in their school centers, independently of the agenda of the online activity and of the cooperative process with other schools.

We have kept the interactive story, the storylines and the

content levels and have adapted the activities to the new context so that you can carry them out successfully.

We recommend you read this Educational Guide. It will provide you with clues to help you develop the different activities we suggest as well as ideas to delve deeper into certain aspects and subjects.

Further information at www.conectandomundos.org

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Summary of the interactive story, objectives and subjects

Chen (Nicaraguan), Gotzone (Basque), Meriem (Moroccan) and Hannah (Italian) are shocked to see their classmates occupying – once again – the entire playground for a football match. The situation is unbearable ...

They also want a place where they can play, but there's no space left for them. Meriem would actually love to play football. What she would really like is to be playing with the boys, but they won't let her... it is so unfair! Whereas Chen, who hates playing football, doesn't dare to say so publicly because he's afraid his classmates will laugh at him.

The power relationships which are forged on the playground will help us learn about stories and cases that can take place in any of the countries where the children come from.

Objectives

- To build one's own identity: how we are and how others see us.
- Develop otherness: the respect for differences, the respect for others.
- Bring one's close environment into the development of the gender-inequality analysis: work with families.
- Work to bring about change in order to build an egalitarian society.
- Learn to manage emotions and relationships between peers.
- Visualize, experience and bring down the cultural construction of gender stereotypes.

Primary focus of the line of work

- Identify roles and stereotypes to make evident equal rights (reproductive work, feminization of the professions and occupation of the space).
- Social construction of gender through stories.
- Family stories: expressing models.

Competence assessment indicators

Language Proficiency

- Global comprehension of the text.
- Identification of the main and secondary ideas.
- Differentiation between facts and opinions, real and imaginary facts.
- Use of specific vocabulary.
- Active listening.
- Participation and respect for the structure of the conversation.
- Expressing themselves with rhythm, pronunciation and intonation.
- Fluency and expressive richness.
- Clear and well-organized presentation.
- Answer questions at the end of a presentation.

Emotional, Social and Citizenship Competence

- Value of languages as a means of communication and understanding.
- Identification and rejection of any type of prejudice.
- Defense of human rights.
- Analysis of causes, inter-relations and risks.
- Active listening.
- Respect for the work and opinions of others.
- Collaboration in group tasks.
- Fulfillment of the agreements that have been adopted.
- Positive expectations of working in group.
- Knowledge and acceptance of all the members of the group.
- Flexible behavior, open to dialogue, in the face of problematic situations.
- Elaboration of rules within the classroom.
- Analysis of the consequences of failing to comply with a rule.

Artistic and Cultural Competence:

- Multimedia presentation of content.
- Enjoyment of the artistic expression.
- Level of originality or ingenuity of answers.

Learning to Learn Competence:

- Selection and preparation of materials.
- Self-control when paying attention and perseverance in the task.
- Search for alternatives.

Teacher's attitudes: the hidden curriculum

In relation to gender equality, teachers face the challenge of trying to avoid conveying – unintentionally through comments, jokes or differential treatment – different expectations regarding school results which can influence the assimilation of stereotypes and traditional roles.

Therefore, teachers must stop to consider which ideas they are unconsciously helping to reinforce (the hidden curriculum) and which models they are conveying to their students.

We suggest that you look out for:

- Comments on: physical appearance, clothes, good behavior addressed to girls; intelligence, scruffy appearance, messiness, bad behavior addressed to boys.
- Jokes: If their jokes are based on stereotypes.
- Differential treatment:
 - Are you more permissive when a boy is being rowdy than when it is a girl?
 - Is the expression of emotions encouraged in girls and restricted or ridiculed in boys?
 - Is the expression of rage allowed for boys and inhibited in girls?
- Different expectations regarding school results:
 - Are girls and boys required to meet the same levels of performance and effort?

When a boy gets something wrong, the teacher considers that he has made a mistake – he is given attention and support and encouraged to repeat the exercise. However, if a girl gets something wrong it is assumed that she was going to fail just for being a girl and she is not encouraged to try again.

- Other aspects that should be considered regarding expectations:
 - Do we use the same tone of voice when addressing boys and girls?
 - Do we tend to look more at girls or at boys when we are speaking in the classroom?
 - Do we react the same way when a boy asks for affection and physical contact as when a girl asks for it?
 - Do you ask boys to help with tasks in which physical strength is needed and assign lighter tasks to girls?
 - Do you ask boys and girls the same number of questions?
 - Do you scold them equally?
 - Do you speak to them equally?
 - When it comes to tidying up, cleaning and decorating the classroom do you ask more for help from the girls?
 - When it comes to tasks which imply organizing or taking on responsibilities, do you ask more for help from the boys?

Methodological guidelines for the development of the activities

On the debates

In this educational proposal we want to focus on dialogue, debate, exchange of opinions and interest and respect for the opinion of others. To promote this we suggest questions aimed at generating debates and reflection among students.

By way of example: What new ideas do your classmates provide? Do you agree with them? With which ideas do you agree? With which of them do you disagree? Why? What new ideas have you offered?

To introduce the debate on the playground problem and the list of ideas for an ideal playground we suggest the following questions:

Based on Meriem and Gotzone's story:

- Do you know someone who has been through a similar situation?
- Why do you think these things happen?
- Do you agree with it?
- Are men better than women at playing sports? Why?
- Do you think there are games or sports for boys and games or sports for girls?

Sobre la realidad más cercana:

- What games do you play on your playground? Who suggests them? Do you all like to play the same games/sports?
- What would you like your playground to have? What things do you like best of your playground?
- What would you remove from your playground? Who occupies more space? Why?
- Would you like to act as observers and write down what goes on during recess on the playground? What do you think goes on?
- Do you always get to play the games you want to play? Why?

We suggest you gather the conclusions you obtain through the different activities and debates - as well as drawings, questionnaires, etc. - on posters as you go along and in that way create a mural to help remember the subjects and activities you have worked on.

The distribution of spaces on the playground during recess

As the systematic observation of formal school settings (classrooms, libraries, etc.) and less-supervised settings (school playgrounds, corridors, etc.) has shown, the distribution of boys and girls within the playground's space is not equal.

During recess and particularly when playgrounds are delimited spaces, students establish relationships of acceptance and rejection which, in

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this case, lead to the occupation of the playground's central and optimal spaces by the dominant groups (in general, boys who play football), while the non-dominant groups (girls who play quiet games and boys who do not participate in sports games) are consigned to the remaining space. This is why we will devote this phase to analyzing the distribution of spaces on the playground and their corresponding activities.

The playground during recess is actually key to socialization and to the learning of social skills:

- We make new friends and create stronger relationships than those forged in the classroom.
- We make plans to meet later at home, to play sports or study together, to meet in the city - all of which strengthens relationships and friendship.
- We develop fondness for others and common projects.
- We also have different ideas about things and about what we would like to play, but we learn – or not – to show respect for differences without losing the friendship.
- We polish – or not – our aggressive and dominant behaviors which will later be the good and the bad of our own working and/or family lives.
- We learn to share or we maintain a selfish attitude.
- We tend to overcome shyness and express ourselves with property, honestly maintaining the ideas we consider are correct.
- We learn – or not – to work in teams and to participate in common projects for the benefit of others.

Source: http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/averroes/html/adjuntos/2008/06/04/0001/adjuntos/pdf/diagnostico_4.pdf

TO DELVE DEEPER INTO: SOME PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES

Here are two practical experiences which also provide resources and can be useful to help you analyze and manage the playground space in a democratic and egalitarian manner.

Albalate de Cinca School, Huesca, Spain

It consists in a project at the Albalate de Cinca school aimed at democratizing school recess. A series of spaces-games are set aside for organized activities in which students can freely decide whether to participate or not. Rather than an obligation, the idea wants to be an alternative to the activities which students usually carry out and which typically involve very few games, "territorial feudalism" (groups of boys or girls who always occupy the same spaces and do not let other boys and girls use them), little physical or play activity, many inactive students occupying school corners, little interaction, little participation of girls in recess, small girls and boys always occupying the same area, etc.

Source: <http://www.albeos.org/IMG/pdf/RECREJUEGOS.pdf>

Primary Education School Center Mercedes Medina Díaz, Lanzarote, Spain

The "Playtime Optimization and Regulation of Coexistence during Recess" project was launched in 2005 with the aim of making the most of the playground space during recess and improving the relationships which took place there. In the first phase – "Everyone Can Play Here" – the space was redesigned and different play areas were created for volleyball, baseball, tick-tack-toe and chess; new sports and educational material was purchased and several students were selected to be in charge of delivering and collecting this material, as well as of controlling its use during recess.

The second phase – "Learning to Coexist While We Play" – was aimed at achieving that students themselves regulated coexistence during recess and took care of the interpersonal relationships which take place there.

Source: http://www.cepcuevasolula.es/espiral/articulos/ESPIRAL_VOL_3_N_6_ART_3.pdf

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER

The term sex mainly refers to the anatomy and physiological characteristics of being male or female, while *gender* is used to speak of attitudes and abilities assigned to each sex which result from socially constructed roles and which finally become cultural stereotypes that a given society expects both from men and from women.

The fact that such behaviors are not based on genetic heredity or biology is what allows the school – as an agent for change and for the transmission of the culture in which it is in itself immersed – to play a fundamental role in the acquisition of sexual roles by students.

Debate on “Mom’s strike”

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Following are some of the ideas we can reflect on after reading the story:

- Tasks which have to do with childcare responsibilities – such as making breakfast, helping kids to dress, preparing backpacks, putting dirty dishes in the sink, taking the children to school and giving lots of kisses and hugs so that the day starts off well – are essential for the good functioning of society. Without someone who performs these tasks, we would not be able to carry out other tasks, such as paid work, political participation, academic training and artistic creation.
- In spite of their importance they are rarely considered “work”. Quite the contrary, they are regarded as obligations and the effort, experience and know-how needed to carry them out efficiently is rarely recognized. Despite this, it is important that we insist on the fact that all of us can – regardless of our age – learn to carry out these tasks by simply putting a little interest and attention, and that we can collaborate as far as possible in offering support for the mutual caring of all family members.
- Everybody, without exception, has the right to be cared for, to care for someone and to care for themselves. However, it’s the women – mothers, daughters, grandmothers, sisters, female domestic workers, etc. – who perform 80 per cent of caring-related tasks and who, consequently, receive less care from others and have less time to care for themselves. We must share these tasks in a more equitable way so that we can all be happier and better cared for.

Source: *La revolución de los cuidados*, (*The Revolution of Care*), published by Ayuda en Acción, InteRed y Entreculturas

Analysis of the questionnaire on the distribution of household chores

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In the card on household chores you can include other items which are more typical of your area or of the cultural reality of students. We recommend you do this previously, with the help of families.

Once you have filled out the card, in the classroom count the tasks that women (including grandmothers), men (including grandfathers), boys and girls carry out. It is important that you analyze which type of household chores is done by boys and which by girls or by their brothers and sisters.

In light of the data you have collected, we can ask the following questions:

- Are household chores important? Why?
- Are women responsible for cleaning and cooking because they do it better?
- Women and men are different and so they have to do different tasks?
- Are mothers responsible for household chores?
- Is childcare a responsibility of women?
- Is this situation fair?
- What can we do to change it?
- What tasks can boys and girls do?
- ...

Sociological notes on the distribution of household chores

Prof. Dr. Gerardo Meil Landwerlin, Departament of Sociology, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, November 2004, *El reparto de responsabilidades domésticas en la Comunidad de Madrid (The distribution of household chores in the Community of Madrid)*.

“The factors that are most clearly linked to the greater participation of men in household chores are, on one hand, the incorporation of women into the labor market and, on the other, women’s - and especially men’s -gender-role ideology. In this sense, men’s participation in housework is based on the demands women made regarding this subject. However, it does not stem from a conscious negotiation over the terms of housework distribution, but rather from men’s conviction of their obligation to participate – in other words, they consider it “normal” or “obvious” and take on their responsibility in this sense.

If the female partner considers that he “already does enough”, or the male partner considers that “it is not his responsibility” - an updated way of expressing “it’s not a man’s work” – we are unlikely to achieve a redefinition in the terms of household chores distribution between the two partners. Socialization based on gender equality model roles of a man’s parents and their contribution, as boys, in household chores proves to be an important factor which increases the possibilities of an active involvement that goes beyond simple, one-off help actions. Among nearly-equal couples, this type of man is over-represented, but we can still find men who were attended to by their sisters while living in their parent’s home. A more equal share of household tasks, therefore, not only implies a non-sexist education, but also an education on the distribution of household responsibilities – although the lack of such an education should not necessarily hinder social change in this sphere.

Although men tend to do more housework during the weekends than on working days, there appears to be no clear connection between the duration of their working day and a higher or lower participation. This stands true not only in regards to household chores, but also in childcare responsibilities. The fact that male parents do more than play with their kids and are actively involved in their children’s care and attention does not appear to be conditioned by their relative extra burden, but rather by their role ideology and the labor status of the woman. In this sense, there is a significant number of male parents who still take pride in having a total lack of responsibility for their children even in the face of new social realities.”

On stereotypes: the female carer / male breadwinner model

Stereotypes such as “women as carers” and “men as breadwinners” filter and reach our students through a number of contexts which go from textbook images to TV ads, toy commercials or comments such as the following:

Well done, young man! Keep on with these marks and you’ll get a job which makes you earn a lot of money.

Look, young man, if you don’t study you’ll have to find a job; I suppose you don’t expect your family to live on thin air, do you?

Don't waste your time in making your bed; your mother will take care of that. Just get down and do your homework immediately.

If you are not tidy with your things now, what will you do when you have to manage your own house?

The “women as carers” stereotype has an influence on girls because it restricts the image they have of themselves as autonomous professionals. This stereotype is linked to the traditional model of family, which identifies the mother - and women in general - as the only carer and prevents girls from seeing themselves within other types of family structures where a group of people take care of one another, collaborate in household chores and, at the same time, have a profession.

On the other hand, the “men as breadwinners” stereotype often has an influence on boys because it prevents them from seeing themselves as autonomous individuals who are able of taking care of themselves and others, since they cannot imagine the benefits of these types of situations. This is probably one of the reasons why boys are more reluctant to focus on professions which basically imply caring for others – particularly dependent people – such as nursing, caring for elders, primary school teaching, etc.

What we understand by productive labor / reproductive labor

In general, women participate in economic productivity in a variety of ways: they produce goods and services for the market in both the formal and the informal (or black) economy and, in addition, they produce non-tradable goods and services through domestic and subsistence.

Reproductive labor or housework must be considered an essential factor in understanding economic activities within the production process as a whole. Housework or reproductive labor comprises:

- All tasks related to taking care of the house and the family (household chores, maintenance tasks, taking care of people or health-care tasks).
- The set of activities carried out as mediator between the family and the services that different public institutions provide to their citizens such as the management of educational, health and entertainment services, among others.
- The set of tasks which derive from the management and organization of household affairs and bureaucratic tasks. Reproductive labor does not restrict itself to the work done within the household – although this is indeed the main space in which it takes place – but also takes into consideration the numerous tasks which materialize within a family-space both inside and outside households.

Productive labor refers to the paid production of goods and services for the market. It is reflected within the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This indicator does not include informal or black economy, or household work, both of which are mainly carried out by women.

The value of stories



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Stories are an excellent resource to help convey values of equality and coeducation from an early age – when a person's moral code is beginning to take shape – because they allow working in advance on the resolution of future situations.

Adults must be aware of their own internalized sexism so as to minimize its impact when choosing, reading or telling stories and when designing work proposals with them. Stories have an inherent, hidden curriculum of their own which we must reveal and closely scrutinize.

Stories are very important because they convey messages which encourage overcoming difficulties. However, they also serve as a vehicle for the reinforcement of differentiated values according to sex. Such values are conveyed by the main characters of the stories, which are depicted as passive and delicate if they are female and as strong and brave if they are male.

The most common stereotypes in fairy tales

The origin of fairy tales takes place within the homes, when the family sat around the fire to tell stories. Storytelling generally fell on mothers and grandmothers, given that they were the ones responsible for the children's education and care.

At the beginning, fairy tales were passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition, but with the invention of the printing press, bourgeois customs and traditions began to be expanded in a literary form. Years later, aristocracy appropriated the stories, embedding their own values and conventions. Being committed to the page, fairy tales became a way of instilling these models in girls and boys.

The most common stereotypes in fairy tales:

- The prince always saves the princess.
- Even when the prince is not the story's main character, he always ends up solving the problem.
- The prince is depicted as adventurous, brave and responsible for the kingdom.
- The prince's character is fundamental because without him, the princess would not be able to solve her problem.
- Women in fairy tales are always vain.
- Fairy tales are always about "true, ideal love"
- Very often, the characters experience love at first sight – with only a glance, they know that they are made for each other.
- In most fairy tales, the prevailing idea of love is one which always ends up in a wedding; a wedding which is rarely the decision of the female character, but rather of their parents or the prince, her savior.

What you need to be to make a prince notice you

As for female stereotypes, young girls in fairy tales who wish to find their prince must be good, beautiful, passive, pure, selfless and grieving. They can also be aggressive, ambitious, selfish, independent, ugly, intuitive, embittered and destructive – but then, no one will love them and they will be the wicked character in the story.

Submission, passiveness and the allocation of domestic spaces are all common characteristics of most of the female characters in traditional stories, but it is actually beauty which plays a vital role in these stories, being among the most valued features attributed to the female world by society.

The transmission of this idea is sometimes so aggressive that some stories even tell us that women would do anything to be more beautiful, even if it means trespassing limits – such as Snow White's stepmother or Snow White herself, who is persuaded by the witch with the simple promise that she will become more beautiful and puts at risk her own life. Moreover, it must be stressed that beauty is the central element in Snow White's life, the cause for all her suffering and misfortune.

Male and female personality: roles, attitudes and belongings

Female

- King's wives
- Patient princesses
- Evil witches
- Wicked stepmothers
- Fearful girls

Their attitudes

- Passiveness
- Submission
- Shyness
- Flirtation
- Meekness
- Diligence
- Meanness
- Vanity

Their objects

- Magic wands
- Brooms
- Poison
- Ornaments and jewelry
- Crowns
- Combs and mirrors
- Spindles and spinning wheels
- Threads and needles

Male

- Powerful kings
- Brave princes
- Bold fighters
- Ferocious ogres
- Righteous policemen

Their attitudes

- Bravery
- Fearlessness
- Aggressiveness
- Dominance
- Adventure
- Leadership
- Intelligence
- Knowledge

Their objects

- Scepters
- Spades
- Shields
- Vessels
- Horses
- Pistols
- Money
- Cloak

Stories from a gender perspective

Non-sexist stories help us transmit models of relationships and development which are free from social and cultural stereotypes, and they also allow modifying such models in order to reinvent them or critically reflect on them.

These stories represent a way in which students relate to their environments and situations. They are also a means of addressing new situations and conflicts by extrapolating the way in which the stories are solved to everyday life.

They promote the critical assessment of psycho-affective attitudes - particularly in relation to gender - which leads to the acquisition of values and to the elimination of stereotypes.

Adela Turin, researcher in the field of child literature from a gender perspective, recently conducted a research in which she points out the following specific characteristics as related to equality:

- Balance between the number of female and male characters in the story.
- Balance in the personal and/or professional roles carried out by the main characters.
- Balanced allocation of activities: sports, science, domestic activities, risk, adventure, etc.
- Equality regarding feelings and emotional elements: bravery, fear, responsibilities, sensitivity, decisiveness, social success, etc.
- Assignment of colors to the illustrations.
- Emphasis in physical features.
- Stereotyped assignment of common objects to the characters.

Register card for co-educational indicators

CO-EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS	Yes	No
Balance between the number of female and male characters in the story	✓	
Assignment of stereotyped roles to the characters		✓
Balanced assignment of activities for both sexes	✓	
Equal assignment of feelings, emotions and ways of expressing themselves, regardless of sex.	✓	
Emphasis in stereotyped physical features		✓
Stereotyped assignment of objects to the characters		✓
Use of sexist language		✓
Sex-biased illustrations		✓
Arguments which highlight equality or foster the critical analysis of equality	✓	

✓ = Correct assessment model of the co-educational aspects in stories

To study the subject in depth, you will find a guideline in [Card 1](#) which allows analyzing whether a story contains sexist elements or not.

You might be interested in using it as reference and support material – there is no need to answer exhaustively each of the questions it poses.

Source: *Contar cuentos. Cuenta en femenino y en masculino*, Almudena Mateos Gil and Itxaso Sasiain Villanueva (Instituto de la Mujer)

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A COLLABORATIVE STORY

We must consider the elements which make up the narrative mode:

- **Narrator:** S/he can speak in first or third-person singular.
- **Space:** Place or places where the action takes place. We must describe them in detail. Where does the story take place?
- **Time:** the date – which can be clearly defined or not defined – in which the story takes place. It can be set far in the past, in the present or in the future.
- **Characters:** Main and secondary characters. In a story, there is no need for a very detailed description of these characters, but we do have to describe how they are. Stories are mostly about a main character who wants to achieve something and his/her opponent, who tries to prevent him/her from achieving it. Who is your main character? How would you describe this character? How are the rest of the characters in the story?
- **Plot:** This is the main part of the story and it is usually fictitious – i.e., not real. It begins describing a situation, which is the PROBLEM, and then one or several THINGS HAPPEN, which gradually complicate the story. Then we reach the SOLUTION or conclusion, which helps us to learn a lesson or moral. Which problem will you pose? What important things happen throughout the story? How does it end? How would you summarize the plot?

The narrative pyramid can help us develop both the plot and the characters for the story. Following is an example:

Narrative Pyramid

Name: _____

Title of the story: _____

Date: _____

*Name of the character**Two words to describe the character**Three words to describe the place where the story happens**Four words to indicate what the problem is**Five words to describe an event that happens in the story**Six words to describe another event that happens in the story**Seven words to describe yet another event that happens in the story**Eight words to describe what the solution to the problem is*

Summary: _____

To go in depth

The gender perspective on intercultural education, by Luz Martínez Ten

Debates on gender equality within the educational system are often consigned to a separate chapter or an explicit epigraph on co-education which is usually developed by women experts on this issue. Likewise, when we address interculturality, the reality of women's discrimination tends to disappear from the main line of discourse, surfacing again only when we tackle very specific subjects which refer either to cultural conflict – because it constitutes the violation of basic women's rights – or to situations which can be clearly identified by a differential treatment to girl students. In education, as occurs in other spheres, equality is exclusively addressed with a focus on situations which affect women as a group. Consequently it blatantly steers clear of the gender category which analyzes the role assigned to women and men – and the relationships which are established among them – suggested by the different models of Intercultural Education. The lack of analysis from a gender perspective not only conceals the situation of women's discrimination in different cultural contexts, but also hinders the design of an education model which teaches equality.

The relationship between feminism and multiculturalism is one of the essential elements for developing an intercultural education model which incorporates gender equality as a fundamental ethical foundation, both within the concept of interculturality itself and within education guidelines, analysis and design, implementation and assessment of education practices.

We must start by rethinking the intercultural model from a feminist perspective, one which places the focus of the debate between universalism and difference, based on the demand for equality among sexes. There is a widespread consensus on the importance of a critical cultural awareness which must be conveyed to the education model from the gender perspective.

It is difficult to develop specific strategies if we do not reflect on the values of equality which we consider fundamental within the curricula, as well as on other decisions which have to do with the school's management and organization.

We need to incorporate gender perspective into every variable forming part of the education experience, from coexistence rules and norms to family participation, sex and relationship education, students' educational and professional guidance and the existing relationship between religion and education. The fact that in recent years Spain has become a destination for groups of immigrants coming from different parts of the world has fully introduced us into the world of cultural ups and downs. And if we had to point out an institution where these social changes are reflected, this would be the school: both conflicts and agreements can take place in the classroom. This said, school can either be a place where social relationships are reproduced or it can become a powerful tool for trans-

formation; school can be the place where social inequalities are reproduced or a place where intercultural meetings take place.

This intercultural meeting which aims to bring about transformation must make a critical review of the values, customs and traditions which have historically discriminated women and teach how to share life in equality. The same equality which was agreed upon in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and widely debated in the different World Conferences on Women (the last of which was hosted in Beijing, 1995), and which resulted in a platform of action which clearly defends the objectives that must be achieved for the advancement of women around the world.

Luz Martínez Ten: <http://www.escuelasinterculturales.eu/spip.php?article148>

The Power in Us and of Us, by Zeliha Ünalı

30 July 2015

Mine is not a story of romance as you may think, it is rather one about awareness and self-realization. Taking the Beijing Express train and participating in the NGO Forum at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 was a life-changing experience for me.

Together with more than 200 women representing NGOs from 29 different countries, I spent eight days on a trans-Siberian train from Warsaw to Beijing. The length of the journey didn't matter to us as we were all dedicated to transforming the world.

I was a 24-year-old graduate student, one of the first graduate students actually, of the Gender and Women's Studies programme of Turkey at the Middle East Technical University. I was chosen to represent this programme in Beijing. I noticed that a quote from Sue Vinson, a world famous feminist, was printed on the bags given to people, "we were many and one" and "looking at the world through women's eyes". When I recall those days, mingling around the tents with thousands of women committing to a better world, two words immediately come to my mind: sisterhood and peace.

I still believe in sisterhood, even though it may sound ancient to the younger generation. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the subsequent five years helped me understand the power in us and of us as the global women's movement.

In 1995, we discussed how to change our domestic law in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. Today, we are discussing how to implement them effectively and efficiently. We have come a long way. Within these 20 years in Turkey, things for women have changed a lot but on the other hand, there has not been much substantial change in the lives of Turkish women. In the late

1990s and early 2000s, there were considerable legislative changes towards gender equality. The women's movement and organizations successfully advocated for the changes in the Civil Code, Penal Code and the Labor Law.

However, two in every five married women in Turkey are still at risk of domestic violence. I have the feeling that the enthusiasm of the Beijing Platform for Action has sort of faded away, especially within the last ten years in Turkey.

Since Beijing, I have worked in the field of gender and development as a consultant, practitioner and an activist. I spent the last three years in the least developed regions of Turkey working with women's NGOs. Throughout my work and my career, I still can feel the wind of Beijing pushing me forward. Now, I am working for the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Ankara, the capital of Turkey as the gender specialist. I feel as if I have been preparing myself for this position since the day I stepped on the Beijing Express and participated in the NGO Forum.

I want to pass the spirit of Beijing on to younger generations. We are still "many and one" and unfortunately there is still a need for local, global, joint and intergenerational efforts to make the world a peaceful and equal place for everyone.

See more WOMEN PORTRAITS at: <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/es/voices-and-profiles/women-of-achievement>

Glossary

Sex: refers to the biological characteristics/attributes that define humans as female or male from birth.

Gender: refers to socially and culturally constructed differences that are learned at an early age and ascribed to women and men based on their sex. They generate situations of inequality and discrimination against women.

Gender stereotypes: are mental images, features and beliefs that attribute different characteristics (sexual and gender) to women and men as groups. They may vary among cultures, but they are in general quite homogeneous. They are bipolar, i.e. - they ascribe qualities or weaknesses to women which exclude men and vice versa. The paradigm of what is “human” is always masculine – there is no universal feminine model for it.

Gender roles: are roles, behaviors and expectations assigned to men and women based on their sex and which determine their way of being, feeling and behaving in society.

Patriarchy: is the cultural, economic, political, social and religious system in which authority, power, leadership and dominance in general is exercised by men over women, who live in a situation of oppression.

Machismo/male chauvinism: refers to dominant attitudes and behaviors, arrogance and superiority of men towards women. Machismo tends to maintain the social order in which men exercise power and women live subdued, discriminated and oppressed.

Feminism: refers to the ideological, social, cultural, economical and political trend aimed at establishing equality of rights and opportunities for men and women.

Soft violence: refers to male dominance and violent behaviors and habits in everyday life and in couple relationships.

Reconciliation of professional and private life: refers to the practices which are aimed at harmonizing personal, family or professional and/or work time of men and women. Its main objective is to support women’s incorporation into the productive environment and men’s incorporation into the private or reproductive space, favoring equality of opportunities and rights.

Equality of opportunities among men and women: refers to a situation in which everybody – regardless of their sex – has the right and opportunity to develop their own abilities and expectations, making decisions and developing themselves as individuals and in society without being limited in their behavior by restrictions and socially constructed gender roles.

Co-education: refers to a deliberate intervention process which promotes students' development based on the reality of two different sexes. It pursues personal, emotional and affective development and a non-opposing common social construction. It should not be confused with "mixed education" because simply grouping boys and girls into one classroom - even when vital - does not guarantee a fairer and more equal learning.

Gender mainstreaming: refers to the responsibility of all public powers to ensure that there is progress towards gender equality. It is the implementation of the principles of equality of opportunities for men and women in public policies in a way that they guarantee women's' equal access to resources, ensure that public policies are planned bearing in mind current inequalities and assess the outcomes and impacts that these policies produce regarding progress towards genuine equality.

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Education for Global Citizenship Resources

Kaidara

www.kaidara.org

Education experiences and resources elaborated by Oxfam Intermón and by members of the Teacher's Network for Global Citizenship. You can download all the resources for free. Both the website and almost all the materials you find there are available in Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician.

Pistas para cambiar la escuela (Clues to Changing the School)

OXFAM-INTERMÓN (2009). Barcelona

Building a global citizenship trend which is committed to humanity and the planet necessarily requires laying down solid foundations in school. Those of us who practise this belief in our daily school routine are aware that this is no easy task. The current educational system provides very few answers. We need a new model, a humanist one which is based on dialogue and coexistence, which builds the school-community, is concerned about justice, open to the environment and to the world. The great challenge is to build an education to “be” and to transform.

http://www.kaidara.org/es/Pistas-para-cambiar-la-_escuela

Centros educativos transformadores: ciudadanía global y transformación social. (Transforming Educational Centres: Global Citizenship and Social Transformation)

OXFAM-INTERMÓN (2012). Barcelona

This publication collects information about other educational models which are partially or totally connected to this transforming ideal and dialogues with them in a critical manner. It also defines feasible transforming programmes based on practices which are carried out at three levels: teaching practises (in the area of teaching-learning), organizational (in the area of organization and relationships) and political (in the area of environment and social transformation).

<http://www.kaidara.org/es/centros-educativos-transformadores>

Card 1 – Guide for analyzing stories

The present guide can help you reflect on whether a book or story contains sexist elements or not.

You might be interested in using it as reference and support material – there is no need to answer exhaustively each of the questions it poses.

1. Title: Does it refer to a male or a female character?

2. Main character(s): Is it played by a male, a female or is there one of each? Is it hierarchical?

3. Number of female and male characters:

- Are there women in the story or does it refer to women?
- Is their absence justified?
- Are there men in the story or does it refer to men?
- Is their absence justified?
- Are there heroes and heroines in the story?

4. Professions carried out by men and women.

5. Participation of women and men in leisure activities and spare time.

6. Role played by each sex in the different spaces where the relationship takes place (within the home, at school, at work, and social and political participation):

- Which activities do women carry out and which activities do men carry out?
- Does the story go beyond the “good woman” (usually depicted as a princess) and the “bad woman” (usually depicted as an evil witch) models?
- Does the story go beyond the traditional violent male model? And does it go beyond the traditional male model of a self-confident man who is unable of expressing emotions or vulnerability?
- Who is the carer? Who is taken care of?
- Are the female characters subjects or objects of desire? And the male ones?
- Are female desires taken into consideration? And male desires?
- Who takes the initiative? Who supports it?
- Who saves and helps who?
- Which models of relationships and sexuality appear?
- Is male sexuality recognized? And female sexuality?
- In the case that each sex performs different characters, is this taken as natural (biological) or social? Does the story take a critical approach on the stereotypes which are assigned to each sex? Does it give alternatives?
- Are the things that female characters do valued unequally to those that male characters do?

7. Female and male references

- Are there several male and female references in the story?
- What female values and male values does the story convey?

8. Types of families:

- What family members are there in the story?
- How are the happy families portrayed? And the unhappy ones?
- Are there any family members missing in the story or not mentioned?
- What is the relationship among them?

9. Relationships:

- Do the female characters collaborate among themselves and help each other? Do they compete with each other?
- Do the male characters collaborate among themselves and help each other? Do they compete with each other?
- Does the story describe relationships which are based on confidence and mutual respect between both sexes?

10. Physical description and clothes worn by men and women:

- What models of beauty are put forward for women? And for men?
- Is beauty associated with intelligence and self-confidence?
- The clothes which women and men wear, are they used as a characteristic to assign them a sex? Are they used to portray their social condition?

11. Psycho-affective and behavioral characteristics:

- Who resorts to force? Who shows their feelings?
- What connotations does it have?
- What differential consequences does their behavior have if they are female characters or male characters?
- What punishments are applied to girls/women? What punishments are applied to boys/men?

12. Dangers which appear:

- What dangers threaten boys/men? And girls/women?
- Who appears as the victim?
- How do male characters behave when faced with danger? How do female characters behave?

13. Uses of language:

- Are there expressions which overvalue female characteristics?
- Are there expressions which overvalue male characteristics?
- Which adjectives are associated with each sex?

14. Figures of power:

- Are the people who exert power in the story male or female?

15. Type of ending:

- Does the happy or unhappy ending depend on the boy or girl's physical appearance?
- Does the story end with a moral or with a reflection which opens up new questions and possibilities?

16. Illustrations:

- Are there men and women in the illustrations? How are they depicted?
- What beauty models do they convey? Are they healthy models?
- Do they show a variety of shapes, colors and proportions?

Taken from *Contar cuentos. Cuenta en femenino y en masculino*, Almudena Mateos Gil and Itxaso Sasiain Villanueva (Instituto de la Mujer)

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