

GENDER EQUITY

# A COLORFUL BIRTHDAY PARTY



## 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](http://www.conectandomundos.org)

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# Summary of the interactive story, objectives and subjects

Today is a special day. Abi is celebrating her seventh birthday. Her family has organized a birthday party for her at home. Mom will prepare snacks and bake a great cake; there will be games and presents and all her family will be there: her cousins, her aunts, her granny... But there is something that Abi is worried about; it is the one thing that she has been asking for for a long time.

## Objectives

- To build one's own identity: how we are and how others see us.
- Recognize feelings, learn how to express them and empathize with others.
- 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.
- Favor emotional education.
- Visualize, experience and bring down gender stereotypes.

## Primary focus of the line of work

- Foster empathy.
- To be able to express one's feelings regardless of cultural background or gender.
- There are no differences in our emotions (we all cry).
- Identify roles and stereotypes to make evident equal rights (reproductive work, feminization of the professions and occupation of the space) through family stories.
- Analyze traditional games and their songs.

## Subjects

- The day of your birthday.
- Feelings and emotions: excitement, happiness, frustration, empathy.
- The distribution of household chores among family members.
- Generosity and friendship.
- Family stories and traditional songs and games.
- Professions.

# 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?

Source: [http://www.oei.es/genero/documentos/niveles/Educacion\\_Infantil/Coeducacion\\_en\\_EInfantil.pdf](http://www.oei.es/genero/documentos/niveles/Educacion_Infantil/Coeducacion_en_EInfantil.pdf)

# Methodological guidelines for the development of the activities

## Guidelines for the dialogues

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.

The guiding thread of the dialogue revolves around the day that we celebrate our birthday. It is a very special day; a day when all children feel special. Each school has its own way of celebrating its students' birthdays. Abigail's story will help us learn about how birthdays are celebrated in every home, taking into account cultural differences.

## Gathering conclusions

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 first-aid emotional kit



This dynamics will help us become aware of our own emotions and of others' emotions in a fun way. We provide the “recipe” which you may use with the children, as well as generating questions and guidelines to help them become aware of their own emotions and guidelines to help them understand the emotions of others. The clues and the first-aid kit are cross-curricular strategies which you can use anytime.

### The recipe for the first-aid emotional kit

The kit includes five happiness potions. To be effective they require your special care and also good relationships at home and at school:

- The kisses jar. Inside this jar there are kisses which you can use whenever you need to show how much you love one of your family members or when you need to cheer some of them up.
- Caressing glove. If you notice that someone is a bit sad, in need of being cuddled, put your glove on and.... caress!!!!
- Apology band-aids. If you've said something nasty to someone and you want to apologize, stick an apology band-aid on their hand and they will definitely forgive you.
- Shout-collector bags. If you get angry at someone and you feel like shouting or calling them bad names, don't do it. You will almost certainly regret it. You'd better fetch your bag, open it and shout in to it as much as you want – your anger will soon disappear.
- Small book of affections: this book contains special messages you can use:

- “I love you”... because you feel like saying it.
- “I want to comfort you”... because you see a close relative who is sad.
- “Can we make it up?”... because you’ve had a quarrel.
- “A smile”... because it is the best gift that one can receive.

Note for the construction of the kit: use real materials – e.g., syrup containers, syringes, cotton balls, band-aids, medicine boxes to keep the small book of affections and the band-aids, bags, candies as kisses, etc.

### Becoming aware of one’s own emotions

In order to identify one’s own emotions we need to develop an emotional conscience and ask ourselves:

- What am I feeling “here and now”?
- What are the causes (internal and external) that are making me feel like this?
- What do I do and how do I behave as a result of what I’m feeling?
- As for my body, what does it do and what is it trying to convey to me?

*It will also be necessary to reflect on emotional situations which we have experienced and to try to identify emotions, and we must also ask for and listen to the opinion of others regarding one’s own emotions. As far as possible, we must avoid blaming others or the circumstances and start taking responsibility for our emotions.*

### Understanding others’ emotions

This is the ability of accurately perceiving others’ emotions and perspectives and of developing an empathic engagement with their emotional experiences.

In order to understand others’ emotions we must:

- Accept that others have the same right as I to feel these emotions.
- If appropriate, express our perception of what they are going through at an emotional level.
- Share their emotions with others, offering them understanding, support and help.
- If we think that the emotion is negative or adverse, take care of the relationship and avoid provoking or intensifying the emotion any further.
- Facilitate assertive communication.

## Who does what for your birthday party?



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book

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 are done by boys and which by girls or by their brothers and sisters, and that you draw conclusions regarding how important it is that everybody collaborate in doing household chores.

We provide you with information related to the concepts of reproductive and productive work, as well as indications on what is understood by gender and sex as introductory concepts or support for the debate.

### Guiding questions for the analysis

Compare the questionnaires. Are the results similar? Are they different? Which family member carries out most of the tasks? Why? Are mothers responsible for household chores? Pay attention to the different family realities of boys and girls. The questionnaires should be adapted to the contexts you move in, but try making visible present inequalities in the distribution of household chores.

Are women responsible for cleaning and cooking because they do it better? Why? Are men incapable of using a washing machine? Why? Women and men are different and so they have to do different tasks? Why is childcare a responsibility of women? Why must girls make their beds and boys mustn't? Is this situation fair? What can we do to change it?

### 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 production.

**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 task, 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.

- 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.

### 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.

## My grandma manuela wanted to be a train conductor

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### Debate on colors and toys

The debate on pink and blue and toys is still valid. To encourage the debate we suggest the following questions: Do all girls like pink? Why? Do all boys like blue? What happens if a boy likes pink? Why? Are there toys for girls and toys for boys? Why? Why do you think that these things happen?

### To analyze the drawings of their bedroom

Given that the drawings of their bedrooms are anonymous, questions should serve to enhance the drawings: What do you like best in this bedroom? Which of these things are also in your bedroom? Do you think that this bedroom belongs to a boy or to a girl? Why?

We suggest a list of objects which are common in bedrooms of children of this age in order to facilitate reflection and make stereotypes visible.

- Beddings with football, princesses, superheroes, etc. themes
- Strawberry-scented perfume
- Animal books
- Posters of football players
- Wooden toy cradle
- Remote-controlled car
- Blackboard
- Ship, car, etc.
- Computer
- Lamp base in the shape of animals, transportation vehicles, etc.
- World globe
- Drawing book
- Mirror
- Doll
- Musical instrument
- Ballet shoes
- Box of tissues
- Construction toys
- Backpacks with shapes or drawings
- Football boots

### The game and gender stereotypes

At present no one doubts that the best tool with which to prompt children's learning is their own activity, **games**.

Through games, children gradually internalize the socio-cultural models around them, discovering the knowledge and values that their culture has constructed throughout centuries, as well as the roles which society has assigned to its members.

Symbolic play – common from 3 to 7 years old - plays an important role in the imitation of models. Boys and girls reproduce the everyday communication and relationship scenes which they experience, reproducing the social roles of adults around them. This gives place to the natural and spontaneous learning of the roles imposed on each sex. Watching the spontaneous games of boys and girls we see that the contents of these games vary according to sex. Girls play quieter games and their toys are not so diverse (dolls, toys related to household chores, etc.), whereas boys play rougher games which imply more physical contact, and their toys are more diverse. Boys prefer playing wars, being pilots, bandits, etc. and they play among themselves. If, occasionally, they let a girl participate in their games, she is more than likely to be the one “kidnapped” - and later saved by her “brave” friends.

### What do girls play?

- Symbolic play: they imitate actions and tasks which are related to women and the reproductive model.
- Rhythmical games: cart wheeling.
- Repetitive games: skipping, bouncing a ball, Chinese jump rope, etc.
- Logical games: puzzles, construction games, painting.
- In general, games which do not imply too much movement; sedentary, passive games carried out in reduced spaces.

### What attitudes do they develop?

- Meekness, shyness, non-competitiveness, submissiveness, conformism, quietness, attentiveness, generosity.
- Cooperation, inhibition, concentration, intellectual development.
- Imitation of traditional roles, rhythm and coordination of movement.

### How do they influence the learning of socially constructed gender roles?

- Assumption of maternity and household work.
- They identify themselves with stereotyped professions: nurse, secretary, teacher, cleaner.
- Girls will choose feminine professions.

The fact of not allowing boys to play these games leads to the learning of contempt for paternal responsibilities or functions and undervalue of household chores. Moreover, it prevents boys from developing the attitudes and behaviors which these games foster and develop, and it leads them to consider the professions of nursing, office work and teaching as lesser professions in so far as they are considered more appropriate for women.

### What do boys play?

- Games implying mobility, chasing each other, fighting and strength.
- Construction games: cars, Meccano.

### What attitudes do they develop?

- Competitiveness, aggressiveness, investigation, physical abilities, risk, manipulation, leadership, security.
- Creativity, violence, space-time control.

### How do they influence the learning of socially constructed gender roles?

- It guides them towards more “prestigious” professions which involve construction, technique, research, mechanics, etc.
- Boys will typically choose masculine professions.

Source: [http://www.csi-csif.es/andalucia/modules/mod\\_ense/revista/pdf/Numero\\_7/ZENaida\\_ALONSO\\_1.pdf](http://www.csi-csif.es/andalucia/modules/mod_ense/revista/pdf/Numero_7/ZENaida_ALONSO_1.pdf)

## In the days of our grandparents...

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### On professions and stereotypes: *The female carer / male breadwinner model*

When it comes to choosing a profession, stereotypes such as “women as carers” and “men as breadwinners” often influence our decision. They 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.

### Physical image and professions

Other times a particular physical “image” appears as the explicit requisite for a profession. These are professions which are – to a large extent – specifically addressed to women (such as models, hostesses for particular events, etc.) who must meet specific requirements regarding measurement, shape, dressing etiquette, hair style and face, which are in themselves irrelevant for the good performance of the job but which, however, often match a stereotyped image which is presumably attractive for men.

Boys should also be encouraged to reflect on all these situations and think about the ideas underlying this attitude by which many men consider women's contributions valuable in so far as they adjust to a fixed esthetic model – an aspect which prevails even over how efficient they are at their work.

Overcoming these stereotypes implies opening spaces where we can imagine ourselves free from prejudices and let our creativity run wild. For this reason it is important that in the classroom we:

- Favor the representation of men and women in different professions – from kindergarten to secondary education – trying also to ensure that these representations question stereotypes.
- Integrate the story of women into the contents that we teach our students so that they can see that there have always been women in all kinds of professions in the sphere of medicine, science, music, art, etc. Moreover, they can also discover that there are also men who devote their life to dancing, decoration, healthcare, etc.
- Associate professions with abilities and desires of individuals and avoid linking them to sexual options, beauty prototypes, etc.
- Show images of women and men carrying out tasks which involve taking care of oneself and of other family members.
- Show images of women and men who work for the wellbeing of the social group where they live.
- Make sure that the tasks which involve responsibility in the classroom are carried out by both girls and boys: tidying up materials, taking care of the plants, decorating the classroom, etc.
- Make sure that girls and boys have equal access to all technical, artistic, scientific, literary, etc. resources available in the classroom and encourage them to use them.
- Listen to boys and girls; encourage them to explore their desires and abilities and get them to talk about themselves.

Source: [http://www.ite.educacion.es/formacion/materiales/112/cd/m6/los\\_estereotipos.html](http://www.ite.educacion.es/formacion/materiales/112/cd/m6/los_estereotipos.html)

## Popular games



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book

Society determines people's thoughts through a socialization process by which we unconsciously assimilate culture through family and school. Our characteristics, behaviors, personality, etc. – in short, the way we are – can be explained as a cultural construction – i.e., a construction of what we have learned.

In many occasions we hear someone say “boys are stronger, but also nobler” or “girls are more intelligent, but also more wicked”. These kinds of messages are the base for a framework of values and beliefs over which identity is constructed.

In every society, the process of socialization is what makes individuals consider themselves male or female and hence display a specific culture. The resulting set of values which is promoted for each sex will determine our thoughts, our way of being, our appreciations, reflections, etc., conditioning the onset of stereotyped “roles” for each sex. Traditional songs are a clear example of sex-typed roles which pass on from generation to generation with messages which go unnoticed ... We suggest bringing these stereotypes to the surface with the children through popular songs and re-writing the song with a focus on gender equality.

To make the task easier we suggest you choose between two songs, analyze the lyrics and re-write them. We are attaching the links to the videos so that you can see how the songs are danced to. We encourage you to find traditional songs of your area and work on them.

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Source: <http://rabida.uhu.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10272/5351/b16450176.pdf.txt;jsessionid=72619FF5D5AB82DB04C624591DFE2B2B?sequence=3>

# To go in depth

## Other issues related to the gender equality perspective

The story of Abi allows addressing other aspects which do not appear in the activities, but which are strongly interrelated from the gender equality perspective.

## Family models

*My aunts have just arrived and they've brought their son, my youngest cousin. I'm really delighted! It's funny because he actually has two mothers!*

There is an increasing number of students who live in a variety of family structures which differ from the traditional nuclear one. These new family structures and the way they function are rapidly changing in many different ways. More than often, this makes families more complex – but this does not necessarily mean that they are problematic or marginal families. As Golombok (2006) shows in his research, what really influences the psychological wellbeing and development of children is the quality of family life rather than the family structure in itself.

Living in one type of family or another and coexisting with diverse families has – especially within the family, school and friends' environment – an influence on the individual construction of the concept of family, given that it facilitates knowledge, awareness and acceptance of family diversity. Because children currently coexist with different types of family structures they are more tolerant and have a more diverse concept of family.

## Intergenerational relationships

*I was really looking forward to seeing my grandmother. She stayed in Guatemala.*

On one hand, increased life expectancy and decreased birth rates have given rise to a new concept of the grandparents' role regarding their grandchildren. The fact that they can coexist up to three or four decades leads to more lasting, exclusive and symmetric relationships than those in the past (Rico et al., 2000). In addition, women's incorporation into the labor market, the increasing number of separations and divorces and the absence of formal childcare services aimed at supporting parents has led to a situation in which - more than often - it is the grandparents who take on the responsibility of providing care and education for their grandchildren. At present, grandparents are a source of economic, psychological and social support for families (López, 2011; Megías & Ballesteros, 2011).

Grandparents are also a source of unconditional love. Moreover, there are many things that they can convey to their grandchildren such as the importance of caring, the transmission of values, a model of ageing, they tell stories and explain family traditions, they play,

they cuddle, they can act as arbitrators when there is a conflict and take part in moments of crisis (Rico et al., 2001). The role of grandparents is very heterogeneous and so the functions they perform may vary according to a number of factors such as age, gender, distance between houses, number of grandchildren, health condition, socio-cultural level, etc.

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## Young people and migration

*I used to play these games with Youssef, but one day his parents were forced to go to another town because they were not able to find a job here*

One in eight people around the world today are migrants. This includes approximately 214 million international migrants and around 740 million internal migrants. Young people make up the largest group of the world's migrants; around one third of the migration flux coming from developing countries is between 12 and 24 years old. This group includes millions of children under 18 who either migrate internally or cross borders, with or without their parents.

It is estimated that in the coming years an unprecedented number of young people will follow this massive exodus, changing the population's dynamics even more. They will migrate influenced by population-related aspects, economic inequality, violent conflicts, state failure, natural disasters, scarcity of resources and environmental pressure – particularly climate changes.

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## Interculturality

*The best birthday present I can dream of is Youssef coming to my party.*

Since the 1980s – and thanks to the European Council and other international agencies – we are aware of the need to prepare citizens to live in multicultural societies, make a critical analysis of the contents of school curricula and promote a truly inclusive, anti-racist and equal education.

This discourse, however, falls within European practices which regarding immigration – presented as a serious problem that we must prevent, control and solve and constantly associated with conflictivity and fragmentation – cancel out all its transformational potential, and finally end up in a sort of rhetorical limbo. And it is also based on the reunification of national cultures by the different European states, presented as a homogenous essence which dates back to Antiquity; as a unification which is only natural, rather than the result of the particular modern configuration of such states (in the case of the Spanish state, for example, this is at odds with everything related to the Gypsy people or with national, cultural and linguistic realities within its boundaries), hindering the opportunity of addressing interculturality in depth.

Intercultural education is not about education for migrants, education for foreigners, education for poor and excluded people or education for all the above. Neither is it about incorporating – in a

well-intentioned but mistaken manner – elements, characters and productions of other worlds or other “cultures” into school contents in different areas. Different “cultures” are not perfectly delimited and separate objects which can be associated to states, peoples or religions at our convenience; and moreover, school curriculum is already excessively overloaded.

This is why we believe that intercultural education is a political and social project and as such, should fall within the hardcore of the social policies of a country just like compulsory and basic education do. It is not a strictly educational or exclusively axiological project, or another innovation to add to the list of the multiple trends and urgencies which knock on the educational system’s door.

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The re-socialization of teachers. By Xavier Besalú  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9J00xEk1MU>

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## **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 transformation; 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>

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## **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](http://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](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>

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