

Leonardo da Vinci project No. D/06/B/F/PP 146 569

**GENDER LOOPS: GENDER MAINSTREAMING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE AREA OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE
WORK AND FOR DAY CARE CENTRES**

OVERVIEW

**- OF THE NORWEGIAN LEGAL AND POLITICAL GM REQUIREMENTS IN
EDUCATOR TRAINING AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Project partners in Norway

Reform – resource centre for men
Oslo University College

2007, Oslo

Context: Norway

Political level

Legislation

National gender mainstreaming legislation

Norway has a national gender mainstreaming legislation: the Gender Equality Act (1978, the last time the Act was amended was 10 June 2005). The Act covers all spheres of public life.

“Women and men shall be given equal opportunities in education, employment and cultural and professional advancement.” (From section 1 of the Act)

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/doc/Laws/Acts/The-Act-relating-to-Gender-Equality-the-.html?id=454568>

The Act requires that the public authorities and all employers work actively and systematically to promote gender equality.

Duty to report on gender equality

According to the Gender Equality Act and the Accounting Act, companies of a certain size must undertake to report on their gender-equality status and activities within their enterprise. The duty to report on gender equality includes: (1) The municipalities, and their responsibility for Early Childhood Education Institutions (ECEIs) in their area. (2) University colleges and universities educating preschool teachers. (3) County councils responsible for vocational training in upper secondary education.

National apparatus to promote gender mainstreaming

Besides the government, the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud has a statutory mandate to promote gender equality in general society. The Ombud is responsible for increasing the level of gender equality and uncovering and identifying conditions that undermine gender equality. The Ombud is also responsible for ensuring that the Gender Equality Act is being complied with.

National enforcement of the Gender Equality Act (Thru the Ombud)

- Complaints lodged under the Act
 - Proactive indictments based on the Act
 - Inspect institutions and advise them on the duty to promote and report on gender equality
- www.ldo.no

The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud also has a mandate to counteract discrimination based on ethnicity, sexuality, disability and other factors.

Regulations and actions plans

As far as the Norwegian partners are aware, there are currently no such regulations/action plans at this level.

Societal level

Status in society and official policies

Rate of access to regulated services

Children one to five years of age: 76 percent. Children one to two years of age: 54 per cent. Children from three to five years of age: 91 percent. A total of 77.5 percent of the children accessing the ECEIs have full-time places (Statistics Norway 2005).

Child-staff ratios and maximum group size

There are on average 4.44 children per employee and 10.61 children per teacher. For children under three years of age, the ratio is higher: 1.28 children per employee and 3.05 children per teacher. (Statistics Norway, Education Union Norway 2005)

According to the Act relating to Day-care Institutions, there is now a minimum standard that each ECEI has to comply with: One teacher per 14-18 children, when the children are three years of age or older. One teacher per seven to nine children when the children are under three years of age.

Designation and qualifications of key staff

A total of 91 per cent of the employees in the ECEIs are women and nine per cent are men.

About one third, 35 per cent, of the employees in the ECEIs are qualified **preschool teachers**. The preschool-teacher education is designed to qualify candidates for work as teachers of children 0-7 years old, and for work as directors and administrators in ECEIs. "The preschool teacher education" is a three-year academic study programme at the bachelor-degree level.

55 percent of the employees in the ECEIs work as **educational assistants** under supervision from a teacher. There are no formal qualifications for assistants. Many of the assistants have informal qualifications from their own childrearing practices, and many attend annual pedagogical seminars.

The remaining 10 percent consist of different employee groups with different tasks in the ECEIs. Some of these employees have no pedagogy related tasks, like carpentry and so fourth. Some have other qualified tasks, and have other higher education than the preschool education. A few are vocationally trained **child care and youth workers**. Child care and youth workers work also under supervision from a teacher. (Statistics Norway 2005)

Official language

"Barnehager" and "førskolrelærer"

The national term for both early childhood education and ECEIs is "barnehager" which corresponds to the term kindergarten or day-care institution. The term for teacher is "førskolrelærer" which corresponds to the term preschool teacher.

Research

Obligatory that research projects reflect on gender equality

The Research Council of Norway funds most of the Norwegian societal studies. Every project applying for funds must reflect on the project's impact on gender and gender equality, <http://www.forskningsradet.no>.

Norwegian Centre for Child Research

There is a Norwegian Centre for Child Research. One of the researchers, Randi Dyblie Nilsen, has now funding for a project which will include gender: "The evolving kinder garden. Inclusion, gender and socialisation – in practice." <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/noseb/english/>.

There is no institution that has an explicit mandate to research and develop knowledge on young children and gender, while there is a relevant institution in the field of ethnicity, the National Centre for Multicultural Education, www.hio.no.

Action plan for gender equality in kindergartens 2004-2007

The government has funded action-research and development projects under the "Action Plan for Gender Equality in kindergartens 2004-2007." Approximately 300 000 Euro have been distributed in the period. Nine different projects have received funds. (For more detailed description see own section)

Partners account of the research

Research on young children and gender has to a limited extent been institutionalized and little research has been carried out in this field. Starting from 1997, a status report found four relevant theses, two PhDs and two Masters. The status report may give a slightly underestimated picture of relevant research (*Barnehagen og førskolelærerutdanningen i et kjønns-, likestillings og diskursperspektiv*, et forprosjekt by Nina Rossholt, 2003/Day-care and preschool teacher education from a gender, equality and discursive perspective). Nonetheless, the institutionalized developments mentioned above are present.

Women in the workforce

Female labour force participation:

In 2004, the labour participation rate for women aged 15-64 was 75.7 per cent, where 33.3 per cent work part-time (10.3 percent of men work part-time) (OECD, *Employment Outlook*, 2005).

Labour force participation rate of women with a child:

Mothers with a youngest child under six years of age had an employment rate of 81 per cent in 2003, where 65 per cent were working full-time and 35 percent part-time. (Starting Strong II. Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD, 2006)

Working hours in couples with a child:

In couples with a child under six years of age the average number of working hours a week for mothers is 19.5 hours. The average number of working hours a week for the fathers is 39.0 hours. In couples with a child under one year of age, the average numbers of working hours a week for the mothers are on average 2.6 hours a week. The average number of working hours a week for the fathers is 34.8 hours. (Statistics Norway 2005)

Early childhood education institutions

Auspices

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for laying down the policies of the ECEIs (The Kinder garden act, the action plans, The Framework Plan) and works together with the County Governors to ensure that the municipalities follow the policies. <http://www.dep.no/kd/english/bn.html>

The local authority for each municipality is responsible for running the public ECEIs and regulating private ECEIs in accordance with the regulations.

Legislation

Duty to report on gender equality

According to the Gender Equality Act and the Accounting Act the municipalities must report on the gender-equality status and activities within their enterprise. This includes reporting on ECEIs within the municipality. (For more read Legislation on political level)

The Kindergarten Act (2005)

This Act regulates all national ECEIs, where content, qualification of employees and educational planning are some of the regulated areas.

In section 2 of the Act, concerning content, it is stated that kindergartens shall:

- promote equality in the care, upbringing and learning provided
- take children's gender into account

It also states that the more specified Framework plan laid down by the ministry shall provide guidelines for the content and tasks in the ECEIs.

Official policies, regulations, action plans

Action plan for gender equality in kindergartens 2004-2007

The Ministry of Education and Research has introduced this action plan. The first overriding objective of the plan is to recruit to a level of at least 20 per cent men in the ECEIs by 2007, the second overriding objective is to achieve gender mainstreaming of all ECEIs.

The county governors have received approximately 450 000 euro for following up the plan in the period. This besides funds from the action plan mentioned under research.

In addition to the overriding objectives, the plan has four goals:

1. That the municipalities and owners ensure that the ECEIs work actively and conscientiously for children's equal opportunities and for the recruitment of men.
2. That the efforts to recruit men and achieve gender mainstreaming are coordinated by five regional networks. The county governors are responsible for the networks, consisting of ECEIs, the municipalities and university colleges. (See "Persons")
3. That boys and girls are given equal opportunities in the ECEIs.
4. That gender equality is integrated into all plans and frameworks in the sector.

There are uncertainties connected with the interpretation of this last point, and the Norwegian partners await clarifications on the part of the Ministry. The understanding of the Norwegian partners is that institutions on all levels must annually report on their gender equality status and their efforts to improve the situation (p. 8). Accordingly all institutions from the ECEIs to the Ministry of education shall report. Comments on the overriding objectives and four goals must be included in the report. (The duty to report under The Gender Equality Act, 2005)

Persons

Five regional representatives

According to the Action Plan for Gender Equality in Kindergartens 2004-2007, the county governors are responsible for five regional networks. (See goal two above). One representative from the county governors shall be responsible for each network. The representative is responsible for the policies under the action plan and especially relating to the recruitment of men:

- Network between the men working in ECEIs in the region.
- Coordinate efforts and spread knowledge on how to recruit men.
- List ECEIs that have knowledge and experience with work on gender, and stimulate the development and dissemination of this knowledge.
- Put together a concrete regional gender equality plan and annually report on the gender equality situation.

The Ministry of Education and Research is not a person, but has according to the plan specified tasks and responsibilities. Important tasks for the Ministry are:

- To arrange annual national conferences on gender equality in kindergartens.
- To supervise gender mainstreaming in the sector based on the annual reports from the county governors on the action plan.

The partners account of the action plan

Does the action plan have gender mainstreaming goals on:

- Enlargement of gender identities – **No**
- Equal allocation of resources - **Yes**
- Gender competence and sensitivity - **Yes**
- More men – **Yes**
- National goals for GM defined in a different way – **Yes, gender socialisation**

“ECEI staff shall be conscious of their part in the children’s gender socialisation, taking part in the socialisation of children to a more egalitarian gender pattern.” p. 6

Curriculum

Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (2006)

This plan regulates the content and tasks of all national ECEIs. It is divided into three parts:

Part I The social mandate of the kindergartens (gender is highlighted)

Part II The content of the kindergartens (gender is mentioned)

Part III Planning and collaboration (gender is not mentioned)

Part I The social mandate of the kindergartens

In this part gender mainstreaming is one of the topics that is highlighted:

“The equality of the genders shall be reflected in the education provided by kindergartens. Kindergartens shall teach the children to relate to and create an equal society. Kindergartens shall base their activities on the principle of equality of the sexes. Boys and girls shall have the same opportunities to be seen and heard, and shall be encouraged to participate jointly in all activities in the kindergartens. Staff must reflect on their own attitudes towards and on society’s expectations of boys and girls.” (Section 1.3)

Part II The content of Kindergartens

This part first describes the life phase and phenomena of childhood. Caring, play, learning and social competence are some of the core concepts used to describe the ECEIs’ responsibilities. In connection with the concept of social competence it is stated that:

“All children in kindergartens regardless of age, **gender**, ethnic background and ability level must be given equal opportunities to participate in meaningful activities with their peer groups.” (p. 17)

The Framework plan then goes on to specify the content of ECEIs in seven learning areas:

1. Communication, language and text
2. Body, movement and art
3. Art, culture and creativity
4. Nature, environment and technology
5. Ethics, religion and philosophy
6. Local community and society
7. Numbers, spaces and shapes

Gender is mentioned in connection with two of the learning areas, (2) Body movement and art and (6) Local community and society. Compared to the multicultural perspective, gender is less integrated. The multicultural perspective is mentioned in four of the learning areas. In addition, the text in one of the learning areas, 5) Ethics, religion and philosophy, corresponds to a large degree to multiculturalism itself.

Part III Planning and collaboration

This part is devoted to planning and services that kindergartens collaborate on. It stipulates what documents and plans must and should be considered planning: The Day-care Institutions Act, the framework plan itself and municipal planning. Comments on gender equality are not made explicit, and the ECEIs duty according to the Gender Equality Act to work actively and systematically to promote gender equality, is not referred to.

The plan does not follow up the specifications in the Ministry’s Action plan for gender equality in kindergartens 2004-2007. The action plan states that all institutions on all levels in the sector shall annually report on the equality status and activities in accordance with the Gender Equality Act. (p. 8)

Specifications on other forms of discrimination (ethnicity, sexuality, religion) are also left out in this part of the plan. This with the exception of the Sami people.

The partners account of the framework plan

Is the framework plan gender mainstreamed? To some extent. Every aspect of childhood can not be described simultaneously in a framework plan. Even though this view is appreciated, gender is not as integrated as it should be.

Does the framework plan specify gender mainstreaming in relation to:

- Enlargement of gender identities - **Yes**
- Equal allocation of resources - **Yes**
- Gender competence and sensitivity - **Yes**
- More men – **No** (the lack of men in ECEIs is not mentioned)

Material supplementary to the curriculum

Report on men in the kindergartens

Friis, Pia (2006) "Report on men in the kindergartens. About recruitment and retaining men in the kindergartens." Ministry of Education and Research. (Only available in Norwegian)

Report on gender equality in the kindergartens

Rossholt, Nina (2006) "Report on gender equality in the educational work in the kindergartens." Ministry of Education and Research. (Only available in Norwegian)

The Ministry of Education and Research has published several reports going more into detail on some of the topics in the framework plan. The intention of the reports is to inspire and describe working strategies, and point out resources. Two of the reports are about gender mainstreaming (see above).

Vocational training schools

Auspices

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for laying down the policies for upper secondary education. In Norway, the upper secondary schools offer vocational training for educators working in ECEIs. This education also qualifies pupils for youth work.
<http://www.dep.no/kd/english/bn.html>

Directorate for Education and Training is the executive agency for the Ministry of Education and Research. The directorate is responsible for the development of primary and secondary education which includes the training of workers in early childhood education.
http://www.utedningsdirektoratet.no/templates/udir/TM_Artikkel.aspx?id=346

The county councils are responsible for running the public upper secondary schools and regulating the private upper secondary schools in harmony with the legislation. (The democratic and administrative level between the local and the central authorities).

Legislation

Duty to report on gender equality

According to the Gender Equality Act and the Accounting Act the county councils must report on the gender-equality status and activities within their enterprise. This includes reporting on the vocational training in upper secondary education within the county. (For more read Legislation on political level)

The Education Act (2000) governs the training and syllabi for upper secondary education. Gender equality is an integral part of the act.

<http://www.dep.no/kd/english/doc/legislation/acts/014101-200002/dok-bn.html>

According to the Gender Equality Act (2005), the county councils are responsible for annually reporting on their gender equality status and their efforts to improve the situation in the upper secondary schools.

Official policies, regulations and action plans

As far as the Norwegian partners are aware, there are no such regulations/action plans at this level.

Curriculum

Curriculum for child care and youth work

In Norway about half the students choose an upper secondary education that qualifies candidates for further academic studies and half the students choose an upper secondary education that leads to a vocation. One popular vocational track (for women) is "Child care and youth worker".

The first year

The students in this education programme take common core courses for all vocational students and for all students in the area of health and care work (vg1). The curriculum is organised in four subjects: (1) Health care, (2) Communication and interaction and (3) Vocational practice and (4) Values. Gender is not mentioned in any of the subjects. Neither is sexuality. On the other hand the concept of multiculturalism is well integrated in the text, and used in all subjects but (1) Health care. One of the formulations in the text may be interpreted in terms of a caring relation being gendered.

The second year

The students specialize in child care and youth work. The courses constitute about three-quarters of the studies in this year (vg2). The curriculum is organised in the same four subjects: (1) Health care, (2) Communication and interaction and (3) Vocational practice and (4) Values. Both gender and sexuality are only mentioned in subject (1) Health care. The concept of multiculturalism is also well included in this year's curriculum, and mentioned in all four subjects.

The third year

The students take on-the-job training in child care and youth work. After the three years the students sit for a final exam paper. The curriculum for the third year is currently under review. The new Curriculum is scheduled for spring 2008.

The partners account of the curriculum

Is the curriculum gender mainstreamed? No

Does the curriculum have gender mainstreaming specifications relating to:

- Enlargement of gender identities - **No**
- Equal allocation of resources - **No**
- Gender competence and sensitivity - **Yes**
- More men – **No**

Universities and university colleges

Auspices

The Ministry of Education and Research is the responsible ministry for the 19 universities/university colleges that educate ECEI teachers. <http://www.dep.no/kd/english/bn.html>

Legislation

The Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (2005) governs the institutions educating ECEI teachers. Under the Gender Equality Act the institutions are seen as public entities.

“Section 6-2. Gender equality: Universities and university colleges shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to ensure gender equality in all categories of employment at the institution.”

Duty to report on gender equality

According to the Gender Equality Act and the Accounting Act Universities and University Colleges must report on the gender-equality status and activities within their enterprise. (For more read Legislation on political level)

Regulation of framework plan for the preschool teacher education (2005).

In addition, the education of preschool teachers is governed by its own national regulations. The regulations specify an outline for the duration, the subjects and the degree (bachelor) that the institutions must offer. The regulations are specified in the national Framework plan. <http://www.lovdatab.no/for/sf/kd/kd-20051213-1448.html>

Official policies, regulations and action plans

As far as the Norwegian partners are aware, there are no such regulations/action plans at this level.

Curriculum

Framework plan for the preschool teacher education (2003)

The plan specifies the content and tasks in the education of preschool teachers nationally. Based on this framework plan all the 19 institutions offering the teacher education operationalize their own, but similar, curricula. The framework plan is divided into three sections. Gender is mentioned in every part:

- Section 1: Teacher education
- Section 2: Preschool teacher education
- Section 3. Plans for subject and fields of knowledge

Section 1: Teacher education

This describes section tasks in common for all teachers at all levels and types. It is stated that the teacher education must change with our changing society. One of the changing aspects mentioned is gender and gender equality.

In meeting this demand: “[k]nowledge about the differences between boys and girls is important for the teacher education.” Importance is attached to the problem of gender stereotypes in a globalized media and culture world. Students must have knowledge about this problem and how it influences children and gender socialisation. And in response they must be able to tailor learning situations taking this influence into account. (Section 1.4)

Section 2: Preschool teacher education

This section describes important general aspects in the education of preschool teachers. On four levels of the education it also names issues that must be included as an obligatory issue in their own right in the content of institutions' local curricula. It is stated that the perspective of gender and gender equality is one such subject. (p. 17)

- Students practice courses: The issue of gender is not mentioned, unlike multiculturalism and many other issues. (p. 16)
- Organization of the study: The issue of gender among the students is not mentioned, unlike the ethnic minority status of students. (p. 17)
- Issues: Here the issue of gender and gender and gender equality is mentioned. (p. 17)
- Intersectional issues: The issue of gender is not mentioned in the specified issues to be integrated inter-disciplinarily. (p. 17)

Section 3. Plans for subject and fields of knowledge

This section specifies the content of the institution's plans in: 1. Pedagogy, 2. Theatre, 3. Arts and crafts, 4. Physical education, 5. Christianity, Religion and Moral Education, 6. Mathematics, 7. Music, 8. Science and the environment, 9. Norwegian and 10. Social Studies. Some other more special subjects are also mentioned.

Gender is only mentioned in two of the subjects; pedagogy and social studies. In comparison, perspectives on ethnic minorities and multiculturalism are given in all subjects but physical education. Gender can not be said to be integrated inter-disciplinarily. This is what is written on gender in this section:

"[Students must] have insight into theories of gender differences between boys and girls, and must have knowledge of methods used to promote the equality and equal worth of the genders." (section 3.1 pedagogy)

"[Students must] have a reflected understanding of such concepts as gender difference, gender equality, social difference and the welfare state." (section 3.10 social studies)

http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/217217/Rammepl.Foerskole.vasket.BM_opprettet_0704_ny.pdf

The partners account of the framework plan

Is the framework plan gender mainstreamed? To some extent

Gender and gender equality are described as comprising an obligatory issue in its own right. But the integration of gender in the descriptions of the various subjects is not developed. Gender is mentioned in two out of ten subjects.

Does the plan have gender mainstreaming specifications on:

- Enlargement of gender identities – **Yes** (in connection with gender stereotypes in the media)
- Equal allocation of resources – **Yes**
- Gender competence and sensitivity – **Yes**
- More men – **No**