

Turkish Overview of the legal and political Gender Mainstreaming requirements in the area of educator training and early childhood education institutions

Context: Political level

Turkey

Legislation

The 1982 Constitution promotes equality between women and men in a general sense. Article 10 guarantees the application of equality before the law for “all without any discrimination related to language, race, colour, sexuality, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, denomination, and such reasons.”

In 2001, and 2004 two changes have been made in two of the articles of the Constitution in terms of equality between women and men: In 2001, article 41 of the Constitution has been changed from “Family is the foundation of the Turkish society” to “Family is the foundation of the Turkish society and it is based on the equality between the spouses.” In 2004, following statement was added to the article 10 of the Constitution mentioned above: “Women and men bear equal rights, and the state is obliged to put this equality into practice.” (Source: Directorate General on the Status of Women/KSGM)

Regulations/ action plans

Directorate General on The Status of Women (KSGM) was founded in 1990, in accordance with the United Nations’ “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.” Directorate General on The Status of Women has been working in the areas of education, health, employment, violence, decision making, international relations and the media to improve the indicators regarding women. (Source: KSGM).

Societal level

Turkey has signed the CEDAW in 1985, in which article 10 indicates gender mainstreaming in education as the following “the states that signed the convention take all the measures to remove stereotypical notions of the roles of women and men in every kind and every stage of education. In order to achieve this goal, they encourage other educational styles, ensure the overview of the textbooks, and school programs and implementation of educational methods that serve this goal.” (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Article 10) (Source: KSGM).

Since pre-primary education is considered optional and mostly based on care rather than education, new regulations in the area of education system do not cover preschool period.

Status in the society/Official policies

The General Directorate for Preschool Education (OOEGM) was founded and conjoined to the Ministry of National Education in 1992, according to the law numbered 3797, as part of a new policy that would highlight the importance of preschool education.

As part of the process to join the European Union, a number of projects regarding preschool education are being carried out at the moment; to emphasize importance of education, to increase enrolment rate, and involvement of parents and so on. These projects may include some gender aspects such as equality between women and men but not necessarily gender mainstreaming.

According to the 2006-2007 statistics of the Ministry of National Education, there are total 20.675 preschool institutions (both public and private) with 640.849 students and 24.775 teachers in Turkey. In addition, 13.465 trainers with contracts have been employed in the same period. According to these numbers, teacher/student ratio comes up as 25.8%. Out of 24.775 teachers 95% are female. 73% of the schools are located in the urban areas

which accommodate 74% of the students. Boys make up 52% of the students while the remaining 48% are girls. 72% of the students are in the age group of 5-6 years, while 21% are in the age group of 4-5 years. The age group of 3-4 years makes up only 7% of the children who attend preschool. Enrolment ratio is about 23% for the age group of 4-6 years, and increases by age (Source: MEB Statistics, 2006-2007).

According to the Preschool Education Institutions Regulation, principally the number of children in a group cannot be less than 10 and more than 25. Second group is formed only if the number exceeds 25 (Source: OOEGM).

Teachers in preschools are required to hold higher education degrees from preschool teacher training programs or child development programs, however; in practice, trainers with contracts are employed commonly for short terms and they are mostly graduates of vocational schools.

Official language

Compulsory basic education is eight years in Turkey. The term “preschool education” is used for the education prior to primary school and is optional. Preschool education is for children aged between 36 months and 72 months.

Preschool education is given at both public and private education institutions which are called Ana Okulları (kindergartens) for 37-72 months, Ana Sınıfları (nursery classes) in primary schools for 60-72 months, and Ugulamalı Ana Sınıfları (‘application’ nursery classes) for 36-72 months. The last ones are so-called, because they were originally set up for the purpose of practical training within the vocational schools for girls. All public preschools are free of charge except for the meal and material contribution of the parents.

0-36 month-olds are not included in this system. There are only private day care centres and nursery schools for this age group which are generally called crèches.

In Turkish, kindergartens and nursery classes are called “mother’s schools and mother’s classes” respectively. Teachers are called preschool teachers (Source: MEB/OOEGM).

Research

No research has been carried out on young children regarding specifically gender.

Women in the workforce

Labour participation rate for women aged 15-65 is around 25%. 4.6 % of working women with children under the age of 6 gets institutional care for their children. The ratio increases to 9% for working women in urban areas and to 21% for women with a degree of high school and over (Source: KSGM/Hacettepe University Demographic Research Institute, 2003 report).

Early childhood education institutions

Auspices (Which ministries have responsibility for ECEI matters?)

The Ministry of National Education is responsible for preschool education, and provides for about 90% of the schools, while the remaining 10% is under the responsibility of Social Services and Child Protection Institution (SHCEK) and other public and private institutions and foundations. SHCEK is overseen by one of the Ministries of the State called “ministry of state responsible for the matters of woman and family.”

Legislation

Currently preschool education institutions are operated through the Preschool Education Institutions Regulation issued in 2004.

Legislation regarding gender is limited with equality between women and men and equal opportunity in education for all. (Article 42 of the 1982 Constitution regulates the rights and responsibilities regarding education. According to the Constitution “no one could be deprived of the right to education..... Primary education is compulsory and free for all citizens both female and male”.) Similarly, according to the primary education law, “educational institutions are open to everyone regardless of their language, race, sexuality, and religion (Article 4). All are provided with equal opportunity and possibility in education (Article 8). No specific mention of preschool education. (Source: MEB)

Official policies/regulations/action plans

Currently no specific regulations or plans on gender mainstreaming at ECEIs exist.

Persons with a mandate to work for Gender Mainstreaming

No persons have been designated for this purpose.

Curriculum /education plans

The aims and principles of preschool education as well as basic working rules in preschool institutions are specified by the Ministry of National Education in its preschool education regulations which do not include gender issues.

Material supplementary to the curricula

No material exists regarding gender.

Vocational training schools

There are two types of vocational high schools with child development programs: Vocational highschool for girls and technical vocational high school; the latter is coeducational by regulation, however in practice boys do not prefer to get a degree in child development.

Auspices (Which ministries have responsibility for ECEI matters?)

The Ministry of National Education.

Legislation

Aims, principles and working rules regarding Vocational education (in high schools) are specified within the Vocational Education Law, numbered 3308 under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education.

Official policies/regulations/action plans

No regulations on gender mainstreaming.

Curriculum

National curricula for all vocational high schools are determined by the Ministry of National Education. It does not include gender issues other than courses such as “health of mother and child” which covers biological aspects of sexuality.

Universities/University colleges

Auspices (Which ministries have responsibility for ECEI matters?)

All higher education institutions are under the responsibility of Higher Education Counsel (YOK) of the Turkish Republic.

Legislation

Higher Education Law, numbered 2547, regulates all matters regarding universities and vocational schools which are under the responsibilities of universities.

Official policies/regulations/action plans Higher Education Law only mentions equal opportunity within its aims and principles. No mention of gender issues or gender mainstreaming.

Curriculum National curricula exist for “preschool teacher training programs” and “child development programs” for all universities and vocational schools. They do not cover gender issues except for the notions of sexual development and information on sexual health. However, in practice, some academics who teach courses in these programs seem to be able to organize their courses to cover gender issues.