Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education

A toolkit for teachers and school leaders

3

Gender-Responsive Pedagogy and School Leaders
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Chapter 3: Gender-Responsive Pedagogy and School Leaders

In a school, accountability is core to good leadership, management and governance. Leadership is a shared responsibility; however, the school leader is the custodian of accountability. This chapter is thus targeted at school leaders.

The information provided will help school leaders create a gender-responsive environment in their schools – an environment in which all learners, boys and girls, have the opportunity to succeed and develop to their full potential, regardless of their sex.

We examine different dimensions of school leadership and how they can contribute to a more gender-responsive school environment. These dimensions are: gender-responsive vision and values; planning and monitoring; distributed leadership; enhancing teaching and learning; strengthening teacher quality; enriching the curriculum; improving conditions for teaching and learning; nutrition; and gender in the relationships both within and outside the school community.

We then focus on a particularly important part of gender-responsive policy, which is child safety and protection, and discuss how to make sure boys and girls are equally protected against all forms of violence and harm. A reflection tool for a gender-responsive school leader closes the chapter.

This chapter aims to help you:

- Develop a gender-responsive, shared vision and values for your school
- Integrate gender responsiveness in planning and monitoring
- Develop ways to support teachers in applying gender-responsive pedagogy through monitoring and support, capacity development, human resources (HR) policy and distributed leadership
- Examine the gender responsiveness in the conditions for teaching and learning and come up with ideas for enhancing the gender responsiveness of the curriculum
- Take on a key role in ensuring parental and community involvement and act as a gender-responsive role model
- Be inspired to shape policies on school-related gender-based violence
3.1. Dimensions of school leadership

A school leader can support the creation of a gender-responsive environment in their school in many ways. This chapter uses a model with eight components of leadership to inspire you (see the diagram). This research-based model puts the learning and well-being of the learners at its core. School leaders can address the gender responsiveness of their school environment through each of the dimensions shown in the diagram. These dimensions and their relevance to gender-responsive pedagogy are discussed below.

A gender-responsive school starts with a vision and a set of values that promote equality between boys and girls, men and women. A gender-responsive school leader takes the needs of each and every individual learner into account. School leaders shape this vision and translate these values into their own actions and into clear guidelines for all stakeholders within the school community. These become concrete through gender-responsive school plans, budgets and policies. The vision and values form the foundation for all new developments, policies and actions.

By building trust, school leaders create the context in which vision and values can be translated into shared practice. Through trust, and by creating a safe and supportive environment for teachers to try out new gender-responsive models, they can enhance gender-responsive teaching and learning in their schools.

3.2. Defining a gender-responsive vision and values, and setting direction

3.2.1 Gender-responsive vision and values

While a school’s vision and values will always be rooted in the context of the education system, the school leadership plays a crucial role in defining their institution’s vision and values.

Your school’s vision and set of values heavily influence your own actions and the actions of others, and will establish a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school. Equity, which includes gender equity, needs to be a vital and clear part of this shared vision and values.

Developing a shared vision and values requires the participation of all stakeholders in the school community (teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, learners, etc.). While it will take time to achieve, it need not be a complicated process.
Activity to develop a shared vision

A good way to develop a shared vision is to bring staff, parents and other stakeholders together (in one session or in separate sessions) and ask them to describe their ideal school. What would the school leaders be doing? What would teachers be doing? What would learners be doing? What would parents be doing? What would the community be doing? Give special attention to how all learners, boys and girls alike, will have the opportunity to succeed and develop to their full potential.

Even though learners in ECE are still very young, it does not mean they cannot participate in such a process. Why not ask learners to draw their ideal school and tell you what they think is important for it?

Once there is a clear and shared understanding of what kind of school you want to be, you can ask all stakeholders what their core values for such a school would be. List all values and try to bring the number of values down by grouping together similar values until you reach five or six core values that everybody can agree on.

Having established your school’s shared vision and values, it is important to distribute and share them widely so that everybody involved in the school community is aware of them.

3.2.2 Gender-responsive planning and monitoring

A school leader needs to plan, support and monitor policy making, policy implementation and policy delivery at the school and these processes should be guided by the shared vision and values of the school. Your vision and values must be reflected in the planning and monitoring processes.

It is the responsibility of the school leader to ensure that policies reflect the gender-responsive vision and values of the school, whether they apply to classroom management; teacher performance; staff recruitment and selection; teaching and learning conditions (including health and safety standards related to hygiene and sanitation); learning material; school-related gender-based violence; and age- and culturally appropriate sexuality education.

Human, physical and financial resources should be equally and equitably available to both boys and girls. It is crucial to continue making parents, teachers and the wider school community aware of how the use of the school budget is linked to the gender responsiveness of the school’s vision and values.2

A successful school plan needs to be realistic and within the means of the school to allocate adequate human and financial resources to each action point. To support ECE in a gender-responsive way, an effective budget and procurement system must consider the different needs of all learners and take their social and economic status and background into account. This can be achieved by including a variety of community members in the planning process.3 Include male and female parents, local leaders, teachers and learners. Doing so safeguards both diversity and inclusion.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the current budget allocation to address the specific needs of girls and boys in our school?
- What programmes, with matching budgets, does our school have for promoting the education of all learners equally?
- What specific procurement policies (and matching funds) should be put in place to address the needs of young girls and boys?4 Gender sensitivity should always be considered when deciding which materials to buy.
The implementation of the school plan needs to be monitored and evaluated. It is therefore helpful to make time to reflect on the progress made and, if need be, to adapt the plan.

When monitoring, it helps to segregate your data collection by sex, as gender-related issues are more likely to emerge. For example, segregate data for enrolment, attendance, retention, progression and achievement rates. In addition, it is also useful to collect more qualitative data through interviews, focus group discussions, observations, etc.

3.3. Restructuring of the organisation – distributed leadership to strengthen the school’s gender responsiveness

Distributed leadership, or the division of roles and responsibilities, has many advantages, among them fostering more ownership, more creativity and balanced decision making. As the school leader, you can assign roles and responsibilities to individuals or groups in your team to implement gender responsiveness in your school.

Because gender inequality affects everyone, it is important that spaces are created for participatory discussions within the school, giving everyone the opportunity to contribute. Discussions on how the school can become more gender responsive can happen at different levels – at student level but also at the levels of support staff, teachers, senior teachers, parents and others. In order to promote this kind of discussion, you can set up formal committees to undertake some tasks and you can support or encourage more informal working groups. You can even engage parents informally in the community or through an open-door policy at school-leader level. This motivates and empowers stakeholders.

Keep in mind that our experiences influence our perceptions and judgement related to gender. Reflection activities such as the examples in Section 2.1.2 on gender biases are an important first step in engaging with different stakeholders on gender while setting up participatory structures and promoting shared leadership on gender responsiveness. Reflection helps us become aware of our own biases and stereotypes, and may open new views and possibilities for action.

A gender-responsive project within the school and its participatory approach can also serve to promote, market and distinguish a school. You could, for example, hold a gender day once a year where gender issues and policies are shared and discussed with parents.

3.4. Enhancing gender-responsive teaching and learning and strengthening teacher quality

The quality of the teachers and the quality of the teaching and learning processes are key elements of a gender-responsive school environment. Pursuing a gender-responsive human resource policy and providing teachers with opportunities for continuous professional development in gender-responsive pedagogy are crucial factors in enhancing the gender responsiveness of the teaching and learning processes in your school.
3.4.1 Gender-responsive human resources

As an agent of change, a school leader needs to have a gender-responsive perspective on school HR. The school can have a gender-responsive curriculum and materials, but if teachers and support staff do not understand and believe in gender-responsive pedagogy, it will be difficult to achieve the intended goals. Even if all elements of your school’s HR management are not under your control, you can assess it for gender responsiveness by asking yourself the following questions:

- Is the diversity (gender, age, background, ethnicity) of the school community reflected in the teaching staff? Do both female and male teachers hold positions of responsibility? What can I do to influence teaching staff selection and allocation of roles?
- Is the diversity of the school community reflected in the support staff? Are both sexes represented? What can I do to influence support staff selection?
- Is the diversity of the school community represented in the parents who are on parent teacher committees (PTCs) or parent teacher associations (PTAs), and other school committees? Are both sexes represented?
- Are policies related to staff recruitment, promotion, retention, development and motivation gender sensitive? In what way can I influence these policies to be more gender responsive? Can I make suggestions and to whom can I make them?
- Is gender sensitivity part of the job description for staff? If not, whom can I approach to make sure this is considered?
- Are new teachers oriented on the school’s gender policies?
- How are the roles of staff distributed? Who takes notes, who serves coffee, who attends trainings, etc.? Is this gender balanced?

3.4.2 Teacher professional development

Encourage teachers to participate in continuous professional development programmes in different areas. Regarding gender, support teachers in learning about gender and diversity and encourage them to learn more. Encourage them to use this toolkit. As mentioned in Section 3.3 on distributed leadership, you can also assign teachers to set up committees on gender responsiveness to facilitate sessions for their colleagues. In addition, you can support earnest self-reflection moments to help teachers to implement gender-responsive pedagogy in ECE or encourage teachers to participate in school-based working groups as well as in professional learning communities (PLCs) which may spread across schools. For example, early childhood teachers from nearby schools could meet to address some of the challenges they face in implementing GRP.

As the school leader, support ECE teachers to be more aware of gender stereotypes in early
Gender-Responsive Pedagogy and School Leaders

childhood. Offer guidance and advice on the implementation of gender-responsive pedagogy by carrying out frequent and supportive teacher observations in their classrooms.

As explained in the previous chapter, GRP touches on different aspects of teaching:

- Lesson planning and delivery
- The teaching and learning environment (including seating arrangement)
- Play and other learning materials
- The interactions of the teacher with learners, other teachers and parents, as well as the interactions of learners with other learners and the language used
- The assessment of learners

It is advisable to tackle only a few of these areas at a time. Below are some useful hints and tips. These tips can help you decide what to observe when you visit the classrooms and how to support your teachers after your observations.

### Hints and tips

**Observing the seating arrangement**

- Are learner seating patterns segregated according to sex? Limiting interactions between boys and girls will limit them in their development.
- Where do girls and boys sit in the classroom in relation to the teacher? Learners who sit near the teacher are usually called on more frequently or receive more of the teacher’s attention.
- In the conversation with the teacher afterwards you may want to ask about seating arrangements – how they are chosen, when they change, and so on.
- You can go further in your observation of the seating arrangement by drawing a map of the classroom:
  - Label the front, back, door, windows, chalkboard, etc.
  - Where do the girls and the boys sit? Mark ‘r’ for girls, ‘b’ for boys and ‘X’ for the teacher.
  - Count the number of girls and boys who sit closest to the teacher (all learners in the front row or the ten learners who sit nearest to the teacher).

**Observing use of learning materials**

- Do the pictures on the wall show equal numbers of males and females? Do they appeal to and inspire both boys and girls? Are they stereotypical in any way?
- Do some pictures challenge stereotypes?
- Do girls and boys have equal access to play and other learning materials?
- Is there a balance between girls and boys in the illustrations? Are the girls and boys doing similar tasks?
- You can go further in observing learning activities by counting the number of play materials you see girls and boys using during the lesson(s) and observing what the boys and girls are doing in the pictures of the materials being used.
- Do the textbooks and stories used by the teachers represent girls and boys equally and fairly?
- If there are some gender stereotypes in the books or stories, does the teacher engage the learners in talking about them?
Observing teacher-learner interaction and language use

- When the teacher walks around the classroom, does she or he walk near and stop to talk to girls and boys equally?
- During some observations it may be helpful to tally how many times the teacher calls on or addresses a girl or a boy during the lesson.
- You may also want to check if specific learners, such as those who are faster or more outgoing, get many more opportunities than others.
- If you do draw the map of the classroom described above, you can go further in your observation of teacher-learner interaction and language use by drawing a broken line to show where the teacher walks. Draw an arrow pointing to the learner every time she or he stops to talk to a girl or a boy.
- You can ask teachers if they have tried systems that can help them call upon learners more equally and what their experiences were, or you can recommend a system used by one of their colleagues.
- Does the language that the teacher uses in the classroom involve both boys and girls?
  - Are gendered words avoided?
  - Are male and female examples given?
- Are compliments uniform across sexes?
- Is the body language of the teacher the same for boys and girls? (For example, does he or she bend down to the level of the learner?)
- Is the tone of the teacher equally kind towards all learners?

Observing learning activities

- What activities do girls and boys engage in in the classroom setting?
- How are class tasks assigned?
- How are the children grouped?
- Do assignments encourage the mixing of boys and girls? For example, are materials that are typically liked by one group combined with materials preferred by the other group?
- It may also be useful to observe learners during outdoor and indoor free play.

Giving feedback to the class teacher

- Share your findings with the teacher after your observation. You can ask additional questions and for clarification for the reasons behind certain choices.
- Thank the teacher for what went well.
- Reflect together on any points for improvement.
- Formulate action points together.

3.5. Enriching the curriculum to be more gender responsive

In many cases, the curriculum in your school is predefined and the available teaching and learning materials are provided to schools by the government. Redesigning the curriculum to become more gender responsive is therefore not always an easy task for school leaders. This, however, does not mean that school leaders cannot play an important role in enriching the existing curriculum to make it more gender responsive. For example, you can:

- Establish a task force in your school mandated to screen all teaching and learning materials for their gender responsiveness and motivate teachers to challenge the gender stereotypes encountered in the materials.
- The task force can check story and picture books, posters and other visuals for stereotypes and urge the staff to write questions that challenge any stereotypes in the margins of these books. In addition,
these books could be supplemented with more gender-sensitive materials.

- Stimulate and support teachers to develop and use gender-neutral play materials and other learning materials.

- Look out for, and distribute free or at a low cost, gender-responsive teaching and learning materials to supplement the existing curriculum. Praise your team for creating their own gender-sensitive materials with locally available resources and stimulate them to be resourceful in creating such materials.

- Bring gender stereotypes in existing learning materials to the attention of publishers and education officials when given the opportunity to provide feedback.

3.6. Improving conditions for gender-responsive teaching and learning

3.6.1. Gender-responsive school infrastructure

The buildings and the overall set-up of school infrastructure have an impact on teaching and learning processes. It is important that the school leader understands how this can affect the quality and gender responsiveness of ECE. The school infrastructure should support the needs of boys and girls.

Ensuring adequate school infrastructure for young children can be challenging as your school may have limited financial resources. In the guidelines below, there are ideas that you can easily implement at your school, even with limited resources.
Physical infrastructure
As girls and boys have the same physical strength and ability until they reach puberty, little or no distinction needs to be made in the school’s physical infrastructure to suit both. It is important, however, that classrooms provide enough space for learners to move.

Door handles should be within learners’ reach so they can enter and leave the classroom independently. Where noise is not an issue for children in other grades, you could also consider adopting an open-door policy where classroom doors remain open at all times. This increases transparency in what is happening within the classrooms, creates possibilities for stronger teacher collaboration and improves the safety of the learners.

Access to water and sanitation
Water is essential, even in schools that do not have direct access to tapped water. Adequate safe and accessible ablution facilities must be in place and they should be appropriate for all children in the school. For example, the youngest learners may need a step to be comfortable on adult toilet bowls and to reach the water basins. In the case of pit latrines, the holes should be smaller to avoid accidental falls. Distance to the ablution facilities is a key factor in ensuring that young learners can use the facilities safely and independently.

At this early age, it may not be necessary to have toilets separated by sex, especially if half doors are in place. If the toilets are separated, ensure the signage is gender responsive and does not reinforce stereotypes. For instance, do not make the signage pink for girls and blue for boys, but use the same neutral colour.

Furniture
The appropriateness and quality of classroom furniture affects the quality and gender responsiveness of the education provided. As school leader, ensure that adequate classroom materials are provided to support the teachers in setting up classrooms for effective learning.

When procuring tables and chairs, it is advisable to cater for the diverse age groups in many ECE classroom settings as well as their appeal to both boys and girls.

Mats can be a low-cost alternative to tables and chairs. In addition, mats can encourage the mingling of all learners.

Play area
An outside play area is very beneficial to learners, who are developing their motor skills.

If a play area is provided, encourage teachers to supervise outside play while bearing in mind some of the tips in Chapter 2 (for example, ensure that the equipment available, such as tyres, skipping ropes or balls, is accessible to all learners). You may consider dividing the play area by, for example, adding low bushes to prevent one group dominating the available space.
3.6.2. Nutrition

It is important that school feeding programmes do not reinforce stereotypes (by, for example, having only women prepare food) and it is important they provide nutritious meals to all learners, without bias. Interaction with parents about the feeding programme can be an ideal opportunity to talk with the community about prevailing harmful stereotypes that prevent healthy nutrition. The school could, for instance, point out to parents that girls in the feeding programme will be given the same portions as boys because their needs are the same, as long as this is in line with their willingness to eat and avoids wasting food.

Locally available, healthy foods represent a greater opportunity for equity among children as they will then eat similar foods. If your school has a tuck shop or canteen, have healthy options on offer. There are also some hints and tips on nutrition (in Section 2.8.4 of this toolkit) suggesting how teachers, with the support of school leadership, can engage parents regarding healthy foods.

3.7. Building gender-responsive relationships within and outside of the school community

A school leader should act as a role model for all staff by ensuring that gender-related considerations are always tabled when implementing activities or effecting any changes. This will show the importance a leader gives to gender and can stimulate staff to go the extra mile and lead by example.

Children, however, also interact with family members, neighbours, extended family and community members. It is therefore essential that schools, parents and communities work together to overcome societal barriers to gender equality. Without the support of the larger community, there are limits to what the school can achieve in creating equal opportunities.

Participation of parents and the larger community also promotes good governance, functionality and accountability within the entire school.

Outlined below are points to consider in enlisting the support of parents, the community and the school governing body for gender-responsive ECE.

As the school leader, you can:

- Create and maintain effective partnerships with parents. This includes communicating effectively about the learners’ performance and welfare.
- Put in place PTCs or PTAs that are gender sensitive and that reflect the diversity of the community. Encourage parents to engage in school activities and decision making through these structures.
- Work with community members to ensure that learners travel safely to and from school.
- Work with parents and other family caregivers to raise awareness of the persistence of gender
stereotyping in school systems and how this affects learners and the community at large. Use occasions like school open days and parent meetings.

- Partner, where appropriate, with non-governmental organisations, agencies, businesses or other organisations to support gender-sensitive teaching and learning.
- Establish partnerships and share practices related to gender sensitivity with other schools.
- Increase appreciation of the importance of ECE and respect for its workforce in the community and among community leaders.

3.8. Child safety and protection

3.8.1 Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is a violation of Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been signed by all African countries. School leadership has the responsibility to uphold a ban on corporal punishment in their school.

- A school leader can shape school policy relating to classroom management and punishment. Taking a stance against corporal punishment, including pinching and beating, contributes to creating a safe environment for all learners.
- Advise the school team against using harsh language and promote acceptable consequences for undesirable learning behaviour. Encourage the use of positive reinforcement systems, like giving compliments or giving symbolic rewards, to prevent undesirable behaviour.
- Teacher professional development in classroom management may be necessary for the teachers. Good classroom management reduces poor behaviour and thus helps reduce the temptation to make use of strong language or corporal punishment.
- Include gender sensitivity and the use of non-violent forms of discipline, such as positive reinforcement systems and clear expectations, in the school’s code of conduct for teachers.

3.8.2 School-related gender-based violence

According to the Global Guidance on Addressing School-Related Gender-Based Violence (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016), millions of children are affected by school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). It is defined as acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics. SRGBV is complex and multifaceted.

A school leader can promote a gender-responsive school environment and thus prevent gender-based violence from happening by having an open dialogue about the topic with the school team. This can be further reinforced by creating awareness among all stakeholders of the policies and mechanisms in place at the school to prevent and deal with incidents of SRGBV.
These policies will be most successful if they are created in consultation with all the staff at the school, across all sections. Policies on the prevention of violence should cover the following elements:

- **A definition of violence**
  This definition may encompass bullying, school fights, inappropriate remarks by teachers and learners, etc. Different forms of violence and how they manifest themselves within different age groups can be included. For example, in secondary schools, bullying is different and may be more sexual. In ECE, bullying may take the form of the same child always hitting another child, or a certain child always being blamed by peers or the teacher. A distinction can be made between violence by people in power, such as teachers with learners, and violence between peers.

- **Suggested activities for learners related to the prevention of violence**
  Teachers can address violence in class through activities like role-play and group conversations on the topic or by telling a story – for example, one about a child being bullied or abused. There can also be activities at whole school level, such as making bullying the topic of an assembly.

- **Safe formal and informal child-protection referral mechanisms**
  The school can have a system for referring cases to more specialised organisations where needed. Teachers and learners can participate in the school referral system. If the school has access to the services of a counsellor, they can also play a role.
  - Once a safe referral pathway is established, learners need to know how they can report violence and to whom they can turn. It is helpful to share referral pathways broadly, both within the school and within the community, so that teachers, administrators and families, in addition to learners, can report or respond to child protection issues that occur in and around ECE environments and homes. The community can also play an important role by denouncing acts of violence by people in power, like a teacher’s use of corporal punishment.
  - Having transparent referral, reporting and disciplinary procedures is important in severe cases of SRGBV, but even for less severe instances of violence it is important to have clear and transparent procedures in place. Intervening in the early stages of SRGBV is often a lot easier than dealing with cases that have worsened into severe forms of violence.
  - In the case of violence among pupils, it is good practice to have the measures that will be taken against SRGBV perpetrators clearly outlined within your school policies for the sake of transparency. Refer to national policies on child protection and to guidelines from the Ministry of Education. If in doubt, contact the higher levels of the ministry for support in putting solid policies in place.
  - Pay explicit attention to gender in these policies with, for example, a chapter dedicated to gender-related violence and a separate chapter on sexual violence and harassment. In the latter, information on referrals is very important for directing victims themselves or teachers of victims to adequate support. The diagram on the next page illustrates a possible entry point and pathway to be followed for referrals and follow-up.
In addition to having policies and referral pathways in place, leadership also needs to raise awareness and empower teachers to reflect on their practices and to monitor and report on violence. Teachers must be enabled to identify and address signs of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation, both within and outside of their classes. It is especially critical for early childhood teachers to be vigilant for signs of violence against young learners as they are less able to express themselves.

Referral pathway for child survivors of GBV

A child tells you about an incident of sexual, physical or emotional violence

**IMMEDIATE RESPONSE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For survivors of sexual violence</th>
<th>For survivors of physical violence</th>
<th>For survivors of emotional violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure immediate access to medical attention (within 72 hours)</td>
<td>Seek a medical/health care entry point</td>
<td>Seek a psychosocial support entry point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is the child with an adult?

Yes

Can this adult accompany the child to referral services?

Yes

Psychosocial services and accompaniment
e.g., women’s organisation, primary health care centre, community-based group, NGO

No

Medical services
e.g., primary health care centre, NGO clinic

If the child or child’s guardian wants to pursue police or legal action, or if there are immediate safety and security risks, refer and accompany the survivor to police or security, or to a source of legal assistance for information

Police
e.g., national police, UNPOL

Legal assistance
e.g., women’s organisation, legal aid group

No

**FOLLOW-UP AND OTHER SERVICES**

After immediate response, follow-up and other services, over time and based on the survivor’s choices, can include any of the following:

- **Family tracing & reunification**
e.g., if the child is unaccompanied or with an adult who is not a parent, contact the Separated Child Call Centre
- **Health care**
e.g., primary health centre, NGO clinic
- **Psychosocial services**
e.g., women’s organisation, primary health centre, community-based group, NGO
- **Protection, security & justice**
e.g., women’s organisation, legal aid group
- **Basic service providers**
e.g., camp management, community committee, NGO
### 3.9. The gender-responsive school leader – a reflection tool

This table can assist a school leader in establishing a gender-responsive environment in the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Exceeding expectation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your school have a gender-responsive vision?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do the collective values of your school community reflect and reinforce gender equity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Were the different stakeholders (staff, parents, learners, parents, etc.) consulted in the development of the vision and values?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your school have policies to ensure that the school curriculum and learning materials take into consideration the specific learning needs of girls and boys?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is gender sensitivity a factor in deciding which materials to buy?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the budget and procurement system consider the different needs of all learners and their social and economic status and backgrounds?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is a variety of stakeholders included in planning to safeguard diversity and inclusion so that all needs are taken into consideration?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the school plan based on or influenced by information gathered during monitoring in order to cater to context-specific needs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the school plan based on or influenced by gender-disaggregated school data on enrolment, attendance, retention and achievement rates?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the implementation of the gender-responsive school plan monitored and evaluated?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does monitoring occur regularly? If so, how often?</td>
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<td><strong>Is more qualitative data on gender responsiveness</strong></td>
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<td>collected through, for example, interviews, focus</td>
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<td>group discussion and observation?</td>
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<td><strong>Distributed leadership to strengthen the school’s gender</strong></td>
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<td>responsiveness (Section 3.3, page 4)**</td>
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<td>Have reflection activities on possibly unconscious</td>
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<td>gender biases taken place?</td>
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<td>If so, with whom?</td>
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<td>Have participatory discussions within the school</td>
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<td>taken place, giving everyone the chance to contribute</td>
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<td>on gender-related issues?</td>
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<td>How often?</td>
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<td>Are there formal or informal working groups or</td>
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<td>committees looking at how the school can become</td>
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<td>more gender responsive?</td>
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<td>Do these happen at different levels (students, support</td>
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<td>staff, teachers, senior teachers, etc.)? Specify</td>
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<td>Is there transparency with regards to the decision-making</td>
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<td>processes?</td>
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<td><strong>Enhancing teaching, learning and teacher quality</strong></td>
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<td>(Section 3.4, page 4)**</td>
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<td><strong>Gender-responsive human resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the gender diversity of the school community</td>
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<td>reflected in the staff?</td>
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<td>Are there equal numbers of females and males in leadership</td>
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<td>positions or positions of responsibility at your school?</td>
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<td>Is the support staff diverse and gender balanced?</td>
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<td>Are policies related to staff recruitment, promotion,</td>
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<td>retention, development and motivation gender sensitive?</td>
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<td>Is gender sensitivity part of the job description for</td>
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<td>staff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are new teachers oriented on the school’s gender policies?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Exceeding expectation</td>
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<td><strong>Continuous professional development</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do gender and diversity form part of staff members’ continuing professional development trajectories?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do some staff members participate in professional learning communities (possibly spread across schools) focused on gender responsiveness?</td>
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<td>Have you helped your ECE teachers to implement this toolkit practically?</td>
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<td><strong>Classroom observations</strong></td>
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<td>Is the seating arrangement gender sensitive?</td>
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<td>Are learners all given the same room to participate, regardless of gender?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the language used by the teacher and learners inclusive and free of gender stereotypes?</td>
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<td>Is mixed grouping commonly used?</td>
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<td>Do all learners have equal access to play and other learning materials, regardless of gender?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the teaching and learning materials gender responsive? If not, do teachers talk to learners about the stereotypes represented?</td>
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<td>Are tasks and responsibilities allocated to girls and boys free of gender stereotypes?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enriching the curriculum to be more gender responsive (Section 3.5, page 7)</strong></td>
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<td>Do you encourage teachers to develop and use gender-neutral play and learning materials?</td>
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<td>Do you or your teachers check story and picture books and visuals for stereotypes?</td>
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<td>Do you encourage teachers to challenge stereotypes in learning materials?</td>
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<td>Is there a task force in your school mandated to screen all teaching and learning materials?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you use free or low-cost, gender-sensitive learning materials that supplement the existing curriculum?</td>
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</table>
## Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education

### Improving conditions for gender-responsive pedagogy (Section 3.6, page 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Gender-responsive school infrastructure</strong></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Exceeding expectation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the school surroundings gender sensitive (decoration, safety, etc.)?</td>
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<td>Are ablution facilities easily accessible and safe for both boys and girls?</td>
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<td>Is there adequate and diverse furniture to cater to the needs of all learners?</td>
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<td>Is the outdoor play area safe, easily accessible and appealing to all learners?</td>
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<td>Are the decorations in the school gender sensitive and reflective of the diverse community?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there dialogue with the community on prevailing harmful stereotypes and practices that compromise healthy nutrition?</td>
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### Gender within and outside of the school community (Section 3.7, page 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Are gender-sensitive PTCs or PTAs in place?</strong></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Exceeding expectation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the diversity of the school community reflected in the parents on the school PTA and other school committees?</td>
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<td>Are both sexes represented?</td>
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<td>Have measures been put in place by the community and school to safeguard the safety of learners on their way to and from school?</td>
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<td>Have parents and other community members been approached about the persistence of gender stereotyping and how this negatively affects learners?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have parents and other community members been informed of the importance of ECE in creating equal opportunities?</td>
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<td>Are there effective partnerships with parents, including effective communication about the learners’ performance and welfare?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Child safety and protection (Section 3.8, page 11)</strong></td>
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<td>Are there policies in your school to address corporal punishment?</td>
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<td>Is there a code of conduct in your school for teachers that includes gender sensitivity and the use of non-violent forms of discipline?</td>
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<td>Are the discipline techniques directed towards girls and boys free of gender stereotypes?</td>
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<td>Has a policy on the prevention of violence been created in dialogue with all the teaching staff? Is the implementation of this policy monitored?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have activities related to prevention of violence taken place with learners?</td>
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<td>Is a safe referral pathway in place?</td>
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<td>Is a safe referral pathway known within the school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is a safe referral pathway known within the wider community?</td>
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<td>Have measures against SRGBV perpetrators been put in place and agreed upon?</td>
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Endnotes


Gender-Responsive Pedagogy and School Leaders
